Exploring Perceptions and Practices of the Intercultural Dimension in EFLTeaching with University Teachers in Mainland China

AN'AN ZHOU

Supervised by:

Dr. Jessica Clapham, Dr. Argyro Kantara

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Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed .....Anan Zhou..... (candidate)

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STATEMENT 1
This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s). Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for deposit in the University's digital repository**.**

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Abstract

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has been integrated into the Chinese national syllabus since 2000. Nevertheless, there has been limited research conducted to date to investigate the perceptions and practices of Chinese university English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers regarding ICC. To address this gap, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive and in-depth comprehension of the perceptions and practices of Chinese university EFL teachers concerning the intercultural dimension within foreign language teaching (FLT).

Employing a convergent mixed research method, data was collected from 224 teachers through surveys, while 10 teachers engaged in one-on-one interviews, and 3 teachers underwent classroom observations. Survey results indicated that teachers generally possessed positive perceptions of ICC, transitioning from a knowledge-centered to a skill-centered approach. However, interview findings shed light on challenges in fully comprehending the ICC concept.

Teachers emphasized the value of intercultural teaching in their self-reported methods, demonstrating a willingness to incorporate it across various topics and activities. However, closer examination of their actual classroom practices exposed inconsistent perceptions of intercultural teaching, suggesting that its integration into FLT is incomplete.

The study investigated the impact of teachers' personal practical knowledge on their perceptions and practices. Statistical analysis indicated that prior experience in teaching *Intercultural Communication*, participation in intercultural teacher training, and having overseas experience had significant effects on teachers' perceptions and practices. Additionally, short-term stays overseas (less than 6 months) positively influenced their intercultural perceptions and practices.

Regression analysis indicated that teachers' perceptions of ICC and intercultural teaching exerted a modest yet significant influence on their instructional practices.

Drawing from the findings, this study offered implications for areas such as professional development, textbook development, and administrative considerations. Furthermore, the study proposed avenues for future research, aiming to enhance comprehension and implementation of the intercultural dimension within FLT.

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List of Abbreviations

AIC:	Assessment of Intercultural Competence
CET:	College English Test
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
EGP:	English for General Purposes
ESP:	English for Specific Purposes
FLT:	Foreign Language Teaching
IC:	Intercultural Competence
ICC:	Intercultural Communicative Competence
MOOC:	Massive Online Open Courses
MoE:	Ministry of Education
PPK:	Personal Practical Knowledge
SPSS:	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TA:	Thematic Analysis
TEM:	Test for English Majors

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The introductory chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the research project by sharing personal interest and motivation, highlighting the purpose of the study, presenting the research questions, and outlining the structure of the study.

1.1 Personal motivation to the study

My journey into the realm of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) and intercultural teaching began in 2018. It was in April of that year when I was appointed as a tutor to assist students in preparing for the 1st College Student Intercultural Competence Contest in Hunan Province. I felt both excited and challenged by this opportunity, as ICC was an entirely new concept to me, beyond its literal meaning. It marked my initial encounter with ICC, and I embarked on a journey to familiarize myself with its principles.

Confronted with this novel concept and the daunting task ahead, I devoted three months to immersing myself in the study of intercultural communication. During this period, I extensively explored theories by Hofstede and other scholars. By July, I commenced training my students, and each interaction with them was a learning experience for both parties.

To my surprise, during our initial meetings, some of my students greeted me in English with phrases like “good morning, teacher” or “hi,

Teacher Zhou". Being a Chinese individual, I was well aware that they were using the typical Chinese way to convey greetings in English. The term "teacher" (or "*laoshi*" in Chinese) was a customary way for students to address their educators. "Teacher" was a generic title used to address any teacher, even if the student did not personally know the teacher. However, this form of address sounded unfamiliar and peculiar to me as "teacher" or "Teacher Zhou" is not customary or widely used in English-speaking countries, where alternative forms of address, such as using the teacher's last name or appropriate titles, are more prevalent. In response to this cultural difference, I encouraged my students to address me as "Betty" or "Ms. Zhou" to align with the cultural norms. It was an intriguing and thought-provoking experience, underscoring the significance of ICC even in seemingly minor and everyday interactions.

This encounter served as a catalyst for my interest in ICC and intercultural teaching. It ignited a desire to delve deeper into these topics, explore their complexities, and contribute to the field through research and practice.

1.2 Purpose of the study

In the current era of globalization, the need to interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds has become increasingly prevalent. Consequently, the acquisition of intercultural communication competence

(ICC) has gained paramount importance as a means to minimize misunderstandings and facilitate smooth communication. Integrating intercultural teaching practices into education was served as a vehicle for promoting ICC. Within the domain of foreign language teaching (FLT), the significance of incorporating an intercultural dimension in language teaching has been widely recognized and emphasized in educational policy documents and pedagogical frameworks (Byram, 2014).

In response to the increasing globalization of China and its growing integration into the international community, the incorporation of ICC has become a primary objective in English language education. This emphasis on ICC was evident in two significant national English-teaching guidelines, namely *The National Curriculum Guide for English Majors (2000)* and *The National Curriculum Requirements for the Teaching of College English (2004)*, which explicitly endorse ICC as a primary goal in English language teaching within Chinese universities. As a result, intercultural teaching has been implemented in accordance with these guidelines, shaping the landscape of English language education in the tertiary sector.

Over the past two decades, the integration of ICC into national educational documents has received significant attention (Hu, 2013; Sun, 2016; Zhang & Yao, 2020). However, there remained a dearth of research exploring ICC and intercultural teaching specifically from the perspective of teachers, particularly within the last ten years. Therefore, it is essential

to examine the current status quo of Chinese university teachers' perceptions regarding ICC and intercultural teaching. Exploring the multifaceted dimensions of teachers' perceptions and practices is crucial in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how intercultural teaching is being realized in the Chinese context. Furthermore, it is essential to identify the significant factors that influence teachers' perceptions of ICC and intercultural teaching, as well as to investigate the extent to which these perceptions shape their instructional practices.

Therefore, this research aims to provide insights into the aforementioned inquiries, shedding light on the perceptions and practices of Chinese university teachers regarding the intercultural dimension in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. By delving into these aspects, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and inform future developments in the field of EFL education in China.

1.3 Research questions

While nationwide official guidelines for both English majors and non-English majors have included ICC as one of the principal objectives (Sun, 2016; Wang, 2016; Zhang, 2007, 2012), there was limited research, especially in the past ten years, on Chinese university teachers' beliefs about ICC and their intercultural teaching practice in actual EFL classroom. In light of this, this study employed a convergent mixed method research

to investigate Chinese university teachers' perceptions of ICC and their implementation of intercultural teaching in classroom. Further, the current study went in-depth to explore possible influence of teachers' Personal Practical Knowledge (PPK) on their perceptions about ICC and intercultural teaching, as well as potential effect of their existing perceptions on their practices. To gain the above purposes, four research questions were put forward as follows:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of Chinese teachers regarding ICC within the context of EFL education at the university level?

RQ2: How do Chinese university teachers perceive and implement intercultural teaching within the EFL classroom setting?

RQ3: Are there any differences in teachers' perceptions due to their PPK such as: a) level of education, b) additional intercultural training, c) previous teaching experience, d) previous intercultural teaching experience and e) overseas experience?

RQ4: To what extent, do teachers' perceptions influence their practices of intercultural teaching in the classroom?

By answering the above questions, this study seeks to depict a comprehensive picture of Chinese university teachers' perceptions on ICC and their current practice of intercultural teaching and find out the underlying relationship between the perceptions and PPK/practice of intercultural teaching, so as to shed light on teachers' professional

development in the future and generate implications for intercultural teaching in EFL university context.

1.4 Structure of the study

The thesis consists of seven chapters. A quick review of each chapter is presented in what follows.

Chapter 1 is an introduction, which begins by presenting the researcher's personal interest and motivation for conducting the study. It then proceeds to articulate the purpose of the study. Subsequently, the chapter outlines the research questions that will be addressed. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis, providing a glimpse into the subsequent chapters of the research.

Chapter 2 is a comprehensive literature review that provides a theoretical foundation for the study. The chapter is organized around key concepts relevant to the current study, namely, ICC, intercultural teaching and teacher beliefs. Section 1 focuses on ICC, discussing its origin, definition and conceptual evolution. Additionally, a critical review of Byram's ICC model is provided, as it will be applied to explore teachers' perceptions of ICC. Section 2 delves into the topic of intercultural teaching. It begins with a discussion of the conceptualization of intercultural teaching, followed by an exploration of various aspects such as objectives, content, principles, and paradigms associated with intercultural teaching.

The section also includes a review of intercultural teaching practices in both Western and Chinese contexts. Section 3 centers around the definition of teacher beliefs and examines the relationship between teacher beliefs and their instructional practices. The section concludes with a review of previous studies on teacher beliefs regarding ICC and intercultural teaching.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology employed to address the research questions. It begins by offering a rationale and justification for adopting a convergent mixed-method approach. Next it provides a detailed introduction to Chinese universities and EFL teaching in tertiary level in China to address the research background. Then it gives a description on methodological issues such as participants, instruments and data procedures, followed by how quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed respectively. Further, it explicates how reliability and validity are considered in survey questionnaire and in qualitative method. Also, the chapter stresses ethical considerations in conducting the research.

Chapter 4, 5 and 6 collectively present the findings and analysis derived from the collected data, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative data. These chapters are developed with respect to key themes, namely, perceptions of ICC, perceptions of intercultural teaching, and practices of intercultural teaching.

Chapter 4 specifically focuses on the results and discussions pertaining to teachers' perceptions of ICC. It incorporates a detailed examination of the trends, commonalities, and variations observed in teachers' beliefs regarding ICC, drawing upon the analysis of the quantitative data. Additionally, the chapter delves into the qualitative data, utilizing thematic analysis to explore teachers' self-reported beliefs and perspectives on ICC.

Chapter 5 provides the results and discussions related to teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching. Building upon literature reviewed in Chapter 2, the chapter delves into the examination of how Chinese university teachers perceive intercultural teaching. It specifically explores their perceptions of the objectives of FLT, their understanding of intercultural teaching objectives, and their overall attitudes and opinions toward intercultural teaching.

Chapter 6 presents the results and discussions regarding teachers' intercultural teaching practice. This chapter delves into various aspects of teachers' actual implementation of intercultural teaching, including the allocation of time dedicated to it, the topics typically addressed, and the materials and methods employed in the classroom. Additionally, the chapter addresses the factors that influence teachers' beliefs and practices regarding intercultural teaching. Furthermore, it investigates how teachers' beliefs impact their instructional practices.

Chapter 7 serves as the conclusion of the research, summarizing the main findings and highlighting their significance in relation to teachers' perceptions and practices regarding ICC and intercultural teaching. Furthermore, this chapter presents educational and practical implications derived from the research findings. Moreover, the chapter engages in reflection by acknowledging the limitations of the current study. It identifies potential areas for improvement, suggesting directions for future research endeavors in the field of ICC and intercultural teaching.

Chapter 2 Literature review

This chapter presents a comprehensive overview by reviewing relevant literature on three key concepts closely related to the study: ICC, intercultural teaching, and teacher beliefs. The chapter is divided into three sections, each addressing specific aspects of the literature.

Section One begins by exploring the definitions of ICC found in the literature. Of particular significance is the analysis of Byram's (1997, 2021) model of ICC, given its influential role in the field of FLT. Byram's model is thoroughly examined and discussed in detail, highlighting its impact and significance in understanding ICC.

Section Two focuses on the understanding of intercultural teaching. This section delves into the conceptualization of intercultural teaching, its objectives, principles, paradigms, and content. A review of studies on intercultural teaching from around the world is provided, with special emphasis given to intercultural teaching in the Chinese context.

Section Three centers on teacher beliefs, which is subdivided into several sub-sections. Firstly, the concept of teacher beliefs is defined and explained. Subsequently, the distinction between teacher beliefs and teacher knowledge is explored, followed by a review of studies on the relationship between teacher beliefs and their practices in literature. Moreover, a critical review of prior research on teacher beliefs regarding

ICC and intercultural teaching is provided, thus contributing to a comprehensive understanding of this domain.

Overall, this chapter contributes to the theoretical framework of the study by presenting a thorough review of relevant literature on ICC, intercultural teaching, and teacher beliefs. The comprehensive analysis and synthesis of existing research in these areas lay the foundation for the subsequent chapters, where the empirical findings of the current study will be presented and discussed in relation to the existing literature.

2.1 Understanding ICC

2.1.1 Definitions of ICC

Over the past few decades, numerous scholars have made significant efforts to define and conceptualize the notion of ICC from diverse perspectives (Byram, 1997, 2021; Chen & Starosta, 1996, 2008; Deardoff, 2006; Fantini, 2000; Fantini, 2012; Sercu et al., 2005).

Byram (1997, 2021) defined ICC as "an individual's ability to communicate and interact across cultural boundaries" (p. 7). He presented a comprehensive framework of five "*saviors*" that form the basis of his influential model of ICC in FLT which would be reviewed in the next section.

Deardorff (2006) described ICC as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's

intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (pp. 241-242). She emphasized the importance of not only having cultural knowledge but also being able to apply it in real-life interactions. Deardorff's perspective highlights the dynamic nature of ICC and the need for individuals to possess a range of competencies to navigate intercultural encounters successfully.

Chen and Starosta (2008), sharing a similar perspective with Deardorff (2006), viewed ICC as "the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute communication behaviors appropriately, while recognizing each other's multiple identities in a specific environment" (p. 7). They emphasized the importance of understanding and adapting to diverse cultural perspectives, while also acknowledging the complex and multifaceted nature of individual and collective identities in intercultural interactions.

Sercu et al. (2005) proposed a multidimensional model of ICC to define the concept, which they referred to as Intercultural Competence (IC). Their model (Table 1) consisted of three main components: knowledge, skills/behavior, and attitudes/traits. Each component comprised several sub-components that contributed to the overall development of IC. This comprehensive model reflects the multifaceted nature of ICC and highlights the importance of integrating various dimensions in ICC development.

Table 1 Components of ICC (Sercu et al, 2005, p. 3)

Knowledge	Skills/behavior	Attitudes/traits
● Culture specific and culture general knowledge ● Knowledge of self and other ● Knowledge of interaction: individual and societal ● Insight regarding the ways in which culture affects language and communication *Savoirs*	● Ability to interpret and relate *Savoir-comprendre* ● Ability to discover and/or interact ● Ability to acquire new knowledge and to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction ● Metacognitive strategies to direct own learning Savoir-apprendre/ savoirs-faire	● Attitude to relativize self and value others ● Positive disposition towards learning intercultural competence *Savoir*-être ● General disposition characterized by a critical engagement with the foreign culture under consideration and one's own *Savoir-s'engager*

Despite considerable progress in formulating multiple definitions of ICC worldwide, the field has not yet reached a unified understanding and agreement on ICC. This lack of consensus suggests the complexity and multifaceted nature of ICC as a construct, requiring further investigation and refinement to establish a comprehensive and universally accepted conceptual framework.

Through further in-depth research on ICC, scholars continuously expanded their understanding and proposed modifications to its components to capture its complexity more comprehensively. Notably, scholars such as Fantini have made significant contributions to the development and refinement of the concept of ICC. To facilitate a clearer comprehension of the evolution of ICC and the distinctions among different versions, the present study incorporated a comprehensive summary of ICC components in Table 2.

Table 2 Fantini's development of ICC

Time	Components of ICC
Fantini (2000)	1. the ability to develop and maintain relationships; 2. the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with minimal loss or distortion; 3. 3. the ability to attain compliance and obtain cooperation with others
Fantini & Tirmizi (2006)	1. various characteristics; 2. three areas or domains (i.e., relationships, communication, and collaboration; 3. four dimensions (i.e., knowledge, attitude, skills, and awareness); 4. host language proficiency; 5. developmental levels
Fantini (2012)	1. characteristics: flexibility, humor, patience, openness, interest, curiosity, empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, and suspending judgments, among others; 2. three domains: 1). the ability to establish and maintain relationships; 2) the ability to communicate with minimal loss or distortion; and 3) the ability to collaborate in order to accomplish something of mutual interest or need; 3. four dimensions: knowledge, (positive) attitude/affect, skills, and awareness; 4. host language proficiency; 5. Degrees of attainment
Fantini (2020)	1. characteristics/attributes: open-minded, patience, motivation, interested, empathy, self-reliance, sense of humor, clear sense of self, flexibility/adaptability, relativity, tolerance for differences, perceptiveness, suspended judgement, tolerance for ambiguity + others; 2. abilities to establish relationships/communicate well/collaborate; 3. Dimension: knowledge, attitude/affect, skills, and awareness; 4. target language proficiency; 5. a longitudinal, developmental process

This summary serves to enhance the understanding of the various elements involved in effective intercultural communication. Furthermore, their research provides valuable insights into the intricate nature of ICC, shedding light on the multiple components involved in successful intercultural communication. Additionally, their efforts underscore the considerable challenge of reaching a shared and definitive definition of ICC.

Nonetheless, Deardorff (2016) synthesized key themes of ICC based on existing literature, providing a solid theoretical foundation for this research: 1) ICC can be assessed; 2) ICC is "a complex, broad, learning goal and must be broken down into more discrete, measurable, learning objectives representing specific knowledge, attitude or skill areas " (p. 121); 3) The acquisition of ICC is a continuous process and one cannot be defined as fully interculturally competent at any point of the process; 4) language fluency is a necessary but insufficient factor in achieving ICC; 5) ICC "should be intentionally addressed throughout the curriculum and through experiential learning" (p. 121); 6) teachers need to possess a thorough understanding of ICC in order to address it effectively within their courses and promote students' development of ICC.

Due to the intricate nature of ICC, a diverse range of terms has been employed in literature to conceptualize ICC. For instance, Byram (1997, 2021) favored ICC over intercultural competence (IC), while Sercu (2006) held an opposing view, preferring IC over ICC as she believed IC "always implies 'communicative competence', and therefore always also has a linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse component" (p. 57). Additionally, Crozet et al. (1999) utilize IC, Bennett (1993) employed intercultural sensitivity, Chamberlin-Quinlisk (2005) employed intercultural awareness, and Knutson (2006) used cross-cultural awareness, although some of these perspectives may be limited.

Interestingly, Fantini (2009) noted that terms such as ICC, cross-cultural communication, intercultural sensitivity, and cross-cultural adaptation were sometimes used interchangeably. All of these terminologies attempted to convey a central idea, namely, describing an individual's ability to effectively and smoothly communicate with individuals from diverse backgrounds by transcending their own culture. Among these terms, IC and ICC were the most commonly used, particularly in the field of FLT /second language teaching (Byram, 1997, 2021; Crozet et al., 1999; Fantini, 2009; Sercu, 2006; Sercu et al., 2005). In light of this, the present study does not specifically delve into the distinction between IC and ICC. ICC will be employed in the current study to examining the intercultural dimension in EFL teaching with Chinese university teachers.

2.1.2 Byram's ICC Model

As previously mentioned, the literature contained a plethora of descriptions and definitions of ICC, as summarized above. The intricate nature of the construct has resulted in varying conceptualizations. Notably, Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009) have provided a comprehensive overview of influential ICC models and theories, enriching the understanding of ICC and its constituent elements. Among these, Byram's 1997, 2021 ICC model, specifically tailored for foreign language education (Byram, 2009),

underscored the critical role of the foreign language in intercultural communication, rendering it highly influential in the field of FLT (Hoff, 2014; Sercu, 2004). The model acknowledged the significance of language in fostering ICC. Importantly, Byram (1997, 2021) formulated concise and explicit objectives (See Appendix F for details) for each of the five components of ICC, serving as a guiding framework to facilitate the development and assessment of ICC, particularly in the context of foreign language education. Given its practicality and alignment with the research design and contextual considerations of the present study, Byram's ICC model is adopted as the framework that will be thoroughly examined in this chapter.

Byram introduced his ICC model in 1997, drawing upon Hymes' concept of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) and Van Ek's framework of communicative ability (Van Ek, 1986). He subsequently refined and developed the model in 2021. While the 2021 version incorporates certain modifications, particularly in the explanation of the concept of '*savoir s'engager*" or "critical cultural awareness", the core of the 1997 model remains unchanged (Byram, 2021, p. xiv).

Byram's comprehensive model of ICC comprised two intertwined components: communicative competence and intercultural competence. Additionally, he provided a summary of the contexts where ICC could be acquired. Byram (1997, 2021) presented his model as follows:

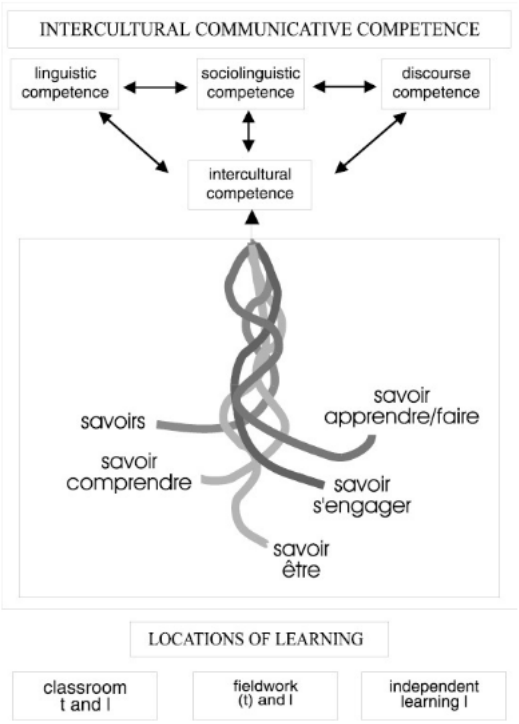


Figure 1 Byram's comprehensive model of ICC (1997, p.73; 2021, p. 162)

Figure 1

The first component of Byram's model, communicative competence, builds upon Van Ek's (1986) theory of communicative ability while modifying the concepts of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence. Byram provided the following redefinitions of these terms:

> Linguistic competence: the ability to apply knowledge of the rules of a standard version of the language to produce and interpret spoken and written language;
>
> Sociolinguistic competence: the ability to give to the language produced by an interlocutor —whether native speakers or not — meanings which are taken for granted by the interlocutor or which are negotiated and made explicit with the interlocutor;
>
> Discourse competence: the ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologue or dialogue texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor or are negotiated as intercultural texts for particular purposes (Byram, 1997, p. 48; 2021, p. 107).

Through his redefinitions, Byram (2021) highlighted the significance of "discovery", "interpretation", and "establishing a relationship" in

intercultural communication, particularly when engaging with interlocutors who may have limited intercultural competence (p. 107). Notably, Byram moved away from Van Ek's idealized native speaker model and introduced the concept of the "intercultural speaker" to describe individuals involved in intercultural communication and interaction (Byram, 2021, p. 82). The intercultural speaker encompassed not only communicative competence but also linguistic and cultural competence as essential components. Thus, Byram introduced the second part of his comprehensive ICC model, intercultural competence (IC).

IC consisted of five interconnected components, often referred to as "*saviors*" by Byram. These components were as follows: (1) attitude - *savoir être*; (2) knowledge - *savoirs*; (3) skills of interpreting and relating - *savoir comprendre*; (4) skills of discovery and interaction - *savoir apprendre/faire* and (5) critical cultural awareness- *savoir s'engager*. Byram illustrated the interrelationship of the five factors in his model as depicted below.

Table 3 Byram's dimensions of ICC (1997. P.34; 2021, p. 83-84)

	Skills interpret and relate (*savoir comprendre*)	
Knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (*savoirs*)	**Education** political education critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*)	**Attitudes** relativizing self-valuing other (*savoir tre*)
	Skills discover and/or interact (*savoir apprendre/faire*)	

Attitude: Byram (1997, 2021) defined attitude as the disposition characterized by curiosity, openness, and the willingness to suspend one's beliefs about other cultures and one's own. It represented the emotional dimension of ICC and held a crucial role in intercultural communication. Attitude could be transformed through an enhanced understanding of one's own culture and other cultures, enabling learners to embrace a more receptive and empathetic stance. Furthermore, a positive attitude fostered the acquisition of new knowledge and facilitates the development of the necessary skills required for effective intercultural communication.

Knowledge: Byram (1997, 2021) identified two categories of knowledge within ICC. The first pertained to "knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one's own country, and similar knowledge of the interlocutor's country" (Byram, 1997, p. 35). This encompassed familiarity with the cultural practices, values, and norms of different social groups. The second area of knowledge involved an understanding of the "processes of interaction at individual and societal levels" (Byram, 1997, p. 35). It encompassed comprehension of how individuals and societies interact, communicate, and negotiate meaning in intercultural contexts. Byram emphasized that knowledge was not fixed but could be enhanced and refined through active engagement and experiences in intercultural interactions.

Skills of interpreting and relating: Within Byram's model, this component referred to the ability to interpret and make sense of other people's documents and events by comparing them with one's own knowledge and experiences. Byram (1997, 2021) emphasized that this process involves finding associated relationships between different cultural contexts. It required learners to draw upon both their conscious understanding and pre-existing knowledge, applying them in intercultural communication situations. This skill enabled individuals to navigate and make meaning of diverse cultural perspectives and connected them to their own cultural background.

Skills of discovery and interaction: this component referred to the capacity to actively explore and acquire new knowledge about a culture and its practices, as well as the ability to effectively utilize one's knowledge, attitudes, and skills in real-time intercultural communication and interaction (Byram, 1997, p. 52). In essence, students were expected to engage in continuous learning of cultural knowledge, gain firsthand experiences, and applyed their existing competencies to authentic intercultural communication contexts. This skill set involves a dynamic process of discovery, adaptation, and effective application of cultural understanding, enabling individuals to navigate and engage in meaningful intercultural exchanges.

Critical cultural awareness/political education: This crucial component of the ICC model encompassed "an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit, systematic process of reasoning, values present in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram, 2021, p. 115). It entailed the ability to critically analyze and comprehend the behaviors and outcomes from the cultural perspectives of both oneself and others. Byram (1997, 2021) highlighted the significance of this component as the ultimate outcome resulting from the interplay of the other four components. Furthermore, it underscored the role of FLT in the development of intercultural competence, as it provided opportunities for learners to engage in critical analysis and reflection on cultural values and practices.

As depicted in the model, the five *savoirs* played a crucial role in the cultivation of ICC and demonstrate a close relationship with communicative competence. These *savoirs* were derived from three overarching categories: knowledge, attitude, and skills. Knowledge and attitude were regarded as fundamental and indispensable in fostering ICC, serving as essential prerequisites for effective intercultural communication (Byram, 1997, 2021). Furthermore, Byram (1997, 2021) emphasized that both attitude and knowledge were dynamic constructs that could be further developed and refined through the utilization of the two skills discussed earlier. The development of these skills enabled learners to actively apply their knowledge in real-life intercultural communication contexts.

Of particular significance in Byram's model was the inclusion of critical cultural awareness, which played a pivotal role in the overall development of intercultural competence. By cultivating the ability to critically evaluate the values inherent in one's own and other cultures, individuals gained a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics at play. Byram (1997, 2021) assertd that critical cultural awareness acted as a cornerstone for studying different languages and cultures, as well as navigating intercultural encounters in diverse linguistic and cultural environments. It functioned as a catalyst for the enhancement of skills and the cultivation of a positive attitude towards intercultural communication.

By incorporating these dimensions, Byram's ICC model encompassed the affective domain (attitude), the cognitive domain (knowledge), and the skills domain, providing a comprehensive framework for comprehending and fostering ICC. His model recognized the interplay between these domains as shown in Figure 1 and emphasized their reciprocal influence on the development of individuals' ability to effectively engage in intercultural interactions. Corbett (2003) asserted that these *savoirs* were "the most fully worked-out specification of intercultural competence, which involves the kinds of knowledge and skills needed to mediate between cultures" (p. 31).

Byram's ICC model, while comprehensive, has faced criticism for certain limitations. Firstly, Byram's ICC model has been generated

theoretically with a range of teaching objectives that can aid in planning teaching and assessment. However, one criticism of the model was its lack of "links of dependency or interdependency among the competences" (Byram, 2009, p. 325). Byram (2009) himself acknowledged this limitation, recognizing that the model lacked detailed specificity or a dialectic ordering that explained the sequence in which competences should be taught. As a result, significant practical aspects remained open-ended.

Another critique of Byram's model was the lack of clarity on how the components of ICC interact and complement each other, particularly in relation to the linguistic-oriented elements of the model (Liu, 2019). This lack of clarity has led to further criticism. It is important to note that Byram himself acknowledged these limitations (Byram, 2009), as his model did not aim to provide explicit guidance on organizing teaching activities or developing ICC alongside linguistic-oriented competences for foreign language teachers.

Moreover, concerns have been raised regarding the applicability of Byram's model in non-Western educational contexts (Liu, 2019), including China. The model's development within Western educational frameworks may not fully align with the cultural and contextual specificities of Chinese education, thereby limiting its suitability and effectiveness in those settings.

Overall, these criticisms highlighted the need for further clarification and adaptation when implementing Byram's ICC model, both in terms of its practical procedures and its suitability in different educational contexts.

2.2 Understanding intercultural teaching

"An intercultural perspective in language teaching and learning has gained prominence over the past two decades and is referred to in different ways in English, such as Intercultural Language Teaching, Intercultural Language Learning, or Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning" (Liddicoat, 2011, p. 837). As the present study focuses specifically on teachers' perceptions and practices of intercultural teaching within the context of FLT, the term "intercultural teaching" will be used for brevity, instead of "intercultural language teaching".

This section primarily focuses on intercultural teaching and establishes the foundation for addressing the research questions concerning teachers' perceptions and practices of intercultural teaching. It consists of four parts. Firstly, it elaborates on the concept of the intercultural dimension in FLT. Secondly, it delves into a comprehensive understanding of intercultural teaching, encompassing its principles, objectives, paradigms, and content. Thirdly, it investigates research on intercultural teaching in the Western world, particularly in America, Europe, and Australia. Fourthly, it synthesizes research on intercultural teaching in

China, which serves as the context for the present study, encompassing both theoretical and practical aspects of research in this domain.

2.2.1 Conceptualization of intercultural teaching

In the 1970s, FLT underwent a significant transformation known as the "cultural turn", marked by the shift of the Communicative Approach (Byram et al., 2013, p. 251). This new approach to FLT recognized the need to move beyond solely linguistic competence and incorporate cultural aspects into language teaching. It was during the 1980s that the concept of intercultural teaching emerged as researchers acknowledged the limitations of the Communicative Approach in fully addressing the complexities of communication (Byram et al., 2013; Sercu et al., 2005).

The introduction of the concept of ICC further advanced the development of intercultural teaching within FLT (Byram et al., 2013). ICC expanded the understanding of language competence to encompass the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural encounters. It emphasized the importance of cultural knowledge, intercultural skills, and critical cultural awareness in addition to language proficiency (Byram et al., 2013).

As a result, the focus of FLT shifted from solely teaching communicative competence to also nurturing students' ICC (Sercu, 2006, p. 55). This shift highlighted the importance of developing students' ability

to engage in meaningful intercultural communication and navigate cultural differences. Byram (2009, p. 331) proposed the notion of the intercultural speaker as a guiding framework for achieving this objective.

The concept of the "intercultural speaker" was introduced by Byram and Zarate in 1994 to distinguish intercultural competence from the cultural competence of a native speaker (Byram, 2009, p. 326). Byram defined the "intercultural speaker" as someone who possesses some or all of the five *savoirs* of ICC to varying degrees (Byram, 2009, p. 327). This definition aligned with Byram's ICC model and reflected the overarching goals of FLT, serving as the desired outcome of intercultural teaching.

The concept of the "intercultural speaker" captured the idea of individuals who were equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to engage effectively in intercultural communication. It went beyond mere linguistic proficiency and emphasizes the importance of cultural understanding, adaptability, critical awareness, and interactional skills in navigating intercultural encounters. By using the term "intercultural speaker", Byram highlighted the development of ICC as a central goal of FLT and underscored the significance of intercultural teaching in achieving this objective.

Overall, the concept of intercultural teaching emerged as a response to the limitations of traditional language teaching approaches and the recognition of the need to equip language learners with the necessary skills

and knowledge to communicate effectively in diverse cultural contexts. Notably, it took an approach that went beyond the native speaker as the ideal norm and instead focused on developing learners as intercultural speakers (Kramsch, 1993, p. 27).

2.2.2 Principles of intercultural teaching

Liddicoat et al. (2003) proposed five general principles for the implementation of intercultural teaching in the language classroom, based on constructivist theory. These principles were intended for intercultural language learning and were considered "fundamental to teaching and learning languages" (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 46). The five principles, as defined and elaborated by Liddicoat et al. (2003, pp. 47-51), were as follows.

Active construction, as defined by Liddicoat et al. (2003), "involves the purposeful and active construction of knowledge within a sociocultural context of use" (p. 47). Within this principle, teachers were encouraged to move beyond presenting culture as a mere repository of information and instead facilitated students in actively noticing, exploring, and reflecting upon cultural differences. The emphasis was on engaging learners in meaningful interactions and experiences that promoted their active involvement in constructing intercultural knowledge. By creating opportunities for students to critically analyze and synthesize cultural

disparities, teachers fostered a deeper understanding and appreciation of intercultural dynamics (Liddicoat et al., 2003).

Making connections, as described by Liddicoat et al. (2003), involves "learning is based on previous knowledge and requires challenges to initial conceptions that learners bring. The challenges led to new insights through which learners made connections, to reorganize and extend their existing framework of knowledge" (p. 48). Accordingly, teachers were tasked with designing activities that foster students' continuous comparison and contrast between their native language and the target language, past experiences and new encounters, existing conceptions and emerging understandings. By encouraging such comparisons, teachers facilitated a deeper understanding and appreciation of the interconnections between different linguistic and cultural contexts, thereby enriching students' overall comprehension of intercultural phenomena (Liddicoat, 2008, p. 7).

Social interaction, as stated by Liddicoat et al. (2003), emphasizes that "learning is social and interactive" (p. 49). It emphasized that language learning occurred within the context of communication and culture understanding is acquired through communication and interaction (Liddicoat, 2004, p. 6). Consequently, teachers were encouraged to foster students' active participation in ongoing dialogues and exchanges from diverse perspectives. This principle enabled students to "draw upon

multiple ideas, beliefs, values, and behaviors" (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 49), thereby promoting a deeper appreciation and understanding of the complexities inherent in intercultural communication.

Reflection, as described by Liddicoat et al. (2003), "involves becoming aware of the processes underlying thinking, knowing, and learning through conscious awareness and reflection" (p. 50). In the context of intercultural teaching, teachers were encouraged to provide opportunities for students to engage with different cultures while still maintaining a connection with their own cultural background (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 50). This principle allowed students to critically reflect on their own cultural perspectives and beliefs, as well as those of others, fostering a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and intercultural communication.

Responsibility, as outlined by Liddicoat et al. (2003), highlighted that "learning depends on learners' attitudes and disposition towards learning" (p. 51). This principle emphasized that learners played an active role in their own learning process. Students were encouraged to take responsibility for successful communication by engaging in meaningful interactions within and across languages. By doing so, they not only enhanced their linguistic competence but also developed a deeper understanding of themselves and others in the process (Liddicoat, 2008, p. 8).

The aforementioned pedagogical principles "explicitly included the role of reflection and shared responsibility for communication and mutual understanding" (Kohler, 2020, p. 415). Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) have provided further elucidation of these principles. They asserted that intercultural contact is fundamentally interpretive in nature, as individuals engage in the ongoing interpretation of meaning, others, and themselves within the context of intercultural communication (Kohler, 2020). Moreover, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) argued that individuals developed an awareness of their own positions and perspectives through reflective practices and introspection, enabling them to engage in communication as a collaborative process of mutual interpretation (Kohler, 2020).

These principles established a comprehensive framework for teachers to implement intercultural teaching in the classroom, serving as a valuable guide for "curriculum design and classroom interaction" (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 5). They provided a foundation upon which language teachers could make informed choices and decisions regarding program planning, student learning, teaching strategies, resource allocation, assessment methods, and the ongoing monitoring, description, evaluation, and renewal of the curriculum (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 5). Furthermore, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) emphasized that these principles served as "a starting point for an intercultural pedagogy not an intercultural pedagogy itself" (p. 59). They highlighted the need for each principle to be translated into effective

teaching practices, requiring development and implementation (p. 59). The practical application of these principles could be conceptualized as a series of interrelated processes, including noticing, comparing, reflecting, and interacting, which were vital for language and culture learning (Liddicoat, 2008, pp. 8-9).

2.2.3 Objectives of intercultural teaching

In order to fully comprehend intercultural teaching, it was crucial to clarify its objectives, as the manner in which teachers defined these objectives had a profound impact on their teaching practices (Castro & Sercu, 2005, p. 19). Teachers who defined the objectives of FLT with an intercultural dimension were more inclined to incorporate intercultural teaching in their classrooms, in contrast to those who solely perceived the objectives from the perspective of communicative competence (Castro & Sercu, 2005).

Intercultural teaching, being a relatively recent approach, recognized the intrinsic connection between culture and language use, thereby shifting its focus away from language as the sole objective. Instead, it emphasized the incorporation of culture into the framework of language teaching (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 24). Liddicoat (2004) highlighted that intercultural teaching placed utmost importance on effective communication while concurrently developing students' intercultural

communicative skills and language proficiency (p. 17). Byram (1997, 2021) further contributed to the development of students' ICC within the context of FLT by outlining a comprehensive set of objectives for each facet of ICC, as presented in Appendix F.

Liddicoat et al (2003) viewed intercultural teaching as "an intra- and inter- personal process" (p. 46) that had a profound impact on individuals' worldviews and communicative practices. They proposed that the objectives of intercultural teaching could be categorized into two levels: a global level and an individual level. At the global level, they outlined the following five goals:

1. understanding and valuing all languages and cultures
2. understanding and valuing one's own language(s) and culture(s)
3. understanding and valuing one's target language(s) and culture(s)
4. understanding and valuing how to mediate among languages and cultures
5. developing intercultural sensitivity as an ongoing goal

(Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 46).

At the individual level, the primary objective of intercultural teaching was to cultivate intercultural learners "who knows and communicates in two or more languages" (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 46). An intercultural learner, in contrast to a monolingual user, was an individual who engaged in intercultural communication by comprehending and constructing meaning from diverse perspectives (p. 46).

Furthermore, Castro and Sercu (2005) have delineated nine distinct objectives of intercultural teaching, as presented in Table 4:

Table 4 Possible intercultural teaching objectives (Castro & Sercu, 2005, p. 26)

Knowledge dimension
• Provide information about the history, geography and political conditions of the foreign culture(s) (culture/Culture).
• Provide information about daily life and routines (culture).
• Provide information about shared values and beliefs (culture/Culture).
• Provide experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions (literature, music, theatre, film, etc.) (Culture).
Attitudinal dimension
• Develop attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures.
Skills dimension
• Promote reflection on cultural differences.
• Promote increased understanding of students' own culture (+ also knowledge of own culture/Culture).
• Promote the ability to empathise with people living in other cultures.
• Promote the ability to handle intercultural contact situations.

Castro and Sercu (2005) have categorized the objectives of intercultural teaching into three dimensions: knowledge dimension, attitudinal dimension, and skills dimension. This classification aligned with the concept of ICC and provided a clear and practical framework for implementing intercultural teaching in the classroom. In their study, Castro and Sercu (2005) asked participating teachers to rank the nine objectives mentioned above. The results indicated that the two objectives most strongly supported by teachers were "developing attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures" and "providing information about daily life and routines" (p. 27).

Overall, the goal of intercultural teaching was to enable learners to serve as mediators between people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, utilizing their intercultural skills and attitudes (Byram &

Wagner, 2018, p. 149). This pedagogy also aimed to help learners shift their perspective away from their own culture and engaged in critical reflection to understand how others perceived the world and how they themselves were perceived (Byram & Wagner, 2018, p. 149). These objectives were highly practical and could be effectively achieved through educational approaches (Byram & Wagner, 2018).

2.2.4 Paradigms of intercultural teaching

In the history of FLT, the teaching of culture has undergone various stages of development, which could be broadly categorized into four paradigms (Crozet et al., 1999). These paradigms represented different approaches to teaching culture, namely, the traditional approach, the "Culture studies" approach, the "Culture as practices" approach, and intercultural language teaching.

The traditional approach to culture teaching represented the most conventional paradigm within the field. It primarily emphasized the teaching of "high culture", with a particular emphasis on literature (Liddicoat et al., 2003). Within this paradigm, cultural competence in foreign language education was perceived as mastery of an established canon of literature, which was often measured in terms of the breadth of reading and knowledge about literary works (Crozet et al., 1999). This approach relied on the assumption that educated native speakers served as

the ideal models for foreign language learners, as they were presumed to possess complete control over the same canon of literature (Crozet et al., 1999). Consequently, the traditional approach "often has built into it an expectation that contacted with the target language was most likely to come through written texts and primarily through literature" (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 18), limiting its effectiveness in preparing learners for intercultural communication (Crozet et al., 1999).

The "Culture studies" approach emerged as a new paradigm in the 1970s, gradually replacing the traditional approach to culture teaching (Crozet et al., 1999). This approach conceptualized culture as an area of study, focusing on learning about different countries and their cultural characteristics (Crozet et al., 1999). In this paradigm, cultural competence was understood as a body of knowledge about the target language country, encompassing aspects such as its history, geography, and institutions (Crozet et al., 1999). The emphasis within the "Culture studies" approach lied on acquiring factual knowledge about a particular culture, akin to what a native speaker is presumed to possess. Cultural competence was equated with the accumulation of information about the target country, with the belief that learners should acquire an external understanding of the culture (Liddicoat et al., 2003). Consequently, culture teaching was often treated as a separate entity from language teaching, where learners were seen as

observers of the target culture rather than active participants in intercultural communication.

While the “Culture studies” approach represented a significant departure from the traditional approach by expanding the scope of culture teaching beyond literature and incorporate broader aspects of the target country, it was not without limitations. One significant drawback of this approach was its tendency to overly emphasize the factual aspects of culture, thereby oversimplifying and perpetuating stereotypes about different cultures (Crozet et al., 1999). By reducing culture to a collection of facts and information, this paradigm overlooked the dynamic and multifaceted nature of cultural identities (Crozet et al., 1999). As such, this approach might lead to “a possibility of stereotyping the target culture” (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 6), especially for learners who had limited interactions with the native speakers.

The third paradigm was the “Culture as practices” approach, which gained prominence in the 1980s. Within this paradigm, cultural competence was defined as understanding the behaviors and practices associated with a particular cultural group, as well as the cultural values attached to these actions and beliefs (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 19). However, this approach presented certain challenges and limitations. One notable concern was that the “Culture as practices:” approach often kept learners confined within their own cultural framework, observing and interpreting

the words and actions of individuals from other cultural backgrounds solely through their own cultural lens (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 6). This limitation restricted learners' ability to truly engage and interact with members of other cultures, as they remained bound by their own cultural assumptions and interpretations. Additionally, the "Culture as practices" paradigm tended to adopt a relatively static and homogeneous view of culture, potentially leading to the stereotyping of the target culture (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 6). By focusing primarily on observable practices and behaviors, this approach might overlook the diversity, complexity, and fluidity of cultures, reinforcing simplistic generalizations and perpetuating stereotypes.

The fourth paradigm, intercultural language teaching, represented a more recent and distinct approach to culture teaching compared to the previous three paradigms. It was characterized by a renewed understanding of intercultural encounters and a deeper recognition of the intricate relationship between language and culture (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 19). Unlike the earlier paradigms that treated culture as secondary to language, intercultural language teaching aimed for a comprehensive integration of language and culture (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 20).

Within the intercultural language teaching paradigm, the explicit objective was to foster the development of ICC through foreign language learning and, by extension, the understanding of how language and culture

intersect in both the learner's first language and the target language (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 21). This approach recognized that language and culture were inseparable, and that language learning should encompass the broader cultural context. By embracing this approach, educators could enhance learners' cultural understanding and equipped them with the skills needed for effective intercultural communication.

2.2.5 Content of intercultural teaching

In terms of the content or themes of intercultural teaching, the scope was exceptionally broad, encompassing a wide range of subjects. The subjects could vary from daily life and routines to music and art, education, and beyond (Risager, 2007, p. 9). Liddicoat (2004) provided a historical overview of the progression of cultural teaching, noting that it initially focused on literature and the arts, then expanded to include history, institutions, popular culture, festivals, and pastimes. It was important to note that researchers in the field did not aim to provide an exhaustive list of subjects to be taught. Rather, their focus was on offering general aspects and guidelines to inform teachers' practice in the classroom.

Crozet et al. (1999) proposed three fundamental aspects or modes of intercultural teaching. These modes were referred to as "the teaching of a linguaculture", "the comparison between the learner's first language/culture and target language/culture", and "intercultural

exploration" (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 21). Among these modes, "intercultural exploration" played a critical role in promoting ICC. Liddicoat (2004) further expanded on the activities involved in intercultural teaching, which included the acquisition of cultural knowledge, comparing cultures, exploring cultures, and finding a personal "third place" between cultures (p. 17).

To ensure the achievement of these goals and develop a comprehensive approach to intercultural teaching, Liddicoat (2004) proposed several principles (pp. 18-20): a) Culture should be explicitly taught as an integral part of language teaching. b) Culture should be integrated into other language skills rather than treated as a separate skill. c) Culture should be introduced from the beginning of language learning. d) The target norm should be the bilingual or intercultural speaker, rather than the native speaker. e) Opportunities should be provided for learners to reflect on their own language and culture. f) Emphasis should be placed on developing learners' abilities to continue learning about the culture they were studying, encouraging them to analyze their experiences and develop their awareness (Liddicoat, 2004, p. 22).

In addition to these principles, Liddicoat (2004) addressed the significance of content selection in intercultural teaching. He presented five principles to guide teachers in deciding on appropriate and useful content for achieving intercultural goals and evaluating whether the

materials they were using support an intercultural approach to teaching (pp. 21-22). These principles served as a framework for teachers to make informed decisions regarding content selection and ensured that the materials aligned with the objectives of intercultural teaching.

> The cultural content contributes directly to developing communication or awareness of the values, attitudes, etc. of the group being studied.
>
> The cultural content is closely linked to language. This is particularly important as the separation of language and culture not only weakens the teaching of culture in the language classroom, but also means that culture learning interrupts language learning rather than supporting it.
>
> Cultural content assists in developing the relevant learning strategies and skills of noticing, comparison and reflection. This means that the material can be used for tasks that promote these skills.
>
> Cultural content is treated as practices with which learners engage, not as facts to. be memorized.
>
> Cultural content allows learners to make connections between their home culture and the culture being studied (Liddicoat, 2004, p. 22).

The diverse range of subjects within intercultural teaching reflected the multifaceted nature of culture itself. While there was no definitive set of subjects to be covered in intercultural teaching, it was essential for educators to consider the relevance and significance of the chosen topics to the learners' needs and interests. By incorporating various aspects of culture, teachers could provide learners with a more comprehensive understanding of different cultural practices, values, and perspectives.

2.2.6 Intercultural teaching in the world

This subsection briefly reviews research on intercultural teaching in the Western world, particularly Europe, the US, and Australia. Intercultural-oriented language teaching has been developed and guided by

the collaborative efforts of linguists to conceptualize fundamental concepts, frameworks, and models (Kohler, 2020). As a result, research related to intercultural teaching, both in theory and practice, will be examined in this review.

In theory: Researchers in the Western region, such as America, Europe and Australia, have made significant contributions by offering valuable insights and guidance for the implementation of intercultural teaching in the classroom. Their endeavors could be broadly categorized into two streams: Firstly, there have been concerted efforts to elucidate the intricate relationship between language and culture (Kohler, 2020, p. 414). Secondly, scholars have proposed frameworks that aim to provide practical guidelines for teachers in terms of pedagogy, curriculum development, and assessment strategies (Kohler, 2020, p. 415).

Many scholars have undertaken investigations into the intricate relationship between language and culture, recognizing its foundational significance for intercultural-oriented language teaching (Kohler, 2020). Kohler (2020) synthesized the existing literature on this topic and highlights that scholars, such as Agar (1994), Byram et al. (1994), Crozet and Liddicoat (2000), Friedrich (1986), Kramsch (1993), Ortega (2011), and Risager (2006) emphasized the interplay between language and culture, yet encountered challenges in capturing the distinctiveness and complexity of each concept (as cited in Kohler, 2020). For instance, Crozet and

Liddicoat (2000) proposed a “language-in-culture” and “culture-in-language” continuum, highlighting the distinct yet interconnected nature of language and culture (as cited in Kohler, 2020). Similarly, Ortega (2011) argued that language teaching and learning should be viewed as an overarching dialogic process, where language (text) and culture (context) were integrated rather than considered separately (as cited in Kohler, 2020). Kohler (2020) concluded that these representative studies shared a common understanding that language and culture were interrelated semiotic systems that served as the foundation for intercultural approaches to language teaching and learning (Kohler, 2020, p. 414).

Based on a shared understanding of the language-culture relationship, researchers have made efforts to construct frameworks that facilitate the implementation of intercultural teaching in educational settings. In the European context, Byram’s (1997) framework has gained considerable influence and was widely referenced (Hoff, 2014; Sercu, 2004). This comprehensive model outlined the specific components of ICC and provided explicit teaching objectives for each component, making it accessible for teachers to guide their classroom practices.

In the American context, Deardorff (2004, 2006) proposed an ICC model, particularly influenced by the growing internationalization trends in higher education. Her process model emphasized the progressive nature

of ICC development, highlighting the importance of incremental growth and continuous learning.

Moreover, within the realm of intercultural communication, Paige et al. (2003) developed a framework that incorporates two types of knowledge: culture-specific knowledge and culture-general knowledge. This framework sought to underscore the fundamental role of culture and encourages critical reflection on the intercultural communication process and the nature of culture itself. It acknowledged the inherent limitations individuals may encounter when engaging with unfamiliar cultures through another language and emphasizes the need for cultural understanding and adaptability (as cited in Kohler, 2020).

In the context of FLT in Australia, scholars have sought to provide more direct guidance for intercultural teaching practices. Crozet and Liddicoat (2000) proposed an intercultural approach to language teaching, which encompassed four distinct phases: awareness raising, experimentation, production, and feedback. Additionally, Liddicoat et al. (2003) developed five pedagogical principles (See Section 2.2.2 in detial) to inform intercultural teaching practices. These principles have been further expanded upon by Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) to provide a comprehensive framework for integrating intercultural perspectives into FLT.

Overall, these frameworks have contributed to the advancement of intercultural teaching by offering conceptual frameworks, pedagogical guidelines, and reflective tools that support the development of ICC in educational contexts. These endeavors have successfully elucidated complex concepts and processes related to teaching and learning from an intercultural perspective, and their impact has been felt globally in the field of FLT regarding intercultural teaching.

However, it is important to note that these frameworks have primarily originated from Anglo-European contexts, thereby establishing an Anglo-European conceptualization of intercultural teaching and learning. While these frameworks have been influential worldwide, it was evident that other regions, such as China, have predominantly relied on these theoretical developments without significantly contributing their own unique perspectives. Consequently, there remained a need for scholars and practitioners in these contexts to further explore and consider their own specific cultural and educational contexts when developing models of ICC. This would enable the field to expand and encompass diverse perspectives, promoting a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of intercultural teaching.

In practice: The development of ICC had a significant scholarly foundation in the Western world, particularly in Europe, the United States, and Australia. Scholars in these regions have extensively studied and

documented ICC, considering the diverse ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural contexts they encompassed (Byram & Zarate, 1994; Garrido & Alvarez, 2006; Lo Bianco et al., 1999; Sercu, 2006). The recognition of the importance of ICC was also supported by the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

In Europe, the Council of Europe (CoE) played a pioneering role in integrating the intercultural dimension into language teaching and learning starting in the 1990s, led by influential scholars such as Byram from the UK and Zarate from France (Byram & Zarate, 1994). A significant milestone occurred in 2001 with the introduction of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), which explicitly promotes the acquisition of ICC and was further refined in CEFR 2020. Byram (2002), in collaboration with the CoE, provided a framework for the development and implementation of the intercultural dimension in language teaching and learning.

In the US, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proposed the "five Cs" as a national standard for FLT: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities (ACTFL, 2012). These standards offered a beneficial framework for conceptualizing the integration of ICC in the language classroom (Moeller & Osborn, 2014, p. 677).

Regarding the implementation of intercultural teaching in the classroom, Kohler (2020) identified two categories of studies: teachers' programming and planning practices, and assessment. Recent works in these areas included Diaz (2013), Kohler (2015), Porto et al. (2018), and Risager (2018) in programming and planning, and Deardorff (2016), Houghton (2013), Purpura (2016), Scarino (2009, 2013), Sercu (2010), and Suomela-Salma (2010) in assessment (as cited in Kohler, 2020). Based on a review of the literature, Kohler (2020) concluded that recent work indicated evolving orientations toward intercultural teaching in practice, with a growing emphasis on critical and political aspects as well as semiotic and symbolic dimensions (p. 421).

2.2.7 Intercultural teaching in China

In China, intercultural education was promoted by the Ministry of Education (MoE). Since 2000, ICC has been included as one of the objectives of FLT at all educational levels, leading to a growing body of research on ICC (Hu, 2013). Consequently, research on ICC in China primarily focused on its development within the context of foreign language education. Despite its relatively recent emergence, this field of research has achieved notable achievements.

Chinese scholars' contributions to ICC could be examined from two perspectives: theoretical exploration and empirical investigations of

intercultural teaching in different foreign language courses (Peng et al., 2020).

In theory: In terms of theoretical explorations of ICC, scholars in China have made contributions in three main categories, as identified by Peng et al. (2020) and Zhang and Yao (2020). The first category involved defining key concepts of ICC. The second category focused on exploring the objectives, principles, and approaches for developing ICC in FLT. The third category entailed the construction of theoretical and practical models for ICC development in FLT.

As for defining the key concept of ICC, scholars such as Hu (2013), Wen (2004), and Zhang (2007) have had significant influence in the field (Peng et al., 2020). According to Wen (2004), ICC encompassed both communicative competence and intercultural competence. Communicative competence included linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, and strategic competence, while intercultural competence consisted of sensitivity, tolerance, and flexibility. Wen's definition of ICC shared similarities with Byram's 1997 model, although she did not explicitly reference Byram's model (Zhong & Fan, 2013).

Regarding the objectives, principles, and approaches of intercultural teaching, scholars such as Ge and Wang (2016), Hu (2013), Sun (2016), and Zhang (2012) have been reviewed by Peng et al. (2020). In the west world, Liddicoat et al. (2003) proposed five principles for intercultural

teaching (See Section 2.2.2 in detail). In China, Sun (2016) put forth intercultural teaching principles known as CREED, which stands for critiquing, reflecting, exploring, empathizing, and doing. These principles emphasized students' abilities to relate, compare, analyze, and reflect, aligning with the views of Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) and Wang (2018) (Peng et al., 2020).

In the third category, Chinese academics have made significant contributions to the theoretical and pedagogical construction of ICC models. These scholars included, but are not limited to, Yihong Gao (1998), Yongchen Gao (2014), Gu (2017), Kong and Luan (2012), Peng et al. (2020), Song (2008), Wang and Kulich (2015), Wu et al. (2013), Xu and Sun (2013), Zhang and Yang (2012), Zhao (2018), Zhong and Fan (2013), and Zhang and Yao (2020).

Most of the models developed by Chinese scholars focused on different components of ICC. For example, Kong and Luan (2012) constructed a structure model and a practice model. The structure model addressed the definition of ICC, while the practice model presented fundamental principles and strategies for intercultural teaching. Kong and Luan's structure model proposed that ICC consisted of three levels: awareness, skills, and practical ability, each comprising several sub-elements. Xu and Sun (2013) proposed a progressive-interactive model of ICC, which included five components: motivation, knowledge, skills,

contexts, and outcomes. Gu (2017) also constructed a theoretical model and a practical model. Her theoretical model focused on what should be taught regarding ICC and identified attitude, knowledge, and skills as its key components. Her practical model outlined how to teach ICC through three interconnected circles: objectives, procedures, and activities of intercultural teaching.

In a more recent development, Zhang and Yao (2020) proposed an "Integrated Model for Chinese Students' Intercultural Competence Development (IMCSICD)", which followed a "4-3-2-1" structure. This model emphasized four perspectives, three dimensions, two contexts, and one platform in the development of ICC. Peng et al. (2020) proposed a theoretical model and a practical model based on the work of Wu et al. (2013), which itself drew from the models proposed by Byram (1997) and Fantini (2007). Their theoretical model consisted of three layers: the platform (foreign language curriculum), forms (experiential learning, analytical learning, and interactive learning), and competence (intercultural competence). Building upon this theoretical model and the five principles of intercultural teaching proposed by Liddicoat et al. (2003), Peng et al. (2020) constructed a practical model that encompassed six aspects: teaching objectives, teaching principles, teaching strategies, teaching procedures, teaching activities, and teaching assessment.

Chinese scholars have demonstrated a scholarly commitment to both the conceptual understanding and practical development of ICC within the classroom, emphasizing the importance of operability and accessibility. This scholarly endeavor contributed to the understanding and implementation of ICC in foreign language education, enriching the literature and providing valuable guidance for intercultural teaching practices. Additionally, it could be seen as a response to the call for ICC development by the Chinese MoE and as a direct concern of foreign language teachers.

However, it is important to note that most of these Chinese models have been constructed and adapted from a Western perspective. As a result, they were primarily rooted within the Anglo-European theoretical framework. This suggested that the current models may have limitations in fully capturing the unique cultural and linguistic contexts of China.

Noteworthy was the scholarly endeavor to construct ICC models that take into account Chinese traditional culture. Several scholars, including Gao (1998), Gao (2014), and Zhao (2018), have made significant contributions in this regard.

Gao (1998) addressed the issue of "effective outcomes" in ICC by proposing a model that incorporates traditional Chinese philosophical concepts. The model consisted of two levels: "*dao*"（*道*） and "*qi*"（*器*）. In Chinese, "*dao*" originally referred to a path or road, but it also carried

the meaning of providing guidance. In the context of ICC, "*dao*" represented the fundamental orientation of communicative subjects. On the other hand, "*qi*" referred to utensils or tools and symbolized the mastery of knowledge, skills, and other abilities necessary for effective intercultural communication (Gao, 1998).

Gao (2014) drew on Anglophone research by scholars such as Byram (1997) and Deardorff (2006) as well as the concept of integrating theory and practice advocated by the Chinese philosopher Yangming Wang during the Ming Dynasty. Gao proposed a model that encompasses two mutually interactive dimensions: "knowing" and "doing". The "knowing" dimension encompassed competences related to knowledge, awareness, and critical thinking, while the "doing" dimension encompassed competences related to attitude, skills, and strategies. Gao's model emphasized the interaction and integration of these two dimensions, considering the "knowing" system as a metaphysical level and the "doing" system as a practical level (Gao, 2014, p. 86).

Zhao (2018) drew upon the humanistic spirit concepts of Confucianism, such as benevolence, goodness, and righteousness, to construct an ICC model specifically tailored to the Chinese context. Zhao's model was intended for the directors of Confucius Institutes and incorporated these Confucian values to guide ICC development.

These scholarly efforts reflected a recognition of the importance of Chinese traditional culture in shaping ICC models and highlighted the desire to incorporate local cultural perspectives into intercultural education.

In practice: Based on the aforementioned theoretical explorations, numerous Chinese researchers have conducted empirical studies on the development of ICC in various foreign language courses. These studies could be further classified into two categories: developing ICC through traditional classroom teaching and developing ICC with the aid of information technology, specifically through blended teaching approaches.

Compared to theoretical exploration, empirical studies on ICC development in the Chinese context were relatively fewer in number and have been published more recently, particularly those of high quality and wide influence. The majority of these studies emerged around 2016 and adopted action research methodologies to investigate the implementation of classroom-based intercultural teaching. Some conducted research in college English course for non-English majors (Chang & Zhao, 2012; Yang & Li, 2017; Zhang & Zhao, 2018), others implemented intercultural teaching in *Integrated English* course for English majors (Fu & Zhang, 2017; Huang, 2015), still others conducted research in some other foreign language courses (Wang & Kulich, 2015; Yan, 2018; Zheng & Li, 2016).

Chang and Zhao (2012) conducted action research in an EGP course to enhance students' intercultural awareness using the "Cultural Knowings"

approach. Their study demonstrated that this approach significantly increased students' intercultural awareness, contributing to a deeper understanding of intercultural teaching. Their attempt to integrate "Cultural Knowings" into the EGP course enriched the modes of college English teaching.

In a similar vein, Yang and Li (2017) conducted two rounds of action research to integrate intercultural teaching into college English classes with the aim of promoting students' ICC and linguistic skills. Based on their research, they proposed a "production-oriented language-IC integration teaching model" consisting of four components: goal setting, task design, implementation, and evaluation/reflection. Their findings indicated that the model effectively integrated ICC into college English instruction and highlighted innovations in curriculum objectives, task design, and assessment.

Drawing on both domestic and international research, Zhang and Zhao (2018) introduced an ethnographic approach to foster ICC among journalism majors. They provided an exemplar of how to implement ethnographic intercultural teaching and found it to be effective in improving students' ICC and linguistic skills. Their research contributed to the understanding and application of ethnographic approaches in promoting ICC development in specific disciplines.

In the context of ICC development among English majors, Fu and Zhang (2017) conducted a study where they integrated intercultural training methods into the *Integrated English* course. Their research focused on the design and implementation of intercultural teaching within the course. They proposed practical and accessible methods and provided suggestions for future intercultural teaching endeavors. By incorporating intercultural training into the *Integrated English* course, Fu and Zhang aimed to enhance students' ICC and foster a deeper understanding of intercultural communication. Similarly, Huang (2015) explored the application of process-oriented culture teaching in the *Integrated English* course. Their study employed the use of electronic portfolios as a tool to facilitate teacher guidance and monitoring throughout the process. The findings revealed that process-oriented teaching, as opposed to traditional knowledge-based culture teaching, played a more significant role in improving students' ICC, particularly at the emotional and behavioral levels.

Other scholars have also conducted research on ICC development in various foreign language courses. Wang and Kulich (2015) employed an ethnographic approach to design a reflective interview project within the *Intercultural Communication* course for senior English majors. Yan (2018) investigated the practice of intercultural education by integrating the cultivation of intercultural competence into the *English newspaper* course,

using the SIIIN teaching model (where S stands for student-centered, I for interaction-oriented, I for integrated-skills focused, I for intercultural-competence based and N refers to newmedia-teaching approach auxiliarized (Yan, 2018)). Zheng and Li (2016) implemented ICC development in a college English course titled *Language, Culture, and Communication* using a Reflective Intercultural Teaching Model. These studies showcased the diversity of approaches taken to foster ICC development in foreign language courses. By utilizing methods such as reflective interviews, the SIIIN teaching model, and reflective activities, researchers aimed to cultivate students' ICC and facilitate their engagement in intercultural communication. The findings contributed to the broader understanding of effective strategies for ICC development across different language learning contexts.

Apart from the aforementioned classroom-based action research, some scholars have explored the implementation of intercultural teaching beyond the traditional classroom setting. Specifically, they have employed online courses, such as MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses), to cultivate ICC through blended teaching approaches. Two notable studies by Chi et al. (2016) and Suo and Chi (2018) exemplified this approach by integrating the MOOC *Intercultural Communication* on FutureLearn into their respective courses.

Chi et al. (2016) designed a blended approach how the MOOC could be effectively utilized in conjunction with face-to-face instruction to enhance students' ICC. Similarly, Suo and Chi (2018) implemented a MOOC-based intercultural teaching approach in *College English* course for non-English major sophomores. The study highlighted the significance of utilizing a blended teaching modality, combining the benefits of online learning through the MOOC with in-class activities and discussions. Both studies underscored the value of incorporating online courses, specifically MOOCs, into traditional classroom settings to foster ICC development.

The review of existing research on intercultural teaching in China reveals that the field was still in its early stages, indicating the need for further exploration and development. The limited number of studies reflected the relatively recent emphasis on intercultural teaching in the Chinese educational context, suggesting that there is ample room for future investigation and advancement.

An interesting observation from the review was the predominant focus on proposing and constructing accessible teaching methods within specific courses. While this approach provided valuable insights into pedagogical strategies, it also highlighted a narrow perspective that may hinder the comprehensive understanding and implementation of intercultural teaching. To foster a more comprehensive research landscape, it was imperative to expand the scope of inquiry beyond individual courses

and delved into broader aspects of intercultural teaching, such as curriculum design, teacher training, and assessment practices.

2.3 Understating teacher beliefs

This section is devoted to examining another crucial concept: teacher beliefs. The literature review in this part covers the following areas: 1) defining teacher beliefs, 2) differentiating teacher beliefs from teacher personal practical knowledge, 3) understanding the relationship between teacher beliefs and their practice, and 4) examining previous studies on teacher beliefs regarding ICC and intercultural teaching to identify gaps in the existing research that the current study can address.

2.3.1 Definition of teacher beliefs

In the field of teaching and teacher education, the examination of teacher beliefs has been a subject of study for over three decades (Borg, 2009, p. 163). The literature on teacher beliefs research has employed various terms to conceptualize this construct. For example, Clark and Peterson (1986) used the term “preconceptions”, Goodman (1988) referred to it as “teacher perspective”, Sharp and Green (1975) explored the notion of “teaching ideology”, and Thompson (1984) introduced the concept of “conception” (as cited in Zheng, 2015). Pajares (1992) acknowledged the complex nature of belief and noted that terms such as attitudes, values,

opinions, and perceptions have been used interchangeably in the literature (p. 309). Consequently, in this present study, an inclusive perspective was adopted, whereby belief, perception, and cognition were used interchangeably to encompass teachers' knowledge, thoughts, and conceptions pertaining to ICC and intercultural teaching.

A significant body of research has made efforts to define the concept, with prominent contributions from scholars such as Pajares (1992) and Borg (2003, 2006, 2009, 2015).

Pajares (1992) defined belief as "an individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition" (p. 316), emphasizing the cognitive aspect of belief formation. He viewed belief as a multifaceted psychological construct comprising interconnected substructures, including epistemological beliefs and educational beliefs. Pajares asserted that individuals' beliefs exert a significant impact on their behavior, acting as filters that shape their actions and decisions (p. 326). Furthermore, he highlighted the intricate interplay between knowledge and beliefs, underscoring the intertwined nature of these cognitive processes (p. 325). Pajares's work provided valuable insights into the study of teacher beliefs and served as a theoretical framework for subsequent research endeavors (Borg, 2015, p. 28), including the examination of Chinese university teachers' perceptions and implementation of intercultural teaching within the EFL classroom setting.

Borg (2003) proposed a general framework for studying language teacher cognition, which was further expanded upon in his subsequent works (Borg, 2006, 2015). The framework consisted of four primary dimensions: schooling, professional coursework, classroom practice, and contextual factors. According to the framework, language teachers' schooling and ongoing professional education contributed to the development of their cognitive understanding of language teaching and learning. Simultaneously, teachers' cognition and their classroom practices interact in a mutually influential manner. This suggested that contextual factors act as mediators, determining the degree of alignment between teachers' instructional approaches and their cognitive beliefs. However, the relationship between cognition and practice was intricate and multifaceted (Borg, 2006, 2015; Zheng, 2015). Therefore, a detailed review of this relationship would be presented in section 2.3.3. Borg's framework provided a comprehensive perspective for investigating language teacher cognition and shed light on the complex interplay between teacher beliefs, professional development, instructional practices, and the contextual factors shaping their teaching experiences.

2.3.2 Teacher beliefs and teacher knowledge

The third research question in this study aimed to examine how Chinese EFL teachers' personal practical knowledge (PPK) influences

their beliefs about ICC and intercultural teaching. To provide a comprehensive understanding of this topic, this subsection will briefly elucidate the distinction between teacher beliefs and teacher knowledge, with a particular focus on defining teachers' PPK.

From a philosophical perspective, Fenstermacher (1994) made a clear differentiation between knowledge and belief. According to him, knowledge was characterized by its connection to factual propositions, while belief was more closely associated with personal values and subjective claims. In this regard, knowledge was considered to be externally verifiable, as it relied on evidence and widely accepted facts. On the other hand, belief was subjective and based on personal acceptance rather than objective verification. Buehl and Beck (2015) further emphasized that knowledge was generally related to widely accepted facts, whereas belief represented subjective claimed that individuals held to be true. This epistemological distinction underscored the difference between knowledge, which could be validated through external sources, and belief, which was rooted in personal perspectives and values.

More specifically, Golombek (2009) provided an insightful definition of PPK as follows:

> It is knowledge that reflects the individual's prior knowledge and acknowledges the contextual nature of that teacher's knowledge. It is a kind of knowledge carved out of, and shaped by, situations; knowledge that is constructed and reconstructed as we live out our stories and retell and relive them through processes of reflection (p. 155).

Golombek (2009) further emphasized an important feature of PPK, which was its capacity to expand our understanding of teachers by shaping their professional identity. She explained that teachers' images, which originated from their past experiences in personal and educational realms, became manifested in their classroom practices. These images could be reconstructed and adapted to suit the demands of particular situations, allowing teachers to reorganize their professional and personal experiences and envision future aspirations and possibilities (Golombek, 2009, p. 156).

Golombek's perspective on PPK underscored its experiential, situational, and dynamic nature, highlighting its role in shaping teachers' beliefs and professional identities in relation to their classroom practices.

2.3.3 Teacher beliefs and their practice

It was suggested in the literature that teacher beliefs had a significant impact on teachers' practices (Castro et al., 2004; Farrell & Kun, 2007; Feryok, 2010; Pajares, 1992).

The relationship between teacher beliefs and their practices was often described as a "filtering effect", as widely discussed in the literature (Clark & Peterson, 1986, p. 283; Munby, 1982; Pajares, 1992; Pintrich, 1990, as cited in Zheng, 2015). This concept suggested that teacher beliefs served as a cognitive filter that influences their thoughts, judgments, and decision-making processes. It implied that teacher beliefs might either align or

diverge from their actual instructional behaviors in the classroom. In other words, teachers might engage in instructional practices that contradict their stated beliefs or fail to reflect their espoused values. However, it was important to note that this did not diminish the significance of the belief system itself. Instead, it highlighted the need to explore the potential connection between beliefs and practices (Buehl & Beck, 2015).

Drawing upon a comprehensive review of 257 English peer-reviewed articles, Buehl and Beck (2015) offered insights into the possible relationships between teacher beliefs and practices. They identified four potential relationships that exist between these two constructs. First, beliefs could influence practices, indicating that teachers' beliefs serve as precursors to their behaviors in the classroom (Buehl & Beck, 2015, p. 68). This implied that teachers tended to enact practices that are consistent with their held beliefs. Second, practices could influence beliefs, suggesting that engaging in specific teaching practices can lead to changes or shaping of teachers' beliefs. Teachers' experiences and reflections on their instructional practices could potentially modify their existing beliefs (Buehl & Beck, 2015). Third, some studies revealed a disconnection, misalignment, or inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and their enacted practices in the classroom (Buehl & Beck, 2015, p. 70). This indicated that teachers might hold certain beliefs but did not consistently reflect those beliefs in their teaching behaviors. Fourth, the relationship between beliefs

and practices was described as reciprocal but complex. This implied that beliefs and practices had mutual influences on each other. The strength and nature of this relationship might vary among individuals, contexts, and the specific beliefs and practices being examined (Buehl & Beck, 2015, p. 70).

Buehl and Beck's (2015) comprehensive analysis provided valuable insights into the multifaceted associations between teacher beliefs and practices. Their findings contributed to our understanding of how beliefs shape instructional practices and underscore the importance of further research to delve into the intricacies of this dynamic relationship.

2.3.4 Previous studies on teacher beliefs regarding ICC and intercultural teaching

This subsection centers on notable studies examining teacher beliefs concerning ICC and intercultural teaching, encompassing research conducted in the Western region such as America, the UK and Australia, as well as the limited number of studies conducted in China.

In the Western context, one of the earliest studies investigating teachers' perceptions of integrating culture into English language classes was conducted by Byram and Risager (1999). This study utilized questionnaires and interviews to explore teachers' perspectives, revealing that a small number of teachers believed cultural teaching to be more important than fostering students' linguistic competence. However, the

participating teachers in the study demonstrated an understanding of the importance of cultural teaching and expressed their willingness to incorporate both cultural aspects and linguistic points into their instruction.

The most widely cited study investigating teachers' beliefs and practices regarding ICC was conducted by Sercu et al in 2005. They utilized a questionnaire survey to collect data from secondary school EFL teachers in seven countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Mexico, Poland, Spain, and Sweden. This large-scale study identified two distinct teacher profiles: the "favorably disposed foreign language teacher" (Sercu et al. 2005, p. 10) and the "unfavorably disposed foreign language teacher" (Sercu et al. 2005, p. 11). The former represented teachers who held a positive attitude towards integrating culture into the language classroom and believed that teaching culture was equally important as teaching the foreign language. Conversely, the latter referred to teachers who hdld an opposing view, believing that intercultural skills could not be acquired at school, especially in the foreign language classroom. Furthermore, the study found that teacher beliefs could influence their integration of culture in their instructional practices, although the exact nature of the relationship between beliefs and practices was not clearly established.

A more recent study investigating teachers' beliefs and practices regarding ICC was conducted by Young and Sachdev in 2011. This study employed a multimethodological approach, utilizing diaries, focus groups,

and questionnaires to collect data. The findings of the study indicated that the participating teachers emphasized the importance of integrating ICC into their classrooms. Additionally, the participants believed that "good" learners and teachers tended to exhibit high ICC (Young & Sachdev, 2011, p. 81). The study also reported that the lack of support in testing and textbooks contributed to the limited emphasis on ICC in syllabi.

In the context of mainland China, there was a scarcity of research exploring teachers' perceptions and practices regarding ICC and intercultural teaching. To date, only a limited number of studies have been conducted in the tertiary education setting. They are Han and Song (2011), Zhou (2011), and Tian (2013). It is worth noting that the latter two studies are doctoral dissertations, reflecting the relatively nascent state of research on this topic in the Chinese context.

Han and Song (2011) conducted a study involving 30 English teachers from a northeastern Chinese university. The researchers utilized a questionnaire to examine the current state of teachers' cognition regarding various aspects of ICC-oriented English Language Teaching (Han & Song, 2011, p. 175). In this small-scale research, it was found that many Chinese English teachers were able to differentiate between the intercultural approach and the communicative approach. However, their understanding of ICC and its relevance to ELT was somewhat vague. Furthermore, some teachers "showed strong doubt toward the possibility of acquiring

intercultural skills at university" (Han & Song, 2011, p. 190), leading to a reluctance to integrate English language and culture in their teaching. Although teachers expressed a willingness to develop students' ICC and allocated more time to teaching culture, their classrooms lacked specific content related to intercultural education. This was attributed to teachers' limited familiarity with the target cultures and the insufficient inclusion of (inter)cultural elements in teaching materials. The study concluded that Chinese university EFL teachers still have a considerable distance to go in implementing intercultural teaching in their classrooms.

Zhou (2011) conducted her study in Harbin, a northeastern city in China, investigating the perceptions and practices of Chinese university EFL teachers regarding ICC. The researcher employed a mixed-method approach, which involved a survey among 201 teachers from five universities in Harbin, followed by interviews with eight selected participants. The findings indicated that while participant teachers recognized the importance of teaching culture, cultural instruction had not yet become a consistent focus in their classrooms. Most teachers still relied on traditional, teacher-centered methods for cultural teaching. Additionally, the study revealed that teachers had varying objectives regarding cultural teaching, with the most commonly shared objective being the promotion of a body of cultural knowledge (Zhou, 2011, p. 193). Zhou also identified a link between teachers' beliefs and their practices. However, the specific

mechanisms through which teachers' beliefs influenced their practices were not explicitly discussed. The study concluded that there was "an apparent need for in-service teacher training program which particularly focuses on intercultural competence teaching" (Zhou, 2011, p. 219).

Tian conducted a study in 2013, focusing on Chinese university EFL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding ICC. Her study was a case study at a university situated in a large city in eastern China. A mixed-method approach was utilized to collect data, involving a questionnaire administered to 96 teachers in the first phase, followed by classroom observations and one-on-one interviews with 11 selected participants in the second phase. The results of the study revealed that Chinese EFL teachers recognized the importance of ICC development in EFL context. However, their perceptions and practices were influenced by traditional Chinese values, specifically the philosophical principles of Confucianism, which resulted in a distinct "sense of Chineseness" in their approach (Tian, 2013, p. 147). Similar to the findings of Zhou (2011), the study indicated that a traditional teacher-centered approach dominated the teachers' classrooms, and the integration of intercultural elements was not a regular focus. Tian (2013) reported that several barriers hindered the implementation of intercultural teaching among the teachers. These included teachers' limited cultural knowledge, the influence of the Chinese test-oriented education system, curriculum requirements, and students' limited language

proficiency. Additionally, Tian emphasized the necessity of providing professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their understanding and implementation of intercultural teaching practices.

Based on the literature review conducted in the context of mainland China, it has become evident that there is still ample room to explore the perceptions and practices of Chinese university EFL teachers concerning ICC and intercultural teaching. There are two main areas that require further investigation. Firstly, from a methodological perspective, it is noteworthy that two out of the three previous studies solely relied on teachers' self-reported perceptions and practices regarding ICC and intercultural teaching. Consequently, a comprehensive understanding of Chinese university teachers' perceptions and practices in this domain is still in progress. It is crucial to employ a more diverse and robust methodology to capture a complete and accurate picture of these teachers' beliefs and practices. Secondly, in terms of the scale of the study, previous research has been confined to a single university or universities within a specific city. This limitation implies a lack of representativeness in the findings.

To address this, the current study will utilize a mixed-method approach to depict a comprehensive overview of Chinese teachers' perceptions and practices regarding ICC. Moreover, data will be collected across various regions in China, without restricting the study to a single

city or province. By addressing these methodological and scale-related limitations, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive and representative understanding of Chinese university EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding ICC and intercultural teaching.

Chapter 3 Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has established the theoretical foundation and rationale for the present study. This chapter focuses on elucidating the research methodology employed to explore the perceptions of intercultural dimension in EFL teaching among Chinese university teachers, which is designed to address the following four research questions:

RQ1: What are perceptions of Chinese teachers regarding ICC within the context of EFL education at the university level?

RQ2: How do Chinese university teachers perceive and implement intercultural teaching within the EFL classroom setting?

RQ3: Are there any differences in teachers' perceptions due to their PPK such as: a) level of education, b) additional intercultural training, c) previous teaching experience, d) previous intercultural teaching experience and e) overseas experience?

RQ4: To what extent, do teachers' perceptions influence their practices of intercultural teaching in the classroom?

The research design employed is a mixed method research approach, including survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. It aims to investigate Chinese EFL teachers' self-reported perceptions and practice regarding ICC and intercultural teaching,

while also examining their actual performances in the classroom. The chapter begins by elaborating the research framework, providing a thorough explanation of the theoretical underpinnings and conceptual foundations guiding the study. Subsequently, a detailed presentation of the research context is provided, offering an in-depth understanding of the specific educational setting. A meticulous description of the study's participants follows, outlining the methods for participant selection and providing pertinent background information. The chapter then proceeds to explicate the methods employed for data collection and analysis. Additionally, the chapter addresses the reliability and validity of the study, employing appropriate statistical measures and qualitative techniques to assess the robustness and credibility of the findings. Ethical considerations related to the study are also presented, demonstrating a commitment to protecting the rights and welfare of the participants. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary, encapsulating the key points discussed, and setting the stage for the subsequent chapters.

3.2 Research design

A mixed method research design was employed in this study to explore the perceptions and practices of Chinese university EFL teachers regarding ICC and intercultural teaching. The utilization of a mixed method research design, as outlined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2017, p.

83), entailed the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data within a specific theoretical or philosophical framework. By integrating these two types of data and their corresponding findings, researchers could conduct a comprehensive investigation within a single study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). This research approach is expected to provide a more holistic and in-depth understanding of the research subject than either qualitative or quantitative data alone would provide (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

A mixed method research design was utilized as this study to comprehensively explore the multifaceted dimensions of Chinese university EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding ICC and intercultural teaching in breadth and depth. Specifically, this study employed a convergent mixed method design, which encompassed the collection and analysis of distinct quantitative and qualitative datasets. These datasets were subsequently integrated to facilitate result comparison and integration, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the research phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017, p. 252). The convergent design, depicted in the diagram proposed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2017), served as the guiding framework for this research, ensuring a rigorous and systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The diagram was presented as follows:

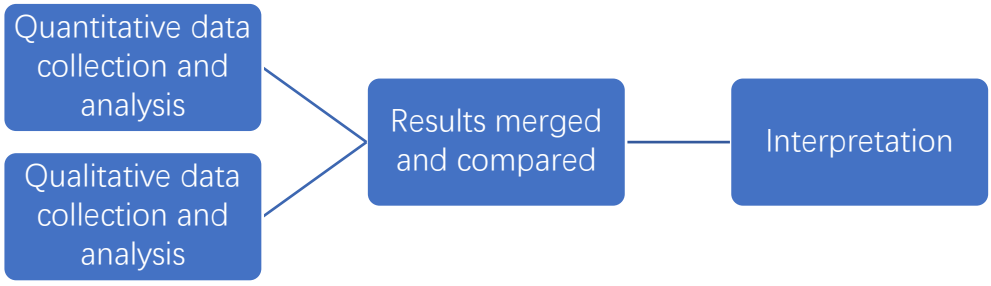


Figure 2 Convergent mixed research method design (Creswell & Plano Clark)

Figure 2

It could be observed from the diagram that the convergent mixed method design entailed the collection of quantitative and qualitative data concurrently or independently (rather than in a sequential manner), followed by separate analysis of each data type. Subsequently, the two sets of data were converged and compared, leading to a comprehensive and robust interpretation that enhances the understanding of the research topic (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

In the context of this study, the convergent design encompassed four key procedures. First, qualitative data in the form of classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, as well as quantitative data through paper questionnaire and online questionnaire (rationale for choice of both questionnaires were presented below in Section 3.5.3.2), were collected independently. This approach underscored the equal significance of both data types, with neither relying on the results of the other. Second, two sets of data were analyzed separately and autonomously. Third, the results from each analysis were merged, facilitating a comparative

examination during the discussion stage. Finally, the findings were interpreted to yield a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese university EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding ICC and intercultural teaching.

The choice of the convergent design is well-suited for the current study due to the following reasons. First, considering the intricate nature of teachers' perceptions and practices, it is challenging to comprehensively explore this topic solely through quantitative or qualitative approaches. Therefore, a convergent design that collects both types of data during a single phase is an efficient approach for the current study. Second, the convergence of results derived from diverse methods measuring the same phenomenon enhances the validity of inquiry inferences (Greene, 2007). In this study, quantitative data from questionnaires and qualitative data from classroom observations and interviews are utilized to investigate teachers' intercultural teaching practices. Furthermore, the triangulation of questionnaire data with semi-structured interviews enables an exploration of teachers' perceptions regarding ICC and intercultural teaching. Third, the adoption of two types of data to examine the same complex phenomenon serves the purpose of complementarity, thereby yielding a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Greene, 2007). For instance, while the questionnaire and interview elucidated teachers' self-reported perceptions and practices

concerning ICC and intercultural teaching, the insights from classroom observations delve into their actual instructional practices and further illuminate their ICC perceptions. By synergistically integrating these distinct data sources, the study attains a nuanced and multifaceted comprehension of the research topic.

In conclusion, considering the intricate nature of the research topic and the aim of attaining a more comprehensive and in-depth comprehension of teachers' perceptions and practices regarding ICC and intercultural teaching, the convergent mixed research design emerges as an appropriate and suitable choice for this study.

3.3 Research context

This research seeks to investigate the perceptions and practices of Chinese university EFL teachers regarding ICC and intercultural teaching. The research focuses on the university context and the context of EFL teaching. It is important to note that this study specifically pertains to universities and EFL teaching in the Chinese mainland, as supported by statistics from the Ministry of Education (MoE) of the People's Republic of China. Due to historical and political reasons, the data provided by MoE only covers statistics from the Chinese mainland. Therefore, universities and EFL teaching in Hongkong, Macau and Taiwan are not included in this study.

University Context

At the tertiary level, universities and institutions in China can generally be classified into two categories: public colleges and universities affiliated with MoE of China, or provinces or local government agencies; and private or non-government institutions. According to the Statistic Communique of the 2020 National Education Development released by MoE of the People's Republic of China in August 2021, there are a total of 2738 public regular colleges and universities in China. This includes 1270 four-year undergraduate colleges and universities (which also includes 21 vocational schools at the undergraduate level), 1468 three-year higher vocational colleges, and 265 adult high education institutions. Additionally, there are 771 private colleges and universities, including 241 independent institutions), which also encompass both four-year undergraduate colleges and universities, as well as three-year higher vocational colleges.

The main body of public colleges and universities in China can be further classified into different categories based on their status. These categories include prestigious universities associated with the Project 985, excellent universities selected through China's Project 211, and ordinary universities that are not included in either project. The Project 985, launched in May 1998, aimed to establish world-class universities and high-level research universities in China. This initiative included only 39

top-tier universities, such as Peking University and Tsinghua University, which became the preferred choices for Chinese secondary school students. These universities enjoy a prestigious reputation and are known for their academic excellence. Similarly, the Project 211 was implemented to enhance China's scientific and educational development. It incorporated 100 colleges and universities based on their "education quality, scientific research achievements, institutional management and efficiency" (China Education and Research Network, 2001, as cited in Tian, 2013). While these universities rank below the institutions in Project 985, they still hold a significant position in the higher education landscape. Chinese students often consider Project 211 universities as their second choice after those in Project 985. It is important to note that both Project 985 and 211 have been phased out in the development of Chinese higher education and were officially terminated in 2019. The MoE of China has since launched a new initiative called the "Double-First Class Project" to further enhance the quality and competitiveness of Chinese universities. However, due to the deeply ingrained influence of Project 985 and 211, these initiatives continue to impact university selection decisions.

In contrast, ordinary universities constitute the largest segment of Chinese higher education institutions. Given the extensive number of universities in China, it becomes challenging to encompass all types of

institutions in a single study. Therefore, this study will focus on recruiting EFL teachers from ordinary universities.

The rationale for selecting EFL teachers from ordinary universities, which encompass both public and private universities at different levels, is outlined as follows. First and foremost, ordinary universities represent the largest proportion of Chinese higher education institutions, making them a representative sample for the study. Out of the total 3509 universities in the Chinese mainland, 3370 are ordinary universities. By including teachers from these institutions, the research sample can provide insights that are reflective of the broader landscape of Chinese universities.

Secondly, China is known for its emphasis on social networks and interpersonal connections. Within this cultural context, establishing personal relationships with university personnel is crucial for effective data collection. It is widely acknowledged that many teachers in China may be more inclined to participate in research when they have a direct or indirect personal connection with the researcher (Zhou, 2011). In this case, being affiliated with an ordinary university and having friends and classmates working in similar institutions enhances the likelihood to attract potential participants and facilitate data collection. Furthermore, the choice to recruit EFL teachers from ordinary universities is practical and feasible in terms of accessibility and data collection during the current

global pandemic. Traveling around China to collect data from various universities would be challenging and may not be feasible due to limited research funding. Therefore, focusing on ordinary universities where the researcher has personal contacts, such as friends and classmates from their MA program, provides a more realistic and accessible approach. These personal connections can act as gatekeepers, assisting in data collection and enhancing the feasibility of the study.

By considering these factors, the selection of EFL teachers from ordinary universities emerges as a methodologically sound approach. It ensures the representativeness of the sample, leverages the significance of personal connections for data collection, and navigate logistical challenges posed by the pandemic and limited research funding.

EFL Teaching Context

EFL teaching in China at tertiary level is characterized by its diversity and complexity. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the context, several key issues closely related to the current study will be described. These include: a general overview of EFL teaching in China, an introduction to English teaching objectives and course systems in Chinese tertiary education based on two official documents by the MoE, an exploration of intercultural teaching as outlined in these documents, an examination of the two most influential tests in Chinese tertiary education that significantly impact EFL teaching,

and finally, a brief introduction to Chinese university EFL teachers, considering their perception and practices regarding intercultural dimension in EFL teaching --- the main focus of this study.

English has been taught as a foreign language in China since the implementation of the reform and open policy in 1978. It has become a compulsory subject for most Chinese students, typically starting in Year 3 of Primary school although in some first-tier cities like Beijing, English instruction may commerce as early as Year 1 (Hu, 2002, as cited in Yu & Liu, 2018). However, it should be noted that there are exceptions for students from rural areas, where English education may begin at a later stage. As a result, most college students in China have received approximately nine years of English language education prior to enrolling in a Chinese university.

It is worth mentioning that the duration and quality of English instruction can differ based on factors such as geographical location, socioeconomic status, and educational resources due to the vast territory and uneven development across different parts of China. Consequently, encompassing the full spectrum of English teaching practices in China within a single study is an ambitious task. Given the selection of ordinary universities as the research sites for this study, it is pertinent to provide a general overview of EFL teaching in ordinary universities.

In China, MoE plays a crucial role as the primary driving force and guide for the promotion of EFL teaching. EFL instruction in Chinese universities, including ordinary universities, is implemented in accordance with guidelines issued by MoE. Generally, EFL teaching at the tertiary level in China can be classified into two streams: one for English majors and the other for non-English majors, each with its own syllabi and curricula. The stream for English majors is designed for students who are specializing in English, with various concentrations such as English literature, business English, translation and more. On the other hand, the stream for non-English majors encompasses students from diverse disciplines including humanities, science, engineering, technology and others.

To address the unique English language education requirements of these two streams, the MoE has issued specific guidelines. Notably, the 2020 version of the "Guidelines for College English Teaching" (GCET) is directed towards non-English majors, while the 2018 version of the "Teaching Guide for Undergraduate English Majors" (Hereby referred to as the Teaching Guide) is applicable to English majors. These documents, which have undergone multiple revisions, were official national standards that aimed to provide guidance to English teachers and ensure the achievement of desired learning outcomes for students (Li, 2016). Thus,

they held substantial significance within the Chinese EFL teaching landscape.

The GCET and Teaching Guide encompassed a wide range of aspects, including teaching objectives, course system, teaching methods, assessment practices, faculty development, and more. Within the context of this study, it is relevant to focus on specific issues such as teaching objectives and the course system. These aspects will be further explicated in the subsequent sections of the research.

The GCET (Committee of College English Teaching Guidance, 2020) explicitly stated that college English served as a dual purpose as an instrumental and humanistic course, being mandatory for all non-English undergraduate students. It outlined a general objective as well as a three-tier objective, taking into account for students' individuality and diverse development of EFL teaching across regions, and ethnic groups.

The general objective of college English was

> to foster practical English language skills, enhance intercultural awareness and communicative competence, develop autonomous learning abilities, and enhance students' overall cultural literacy. The aim is to equip students with the necessary English language proficiency to effectively navigate their future academic studies, daily lives, professional careers, and social interactions, thereby fulfilling the needs of the nation, society, educational institutions, and their personal growth (Committee of College English Teaching Guidance, 2020, p. 2). (大学英语的教学目标是培养学生的英语应用能力，增强跨文化交际意识和交际能力，同时发展自主学习能力，提高综合文化素养，使他们在学习、生活、社 会交往和未来工作中能够有效地使用英语，满足国家、社会、学校和个人发展的 需要。)

The three-tier objectives, including basic objectives, improving objectives and developing objectives, were structured to cater to different

groups of students (Wang, 2016). The basic objectives primarily applied to students who had passed the national college entrance examination in English and represented the essential requirements for the majority of non-English majors to fulfill for graduation. The improving objectives were designed for students with a higher level of English proficiency. And developing objectives were established to address the specific talents training needs of universities and catered to the diverse needs of exceptionally talented students.

To accomplish these objectives, a range of course systems has been designed to address specific needs. These included English for General Purposes (EGP) courses, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses and intercultural courses. The implementation of these courses, whether they were mandatory or optional, was determined by individual colleges and universities based on factors such as the institution's level or the English proficiency of its students. Li (2016, p. 83) provided a comprehensive chart that outlined the specific courses corresponding to the three objectives, drawing from the GCET (Draft Exposure 2015). It is important to note that the Draft Exposure 2015 aligns with the formal version released in 2017 and 2020.

Table 5 Course system corresponding to the three-tier objective (Li, 2016)

Course / Objectives	EGP	ESP	Intercultural courses
Basic	1.5 years	EGAP	Hidden curriculum that offers introductory information about Chinese and western cultures
Improving	1 year	EAP, ESP & EOP	Intermediate Cultural courses: movie appreciation, public speaking, introduction to European civilization/ English-speaking countries, Chinese culture etc.
Developing	0.5-1 year	EST, EBE, ESS etc.	Advanced cultural courses: English Poetry, Literature, cross-cultural communication, Shakespeare plays, etc.

(EGP: English for General Purposes; EGAP: English for General Academic English for Science and Technology; EBE: English for Business and Economics; ESS: English for Social Sciences).

More specifically, I would like to provide a specific example of the curriculum system in an ordinary Chinese university to illustrate the three-tier objectives. Based on the GCET 2020, the university where I am currently employed has developed its latest curriculum system for non-English majors.

In this curriculum system, all non-English majors are required to complete the college English courses during their first two years of undergraduate study. The academic year in Chinese universities is divided into two semesters. In the first and second semesters, non-English majors enroll in the EGP course: *College English*, which focuses on enhancing their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

From the third semester onwards, students have the opportunity to choose their courses based on their performance in the College English

Test (CET) - Band 4 (Further information about the CET will be provided later in this section). Those who passed the CET-4 had the option to select advanced college English courses or pursue a second foreign language as part of the EGP curriculum. On the other hand, students who did not pass the test were required to continue with the EGP course, *College English*.

In the fourth semester, all non-English majors, regardless of their CET-4 results, were provided with choices to take either ESP courses, intercultural courses, or continue with the EGP course. This allowed students to specialize in specific areas of study or develop their intercultural competence. The curriculum system could be summarized as follows:

Table 6 Course system of an ordinary university (School of Foreign Languages & Literature, 2017)

Semester	Course
1	EGP course: *CE*
2	EGP course: *CE*
3	EGP course: Advanced CE; a second foreign language
4	1 EGP course: Advanced *CE*; a second foreign language; 2 ESP courses: *English for Academic Purposes*, *Business English* etc. 3 Intercultural courses*: Intercultural Communication*, *Chinese Culture*, *History of Western Civilization* etc.

From the above table, it became evident that in ordinary Chinese universities, the EGP course remained the primary focus of EFL teaching at the tertiary level. This indicated that the emphasis was primarily on achieving the basic objectives, while the inclusion of ESP and intercultural courses aimed to address the diverse needs of students. However, it is noteworthy that the ESP and intercultural courses, which align with the

improving and developing objectives respectively, are not widely accessible to the majority of college students in Chinese ordinary universities.

In accordance with the 2018 Teaching Guide (Ministry of Education, 2020), the curriculum system for English majors in Chinese universities consisted of two main categories: major-based courses and orientation-based courses. Major-based courses further encompassed a range of skill-oriented and knowledge-oriented courses. Skill-oriented courses included English listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, and the acquisition of a second foreign language. The aim of these courses was to develop and enhance students' language proficiency and competence. Knowledge-oriented courses, on the other hand, introduced students to foundational concepts and theories in linguistics, literature, and culture, providing them with a comprehensive understanding of the English language and its associated disciplines.

In addition to the major-based courses, the curriculum also included orientation-based courses. These courses were more specialized and tailored to the specific interests and career paths of the English majors. These courses delved deeper into specific areas of study, such as linguistics, literature, translation, or English teaching. They aimed to cultivate students' expertise and knowledge in their chosen field, preparing them for future professional endeavors (School of Foreign Languages & Literature, 2017).

It is important to note that while the Teaching Guide provide guidelines for the curriculum structure, each university has the flexibility to design its own curriculum based on these guidelines. This allowed for variations in course offerings and specialization tracks, ensuring that the curriculum met the specific needs and goals of the English majors at each institution (Zeng, 2019, p. 2).

Different from intercultural education in the West, the concept of cultural/intercultural teaching in China was relatively new in the pedagogical context (Zhang, 2012). The mention of cultural literacy as a teaching objective first appeared in the 2007 College English Curriculum Requirements, a national official document issued by the MoE (Yu & Liu, 2018). However, these requirements did not provide specific suggestions or requirements, resulting in limited implementation of intercultural teaching in practice (Zhang, 2012).

A significant shift occurred in 2017 with the release of the new version of GCET. This document explicitly embraced intercultural awareness, communicative competence, and the enhancement of students' comprehensive cultural literacy as integral components of the general objective for college English teaching in tertiary education (Committee of College English Teaching Guidance, 2020). This development "signals the beginning of intercultural education in college English teaching in China" (Li, 2016, p. 82). The introduction of intercultural education

reflected the humanistic nature of college English teaching, which signified a departure from the previous instrumental nature of college English teaching, which primarily focused on practical use of English.

With the updated national guideline, Chinese universities began incorporating intercultural education into their curriculum systems. The GCET Committee of College English Teaching Guidance, 2020) suggested that intercultural education could be integrated into the EGP course *College English*, and specific courses such as *Intercultural Communication* and *Chinese and Western Civilization* could be developed to facilitate intercultural learning (Wang, 2016). Similarly, the 2018 Teaching Guide also emphasized the cultivation of ICC as one of the main objectives, highlighting the emphasis of intercultural education for both English majors and non-English majors.

When discussing EFL teaching in China, it is crucial to highlight the significant role played by two important tests: the College English Test (CET) and the Test for English Majors (TEM). The CET was introduced by the MoE in 1987 to assess the English proficiency of non-English majors (Li et al., 2012; Jin, 2014), while the TEM was established in 1992 specifically for English major undergraduates at the end of their second year, known as the foundation stage, in their four-year program (Jin & Fan, 2011).

Both tests consist of two bands: CET-4 and CET-6 for the CET, and TEM-4 and TEM-8 for the TEM. These tests are large-scale standardized assessments administered to evaluate the extent to which university EFL teaching adheres to the requirements outlined in the national curriculum guidelines (Fan et al., 2020; Jin & Fan, 2011; Li et al., 2012). In essence, the passing rates of these tests served as a measure of the quality of EFL teaching in universities (Yu & Liu, 2018). Additionally, these tests were designed with the intention of promoting positive changes and improvements to the national curriculum design (Fan et al., 2020; Zou & Xu, 2017).

The CET and TEM tests held considerable recognition among universities and employers. For instance, TEM-4 was a prerequisite for English majors to obtain their bachelor's degree (Jin, 2014). Similarly, many employers required a CET-4 certificate with a score of 425 or above (out of a total of 710) for hiring college graduates, and it was also necessary for obtaining a residential permit in first-tier cities (Jin, 2014). Furthermore, individuals who failed to pass CET-6 were not eligible for admission to master's or doctoral programs (Jin, 2014). While these uses of the tests went beyond their original intentions, they had a significant washback effect on EFL teaching in Chinese universities.

One of the most notable effects was that EFL teaching has become test-oriented, with a strong emphasis on preparing students to pass the

CET and TEM tests. Consequently, students tended to focus on learning English solely for the purpose of achieving high scores in these tests, and teachers made efforts to meet students' demands in test preparation. As the CET-4 and CET-6 tests primarily assessed students' English language skills (Yu & Liu, 2018), the goal of improving students' comprehensive cultural literacy, as set forth in the guidelines, often received minimal attention in practice (Yu & Liu, 2018).

The fourth issue pertinent to EFL teaching in Chinese universities concerns the characteristics and qualifications of EFL teachers. In the Chinese context, EFL teachers hold various titles based on their teaching and research achievements, such as professors, associate professors, lecturers, and associate lecturers. However, it should be noted that the term "teacher" is generally used as a general reference for faculty members engaged in teaching in Chinese tertiary education. While there is no official document providing a comprehensive overview of EFL teachers in China, a large-scale survey conducted by Wang and Wang (2011) shed light on college English teachers.

According to the survey, which covered 530 universities across all 31 provinces of mainland China, the average number of college English teachers per university was 46.3, with female teachers comprising an overwhelming 80.1% of the total. In terms of job titles, professors accounted for 3.3%, associate professors accounted for 22.6%, and the

majority consisted of lecturers and associate lecturers at 74.1% (Wang & Wang, 2011). Regarding educational background, the report indicated that teachers with doctoral and master's degrees accounted for 1.5% and 60.1% respectively, which marked a significant increase compared to the figures from 2001 (0.3% and 21.9 % respectively) and 2008 (1.2% and 53.5% respectively) (Wang, 2009).

The report highlighted that while the educational background of college English teachers has made significant progress compared to the past, there still existed a considerable gap compared to other disciplines where doctoral degrees were more common. The survey also revealed that the average teaching hours per week for college English teachers were 13.5. It concluded that the imbalanced distribution of gender, job titles, and educational backgrounds, coupled with the heavy workload, poses challenges to both the enhancement of teaching quality and the professional development of EFL teachers (Wang, 2009).

3.4 Participants

This study aims to maximize participant recruitment in order to attain a comprehensive and thorough understanding of Chinese university EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding ICC. The researcher places great importance on achieving a high response rate in the survey. Given the vast number of EFL teachers in China, it is impractical to involve every

individual teacher in this study. Therefore, a combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling (Creswell, 2015) was employed for the survey questionnaire, allowing for broad participation. Additionally, purposeful selection (Maxwell, 2012) was implemented for interviews and in-class observations, enabling the researchers to target specific individuals who could provide valuable insights into the topic of interest.

Convenience sampling and snowball sampling are two nonprobability sampling techniques utilized in this study to recruit participants and gather a comprehensive understanding of Chinese university EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding ICC. Convenience sampling involved selecting participants based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study (Creswell, 2015). Given the cultural context in China, where respondents were more likely to engage in surveys if they have a personal connection with the researcher (Zhou, 2011), recruiting participants with whom I have personal contacts proves practical and feasible for maximizing participation rates. To expand the participant pool in the survey, snowball sampling is also employed. This method involved leveraging the existing connections and networks of participants to identify additional eligible individuals (Creswell, 2015). Through personal contacts, I invited participants to serve as gatekeepers within their respective universities, assisting in distributing the online questionnaire to their colleagues.

It is important to note that the selection of participants through convenience and snowball sampling does not compromise the study's credibility (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell, 2015; Maxwell, 2012). Participants selected through personal connections are EFL teachers working in Chinese universities, making them suitable representatives of the population of interest. Therefore, the approach of recruiting participants through personal contacts "could provide useful information for answering questions and hypotheses" (Creswell, 2015, p. 144).

A total of 284 Chinese EFL teachers participated in the survey, with 66 completing the paper questionnaire and 218 completing the online questionnaire. Among the participants who completed the paper questionnaire, all responses were fully completed and considered valid for analysis. Regarding the online questionnaire, 159 participants successfully completed the survey in its entirety, providing valid data for further analysis. In total, 225 Chinese EFL teachers returned their completed questionnaires, which were considered valid and suitable for subsequent data analysis. These participants represented a wide range of ordinary universities located in 19 provinces across mainland China. Both English majors and non-English majors were included in the sample, ensuring the inclusion of different teaching contexts and perspectives.

Purposeful selection (Maxwell, 2012) or purposive sampling (Cohen et al., 2018) was employed in the qualitative phase of this study. As

described by Maxwell (2012), purposeful selection involved the deliberate selection of specific settings, individuals, or activities "to provide information that is particularly relevant to your questions and goals, and that can't be gotten as well from other choices" (p. 132). The objectives of purposive sampling, as outlined by Maxwell (2012) and Cohen et al. (2018), included achieving representativeness, capturing the heterogeneity of the population, enabling comparisons, focusing on unique or specific issues, and selecting participants who can best contribute to answering the research questions.

In this study, qualitative methods were employed to gain an in-depth understanding of EFL teachers' perspectives on ICC and intercultural teaching. Therefore, participants with diverse personal experiences and practical knowledge related to intercultural teaching were considered. Factors such as level of education, previous intercultural teaching experience, additional intercultural training, and overseas experiences were taken into account. These criteria align with the goals of purposive sampling mentioned earlier. Accordingly, a total of ten EFL teachers were purposefully selected to participate in semi-structured interviews, with three of them also being observed in the classroom setting.

3.5 Data collection

This section aims to address the key issues surrounding data collection in the present study. Firstly, an overview of the data sources will be provided. Secondly, the two instruments employed in this study, namely a survey questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview will be comprehensively described. Lastly, the process of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data will be elucidated.

3.5.1 Sources

Data was collected through three primary sources: a survey questionnaire administered in both paper-based and electronic formats, a semi-structured interview, and classroom observation.

3.5.2 Instruments

Two instruments were employed for data collection. The first was a Likert-style survey, while the second was an interview protocol. Detailed explanations of each instrument would be provided in the subsequent subsections.

3.5.2.1 Survey questionnaire

The survey questionnaire utilized in this study was primarily adapted based on established questionnaires developed by Sercu and her colleagues

for their international investigation on foreign language teachers' ICC (Sercu et al., 2005). Additionally, reference was made to Zhou's investigation on Chinese EFL teachers' ICC (Zhou, 2011), taking into account the shared research context of China. Both questionnaires were originally developed in English, thus the adapted questionnaire for the present study was initially developed in English but translated and administrated in Chinese. Translating the questionnaire was one of the key issues in questionnaire design which will be further discussed after the introduction of instrument development.

The survey instrument held a pivotal role in data collection, serving as a fundamental tool to gather essential information (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012). Hence, it was crucial to develop a standardized questionnaire for "obtaining large amounts of data in a relatively short period of time in a cost-effective way" (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012, p. 75). The questionnaire utilized in this study was adapted based on the key design considerations proposed by Dörnyei and Csizér (2012).

First, the format of the questionnaire "is half the battle in motivating respondents to produce reliable and valid data" (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012, p. 78). Length and the arrangement of scales were crucial aspects considered during the development process to ensure a professional and visually appealing questionnaire. While Sercu et al. (2005) presented an extensive questionnaire consisting of 29 pages to investigate foreign

language teachers' ICC, Dörnyei and Csizér (2012) suggested a four-page limit to avoid exceeding a 30-minute completion timeframe (p. 78). Mixing different scales was also essential to "prevent respondents from simply repeating previous answers" (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012, p. 78). In line with this, items suitable for EFL teaching in the Chinese context have been selected, excluding those that are not commonly encountered in China, such as Section 8 school trips in Sercu's questionnaire. Additionally, varying points on the Likert were employed in different sections to provide diversity and discourage response repetition. Matrix tables questions were also incorporated, serving the purpose of maintaining a concise and visually pleasing questionnaire within the aforementioned four-page limit (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012; Nardi, 2018).

Second, Dörnyei and Csizér (2012) emphasized that "most professional questionnaires were primarily made up of 'closed-ended' items" (p. 76). Gu (2016) also reported a preference among Chinese interviewees for closed questions. Accordingly, the questionnaire in this study employed the widely recognized Likert scale, a prominent closed-ended items format, to explore teachers' perceptions and practices concerning ICC and intercultural teaching.

Third, Dörnyei and Csizér (2012) highlighted the importance of writing well-crafted items, "using simple and natural language" (p. 78), to ensure clarity and conciseness. Given that English was a foreign language

for Chinese EFL teachers, certain terms used in Sercu's questionnaire may be unfamiliar or the items may appear lengthy and complex. Adaptions were made to enhance comprehension. For instance, the statement "Enthuse my pupils for learning foreign languages" in Sercu's questionnaire was simplified as "Promote my students' interest in English learning", which was more straightforward for Chinese EFL teachers to understand. Similarly, statements such as "Promote my pupils' familiarity with the culture, the civilization of the countries where the language which they are learning is spoken" were condensed and simplified to "Promote my students' familiarity with English cultures". Furthermore, minor adjustments have been implemented to increase participants' engagement, such as using the first-person pronoun "I" instead of the second-person pronoun "you". Additionally, the term "pupils" in Sercu's questionnaire was replaced with "students" to align with the focus of this study on ICC at the tertiary level.

Another critical design consideration highlighted by Dörnyei and Csizér (2012) pertained to the translation of questionnaires, which was particularly relevant in the current study as the questionnaire was administered to Chinese university EFL teachers. While these teachers possessed the ability to comprehend the questionnaire in English, a Chinese questionnaire was preferred due to its familiarity and expedited completion time. Translating a questionnaire required "reconcile two

somewhat contradictory criteria" (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012, p. 79): producing a close translation that is equivalent to the source text, while ensuring the naturalness and idiomatic quality of the target language, in this case, Chinese. This was precisely the situation in the current study.

Initially, the questionnaire was translated into Chinese, and for most items, finding equivalent solutions proved relatively straightforward. However, a few items presented challenges, as a literal translation resulted in awkwardness and failed to capture the original meaning. To address this issue, a team consisting of four colleagues, including two professors and two associate professors, was formed to serve as a translation think-tank. This collaborative approach to translation and negotiation aligns with the recommendations put forth by Dörnyei and Csizér (2012) and proved highly valuable. Through three brainstorming sessions, the team extensively discussed the overall translation of the questionnaire, aiming to strike a harmonious balance between the original English version and the translated Chinese version. For instance, Question 8 of the questionnaire, originally presented as a noun phrase in English, "Average distribution of teaching time over 'language teaching' and 'intercultural teaching'", posed a particular challenge in terms of literal translation into Chinese, as it appeared awkward and unfamiliar to Chinese readers. After thorough deliberation, the team decided to transform the noun phrase into a complete, well-formed Chinese sentence that would resonate more

effectively with Chinese readers (在您的课堂中，用于语言教学和跨文化教学的时间分配比例是), ensuring greater clarity and comprehension.

Furthermore, to ensure the equivalence between the source questionnaire and the translated version, one of the teachers involved in the pilot study was invited serve as a "bilingual external reviewer" (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012, p. 79). This reviewer played a crucial role in assessing the translation and providing valuable insights to maintain consistency and fidelity to the original questionnaire. Additionally, another essential design consideration, namely the piloting the questionnaire, will be discussed in detail in Section 3.5.3.

The current adapted questionnaire was organized into four sections.

Section 1 focused on gathering participants' background information. It comprises 10 questions that pertain to participants' gender, age, educational level, years of teaching experience, weekly teaching periods, years of teaching experience in *Intercultural Communication*, average time allocated to language teaching and intercultural teaching, as well as their experiences of international travel or studying abroad.

Section 2 was specifically designed to assess participants' perceptions of ICC. This section, represented by Question 11 in the questionnaire, comprises 20 items presented on a 6-point Likert scale. These items have been adapted from Zhou's (2011) questionnaire Section 3, which was primarily derived from Fantini's (2007) Assessment of Intercultural

Competence (AIC) (as cited in Zhou (2011)). Fantini's model aligns closely with Byram's 1997 and 2021 ICC framework, encompassing dimensions such as knowledge, skills, attitude and awareness. Zhou further incorporated elements from O'Neil's (2008) instrument, resulting in a modified version of the AIC tailored to assess Chinese EFL teachers' perceptions on ICC. Within the 20 items, five were allocated to evaluate teachers' knowledge of ICC, four pertains to attitudes, seven examine skills, and the remaining four focus on awareness. Participants were instructed to rate their level of agreement or opinion for each item from 0 (Not at all) to 5 (Very high).

Section 3 delved into teachers' self-reported perceptions regarding intercultural teaching from three aspects: the objectives of FLT, the objectives of intercultural teaching, and statements concerning teachers' intercultural teaching. These perspectives corresponded to Question 12, Question 13 and Question 14 in the questionnaire, respectively. Question 12 consisted of seven statements, adapted from Section 3.2 of Sercu et al.'s (2005) questionnaire. Certain modifications have been made to streamline the items and enhance their clarity. Specifically, statement (1), (2), (4), (5), and (8) form Sercu et al.'s (2005) questionnaire have been included with appropriate adjustments. Statement (6) has been omitted, given the limited prevalence of second foreign language learning among most Chinese students. Moreover, statement (3) and (7) have been refined to ensure their

relevance within the context of EFL teaching in China. Notably, an additional statement, “Assisting my students in passing relevant examinations such as the College English Test Band 4 and Test for English Majors,” has been included to acknowledge the significant influence of these tests on EFL teaching in China.

Question 13 comprised seven statements extracted from Section 3.3 of Sercu et al.’s (2005) questionnaire. Statement (4) to (9) from Sercu et al’s questionnaire have been directly incorporated into the adapted questionnaire, with minor modifications to replace “students’ own culture” with “Chinese culture”. Additionally, statement (1) to (3) from Sercu et al.’s questionnaire has been combined into a single statement for greater conciseness and coherence. Question 14 encompasses nine statements drawn from Section 11 of Sercu et al.’s (2005) questionnaire. Out of the original 24 items, those most closely aligned with EFL teaching in Chinese tertiary education have been selected for inclusion in this question. The statements in this section employs a 5-point scale, ranging from 0 (Undecided) to 4 (Agree completely), enabling participants to indicate their level of agreement.

Section 4 investigated teachers’ self-reported intercultural teaching practices in the classroom. This section examined teachers’ implementation of intercultural teaching from two perspectives: the frequency with which they incorporated specific intercultural topics

(Question 15) and the frequency of their utilization of intercultural activities in the classroom (Question 16). Question 15 consists of a list of 10 topics, which have been directly extracted from Sercu et al.'s (2005) Section 6.3. Question 16 has been adapted based on relevant sections from both Sercu et al's (2005) questionnaire (Section 6.1) and Zhou's 2011 study (Question 15). The section encompassed a total of 13 items, with 10 items originating from Sercu et al.'s questionnaire and an additional 3 items from Zhou's research. These modifications have been made to establish a contextual relevance to the Chinese educational environment. Participants were required to rate each item on a 4-point scale, ranging from 1 (Never) to 4 (Always).

Notably, this research utilized both paper-based and online questionnaires to collect quantitative data. The inclusion of both formats served specific purposes: the paper-based questionnaire ensured a higher response rate, while the online questionnaire offered convenience and efficiency, particularly in engaging a larger participant pool at a relatively low cost. This approach became even more pertinent in the context of the global pandemic, where online administration mitigated physical contact and facilitates remote data collection. Therefore, the inclusion of both paper and online questionnaires allowed for a comprehensive and flexible data collection strategy, ensuring a robust dataset while maximizing

participant engagement and accommodating the unique challenges posed by the prevailing circumstances.

The instrument was administered in both paper-based and online questionnaires, with the distinction that the online version includes an additional question at the beginning of Section 1, which prompted participants to indicate the province or location of their respective universities.

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire have been carefully considered and would be discussed in Section 3.7.

3.5.2.2 Semi-structured interview

In order to gain in-depth understanding of Chinese university EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding ICC and intercultural teaching, this study incorporated interviews as a qualitative research method. Specifically, a semi-structured interview approach was employed. This methodological choice, as Thomas (2017) explains, provided participants with the maximum opportunity to provide relevant data while enabling the researcher to gather a comprehensive range of insights on teachers' perceptions and practices related to ICC and intercultural teaching. Furthermore, employing a semi-structured interview aligned with the practical considerations of small-scale research, as it was a widely used method in such contexts (Thomas, 2017). By incorporating semi-structured

interviews, this research aims to capture nuanced insights into Chinese university EFL teachers' perceptions and practices regarding ICC and intercultural teaching, thereby enhancing the overall comprehensiveness and depth of the study.

Based on literature in the field and the research questions of the current study, I designed the interview protocol. It comprised 12 questions with the objective of gathering information in four key areas: teachers' personal background, perceptions of ICC, perceptions of intercultural teaching, and intercultural teaching practices in the classroom. The protocol was initially developed in English and subsequently translated into Chinese to cater to the participants' language preferences. Throughout the interviews, participants were encouraged to utilize the language in which they felt most comfortable, ensuring that they can express themselves freely and provided nuanced insights into their experiences and perspectives. This approach was intended to elicit rich and detailed information, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese university EFL teachers' views and practices regarding ICC and intercultural teaching.

3.5.3 Procedures

In a convergent mixed method design, quantitative and qualitative data were collected independently and concurrently rather than in a

sequential order (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Initially, classroom observations and paper questionnaires were conducted in parallel while I was in China. Subsequently, online questionnaires and interviews were administered via platforms such as Skype or WeChat audio or video conferencing, considering my absence from China. Prior to the administration of the main questionnaire and formal interviews, pilot studies were conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments.

3.5.3.1 Pilot study

Dörnyei and Csizér (2012) highlighted the necessity of conducting a pilot study for questionnaires, even when adopting items from existing instruments, to ensure their appropriateness for the specific target population. In line with this, the instruments used in this study underwent a pilot study prior to their administration among the intended population. Specifically, a pilot study was conducted for both the paper questionnaire and the online questionnaire. Similarly, a pilot interview was conducted to assess the clarity and effectiveness of the interview protocol before the formal interviews took place. These pilot studies served as crucial preliminary steps, enabling the researchers to fine-tune the instruments and interview protocol, ensuring their reliability and validity for the subsequent data collection phase with the target population.

The paper-based pilot study was conducted in late December 2020, involving five Chinese EFL teachers who were selected through purposive sampling. The selection of participants was based on their expertise in areas such as translation and language teaching, as the pilot study aimed to achieve several objectives: (1) modify the final version of the questionnaire; (2) enhance the clarity of wordings; and (3) assess the time required for questionnaire completion (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012). During the pilot study, participants provided valuable feedback, suggesting the need to rearrange the order of items in certain questions, particularly Question 12, to better align with the objectives of FLT in the Chinese context. Following the completion of the pilot questionnaire, one of the participants, who had a background in translation, served as a "bilingual external reviewer" to assess the translation of the questionnaire. The reviewer provided positive feedback on the translation quality, acknowledging its overall effectiveness. However, he suggested making slight modifications to certain word choices to enhance the accuracy and neutrality of the translated statements. For instance, in Question 16, the original statement "I talk with my students about stereotypes regarding particular cultures and countries or regarding the inhabitants of particular countries" was rendered as "引导学生讨论某一外国文化或某一族群的僵化印象" in Chinese. The reviewer proposed replacing "文化定势"(cultural stereotypes) with "僵化印象" (fixed impressions), as it conveyed a more neutral meaning in the context. These

recommendations were taken into consideration for the final version of the questionnaire. All participants reported that they were able to complete the questionnaire within approximately 10 minutes. Taking into account the feedback received, the questionnaire was subsequently revised, and at this stage, the layout of the questionnaire was finalized.

The online questionnaire was constructed using Qualtrics. The content remained the same as the paper questionnaire, with the addition of an introductory question asking participants to indicate the province of their working university. This distinction was necessary since the paper questionnaire would be administered solely among colleagues from the same province. However, it was important to acknowledge that the online questionnaire differed both in appearance and user experience compared to its paper-based counterpart. Furthermore, the online questionnaire aimed to reach a larger sample of participants from various regions throughout mainland China, necessitating a pilot study to ensure its efficacy.

The online pilot study was conducted twice in late July 2021. Eight Chinese EFL teachers were invited to participate in order to: (1) familiarize participants with the administration procedures, (2) gather feedback on the experience of completing the electronic survey, and (3) measure the time required for questionnaire completion. The pilot participants reported that the online questionnaire had an elegant and professional appearance and that the survey functioned smoothly. They also reported an average

completion time of approximately 10 minutes. However, it was worth noting that during the first pilot study, irrelated information appeared in the recorded data due to the misuse of a default template in Qualtrics. Recognizing the potential impact on future data analysis, a new electronic questionnaire was created using a different template. The second pilot study was then conducted, resulting in positive feedback from participants, with the recorded data accurately displayed without any anomalies.

A pilot interview was conducted prior to the formal interviews, involving one of my colleagues who would not be participating in the actual interviews. The primary objectives of the pilot interview were to familiarize ourselves with the interview process and to refine the interview questions. The pilot interview proceeded smoothly, allowing for slight adjustments in the wording and sequence of questions, which were subsequently applied in the subsequent formal interviews.

3.5.3.2 Administration of the questionnaire

Following the pilot study, the instrument was administered to a specific group of participants. Two approaches were commonly used for the questionnaire administration: self-administered and group administered (Brown, 2001). In the self-administered approach, the questionnaire was individually mailed to participant who were then expected to complete and return it by mail. However, this method carries

the risk of low return rates (Brown, 2001). In contrast, the group administered approach involved administrating the questionnaire to a group of participants simultaneously in the same location, with a designated time frame for completion and return to the administrator. This approach increased the likelihood of higher response rates as participants may feel a sense of obligation to complete the questionnaire (Brown, 2001). Considering the significance of achieving a high response rate, the group administered questionnaire method was employed in this study.

Paper questionnaire

Paper questionnaire was administered at a university located in central China. This university is an ordinary institution that encompassed a foreign language school comprising 70 EFL teachers, including both who teach college English courses and those who specialize in English major courses.

The distribution of the questionnaire was strategically planned to occur immediately following the annual faculty meeting, which took place at the end of December 2020. During the meeting, college English teachers and English major teachers were assigned to two separate meeting rooms. Subsequently, I visited each office individually, providing an explanation of the Information Sheet to teachers in Chinese and distributing the informed consent form (Appendix A). Teachers were requested to sign the informed consent form if they voluntarily agreed to participant in the survey. In total, 70 copies of questionnaires were distributed, with 38

responses received from college English teachers and 28 from English major teachers, resulting a total of 66 collected responses.

Online questionnaire

In light of the prevailing global pandemic and the absence of financial recourses allocated to this study, an online questionnaire was developed to engage a broader population across mainland China.

Different from the paper questionnaire, where I had the opportunity to personally visit participants' universities to explain the nature of the research and obtain their consent, the online questionnaire required a different approach. Due to the remote nature of the online survey, the information sheet was incorporated into the cover page of the electronic questionnaire, with the Informed Consent Form following on the subsequent page. The information sheet provided a concise overview of the current research and introduced myself as the researcher. Recognizing that many Chinese teachers may prefer to complete surveys using their smartphones, the limited space available necessitated a simplified version of the information sheet. This decision aimed to ensure a positive user experience during the survey, increasing participants' willingness to engage. Following the simplified information sheet, the informed consent form was presented. Given the constraints of the online survey format, participants were required to indicate their consent by clicking either "I agree to participate" or "I don't agree to participate" at the bottom of the

informed consent page. Only those who clicked “I agree to participate” were granted access to the questionnaire section of the survey. This process ensured that participants actively affirmed their willingness to participate in the study before proceeding further. By incorporating these measures, the research aimed to uphold ethical considerations and maintain transparency and voluntary participation in the online data collection process.

The online questionnaire was distributed to potential participants between August and September 2021. Two methods were utilized to administer the online questionnaire. Firstly, personal contacts were enlisted as gatekeepers who played a crucial role in distributing the questionnaire among their colleagues. This method allowed for targeted access to a specific group of participants. Secondly, the questionnaire was shared in selected WeChat groups, a popular social media platform in China, which comprised university EFL teachers from various provinces across China. A total of 218 teachers participated in the online survey, out of which 159 responses were deemed valid and included in the data analysis. This yielded a response rate of approximately 73%, indicating a favorable level of engagement and willingness to participate among the target population.

3.5.3.3 Demographic information of participants in the survey

A total of 284 Chinese university teachers participated in the survey, consisting of 218 participated in the online questionnaire and 66 in the paper-based survey. However, 59 participants from the online survey and 1 from the paper survey did not complete the questionnaire, leaving 159 online questionnaires and 65 paper questionnaires, totaling 224 for data analysis.

The participants were from 19 different provinces across mainland China, accounting for teachers from 61% of the provinces. The majority of participants (89.9%) were from middle and western provinces, indicating a focus on those regions. Out of the total participants, 194 were female and 30 were male, suggesting a higher representation of females in the survey. Most of the teachers (79.5%) were aged over 35, indicating a wealth of teaching experience, while only 7.6% were novice teachers with less than 5 years of teaching.

In terms of educational attainment, 81.3% of participants held a master's degree, while 13.4% possessed a doctorate and 5.4% held a bachelor's degree.

In terms of teaching assignments, some of them (44.6%) taught college English courses, other (31.3%) taught English major courses, and others (20.5%) taught both.

Regarding weekly teaching load, the distribution was as follows: 1-4 periods (2.7%), 5-10 periods (13.8%), 11-15 periods (56.7%), 16-20 periods (20.1%), 21-25 periods (4.5%), and above 25 periods (2.2%). It is important to note that each period of class typically lasted 45 minutes.

Regarding their intercultural teaching experiences, the majority of participants (77.2%) had not taught the course on *Intercultural Communication*. Additionally, 67% of the participants had not received any training in intercultural teaching.

When asked to estimate the average time dedicated to language teaching versus intercultural teaching, over half of the teachers (53.1%) reported that 80% of their time was allocated to language teaching, while 20% was devoted to intercultural teaching.

In regard to overseas experiences, 48.2% of the participated teachers had not traveled abroad. Among the teachers who had overseas experiences (51.8%), 32.8% had spent more than one year in foreign countries, while 67.2% had shorter stays. Specifically, 31.9% had stayed abroad for less than 6 months, and 35.3% stayed for 6 months to 1 year. Short stays were primarily for travel purposes, while longer stays were typically for visiting family or serving as visiting scholars. Those who had spent more than one year abroad mostly did so for the purpose of studying abroad.

For a detailed breakdown of the demographic background of the survey participants, please refer to the table below.

Table 7 Demographic information of the survey participants

Categories		Number	Percentage
Provinces	Hunan	114	50.9%
	Henan	35	15.6%
	Sichuan	15	6.7%
	Hebei/Jilin/Jiangxi	9	4.0%
Provinces	Chongqing	7	3.1%
	Hubei	6	2.7%
	Jiangsu	4	1.8%
	Gansu/Fujian	3	1.3%
	Guangdong/Zhejiang	2	0.9%
	Beijng/Shanghai/Neimeng/Shanxi Heilongjiang/Yunnan	1	0.4%
Gender	Female	194	83.6%
	Male	30	13.4%
Age	20-25	3	1.3%
	26-30	11	4.9%
	31-35	32	14.3%
	36-40	61	27.2%
	41-45	77	34.4%
	46 and above	40	17.9%
Degree	Bachelor	12	5.4%
	Master’s	182	81.3%
	Doctor’s	30	13.4%

Categories		Number	Percentage
Years of teaching	1-5	17	7.6%
	6-10	35	15.6%
	11-15	43	19.2%
	16-20	69	30.8%
	21-25	35	15.6%
Years of teaching	26 and above	25	11.2%
Teaching periods per week	1-4	6	2.7%
	5-10	31	13.8%
	11-15	127	56.7%
	16-20	45	20.1%
	21-25	10	4.5%
	26 and above	5	2.2%
Courses teaching	College English course	100	44.6%
	English major course	70	31.3%
	Both of the above	46	20.5%
	others	8	3.6%
Years of teaching Intercultural Communication course	none	173	77.2%
	1-3	31	13.8%
	4-6	6	2.7%
	7-9	3	1.3%
	10-12	4	1.8%
	Above 12	5	2.2%

Categories			Number		Percentage	
Intercultural teaching training	Yes		72		32.1%	
	No		150		67.0%	
	Missing		2		0.9%	
Overseas experience	Yes	Less than 6 months	35	116	15.6%	51.8%
		6 months – 1 year	42		18.8%	
		Above a year	39		17.4%	
	No		108		48.2%	

As shown in the table, the number of female EFL teachers in Chinese universities significantly outweighed the number of male teachers. This finding aligned with previous studies conducted by Wang (2009), Zhou (2011) and Tian (2013). Similar to Zhou's and Tian's findings, a majority of Chinese EFL teachers held a master's degree. However, there were some differences in the demographic characteristics compared to Zhou's study. The participants in this study were generally older, with a substantial proportion (79.5%) being over the age of 35, whereas Zhou (2011) reported that 60.9% of the participants were below this age threshold. Consequently, a significant portion of Chinese university teachers (76.8%) in this study were experienced teachers with more than 10 years of teaching. The teaching load among Chinese universities exhibited some common features, with over half of the teachers (56.7%) taught 11-15 class periods per week, where each period lasted 45 minutes.

Regarding overseas experience, nearly half teachers (51.8%) had traveled abroad for various purposes, which was consistent with the

findings of Zhou (2011). However, Tian (2013) reported that all participants in her study had been abroad. This difference may be attributed to the fact that her research was a case study conducted in a large city in eastern China (Tian, 2013), specifically focusing on a 211-university (top 100 universities in mainland China), where teachers had more opportunities for international travel. Similarly, Han and Song (2011) reported in their case study conducted at a northeastern university that most of the participants had visited foreign countries or regions.

3.5.3.4 Interview process

The interviews for this study were conducted between July and August 2021. A diverse group of participants was selected based on various criteria, including their level of education, prior experiences of intercultural teaching, and overseas experiences. Initially, potential participants were contacted through WeChat to seek their consent for the interview. Subsequently, appointments were scheduled at their convenience to conduct the interview. Participants were informed about the audio-recording of the interviews, and their consent was obtained before proceeding. All interviews were recorded using a recording device, ensuring compliance with ethical considerations. Due to the geographical dispersion of participants and the interviewer, the interviews were conducted through WeChat audio or video conferencing, as well as Skype.

Participants were given the flexibility to choose from their preferred mode of communication, either audio or video, to create a comfortable environment for their responses. Additionally, participants were given the option to use either Chinese or English as the interview language. Most participants primarily used Chinese, incorporating occasional English words or sentences, while one participant used both Chinese and English throughout the interview.

The duration of the interviews varied, ranging from approximately 10 minutes to 30 minutes. To ensure accuracy, all interview data were transcribed verbatim, preserving the original language used during the interview.

3.5.3.5 In-class observation

Observation, as "a fundamental and highly important method in all qualitative inquiry" (Marshall et al., 2022, p. 260), "was used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings" (Marshall et al., 2022, p. 260). In this study, observation was employed as an additional research method to explore teachers' actual implementation of intercultural teaching practices in the classroom. While interviews capture teachers' self-reported perceptions and practices related to ICC and intercultural teaching, observations offered a distinct advantage by providing objective evidence

and insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Hancock et al., 2021).

I contacted several teachers to request their consent for classroom observation. However, encountering reluctance from many potential participants, I faced challenges in securing observation opportunities. Eventually, three English-major teachers kindly agreed to be observed. Each teacher's class was observed for two periods, totaling 90 minutes (with each period lasting 45 minutes). Throughout the observation process, a total of 270 minutes of captured teaching material were recorded.

Prior to conducting the classroom observation, the teachers were presented with an information sheet outlining the details and purpose of the study. They were requested to carefully review the sheet and sign the informed consent form to indicate their voluntary participation. Furthermore, the teachers were explicitly informed that the observation would be conducted in a non-participatory manner to uphold the integrity of the research process. In this capacity, my role as an observer was to document and record the classroom activities without any intention of intervening or participating in the instructional process. This approach was crucial to ensure the collection of unbiased and authentic data for the study, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the intercultural teaching practices.

The observation sessions were documented through audio recordings and written memos, which included essential details such as the dates, times, locations, course names, and specific topics covered during the classes. Within these records, I described the various intercultural practices and behaviors observed, including intercultural activities, discussions on intercultural topics, and interactions between the teachers and students. Furthermore, I maintained a section in the memo to record my own comments and thoughts regarding the observations, allowing for further analysis and reflection on the observed intercultural teaching practices.

3.5.3.6 Profile of participants in qualitative study

Ten teachers willingly participated in the qualitative study, selected through a combination of purposeful and convenient sampling methods (Creswell, 2015; Maxwell, 2012), ensuring a diverse range of PPK among the participants. Out of the ten teachers, all of them agreed to be interviewed, while three of them granted permission for classroom observation. The interview sessions collectively lasted 212 minutes, with an average duration of 21 minutes per interview. For the classroom observations, a total of six class periods were observed, with each teacher's class being observed for two periods, amounting to 45 minutes per period. Throughout the study, pseudonyms were employed to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

The ten interviewees in this study were selected from ordinary universities, which represented the largest proportion of Chinese universities. They were affiliated with four different universities located in different provinces. Among the interviewees, two were male teachers and the remaining participants were female teachers, reflecting the gender composition of the Chinese university English teaching workforce to some extent. Additionally, the participants consisted of five lecturers, four associate professors, and one professor, indicating a mix of experience and expertise. Furthermore, half of the interview participants taught college English courses, while the other half were involved in teaching English major courses, providing a balanced perspective across different areas of English language education.

This study aims to delve into the potential impact of teachers' PPK on their perceptions and practices regarding ICC and intercultural teaching, with the goal of providing valuable insights for future teacher training initiatives. The PPK variables considered in this study include a) level of education: This variable pertains to the participants' educational attainment, including their highest degree earned and their academic field of study. b) additional intercultural training: This variable explores whether the teachers have engaged in any specialized training or professional development activities focused on intercultural teaching. c) previous teaching experience: This variable investigates the participants' prior

teaching experience, encompassing the duration of their teaching career. d) previous intercultural teaching experience: This variable focuses on whether the teachers have previous experience teaching the specific course named *Intercultural Communication*. and e) overseas experience: This variable examines whether the teachers have lived or studied abroad, thereby exposing them to different cultural contexts and potentially influencing their intercultural perspectives. In the subsequent sections, the ten participating teachers will be introduced, highlighting their PPK within these specific dimensions.

Among the ten teachers in this study, three held doctorate degrees, six had master's degrees, and one had a bachelor's degree. Regarding their teaching experience, eight out of the ten teachers have been working as English teachers at the tertiary level for more than ten years. Specifically, two teachers had over 26 years of teaching experience, four teachers had 16-20 years of experience, and two teachers had 11-15 years of experience. Regarding intercultural teacher training, only two out of the ten teachers reported receiving brief training prior to the interview. Notably, these two teachers were also the ones who had previously taught the course *Intercultural Communication*. In terms of overseas experience, two teachers spent 5 years in the US pursuing their doctorate degrees. Additionally, three teachers had stayed abroad for over 1 year as visiting scholars. The remaining three teachers had shorter stays, lasting less than

2 months, in foreign countries for purposes such as traveling or visiting family. Finally, there was one teacher among the ten teachers who had never traveled abroad.

The profile of the participant teachers in the qualitative study can be summarized in the table (Table 8) as follows:

Table 8 Profile of the participants in the qualitative study

N	**Name (Pseudo)**	**Degree**	**Title**	**Overseas Exp.**	**Yrs of Tchg**	**Yrs of Tchg IC**	**Exp. Of intercultural training**	**Interview**	**Class Observation**
1	Ms. T1	Doctor	Lecturer	5 yrs	11-15 yrs	No	No	Yes	No
2	Ms. T2	Master	Lecturer	Over 1 year	16-20 yrs	No	No	Yes	No
3	Ms. T3	Master	Lecturer	Less than 6 months	1-5 yrs	No	No	Yes	Yes
4	Ms. T4	Doctor	Lecturer	5 yrs	11-15 yrs	No	No	Yes	No
5	Ms. T5	Bachelor	Associate professor	Less than 6 months	26 yrs	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
6	Ms. T6	Master	Lecturer	Less than 6 months	1-5 yrs	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
7	Mr. T7	Doctor	Professor	1 year	26 yrs	No	No	Yes	Yes
8	Ms. T8	Master	Associate professor	No	16-20 yrs	No	No	Yes	No
9	Ms. T9	Master	Associate professor	1 year	16-20 yrs	No	No	Yes	No
10	Mr. T10	Bachelor	Associate professor	Over 20 yrs	16-20 yrs	No	No	Yes	Yes

3.6 Data analysis

Raw quantitative data and qualitative data collected in this study have been analyzed to extract their underlying meaning (Basit, 2003). The use of both quantitative and qualitative data allowed for a comprehensive understanding of Chinese university EFL teachers' perceptions and practices related to ICC and intercultural teaching. Quantitative data provided a broad overview and a large-scale perspective, while qualitative data delves deeper into the research topic (Basit, 2010). In the present study, both types of data were collected and analyzed, and the analysis of each was described in detail below.

3.6.1 Quantitative data

Quantitative data collected in the current study underwent an analysis process that aligned with the framework outlined by Creswell (2015). This process consisted of several key steps:

1) Preparing the data for analysis: This step involved organizing and cleaning the collected quantitative data to ensure its accuracy and suitability for analysis. It included tasks such as data coding, data entry, and data verification. Notably, missing data (Cohen et al., 2018; Newman, 2014) were handled, and a normality assumption test was performed at this step to ensure the validity of the statistical analysis (Field, 2009, 2018).

2) Analyzing the data: In this step, various statistical techniques were applied to the prepared quantitative data. These techniques included descriptive statistics, inferential statistics such as one-way ANOVA and regression analysis, depending on the research questions and the nature of the data. As is commonly accepted among scientists, p-value below .05 was considered significant in the inferential statistics of this study (Field, 2018). The purpose of this step was to derive meaningful insights, identify patterns, and draw statistical conclusions from the data.

3) Reporting the results: The findings from the data analysis were presented in a clear and concise manner. This involved the use of tables and figures to summarize and present the key results. Additionally, a discussion of the main findings and their implications were provided to facilitate the understanding and interpretation of the results.

4) Interpreting the results: In this final step, the researchers interpreted the results of the data analysis in the context of the research objectives and the existing literature. This involved critically examining the findings, identifying any limitations or potential biases, and discussing the implications of the results for theory, practice, or further research. (Creswell, 2015, p. 175).

To be more specific, the quantitative data obtained through online and paper questionnaires were carefully prepared and organized using

Microsoft Excel. This process involved cleaning the data, removing any inconsistencies or errors, and structuring it in a suitable format for analysis.

Descriptive analysis techniques were employed to address the first two research questions, which focused on teachers' self-reported perceptions of ICC and intercultural teaching. Measures such as mean scores and standard deviations were calculated and ranked to provide an overview of the general tendencies and variations in teachers' perceptions (Field, 2018). This analysis aided in understanding the overall landscape of teachers' perspectives on ICC and intercultural teaching.

In addition, inferential analysis methods were utilized to explore the relationships between teachers' perceptions and their personal practical knowledge, as well as the potential impact of these perceptions on their teaching practices. These analyses involved more advanced statistical techniques, including regression analysis, to examine the significance and effect sizes of the observed relationships. By employing inferential statistics, the study aimed to draw meaningful conclusions and uncover associations between variables of interest (Field, 2018).

To conduct the statistical analyses, the researchers utilized the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, specifically version 26.0. SPSS was a widely recognized and robust tool for data analysis in the social sciences, providing a range of statistical procedures and tests to derive meaningful insights from the collected data. This

software enabled the researchers to perform comprehensive statistical analyses and drew reliable conclusions based on the quantitative data obtained in the study.

3.6.2 Qualitative data

The qualitative data collected in this study were analyzed using Thematic Analysis (TA) as outlined by Braun and Clark (2006, 2012). TA was a widely recognized for its flexible and accessibility, making it a suitable method for analyzing qualitative data. It was a method for "systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set" (Braun & Clark, 2012, p. 57), which "allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences" (Braun & Clark, 2012, p. 57).

Braun and Clarke (2012) provided a 6-phase guide for conducting TA, which served as the analytical framework in this study. The guide facilitated a systematic approach to coding and analyzing qualitative data. The 6 phases were as follows: 1) familiarizing with your data, 2) generating initial condes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and naming themes and 6) producing the report.

As highlighted by Braun and Clarke (2006), the process of TA "is not a linear process of simply moving from one phase to the next" (p. 86). Instead, it was a recursive and interwoven process that involved moving

back and forth between the phases (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86). In line with a more "theory driven" analysis approach, which was discussed in detail in Step 2, phase 2 and 3 (generating initial codes and searching for themes) occurred concurrently in most stages of the analysis. Similarly, phases 4, 5 and 6 also involved iterative processes that run in parallel. The procedures for data analysis in this study could be outlined as follows.

Step 1: Familiarizing with the data

The initial phase of TA involved immersing oneself in the data to develop a deep familiarity with its content and context (Braun & Clark, 2006). In this study, verbal data, such as interview transcripts were transcribed into written form to facilitate the analysis process (Braun & Clark, 2006).

While the process of transcription may be perceived as tedious, time-consuming, and occasionally frustrating, it served as a valuable means of immersing oneself in the data. Through this phase, I engaged in a comprehensive exploration of the data by listening to audio recordings, carefully reading and rereading interview transcripts, as well as reviewing class recordings. This phase was widely recognized as "a key phase of data analysis within interpretative qualitative methodology" (Bird, 2005, p. 227). as it enabled the researcher to construct meaningful interpretations from the data rather than simply transcribing sounds onto paper (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999).

It was important to note that, in order to preserve the authenticity of the raw data, the transcription process was conducted in the original language and were not translated until the subsequent stages of the write-up, when the findings were reported.

Through this comprehensive immersion in the data, I sought to develop a solid foundation for the subsequent phases of analysis. By becoming intimately familiar with the content, nuances, and subtleties of the data, I positioned myself to identify meaningful themes and patterns that would emerge during the analysis process.

Step 2: Generating initial codes and searching for themes

In this step of the analysis, a line-by-line coding approach was employed to generate initial codes and identify potential themes. The current study adopted a "theory-driven" approach to TA, which was a method that the researcher "approach the data with specific questions in mind that you wish to code around" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89). The interviews conducted in this research aimed to provide a deeper understanding of Chinese university teachers' perceptions of ICC, perceptions of intercultural teaching, and their practices in intercultural teaching.

Given the specific research questions and the existing theoretical framework, several candidate themes, such as perception of ICC, perception of intercultural teaching, and practice of intercultural teaching,

were identified prior to the coding process. During this step, data extracts were coded line-by-line, aligning them with the identified candidate themes. Furthermore, Byram's (1997, 2021) ICC models discussed in the literature review chapter were utilized as a theoretical lens to guide the identification of themes.

The coding process focused on capturing the surface meaning of the data extracts, analyzing them semantically, and identifying patterns of significance (Braun & Clarke, 2006). By applying this approach, meaningful patterns emerged, highlighting the connections and relationships within the data. This systematic coding and identification of themes allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the research questions and theoretical framework.

By generating initial codes and searching for themes in a theory-driven manner, this step of the analysis laid the foundation for further analysis and interpretation in the subsequent phase. It ensured that the data were examined in a structured and focused manner, enabling the identification of key themes and providing insights into the participants' perceptions and practices related to ICC and intercultural teaching.

Step 3: reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, producing the report

In this step, a meticulous review of the identified themes was conducted to ensure their coherence, relevance, and alignment with the dataset. The following activities were undertaken:

Firstly, all coded data extracts pertaining to each candidate theme and subtheme were thoroughly reviewed to determine the extent to which they substantiated the assigned themes. This process involved scrutinizing the extracts to ascertain their consistency and correspondence with the broader dataset. The aim was to ensure that each theme accurately captured “the meanings evident in the data set as a whole” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91).

Secondly, a comprehensive examination of the entire dataset was undertaken to identify any additional data that may have been overlooked during the initial coding phase. This comprehensive review sought to encompass any pertinent information that could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

Thirdly, a meticulous refinement of the identified themes was conducted to capture their essence and achieve internal coherence (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). This involved organizing the themes in a logical and coherent manner, enabling a clear and meaningful representation of the data. Through this refinement process, the objective was to provide to provide a coherent and internally consistent account of the research findings.

Finally, an analysis for each coded theme was undertaken, providing "a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tell within and across themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 93).

By undertaking these activities, the study aimed to generate a robust analysis that accurately reflected the patterns and meanings presented in the dataset. This step served as a critical step in synthesizing the findings and laying the groundwork for subsequent interpretation and reporting.

By engaging in this analysis, a vivid and nuanced picture of Chinese teachers' perspectives and actions regarding intercultural teaching could be revealed. These findings will be presented in detail in the subsequent chapters, shedding light on the intricate dynamics at play and contributing to a deeper understanding of intercultural teaching practices in the context of Chinese universities.

3.7 Reliability and validity

Cohen et al. (2018) emphasized the crucial significance of reliability and validity in research, as the absence of them can make a study "turn out to be worthless" (p. 109). It was noteworthy that the concepts of reliability and validity held distinct meanings in the context of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 245). Since the current study adopted a convergent mixed method, it was imperative to examine and discuss the reliability and validity of both the questionnaire

and qualitative methods. By doing so, the methodological rigor and integrity of the study could be ensured, enhancing the overall validity and reliability of the research findings.

3.7.1 Reliability and validity in the questionnaire

In quantitative research, reliability "means that scores received from participants are consistent and stable over time" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017, p. 318). Brown (2001) defined "survey reliability is the consistency with which a survey measures whatever it is measuring" (p. 171). Within the context of survey questionnaire, internal reliability was commonly assessed to evaluate the quality of the instrument. Huck (2012) defined internal reliability, or internal consistency reliability, as follows:

> consistency across the parts of a measuring instrument, with the "parts" being individual questions or subsets of questions. To the extent that these parts "hang together" and measure the same thing, the full instrument is said to possess high internal consistency reliability (Huck, 2012, p. 71).

Internal reliability was typically assessed using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, or referred as the reliability coefficient alpha, or simply the alpha (Cohen et al., 2018). The alpha was used to determine the degree of internal consistency among the items within a multi-item scale (Cohen, et al., 2018). Statistical software such as SPSS can be utilized to calculate the alpha coefficient (Huck, 2012). The resulting alpha ranges from 0 and 1, with values closer to 1 indicating higher internal reliability of the instrument (Huck, 2012).

In this study, the 77 items from the 16 questionnaire questions were imported into SPSS for analysis. The calculated alpha coefficient for Section 2, 3, and 4 was .95, .83 and .94, respectively, with an overall alpha coefficient of .94 for the entire questionnaire. These results indicate a high level of internal consistency for the questionnaire used in this research.

Validity referred to the extent to which a research study measured what it claimed to measure (Cohen et al., 2018; Huck, 2012; Nunan, 1992). Huck (2012) identified that "the most three frequently used procedures are content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity" (p. 82). In the current study, criterion-related validity was not applicable since a new instrument is not being introduced. Therefore, the focus will be on content validity and construct validity.

Content validity referred to "the degree to which the various items collectively cover the material that the instrument was supposed to cover" (Huck, 2012, p. 82). Brown (2001) suggested that researchers should provide an explanation of how the questionnaire questions were developed in order to defend the content validity (See Section 3.5.2.1 for details). In order to establish content validity for the questionnaire used in this study, multiple steps were taken.

Firstly, the questionnaire was developed based on a thorough examination of relevant literature and theoretical frameworks in the field. This ensured that the questions covered the key constructs and dimensions

of interest in investigating teachers' perceptions of ICC and intercultural teaching.

To further enhance content validity, a rigorous process of translation and expert review was conducted. The questionnaire was initially developed in English and then translated into Chinese by a proficient bilingual researcher. A bilingual external reviewer, with expertise in the field, carefully assessed the translated questionnaire for accuracy and appropriateness of language. Minor modifications were made based on the reviewer's suggestions to improve clarity and cultural relevance.

Additionally, a panel of four experts, comprising professors and doctors specializing in Chinese EFL teaching, reviewed the questionnaire for its content and structure. They provided valuable insights and recommendations regarding the overall framework and the sequencing of items. Their expertise and input ensured that the questionnaire adequately covered the intended content domain and effectively captured the research constructs.

By following these procedures, the content validity of the questionnaire was established. The systematic development process, translation, and expert reviews helped to ensure that the questionnaire items accurately represented the content domain of interest and were appropriate for the study's objectives.

Construct validity, also referred to as quantitative validity, “means that the scores received from participants are meaningful indicators of the construct being measured” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017, p. 318). In other words, construct validity examined whether the questions in the questionnaire effectively addressed the intended concepts under investigation (Nunan, 1992).

To ensure the construct validity of the questionnaire used in this study, several steps were taken. First, the questionnaire was developed based on previous research conducted by Sercu et al. (2005) and Zhou (2011), which provided a solid foundation for capturing the key constructs of interest. This alignment with established literature helped to ensure that the questionnaire was designed to measure the intended constructs accurately.

Furthermore, the questionnaire underwent a thorough review process by both the supervision team and a panel of experts. Their expertise in the field of Chinese EFL teaching and ICC was instrumental in confirming the alignment of the questionnaire with the intended constructs. Their validation of the modified questionnaire reinforced its construct validity by verifying that the questions effectively addressed the concepts they were intended to investigate.

By incorporating insights from previous research and obtaining validation from experts in the field, the construct validity of the questionnaire was established. This process ensured that the questionnaire

items were meaningful indicators of the constructs under investigation and that the questionnaire itself accurately measured the intended concepts.

3.7.2 Validity in qualitative methods

In qualitative research, Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) argued that "there is more of a focus on validity than reliability" (p. 318). Qualitative validity, also known as trustworthiness or authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017), generally "means assessing whether the information obtained through the qualitative data collection is accurate, such as examining the extent to which the information is credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017, p. 318). To ensure the validity of the qualitative data in this study, three key strategies were utilized, following the recommendations of Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely, member-checking, triangulation, and peer review. Firstly, data transcripts and reports were sent back to the participants to verify the accuracy of their ideas and perspectives. This process allowed for a collaborative dialogue between the researcher and the participants, ensuring the credibility and authenticity of the data.

Second is triangulation, which involved using multiple sources of data to corroborate and validate the findings. In this study, multiple sources such as interview transcripts and observation notes were utilized. By

integrating different perspectives and sources of data, the research findings became more comprehensive and reliable.

The third was peer review, which added an external perspective to the research process. A colleague who had expertise in qualitative research was invited to examine the data and provide feedback. This peer review process helped to ensure the rigor and accuracy of the analysis, enhancing the dependability and confirmability of the findings.

By implementing these strategies --- member-checking, triangulation, and peer review --- the validity of the qualitative data in this study was addressed. These approaches strengthened the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings, contributing to the overall trustworthiness and authenticity of the qualitative research.

In addition to addressing reliability and validity, the convergent mixed method design itself served to “bridge issues of reliability and validity” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 266). In a convergent mixed method research design, multiple independent methods were employed to measure the same objective construct, creating a triangulation between methods. This triangulation enhanced the reliability and validity of the research findings (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.8 Ethical considerations

Stutchbury and Fox (2009) emphasized the importance of considering ethical dimension in all research endeavors involving interactions with individuals, and "educational research is no exception" (p. 489). In the current study, ethical considerations were given the utmost importance right from the outset. An official Application for Ethical Approval was submitted to the Ethics Committee of UWTSD, and data collection activities commenced only after obtaining explicit permission on 16th December 2020. Throughout the entire duration of data collection and analysis, strict adherence to the ethical guidelines outlined in the UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice.

Research Data Management Policy was maintained to ensure the protection of participants' rights and well-being. Three key ethical issues were particularly emphasized and addressed in this study:

3.8.1 Informed consent

The first and foremost ethical consideration in conducting research was obtaining informed consent from participants. In this study, rigorous measures were taken to ensure that participants were fully informed and had the opportunity to provide their consent based on a clear understanding of the research process and its implications. To facilitate this, an Information Sheet (see Appendix B) was provided to participants, which

introduced the researcher and outlined the purpose and nature of the research. The Information Sheet explicitly addressed any potential risks or disadvantages associated with participation and emphasized the commitment to maintaining confidentiality and anonymity throughout the study. It also highlighted that participation was entirely voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any point without needing to provide a reason. To obtain formal consent, participants were requested to sign a Consent Form (see Appendix A). This form served as a confirmation of their understanding of the information provided in the Information Sheet. It also offered participants the opportunity to seek clarification or ask questions regarding their involvement in the research.

3.8.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity were important ethical considerations in this study. Personal information, such as names, addresses, was not collected in the survey, interviews or observations. All collected data was stored on a computer with password protection, and only be accessed by the researcher and the supervision team. Moreover, participants engaged in the interviews and observations were anonymized to further ensure confidentiality. Throughout the entire research process, strict measures were taken to maintain full confidentiality and anonymity.

3.8.3 Protection of participants

All necessary precautions were taken to protect the rights and well-being of all participants involved in the research. Prior to the formal interviews, each participant was contacted individually to discuss their availability and schedule the interviews at a time that was at their most convenient. Furthermore, participants were given the freedom to choose their preferred language of communication during the interviews, ensuring that they felt comfortable and at ease throughout the process. Additionally, participants were fully informed of their rights and were assured that they had the freedom to decline answering any questions during the interview. Also, they were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point, without facing any repercussions. It was emphasized that all data collected would be used solely for the purpose of the research and would be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

3.9 Summary of the chapter

This chapter presented a detailed account of the research methodology utilized in the current study. It started by providing a comprehensive rationale for employing a convergent mixed method approach, highlighting its suitability for addressing the research objectives effectively. The specific context of the study, focusing on the EFL teaching environment in

Chinese universities, was introduced to provide a clear understanding of the research setting.

The chapter proceeded to outline the research process, encompassing participant selection procedures, the chosen research instrument, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. The criteria and procedures for selecting participants were described, emphasizing the relevance and representativeness of the chosen sample. The research instrument, comprising various data collection methods, was discussed in terms of its alignment with the research objectives and the information sought. The data collection phase, including interviews, class observations, and surveys, was explained, underscoring the steps taken to ensure the engagement and cooperation of the participants.

Reliability and validity were examined in the context of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The chapter provided a comprehensive discussion of reliability, with a particular focus on internal reliability and the utilization of statistical calculations, specifically in the form of Cronbach's alpha, to assess the consistency of the research instrument. Moreover, the concept of validity was explored, with an emphasis on content validity and construct validity as the primary approaches employed to ensure the accuracy and meaningfulness of the collected data.

The chapter concluded with an analysis of the ethical considerations associated with the study. Informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and participant protection were identified as fundamental ethical principles. The measures undertaken to uphold these principles, such as providing participants with comprehensive information sheets and consent forms, ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, and respecting their rights to withdraw from the study, were discussed in detail.

Chapter 4 Results and discussions: teachers' perceptions of ICC

4.1 Introduction

Based on the application of a convergent mixed-method design, this study aims to investigate English teaching at the tertiary level in China from the perspective of intercultural dimensions, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Chapters 4 to 6 will present the outcomes and analyses pertaining to teachers' perceptions of ICC, their perspectives on intercultural teaching, and their intercultural teaching practices.

This chapter specifically focuses on exploring teachers' perceptions of ICC, with convergent results of the survey and semi-structured interviews. First, key quantitative results will be presented, followed by qualitative results, and then discussions based on the comprehensive synthesis of the results.

4.2 Results based on quantitative data

Section 2 of the questionnaire was utilized to investigate Chinese teachers' perceptions of ICC. It comprised of 20 items that were adapted based on Zhou (2011) and were presented on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (Not at all) to 5 (Very high). The participants were asked to rate their ability, knowledge or willingness regarding ICC. The section sought to assess the four components of ICC, namely, knowledge, attitude,

skills and awareness (Byram, 1997, 2021; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2000, 2020). Specifically, items 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 were geared towards gauging participants' knowledge of ICC, items 9 to 12 pertained to the attitude dimension, items 3, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15 and 16 sought to measure their skills related to ICC, and items 17 to 20 probed their level of the awareness of ICC. (See Appendix C)

Subsequently, the scores obtained for each of the four dimensions were treated as separate independent variables in order to undertake a more in-depth exploration of teachers' perceptions of ICC. To this end, the individual score for each dimension was added up and then the mean score was calculated for each of the dimensions in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the respective dimension.

A general average score was calculated for the 20 items in Section 2 to determine the overall level of ICC understanding among participating Chinese university EFL teachers. The results indicated that the mean score for ICC among the teachers was 4.42, which was higher than the average score of 3 on the 6-point Likert scale. This finding was indicative of a solid understanding of the ICC concept among the teachers.

To gain a more detailed understanding of teachers' ICC perception, the study conducted a descriptive analysis, which involved calculating the average scores for each of the four ICC dimensions. The results showed that the mean scores for the knowledge, attitude, awareness, and skills

dimensions were 4.03, 4.75, 4.69, and 4.34, respectively. These results suggested that Chinese teachers had a relatively high level of awareness and attitude towards ICC. However, their knowledge dimension scores were comparatively lower, which might indicate the need for further training and development in this area.

In addition, the study utilized statistical analyses, such as Independent Sample t-test and One-way ANOVA, to explore the differences in subgroups of Chinese regarding their perceptions of ICC. The Independent-Sample t test "is used to determine if the means of two unrelated samples differ" (Bryman & Cramer, 2009, p. 175), thereby identifying any statistically significant differences between two independent groups. One-way ANOVA was utilized as a statistical test to compare means across three or more independent groups (Field, 2018). If a statistical significance difference was found through the One-way ANOVA, a post-hoc comparison was planned for conducting pairwise comparisons to provide insight into the differences among all treatment groups (Field, 2018, p. 715). This method allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of the differences between subgroups and provided insight into the relationship between various factors and perceptions of ICC among Chinese university EFL teachers.

Independent-Sample t tests were conducted to investigate the impact of gender and intercultural teacher training on teachers' perception of ICC.

The results indicated that the mean scores of female teachers (M=4.42) and male teachers (M=4.45) did not differ significantly. However, a statistically significant difference ($t(220) = 4.07$, $p < .001$) was observed between teachers who had received intercultural training and those who had not. This indicated that teachers who had undergone intercultural teacher training possessed higher level of ICC than those who had not received such training. Specifically, teachers who had undergone intercultural teacher training displayed greater proficiency scores across all dimensions of ICC, including attitude ($t(220) = 3.04$, $p = .003$), knowledge ($t(220) = 3.81$, $p < .001$), awareness ($t(220) = 3.19$, $p = .002$), and skills ($t(220) = 3.93$, $p < .001$). It was worth noting that despite the significant difference between the two groups, they shared a commonality in that they followed a consistent pattern in the four dimensions of ICC. That is, both groups exhibited the highest level of competence in the attitude dimension, followed by awareness and skills, and the lowest level of competence in the knowledge dimension.

One-way ANOVA was performed to compare teachers' perceptions of ICC across various demographic factors, including age, degree, department, years of teaching, years of teaching *Intercultural Communication* and overseas experience. The results indicated no statistically significant difference among teachers of different age groups, years of teaching and with different academic degree, neither in their

overall perception of ICC nor in each dimension of ICC. However, significant differences emerged among teachers from different departments ($F(3,22) = 12.49$, $p < .001$), with different years of teaching *Intercultural Communication* and overseas experience (See Table 9). Regarding departments, four groups of teachers were included in the study, namely, teachers teaching English-major courses, college English courses, both of the above and none of the above but some other courses. The one-way ANOVA results revealed a statistically significant difference among the four groups. However, the post-hoc Bonferroni procedure (Field, 2018) further revealed that teachers who had the experience of teaching both English-major courses and college English courses presented a significantly higher perception of ICC than teachers from the other three groups. No significant difference was found among English-major courses teachers, college English courses teachers and teachers teaching other courses. Significant differences were also found among teachers with different years of teaching *Intercultural Communication*. However, the post-hoc test did not provide further comparison between each group. In terms of overseas experience, to gain further insights into the impact of the duration of stay abroad on teachers' perceptions of ICC, the present study categorized participating teachers into four groups based on the length of their overseas experience, in accordance with prior research by Tian (2013): those with no overseas experience, those who had stayed abroad for less

than 6 months, those who had stayed abroad between 6 months to 1 year, and those who had stayed abroad for more than 1 year. The one-way ANOVA results indicated a significant difference. The post-hoc Bonferroni test further showed that a significant difference was found between teachers with no overseas experience and those with overseas experience. No significant difference was found among sub-groups of teachers with durations of stay abroad (i.e., less than 6 months, 6 months to 1 year and over 1 year), which suggested that a short stay abroad help promote teachers' ICC.

Table 9 one-way ANOVA results regarding teachers' perceptions of ICC

Measure	ICC		F (5,216)	p
Years of Teaching *Intercultural Communication*	Mean	Standard deviation		
None	4.34	.69	2.79	.02
1-3	4.70	.70		
4-6	5.10	.49		
7-9	4.42	.12		
10-12	4.28	.65		
13 and above	4.52	.64		
Overseas experience	Mean	Standard deviation	F (3,220)	p
None	4.10	.65	20.08	.001
Less than 6 months	4.82	.59		
6 months to 1 year	4.51	.64		
Above 1 year	4.82	.51		

****The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.*

4.3 Results based on qualitative data

To provide a more comprehensive description of Chinese university teachers' perceptions of ICC, the present study invited participants to expound upon their definition of the aforementioned concept in the semi-structured interview.

4.3.1 Teachers' definition of ICC

During the definition phase, it was observed that a few participant teachers provided an indirect description of ICC instead of a direct statement. For instance, Ms. T8 articulated her understanding of ICC as follows: "I view ICC as opening a window for people. It facilitates the comprehension of foreign cultures and contributes to career advancement, while also enhancing one's understanding of their own culture. Additionally, it enables individuals to explore a more diverse and fascinating world." (我觉得跨文化交际就像，就像给人打开了一扇窗户一样，然后呢，他让你除了了解本国的文化之外，能够了解国外的文化，能够开拓自己的事业，然后呢，嗯，嗯，怎么说呢，能够去了解更精彩的世界吧。). Ms. T1's definition of ICC is also noteworthy. When asked to explicate the concept, she stated, "In my opinion, ICC is primarily characterized by one's external behavior. This implies that individuals are able to communicate seamlessly with people from diverse cultures and avoid any unexpected communicative challenges, or obstacles,

which attests to their competent ICC performance. Simultaneously, the internal aspect of ICC is also crucial as it requires individuals to possess awareness of both their own culture and foreign cultures, and to engage in reflective thinking about them. Lastly, individuals with strong ICC are at ease when communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds and are not easily overwhelmed by cultural differences" (嗯，跨文化交际能力，我的理解是,就是一个方面应该是表现在……这个外在的这种行为特征吧，就是，啊，能够很舒服的跟，啊，这个来自于不同文化的人能够，呃，沟通交流，没有造成这种，嗯，自己意想不到的这种障碍，或者说问题或者交际问题，那这个应该就是跨文化交际能力表现好的一个外在的这个行为特征，那么内在的话是，嗯，就是，应该是对这一个自，自身的这个文化和对这一个外部的文化都有一个，呃，我们说有一个 awareness，……自己知道，然后也反思过。然后，呃，另外还有一个心理特征，应该我，我是觉得就是，我其实刚才讲的就是其实应该是很舒服，就是对，就是很舒服，跟，跟来自于外国文化的人沟通交流，感觉很舒服，没有太多压力。).

Several teachers demonstrated consensus while defining ICC, in that they offered a broad definition while using key terms like *effectively* and *appropriately*, which are integral to the concept as defined by Chen and Starosta (2008) and Deardorff (2006). For instance, Ms. T2 articulated her perspective on ICC as follows: "Well, I believe that ICC refers to the capacity to communicate *effectively* with individuals from various cultural

backgrounds." (嗯，我认为跨文化交际能力，就是，嗯，你可以和不同文化的人之间进行……是否能够进行有效沟通的能力。). Similarly, Mr. T7 expressed a view similar to that of Ms. T2, stating: "In broad terms, my understanding of ICC pertains to the ability to communicate *effectively* with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds." (我的理解就是能够嗯，具备在不同的这个文化背景的人之间进行有效的交际交流的一种能力吧，这是我的理解……对，就是说宽泛的来说，我觉得应该就是这样的。). Furthermore, Ms. T4 offered her perspective on ICC by stating: "To me, ICC means the ability to communicate smoothly and *effectively* with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds to accomplish communicative objectives." (在我看来就是不同文化之间作为一个……带有交际目的，带有交际，具有，呃，交际要求，嗯，在不同文化之间，了解不同文化……然后达到一个流畅的，呃，并且有效的交流的一个目的。).

Ms. T3 and Ms. T9 attempted to define ICC by breaking it down into various components within the framework of the classic ICC model. Ms. T3, for instance, believed that ICC comprised several elements. "Well, in my opinion", she explained, "ICC encompasses several aspects. Firstly, ah, it involves language ability, which serves as the cornerstone of communication with individuals from different cultures. Next, it entails familiarity with intercultural background knowledge. Finally, I believe that attitude constitutes the third dimension of ICC. That is to say, the emotional

stance one takes [towards intercultural communication].” (嗯，我觉得就是跨文化沟通的能力，首先，啊，首先就是它，它包含几个方面吧，然后其中有一个，第一层应该是，我觉得应该是语言能力……就是说起码要能够建立起跟另一种文化沟通的一个桥梁，那这个桥梁，前提就是有，有语言作为一个基础…… 然后跨文化交际能力还需要一定的跨文化背景知识……然后第，第三个层面，我觉得应该是跨文化交际能力，还包含一个, ……就是说你是带着一种什么样的态度，或者说是情感态度方面的……这样子的一个心态去……). Similarly, Ms. T9 expressed her view on ICC by stating: “My understanding of ICC entails... First of all, having knowledge of the history and culture of foreign countries, as well as understanding the cultural differences between foreign countries [and our own]. And, during the communication process, we should acknowledge and appreciate these differences and behave accordingly, in accordance with the habits and customs of foreign cultures. I believe that this represents a kind of ICC.” (我的理解就是跨文化交际的这个能力……首先得具备一些就是说其他国家的呃，这个历史文化的这个知识，呃，然后呢就是对于别人国家……这种文化差异, ……也应该有所了解。那么我们在跟别人交往的过程中，我们能够认可并且尊重这种差异，啊，然后呢就是……能够做出这种就是比较得体的符合人家的这个，这个文化的这个习惯的这样的，这样的呃，这个行为，我觉得这就是一种跨文化交际的能力。).

In contrast to the other participants, Ms. T5 and Ms. T6 presented their definition of ICC in a clear, direct, and straightforward manner. Ms. T5, for example, simply stated, “ICC comprises attitude, knowledge, skills, and awareness” (跨文化交际的能力，……就是态度知识技能……再加上意识). Similarly, Ms. T6 offered her definition of ICC by stating, “ICC, as argued by many scholars, primarily consists of three aspects: knowledge, skills and attitude” (跨文化交际能力，我觉得就像很多学者讲的，它可能就主要包含了三个方面吧，知识，技能和态度。). Their definition of ICC aligns with the essential components of ICC as conceptualized by Byram (2021), Deardorff (2006) and Sercu (2005), indicating that they possess a comprehensive understanding of the concept.

The result of interview indicated that the teachers struggled to provide a clear and concise definition of ICC, often using vague and indirect language. It appeared that most participant teachers defined ICC from the perspective of achieving certain goals, such as communicative or personal development goals, or with components that are part of or beyond the ICC models reviewed in the literature. This suggested that the participants do not have a comprehensive understanding of ICC and are unable to grasp its core concept. Furthermore, some participant teachers emphasized language ability as the foundation of ICC, reflecting their linguistic perspective in perceiving the concept. This perspective was also observed in class observation, as Ms. T3 and Mr. T7 spent a significant amount of time

explaining language points in the text during two class periods (See Section 6.3.2 for further details).

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 Teachers' perceptions of ICC

A survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were employed to investigate teachers' perceptions of ICC from different perspectives. The survey questionnaire presented participants with pre-defined items related to ICC, while the semi-structured interviews allowed for open-ended responses to gather a more personal understanding of the concept from the teachers' perspectives. The convergence of both quantitative and qualitative results provided a more comprehensive and in-depth investigation of participated Chinese teachers' perceptions of ICC. By triangulating the results, the study was able to draw conclusions based on both the objective and subjective aspects of the participants' responses, offering a more nuanced understanding of the topic.

The result of the survey indicated that Chinese university teachers in this study, in general, presented a good understanding of ICC with a mean score of 4.42, which is higher than the average score on the 6-point scale. In comparison, more than a decade ago, Zhou (2011) reported that the mean score of teachers' perceptions of ICC was 3.24 (also with a 6-ponit scale), which suggests that Chinese university teachers' perceptions of ICC

have made significant progress in recent years. This improvement can be attributed to the growing emphasis on intercultural teaching in Chinese higher education and the increasing availability of resources and opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge of ICC. For instance, universities have been encouraged to integrate intercultural teaching into basic courses such as *College English*, *Integrated English*, and *English reading*, as well as offer specialized courses named *Intercultural Communication* to implement intercultural teaching. Moreover, the flourishing research on ICC and intercultural teaching has contributed to the dissemination of knowledge and best practices among teachers. In addition, the organization of contests and other activities that showcase students' ICC skills has raised the profile of ICC and motivated teachers to engage with the concept more deeply. Overall, the survey results suggest that participated Chinese university teachers are increasingly familiar with ICC.

The survey also provides a closer examination of teachers' understanding of ICC. Specifically, the average scores for four dimensions of ICC were calculated. The result indicated the sequence of teachers' perceptions of the four dimensions from low to high was knowledge, skills, awareness, and attitude. The lowest mean score suggests that teachers seemed to present the poorest perception regarding the knowledge dimension of ICC. It is interesting to note that intercultural teaching in

China has traditionally focused on passing on cultural knowledge and information (Zhang, 2012), yet the knowledge dimension fell into the lowest category in this survey. This might be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, in recent decades, Chinese teachers have placed more emphasis on cultivating positive attitudes and developing intercultural awareness and skills, rather than just passing on knowledge when promoting students' ICC. This may suggest that in recent years, Chinese teachers have emphasized developing positive attitudes and intercultural awareness and skills over passing on knowledge when promoting students' ICC. However, it calls for future research about this shift in emphasis. Secondly, the lowest score for the knowledge dimension might be due to teachers' insufficient knowledge about the target culture. This was reflected in the interviews, where Ms. T4, Ms. T5 and Mr. T7 all mentioned their own insufficient knowledge of the target culture as a challenge in conducting intercultural teaching. They expressed a lack of confidence in their knowledge of the target culture, which may lead them to avoid teaching this aspect of ICC.

This sequence of the four dimensions of ICC uncovered in the present study aligns with the findings of Zhou (2011). In her study, teachers demonstrated a superior comprehension of the attitude dimension of ICC and a relatively poorer understanding of the knowledge dimension of ICC. It is noteworthy that teachers' perception of these two dimensions, similar to teachers' overall perceptions of ICC, has improved over the past decade,

which is indicative of the positive impact of intercultural teaching advocacy at the tertiary level in China.

The results of the interview deviated from the survey findings, as teachers appeared to discuss ICC in a vague and indirect manner without any specific cues. This observation is consistent with previous research by Tian (2013) and Zhou (2011) conducted in the Chinese context. Both studies found that teachers exhibited a poor comprehension of the concept during the interview and recommended the need for intercultural teacher training. While the survey results indicate that Chinese university teachers have a reasonable comprehension of ICC and have made strides in recent years, the interviews suggest that this may not be the case. Thus, this study highlights the need for intercultural teacher training to bridge any potential gaps in teachers' ICC understanding.

4.4.2 Teachers' PPK and their perceptions of ICC

As reviewed in 2.3.2, teachers' PPK was characterized as externally verifiable factual propositions, in contrast to teacher beliefs, which reflected true subjective personal values (Buehl & Beck, 2015; Fenstermacher, 1994). It pertained to teachers' prior knowledge constructed from their personal experiences, such as educational lives and professional experiences (Golombek, 2009). In addition to exploring Chinese university teachers' overall perceptions of ICC, this study seeks to

further examine the influence of five aspects of teachers' PPK on their perceptions of ICC: 1) level of education, 2) additional intercultural training, 3) previous teaching experience, 4) previous intercultural teaching experience, and 5) overseas experiences. Level of education pertains to the degree obtained by the participating teachers. Additional intercultural training refers to whether teachers have received training related to intercultural teaching. Previous teaching experience refers to the number of years teachers have taught foreign languages. Previous intercultural teaching experience refers to whether teachers have taught the course *Intercultural Communication*, which is a typical way to conduct intercultural teaching at Chinese tertiary education. Overseas experience refers to teachers' experience of visiting, travelling or studying in a foreign country.

More specifically, the study aims to address the following research questions: a) the extent to which teachers' level of education influences their perceptions of ICC, b) the impact of additional intercultural teaching training on teachers' perceptions of ICC, c) the role of previous teaching experience in shaping teachers' perceptions of ICC, d) the influence of previous intercultural teaching experience on teachers' perceptions of ICC, and e) the effects of teachers' overseas experiences on their perceptions of ICC, and the ideal length of stay to maximize the benefits of such experiences. This section will focus specifically on the impact of these

factors on teachers' perceptions of ICC, contributing to a better understanding of how teachers' PPK shapes their perceptions of ICC in the Chinese tertiary education context.

Among the five factors, one-way ANOVA indicated that teachers' past intercultural teaching experience and overseas experience had a significant statistical influence on their perceptions of ICC (See table 9 for details). It is noteworthy that the impact of teachers' past intercultural teaching experience was examined for the first time in the Chinese context, with the results indicating a significant positive association between the two variables. Specifically, the findings suggested that teachers' experience of teaching the course *Intercultural Communication* had a positive impact on their perceptions of ICC. This finding is justifiable since teaching such a course would require teachers to actively engage in preparing themselves, thereby enabling them to update their understanding of ICC before transferring knowledge or theories to their students. Consequently, this approach may be a productive way to enhance teachers' perceptions of ICC.

The insights obtained from the interview might serve as evidence of the factors' influence. As such, the table below depicts PPK of ten teachers.

Table 10 PPK of the interviewed teachers

Name (Pseudo)	Level of education	Additional intercultural training	Previous teaching exp.	Previous intercultural teaching exp.	Overseas Exp.
Ms. T1	Doctor	No	11-15 yrs	No	5 yrs
Ms. T2	Master	No	16-20 yrs	No	Over 1 year
Ms. T3	Master	No	1-5 yrs	No	Less than 6 months
Ms. T4	Doctor	No	11-15 yrs	No	5 yrs
Ms. T5	Bachelor	Yes	26 yrs	Yes	Less than 6 months
Ms. T6	Master	Yes	1-5 yrs	Yes	Less than 6 months
Mr. T7	Doctor	No	26 yrs	No	1 year
Ms. T8	Master	No	16-20 yrs	No	No
Ms. T9	Master	No	16-20 yrs	No	1 year
Mr. T10	Bachelor	No	16-20 yrs	No	Over 20 yrs

As shown in the table, Ms. T1, Ms. T4 and Mr. T7 received their doctorates; Ms. T2, Ms. T3, Ms. T6, Ms. T8 and Ms. T9 had master's degrees. The remaining two teachers, Ms. T5 and Mr. T10 held bachelor's degrees. Interestingly, based on the interview and the class observation, there was no significant difference in performance between Mr. T7, who held a doctorate and Ms. T3, who had a master's degree. Eight out of ten teachers have taught English for over 10 years, while only two have less than 5 years of experience teaching a foreign language. Regarding overseas experience, six out of ten teachers spent over 1 year abroad, with only one teacher having no experience overseas. The majority of teachers had not received intercultural teaching training, nor had they taught *Intercultural Communication*, except for Ms. T5 and Ms. T6. During the interview, these two teachers were able to articulate a clear understanding of ICC and also

provided diverse self-report evidence of their intercultural practices. Upon examining similarities among the two teachers, it appears that their positive perception of ICC is not necessarily related to their highest degree or the longest stay overseas. Rather, the commonality is that they are the only two teachers who have received intercultural teaching training and have taught *Intercultural Communication.* Therefore, it can be concluded that additional intercultural training and intercultural teaching experience are the primary factors that positively influence teachers' perceptions of ICC.

In terms of the impact of overseas experience on teachers' perceptions of ICC, statistics showed a significant difference between teachers with no overseas experience and those with overseas experience. Zhou (2011) also reported that compared to teachers who had not been abroad, those with overseas experiences had a higher level in the knowledge dimension of ICC. However, no difference was found among sub-groups of teachers with different durations of experience abroad, such as less than 6 months, 6 months to 1 year and over 1 year, which suggests that even a short stay abroad can help promote teachers' understanding of ICC. This finding is also supported by Baker and Humphreys (2021). It may be beneficial for professional development programs to organize short-term study abroad campaigns to provide opportunities for intercultural communication and promote teachers' understanding of ICC. It may also encourage teachers to create opportunities for short stays abroad. It is worth mentioning that a

longer stay abroad does not necessarily result in a better understanding of ICC among teachers. Teachers who stayed abroad for over 1 year did not show a statistical difference in their perceptions of ICC compared to those who stayed less than 6 months abroad. However, Tian (2013) found that teachers who stayed abroad for 6 months to 1 year tended to demonstrate a better understanding of specific ICC-related items, including goals, components, and beliefs, than those who stayed for less than 6 months. Therefore, it is advisable to conduct further research to provide empirical evidence for the benefits of short stays abroad in promoting teachers' perceptions of ICC, and to investigate the minimum duration required for a positive effect.

Previous studies conducted by Tian (2013) and Zhou (2011) examined the factors that influence teachers' perceptions of ICC. Tian (2013) found that there was no significant difference among teachers of different gender, age, years of teaching and with varying degrees of overseas experience. However, significant difference was observed among teachers with different academic degrees. Zhou (2011) similarly identified that having an academic degree was a significant factor influencing teachers' perception of ICC. In addition, significant differences were also observed between teachers with and with no overseas experience, and between English-major course teachers and college English course teachers. Notably, both studies indicated teachers with a doctorate degree

showed a significantly higher level of ICC than those with a master's degree. However, this finding was not supported by the present study. Consistent with Tian (2013), the current study also found that differences in age, gender and years of teaching did not have an impact on teachers' perception of ICC. Both Zhou (2011) and the current study indicated that overseas experience was positively associated with ICC. The current study further showed that a longer time of stay abroad did not make a significant difference. While Zhou (2011) indicated that teachers who taught English major courses demonstrated a significant higher level of ICC than those who taught college English courses, the current study did not find significant differences between the two groups. Interestingly, the current study noted that teachers who had the experience of teaching both courses displayed a significant high level of ICC.

4.5 Summary of the chapter

This chapter examined Chinese university teachers' self-reported perceptions of ICC by using Section 2 of the questionnaire and a semi-structured interview where teachers were asked to define the concept. The result of the survey indicated that participated Chinese teachers possessed a positive perception of ICC, and their understanding of the concept had improved significantly over the past decade. Furthermore, their teaching approach had shifted from solely passing on knowledge to developing

intercultural skills and awareness. However, the results of the interview revealed that only two out of ten interviewees displayed a clear understanding of the concept, while the rest tended to define it using vague and indirect words, suggesting their struggle to grasp the concept.

The survey also explored the potential impact of various PPK on Chinese university teachers' perceptions of ICC. The results demonstrate that teachers who had experience teaching *Intercultural Communication*, had received intercultural teacher training, and had overseas experiences held more positive perceptions of ICC than those who lacked such experiences. Furthermore, the current study found that even a brief stay abroad, less than 6 months, could have a statistically significant impact on teachers' perceptions of ICC. Additionally, the survey indicated that teachers who taught both college English courses and English major courses demonstrated better perceptions of ICC than those who only taugt one. Overall, this study highlighted the crucial role of experience teaching *Intercultural Communication*, intercultural teacher training, overseas experiences, and teaching both college English and English major courses in promoting Chinese university teachers' perceptions of ICC.

Chapter 5 Results and discussions: teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the investigation into Chinese university EFL teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching. The study aimed to assess teachers' perceptions of the objectives of FLT, their perceptions of the objectives of intercultural teaching, and their opinions on specific issues related to intercultural teaching. The research employed a mixed methods approach, utilizing both a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview to collect data.

In Section 3 of the survey, teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements related to the aforementioned themes of intercultural teaching. Responses were scored on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (disagree completely) to 5 (agree completely). The semi-structured interview allowed teachers to express their own view on objectives of FLT and intercultural teaching as well as their opinions and beliefs about intercultural teaching.

The results of the survey and interviews are presented separately in this chapter, followed by a discussion of the convergent findings. In addition, the study examined the impact of teachers' personal practical knowledge on their perceptions of intercultural teaching.

5.2 Results based on quantitative data

5.2.1 Teachers' perceptions of foreign language teaching objectives

To explore teachers' perceptions of the objectives of FLT, a list of eight objectives was utilized, which was primarily adapted from Sercu et al.'s work (2005). These objectives were somewhat aligned with key objectives outlined in China's national Guidelines on college English Teaching (for non-English major students in higher education) (Committee of College English Teaching Guidance, 2020) and Teaching Guide for Undergraduate English Major (MoE, 2020). Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 5-point scale, with 1 indicating complete disagreement and 5 indicating complete agreement. Mean scores were then calculated to assess teachers' perception of the objectives of FLT, with a higher mean score indicating greater value placed on the objective.

Sercu et al. (2005) proposed a tripartite classification of the objectives of FLT, encompassing culture learning objectives, language learning objectives, and general language skills learning objectives (p. 20). Of the eight objectives employed in this study to elicit teacher perceptions of FLT objectives, seven were adapted from Sercu et al.'s framework, while the remaining objective was included to account for the Chinese context. The present study followed Sercu et al.'s classification scheme, with the additional item classified as an "other" objective. Analyses and discussions

were organized according to this classification scheme. The order of the objectives in the questionnaire was randomized to minimize order effects. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 11 Teachers' perceptions of FLT objectives

Items/Objectives	M	SD
Culture learning objectives		
Assisting my students to develop a better understanding of their own identity and culture.	4.59	.60
Developing in students an open mind and a positive disposition towards unfamiliar cultures.	4.57	.67
Promoting my students' familiarity with English cultures.	4.47	.66
Language learning objectives		
Promoting the acquisition of a level of proficiency in the foreign language that will allow the learners to use the foreign language for practical purposes.	4.64	.57
Promoting my students' interest in English learning.	4.48	.70
Assisting my students to acquire basic skills in language learning (such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, etc.)	4.44	.69
General language skills learning objectives		
Assisting my students to acquire skills that will be useful in other subject areas (memorize, summarize, give a presentation, etc.)	4.32	.67
Other objectives		
Assisting my students to pass certain examinations (such as College English Test Band 4, Test for English Majors, etc.)	4.09	.78

Note. M means mean score (ranging from 1.00 to 5.00), SD stands for standard deviation

The objective that received the highest mean score was identified as a language learning objective, specifically, "Promoting the acquisition of a level of proficiency in the foreign language that will allow the learners to use the foreign language for practical purposes" (M=4.64). The second most important objective, as ranked by participants, was a culture learning objective: "Assisting my students to develop a better understanding of their

own identity and culture" (M=4.59). Following this, the third most important objective was another culture learning objective: "Developing in students an open mind and a positive disposition towards unfamiliar cultures" (M=4.57). The fourth most important objective was also a language learning objective: "Promoting my students' interest in English learning" (M=4.48). It is noteworthy that the culture learning objectives ranked second, third, and fifth among the top six objectives, while the language learning objectives ranked first, fourth, and sixth.

Statistical analyses were conducted to determine whether demographic factors had an impact on teachers' perception of foreign language objectives. The result showed that there were no significant differences among teachers from different provinces, genders, ages, academic degrees, years of teaching, years of teaching *Intercultural Communication*, departments, and with different overseas experience ($p>.05$ for all eight goal statements). These findings suggested that the aforementioned factors did not influence teachers' perceptions of objectives of FLT, which was consistent with previous studies by Zhou (2011). The only significant difference was found in teachers who had received compared to those who had not ($t(220) = 2.23$, $p = .03$). The results of the independent t-test indicated that intercultural teacher training was significant in refreshing teachers' perceptions of FLT objectives. Furthermore, location (province), gender, age, academic degree,

department, and overseas experience did not need to be considered when providing professional development on the perception of intercultural teaching.

5.2.2 Teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching objectives

In order to further investigate Chinese teachers' perception of intercultural teaching, the researcher invited participants to indicate the extent to which they perceived possible objectives of intercultural teaching. A list of seven intercultural objectives (See Table 12) adapted by Sercu et al. (2005) was utilized and classified into three categories---knowledge dimension, attitude dimension, and skills dimension, which were covered by Byram's (1997, 2021) ICC model. Participants were asked to rate their understanding of these objectives on a scale of 1 (disagree completely) to 5 (agree completely). The higher the score, the more likely the teachers defined intercultural teaching from that perspective. The results were analyzed in accordance with the three dimensions. The table below presented the participants' responses to the intercultural teaching objectives.

Table 12 Teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching objectives

Item	M	SD
Knowledge dimension		
1). Providing information about English culture (daily life and routines, history, geography, political conditions, etc.)	4.48	.64
Knowledge dimension		
2). Providing experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions (literature, music, theatre, film, etc.)	4.46	.67

Item	M	SD
Attitude dimension		
3). Developing attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures.	4.55	.65
Skills dimension		
4). Promoting reflection on cultural differences.	4.59	.66
5). Promoting increased understanding of Chinese culture.	4.64	.63
6). Promoting the ability to empathize with people living in other cultures.	4.47	.73
7). Promoting the ability to handle intercultural contact situations.	4.58	.63

Note. M means mean score (ranging from 1.00 to 5.00), SD stands for standard deviation

The table presented above shows that the objectives related to the skills dimension received higher levels of support from teachers, as compared to those related to the knowledge objectives. This observation implied that Chinese university teachers predominantly associated intercultural teaching with the development of intercultural skills, as opposed to the mere transmission of intercultural knowledge.

The results obtained from the table revealed that objectives related to the skills dimension received greater support from Chinese university teachers compared to knowledge objectives. The objective that enjoyed the highest level of support in the skills dimension was “promoting increased understanding of Chinese culture” (M=4.64), followed by a related objective “promoting reflection on cultural differences” (M=4.59). The highest support suggested that Chinese foreign language teachers did not view the responsibility of promoting Chinese culture as exclusively that of Chinese and arts teachers. This may be attributed to the Chinese

government's efforts to build cultural confidence in the society, which has made teachers more sensitive to the role of Chinese culture in FLT. Additionally, the result also suggested that Chinese university teachers in this study viewed reflection on cultural differences as inseparable from their own cultural identity, which led to placing Chinese identity ahead of foreign culture when comparing Chinese culture with the target culture. Furthermore, the skills objectives "promoting the ability to handle intercultural contact situations" (M=4.58) and "promoting the ability to empathize with people living in other cultures" (M=4.47) received significant support, whereas knowledge objectives such as "providing information about English culture (daily life and routines, history, geography, political conditions, etc.)" (M=4.48) and "providing experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions (literature, music, theatre, film, etc.)" (M=4.46) received lower support. The higher recognition of the skills dimension corroborates the finding that participated Chinese university teachers tended to define intercultural teaching more as the transmission of knowledge than as the promotion of intercultural skills. Moreover, the high level of support for the attitude objective "developing attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures" (M=4.55) further supports this finding.

Statistical analyses were conducted to determine whether demographic factors had an impact on teachers' perceptions of the

objectives of intercultural teaching. Independent t-tests were performed to compare the perceptions of male and female teachers and those who had received intercultural teacher training with those who had not. One-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate the influence of variables such as province, age, degree, department, years of teaching, years of teaching *Intercultural Communication*, and overseas experience on teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching objectives. The t-test results indicated that participating teachers from different provinces, genders, and age groups, with different academic degrees, years of teaching, and years of teaching *Intercultural Communication*, had similar beliefs ($p > .05$). This suggests that intercultural teacher training programs may not need to consider these demographic variables when implementing their programs. In other words, there may be no need to separate teachers based on these variables to provide intercultural teacher training.

However, other factors such as department ($F(3,220) = 3.44$, $p = .02$), training, and overseas experience significantly influenced teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching objectives (See Table 13). Specifically, 32.1% of the participating teachers reported having received training on intercultural teaching. The mean score of their perceptions of the objectives of intercultural teaching was 4.65, while those who had not received training obtained a mean score of 4.48. The result of an independent t-test indicated that a significant difference between the two

groups (t (220) =2.43, p = .02). This suggests that intercultural teaching training can be helpful in promoting teachers' perceptions of the objectives of intercultural teaching. In terms of department (i.e., teachers teaching different courses, namely, college English course, English major course, both, or other courses), the results of a one-way ANOVA indicated significant differences among the groups (F (3,220) = 3.44, p = .02). Post-hoc tests were performed to further examine the differences between groups. The results showed a significant difference between teachers who taught college English courses only and those who taught both college English and English major courses (P = .03). This suggests that teachers who teach both courses (M=4.71) demonstrate a better perception of intercultural teaching objectives than those who teach college English courses only (M=4.43). Regarding overseas experience, a statistically significant difference (F (3,220) = 4.56, p = .00) was found among teachers with different lengths of stay abroad. Post-hoc tests further indicated that a significant difference (P = .00) was found between teachers who had never been abroad (M=4.41) and those who had stayed overseas for less than six months (M=4.76). This result may be encouraging for teachers who want to promote perceptions of intercultural teaching, as a short stay abroad of less than six months was found to be significant in helping to promote their perceptions.

Table 13 one-way ANOVA results regarding teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching objectives

Measure	Perceptions of intercultural teaching objectives		F (3,220)	p
Overseas experience	Mean	Standard deviation		
None	4.41	.58	4.56	.00
Less than 6 months	4.76	.36		
6 months to 1 year	4.61	.64		
Above 1 year	4.54	.55		

***The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.*

Previous research also examined the aforementioned factors. For instance, Zhou (2011) found that teachers from different departments demonstrated similar beliefs regarding the objectives of intercultural teaching, while those with a doctoral or master's degree considered intercultural teaching to be more significant than those with a bachelor's degree. Additionally, Tian (2013) determined that factors such as gender, age, and years of teaching did not significantly impact teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching objectives, but academic degree and overseas experience were significant influencing factors. Specifically, Tian (2013) found that teachers with a doctoral degree, compared to those with a master's degree, were more inclined to value an open and positive attitude, as well as their own culture and identity during intercultural communication. In contrast to Zhou (2011) and Tian (2013), the present study found that academic degree did not significantly influence teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching. With regard to overseas experience,

Tian (2013) found that teachers who stayed abroad for six months to one year rated certain objectives higher than those who stayed abroad for less than six months. However, the current study reported a significant difference between teachers who had never been abroad and those who had stayed abroad for less than six months, while no significant difference was found between the group who stayed abroad for less than six months and the group who stayed abroad for six months to one year.

Drawing on previous studies, the present study concluded that factors such as age, gender, department, and years of teaching may not significantly influence teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching objectives. However, the impact of teachers' academic degree and overseas experience on their perceptions remains inconclusive and warrants further investigation. Notably, this study contributes to the literature by examining the influence of factors such as provinces, years of teaching *Intercultural Communication*, and intercultural teacher training on their perceptions of intercultural teaching objectives, which have not been extensively examined before and therefore require further research in the future.

5.2.3 Teachers' opinions on intercultural teaching

In addition to investigating the objectives of FLT and intercultural teaching, this study explored teachers' overall views on intercultural teaching to gain a deeper understanding of their perceptions. To

accomplish this, participating teachers were asked to rate nine statements about intercultural teaching on a five-point scale ranging from “disagree completely” to “agree completely” (see Table 14). To provide a more straightforward presentation of the results, the percentages of responses for each scale were reported, as well as the mean scores for each statement. A higher mean score indicated greater agreement among the teachers regarding the statement.

Table 14 Teachers’ opinions on intercultural teaching

Item	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
1). In a foreign language classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the foreign language.	0%	4.0%	7.1%	35.7%	53.1%	4.38	0.79
2). Before I can teach culture or do anything about the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students have to possess a sufficient proficiency in the foreign language.	5.4%	19.2%	14.3%	37.5%	23.7%	3.55	1.20
3). When I only have a limited number of teaching periods, intercultural teaching has to give way to language teaching.	8.9%	28.1%	19.6%	33.0%	10.3%	3.08	1.18
4). Language problems lie at the heart of misunderstandings in international contacts, not cultural differences.	23.2%	32.1%	18.3%	17.4%	8.9%	2.57	1.26

Item	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
5). Language and culture cannot be taught in an integrated way. I have to separate the two.	56.7%	18.8%	8.0%	10.3%	6.3%	1.91	1.27
6). A foreign language teacher should present a positive image of the foreign culture and society.	6.7%	18.4%	19.3%	27.4%	28.3%	3.52	1.26
7). I would like to teach intercultural competence through my foreign language teaching.	0%	0.9%	4.5%	30.0%	64.6%	4.58	0.62
8). In the foreign language classroom students can only acquire additional cultural knowledge. They cannot acquire intercultural skills.	23.2%	29.9%	18.8%	21.0%	7.1%	2.59	1.25
9). Foreign language teaching should not only touch upon foreign cultures. It should also deepen students' understanding of their own culture.	0.9%	0.4%	2.7%	21.0%	75.0%	4.69	0.64

Note: M means mean score (ranging from 1.00 to 5.00), SD stands for standard deviation; 1=Disagree completely, 2=Disagree to some extent, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree to some extent, 5=Agree completely

The results indicated that Chinese teachers in current study held a positive attitude towards intercultural teaching. This positive outcome was reflected not only in their agreements but also in their disagreements. Specifically, the participating teachers demonstrated a clear willingness to implement intercultural teaching, as 94.6% of them agreed with the

statement “I would like to teach intercultural competence through my foreign language teaching”. Furthermore, they highly valued the role of Chinese culture in intercultural teaching, as evidenced by their response to Item 7, where 96.0% of teachers agreed with the statement “Foreign language teaching should not only touch upon foreign cultures. It should also deepen students’ understanding of their own culture”, with 75.0% expressing strong support for it. Additionally, 88.8% of the teachers supported the item “In a foreign language classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the foreign language”, indicating that the respondents believed that intercultural teaching was of equal importance with FLT.

On the other hand, what teachers disagreed on also reflected their positive attitude towards intercultural teaching. For example, regarding the statement “Language and culture cannot be taught in an integrated way. I have to separate the two”, 75.5% of the teachers expressed their disagreement, suggesting that they believed intercultural teaching should be integrated into FLT, rather than being separated. Furthermore, only 26.3% of the participating teachers supported the statement “Language problems lie at the heart of misunderstandings in international contacts, not cultural differences”. This indicated that teachers did not agree that language played a critical role in intercultural communication and instead valued culture more than language. Additionally, over half of the teachers (53.1%)

disagreed with the statement “In the foreign language classroom students can only acquire additional cultural knowledge. They cannot acquire intercultural skills”, suggesting that teachers also emphasized the importance of promoting intercultural skills in class, in addition to passing on knowledge. This is consistent with what was found in teachers’ perceptions of intercultural teaching objectives. Notably, teachers from different provinces appeared to have a similar understanding of the above items regarding intercultural teaching, as no significant difference was detected by one-way ANOVA, suggesting that participated teachers from ordinary universities in mainland China tended to have a similar attitude toward intercultural teaching.

Interestingly, the results also reflected inconsistencies in teachers’ attitudes toward intercultural teaching. For instance, when asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement “Before I can teach culture or do anything about the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students have to possess a sufficient proficiency in the foreign language”, a large number of teachers (61.2%) expressed support, suggesting that they believed that a certain level of language proficiency was a precondition for conducting intercultural teaching. Based on this, it might be reasonable to infer that language proficiency was critical in intercultural communication. However, only 26.3% of the participating teachers were supportive of the statement “Language problems lie at the

heart of misunderstandings in international contacts, not cultural differences". In addition, only a small proportion of teachers (37.0%) disagreed with the statement "When I only have a limited number of teaching periods, intercultural teaching has to give way to language teaching". This indicated that they still had a notable preference for FLT over intercultural teaching when limited teaching periods were available hence seemed to view intercultural teaching and FLT as separate entities. Nonetheless, 75.5% of them reported that they did not separate the two, and 88.8% of them agreed that "In a foreign language classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the foreign language".

When participants were asked to score on the statement "A foreign language teacher should present a positive image of the foreign culture and society", over half of the teachers (55.7%) agreed with presenting a positive image of the foreign culture and society, rather than an objective, realistic one. However, the percentage of supporters for this statement had decreased compared to participants in Zhou's (2011) study. More than a decade ago, Zhou (2011) reported that 78.6% of the participating teachers agreed with presenting a positive image of the foreign culture and society. The decrease indicated that teachers were more inclined to present a more comprehensive and realistic image of the target culture in intercultural teaching, which was also a positive reflection of their perceptions regarding intercultural teaching. In addition, a decreasing number of

teachers agreed with the statement “Language problems lie at the heart of misunderstandings in international contacts, not cultural differences”. In Zhou’s (2011) study, 63.2% of teachers believed that poor language proficiency was the major cause of misunderstandings in intercultural communication, whereas the number decreased to 26.3% in the current study. This decrease meant that participated teachers had recognized the importance of culture in intercultural communication, which could also be considered a positive outcome gained over the past decade.

5.3 Results based on qualitative data

The convergent mixed method design involved the collection of qualitative and quantitative data independently or in parallel, followed by the integration and comparison of the results obtained from both methods to explore a particular issue (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). To comprehensively explore Chinese university teachers’ perceptions of intercultural teaching, semi-structured interviews were conducted alongside the survey. The survey utilized a Likert scale to assess teachers’ perceptions of objectives of FLT and of intercultural teaching. In the interview, participants were invited to elaborate on their understanding of these objectives.

5.3.1 Teachers' perceptions of objectives of foreign language teaching

As mentioned in Section 3.3, EFL teaching in China can be classified into two distinct categories: college English teaching for non-English majors, and English teaching for English majors. Of the participants in the interview, Ms. T2 was a college English teacher, while Mr. T7, Ms. T9 and Mr. T10 exclusively taught English-major courses. The remaining participants had experience teaching both English majors and non-English majors. It is important to note that the discussion of the results will be closely linked to the objectives of FLT in Chinese university context.

English teaching at the tertiary level in China has traditionally emphasized the developing of students' linguistic ability in the past decades (Zeng, 2019). It was not until the latest version of the Teaching Guide for Undergraduate English Major was released in 2018 that there was a shift away from this focus on language skills in core courses (Zeng, 2019). This had a significant impact on teachers' perceptions of foreign language teaching, which was reflected in the interview. Of the ten teachers interviewed, five emphasized the importance of developing students' language skills in English teaching. Ms. T 3, Ms. T6 and Ms. T9 believed language skills should be given top priority in FLT as they viewed language skills as the foundation for developing other abilities. Ms. T 1 and Ms. T 2 on the other hand, viewed language skills as being equally important to intercultural communication skills in FLT.

As ICC has been officially incorporated into the national guidelines for FLT in China since 2000, teachers are now able to include promoting ICC as one of the objectives of FLT. Half of the participant teachers in this study mentioned the goal of promoting ICC when discussing the objectives of FLT. For example, Ms. T3 stated: "The second [objective] is to help students become familiar with foreign culture, background knowledge of foreign culture … thus promoting ICC to some extent. This is very important, and it has been included in the new Teaching Guide and National Standard." (那第二…就是对外国的文化，文化背景知识是非常了解，并且具备一定的跨文化能力的，这一点很重要，就是包括现在我们这个新的指南新的国标都把这个列进去了。). When discussing the promotion of students' ICC, Ms. T3 also emphasized the importance of understanding one's own culture. She said: "Only with a good understanding of the history and culture of the home country can they go, er, undertake [intercultural communication], ... how to say" (对于本国的文化历史也是很了解的，才能够去，呃，就是说承担这样一个，呃，……怎么说呢……).

Facilitating effective communication has been also considered as a key objective of FLT. As such, it is unsurprising that several participant teachers highlighted this goal in their interviews. For instance, when discussing objectives of FLT, Ms. T5 briefly stated "communication, exchange ideas" (交际吧，交流，交流思想). Mr. T7 echoed this view and

said: “I have always believed that goal of FLT---, … not the primary goal, I mean the ultimate goal is to enable [students] to communicate effectively with native speakers by using the foreign language, ….” (我一直认为外语教学的---, ……不是说主要目标，我的理解就是说终极目标，……，就是说能够用所学的这个外语和目的*（语）*，和这个，就是这个外语为母语的人能够进行有效的交际，……。).

In addition to the objectives previously discussed, Ms. T9 emphasized the importance of considering English as a lingua franca when setting objectives for FLT. She highlighted the instrumental nature of foreign languages, stating “because English is now used as a lingua franca, I think the main goal is... well, ... I think it can be taken as an instrument, an especially important instrument.” (我觉得主要的目标，……呃，因为英语它现在是一种通用语言，…… 我觉得应该是，它是一种，一种工具吧，特别重要的工具。). Moreover, when I summarized her points and confirmed with her: "Well, to sum up, you think that the goal of FLT is to help students in their future workplace, or, er, to meet the needs of life and work, to enable them to, er, use the language and intercultural knowledge they have learned to cope with various scenes of their life and work. Is that so?” (嗯，就是，总结起来就是您认为外语教学的目标就是培养，就是学生就是在以后的职场当中的，或者是说，呃，生活工作需要，就是让他能够，呃，能够利用他所学的这个语言，以及所学到的这种跨文化的知识，来应对他生活工作的各个场景。可以(这么说吗)?) She

responded with a positive answer, saying “yeah, right” (啊，对). Hence, she believed that the goal of FLT was to help students’ meet the demands of their future lives and careers.

5.3.2 Teachers’ perceptions on objectives of intercultural teaching

Based on Byram’s (1997, 2021) five *saviors* of ICC, objectives were set for each *savior* to serve as guiding criteria for assessing ICC in the context of FLT. Appendix F provides a detailed description of these objectives. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of teachers’ perceptions in this regard, participant teachers were invited to discuss the objectives of intercultural teaching during the interview. The discussions were conducted within the framework of Byram’s definition of objectives corresponding to the five *saviors*: knowledge, attitude, skills (of interpreting and relating, of discovery and interaction) and critical cultural awareness.

The most frequently mentioned objective of intercultural teaching was related to the skills dimension. Seven out of ten interviewed teachers discussed the dimension in a general manner, stating that intercultural teaching aimed to develop students’ intercultural communicative skills, enabling them act and behave appropriately and effectively and reduce misunderstandings during intercultural interactions. For instance, Mr. T10 stated that the objective of intercultural teaching was to promote students’

ICC without elaborating further. He stated, “Um, I think uh, I think the objective of intercultural teaching is to make students more competent in intercultural communication” (Um, I think uh, 我觉得跨文化教学的目的是让人更有 intercultural communication competence.). Ms. T2 believed that the objective of intercultural teaching was to facilitate effective communication with people from the target language culture as she said, “The ultimate goal is to apply the foreign language knowledge he/she has learned and, uh, ah, to enable effective communication with native speakers or individuals from other cultures.” (这个他的最终目的还是能够应用他所学到的外语知识和，呃，啊，不同文化之间的，或者母语啊母语者能够进行有效沟通。). Ms. T4 described the objective of intercultural teaching as follows: “Intercultural teaching is - to, um, guide students to use the language appropriately and effectively, … to facilitate their future life, study and work by minimizing communication mistakes, misunderstandings, and potential troubles they may encounter.” (跨文化教学就是——能，嗯，引导学生正确的有效的使用这门语言,……更好地服务于他们今后的，呃，生活、学习和工作，呃尽量减少一些不必要的在交际方面的，……错误，或者是会引，引起的误解，或者是就是尽量给他们减少可能会碰到的一些麻烦吧。).

Five out of the ten interviewed teachers acknowledged the importance of the knowledge dimension of ICC. They asserted that one of the objectives of intercultural teaching was to impart a body of knowledge to

students. During the interview, Ms. T4, Ms. T8, and Ms. T9 elaborated on their specific definitions of knowledge. Ms. T8 defined knowledge as encompassing the culture, history, and traditions of the target language. Ms. T4 identified cultural aspects and basic norms as forms of knowledge. Ms. T9 emphasized the importance of presenting differences in areas such as history, culture, and conventions between English-speaking countries and China. Byram (1997, 2021) identified 12 types of knowledge that fulfill the objectives of this dimension in ICC, which includes the types of knowledge referred to by Ms. T4 and Ms. T8.

Regarding the attitude dimension, two interviewed teachers, Ms. T5 and Ms. T6 expressed that intercultural teaching should cultivate students' positive attitude towards intercultural communication. Ms. T5 stated, "[The aim of] intercultural [teaching] is to cultivate students' intercultural awareness, improve their attitudes, enhance their skills, and develop their intercultural competence." (跨文化那就是培养学生嘛，培养学生的跨文化意识嘛，然后提高他们的……就是端正他们的态度嘛，提高他们的技能嘛，就培养学生的……就，就提高学生的跨文化能力嘛。). Ms. T6 further explained: "Another important objective, I think, is that intercultural teaching should also help students, er, learn to be tolerant, ah, in the process of learning. That is, to learn to be tolerant and respectful." (另外一个我觉得还有很重要的一个，一点就是跨文化教育也应该，就

是让学生就是呃，在这个学习的过程当中去学会包容，……呃，学会包容、尊重。).

In terms of the awareness dimension, only two out of the ten interviewed teachers, namely Ms. T1 and Ms. T5 discussed this aspect. Ms. T5 emphasized the importance of cultivating intercultural awareness in intercultural teaching. She stated: “Because I myself have a relatively strong intercultural awareness, I think, for me, I didn’t include awareness in [the objectives], but in the process of teaching, knowledge can never be exhausted, so the cultivation of awareness should be given top priority.” (因为我本人是比较具有跨文化意识的，我觉得，所以意识对我来说，我就没有把它放进去，但是在教学的这个过程中，因为知识他是不能穷尽的，但是意识的养成，那是第一位重要的。).

5.3.3 Teachers’ other beliefs revealed in the interview

In addition to the objectives of FLT and intercultural teaching, teachers’ perceptions of intercultural teaching could also be reflected by responses during the interview.

Half of the interviewed teachers believed that intercultural teaching should be mainly implemented through a specialized course in *Intercultural Communication*, rather than through other courses such as *College English* for non-English majors or English-major courses such as *Integrated English* or *Advanced English*. Three teachers explicitly

expressed this idea when discussing the objectives of intercultural teaching. For instance, Mr. T7 said: “In my opinion, intercultural teaching, which is taught in a specialized course, … should focus on…” (跨文化教学如果就是说，作为我，我的理解是作为一个专门的的一个课程吧来进行教学的话，……， 应该就是更着重于……). In addition, Ms. T8 stated: “I think the main goal of intercultural teaching is fulfilled through …this *Intercultural Communication*, um, this course, to help students improve their understanding of foreign culture, tradition and history…” (我觉得跨文化教学的主要的目标的话，……通过这个跨文化，嗯，这门课程吧，能够使学生去增进对国外的文化、传统、历史的了解……).

Two of the interviewed teachers implicitly expressed the aforementioned view that intercultural teaching should be primarily implemented through the course *Intercultural Communication*, rather than through other courses such as *College English*, *Integrated English* and *Advanced English*, when discussing challenges in implementing intercultural teaching.

Ms. T2, as a college English teacher, stated that she had not encountered any challenges because intercultural teaching, takes up merely a quarter of her class time, is not the focus of the course, implying intercultural teaching is the focus of the specialized course *Intercultural Communication*. She said: “Hmm... I spent only 1/4 of my class on intercultural [teaching], it is not my foucs, so I haven’t had [challenges] so

far." (嗯……因为跨文化在我的课程当中只占 1/4 的时间，所以不是我的主要内容，所以目前还没有。). Similarly, Ms. T9, who taught *Advanced English*, indicated that she could handle intercultural dimension involved in her course with some help, as it only touches on a few aspects which she could get prepared in advance with some help. She stated:" Err - Err- it seems that I haven't [met any challenges yet], because my (class), after all, it involves a few aspects, and my teaching reference, or I can deal with it by consulting. That is to say, ... in terms of intercultural communication [teaching], I can cope with what's involved in my class." (呃——嗯——好像目前还没有，因为我的这个*（课）*它因为，它毕竟这个课它涉及到只是一些方面，而且这个我的教参呀，或者说我通过查阅资料都是能够解决的。就是说嗯，如果说就跨文化交际来说，……我的这个课里面所涉及到的都是我能够准备的。). They implied that the course *Intercultural Communication*, rather than their general English courses (*College English* and *Advanced English*), is better equipped to undertake intercultural teaching as it is specifically designed for that purpose.

The perception of intercultural teaching as being solely the responsibility of the *Intercultural Communication* course could be attributed to the influence of national guidelines and standards for foreign language education. These documents encouraged universities to offer a specific course in *Intercultural Communication* to promote students' ICC.

As a result, many Chinese universities have implemented such a course for undergraduate students. Consequently, it is understandable for teachers to assume that the *Intercultural Communication* course is primarily responsible for fostering students' ICC, given the emphasis placed on it in the national guidelines and standards.

In addition, the interviewed teachers indicated that in EGP courses, intercultural teaching typically involved the introduction of background knowledge, which could be classified under the knowledge dimension outlined by Castro and Sercu (2006). When asked about how intercultural teaching was implemented in class, Mr. T7 specified that intercultural teaching in his *Advanced English* course referred to teaching factual knowledge about culture. He explained: "I don't think it's that kind of intercultural teaching. Maybe it's cultural teaching, I think, teaching culture" (我觉得不完全是那种跨文化教学，可能是那种文化教学吧，我感觉是文化教学。). When prompted about whether he meant introducing background knowledge to aid students' comprehension of reading materials, he affirmed, "Yes, background knowledge, or a broad introduction to some cultural facts." (背景知识——或者是一些文化知识的拓展。).

Another perception of intercultural teaching that emerged from the interview was that teachers recognized the importance of intercultural teaching. Ms. T3, for instance, stated: "I believe that intercultural teaching,

um, is absolutely necessary, for, er, English learners and foreign language learners. It should be a compulsory course for English majors." (我觉得跨文化教学，嗯，完全是，是非常有必要的，而且是对于，呃，英语学习者而言，外语学习者而言是应该是必修，必修的一个，呃，这个专业课。). She further explained: "That is to say, as an elective course [in her university], which makes it marginalized, I think. It should be one of the core courses…" (就是说它作为选修课，我觉得都，都，都还算是把它边缘化了一点，而我觉得应该它是主要课程之一……).

One additional perception that emerged from the interviews was that teachers demonstrated their willingness to implement intercultural teaching. They reported that students became more interested and engaged when intercultural content was introduced, resulting in a more dynamic and active classroom environment.

5.4 Discussion

5.4.1 Perceptions of foreign language teaching objectives

From the results of the survey, culture learning objectives ranked 2nd, 3rd, and 5th among the top six objectives, while language learning objectives ranked 1st, 4th, and 6th. These results suggest that Chinese university teachers in this study consider cultural learning objectives to be of equal importance as language learning objectives in FLT. This finding can be interpreted from two perspectives.

Firstly, the ranking of objectives indicates that culture learning objectives are generally perceived to be of equal importance with language learning objectives, which is different from a decade ago when Zhou (2011) found culture learning objectives were considered secondary to language learning objectives. This shift in perception may be attributed to changes in the national syllabus. Intercultural education was first incorporated in the national syllabuses in 2000, defining the nature of English teaching objectives only, without providing specific suggestions and guidance (Zhang, 2012). Therefore, intercultural teaching was not actually implemented in classroom practice (Zhang, 2012). However, the national syllabuses were updated in recent years and now provide more practical guidance in curriculum design to promote ICC (Zhang, 2012). As a result, intercultural courses like *Introduction to Western Civilization* and *Intercultural Communication* have been established in Chinese universities, giving teachers more opportunities to directly access ICC thus making them more sensitive to culture learning in FLT. Furthermore, intercultural teaching is now widely recognized as an important development direction of FLT and has been fully implemented (Zhang et al., 2018). Moreover, more forums have been held to discuss teaching and research regarding intercultural teaching, providing teachers with more opportunities to update their perception of it (Pan & Zhu, 2017, Zhang, 2012). In addition, college students' intercultural competence contests have been launched to

assess intercultural teaching (Zhang et al., 2018). As tutors of the contest, teachers had to train and promote their own ICC in advance to help their students win the contests, which actively engaged them in intercultural teaching and promoted their perception. This was the case for the researcher, who became more sensitive to ICC and intercultural teaching after serving as a tutor in 2018.

Secondly, it is worth noting that while Chinese university teachers in current study valued culture learning objectives highly, the language learning objective of "promoting the acquisition of a level of proficiency in the foreign language that will allow the learners to use the foreign language for practical purposes" remained the top-ranked objective in foreign language teaching. The objective reflects the general objective of FLT outlined in Chinese national English teaching syllabuses, which emphasize the need to meet the demands of the nation, society, economy, education institutions and individual development (Committee of College English Teaching Guidance, 2020). A good command of English is a steppingstone for students in finding good jobs, going abroad, or furthering their education at home or abroad, and so on. Therefore, it was unsurprising that a pragmatic language learning objective is placed at the top of all objectives. These results further suggest that the national syllabuses significant influence over teachers, and that language learning objectives continue to be viewed as a priority in FLT. This finding is supported by

results from the qualitative study. Five out of ten interviewed teachers placed the language learning objective of promoting students' language skills in first place, suggesting that the priority of language learning objectives in FLT have been firmly established among teachers. This is also evident in the classroom observation, where a complete dominance of language learning was observed (See Section 6.3.2 for details).

It is interesting to find that teachers believed that "assisting my students to pass certain examinations (such as College English Test Band 4, Test for English Majors, etc.)" was the least important objective in foreign language teaching (M=4.09). This objective was added to the list as the researcher, also a Chinese university English teacher, recognized the impact of these exams over the past decade. English teaching in China has been largely considered as test-oriented for almost two decades in the majority of Chinese universities (Gu & Liu, 2005; Wang & Guan, 2020). Students were encouraged to learn English primarily for the purpose of passing exams (Ren, 2011). As a result, teaching has been heavily influenced by the need to help students pass various exams. For a long period, FLT placed significant emphasis on CET-4/CET-6 and TEM-4/TEM-8, as passing these exams was a prerequisite for graduation in the language learning part or for competitiveness in the job market (Cheng, 2008; Gu & Liu, 2005: Hu, 2005). A higher passing rate of the exams was considered a sign of better teaching quality. Consequently, teachers had to

relate their class to the exams to meet students' practical purposes, or their class might be considered unhelpful. This made it difficult for teaching to "extend to non-test contexts" (Ren, 2011, p. 243). Teaching was almost entirely focused on preparing students for exams, and passing the exams became the primary goal of teaching (Cheng, 2008).

However, the result revealed that teachers considered helping students pass exams as the least important objective. The reasons behind might be twofold. First, exams like CET have been shown to "induce negative washback on students' learning" (Sun, 2016, p. 177), with learning being solely focused on the test-taking skills and tested contents of the curriculum, at the expense of "long-term English language proficiency development" (Sun, 2016, p. 177). Thus, CET was criticized for its limited improvement in students' English proficiency. Moreover, CET focused on measuring discrete linguistic forms rather than integrative skills and discourse-driven knowledge (Ren, 2011). College students who passed the exam were not necessarily capable of working in the job market. CET was considered a test with questionable validity that hindered real language learning (Ren, 2011). As a result, many universities have started to reduce the importance of such exams in language teaching. Administrators no longer rely solely on the performance of teachers and students in exams for evaluation. Furthermore, CET-4 is no longer a basic requirement for graduation. Students can obtain a bachelor's degree even if they fail CET-

4 but meet other language learning requirements. This not only reduces students' pressure to pass the exams but also frees teachers from being limited by exam preparation. Second, teachers seem to be unwilling to restrict FLT to exam preparation. They prefer not to devote themselves to solely language learning objectives when given the choice.

5.4.2 Perceptions of objectives of intercultural teaching

The survey results revealed that objectives related to skills dimension were more strongly supported by Chinese university teachers in comparison to knowledge objectives. This suggests that teachers view intercultural teaching as primarily focused on promoting intercultural skills, rather than imparting intercultural knowledge (refer to Section 5.2.2 for detailed discussion). This finding is consistent with the results of the interviews conducted with ten teachers, in which seven teachers emphasized the importance of skills objectives for intercultural communication. They believed that developing intercultural skills is critical for effective communication, reducing misunderstandings, and promoting appropriate behavior. Therefore, intercultural teaching should prioritize this dimension to help students acquire the necessary skills for intercultural communication.

However, the actual intercultural teaching practice of the teachers did not align with their self-reported perception. During classroom

observations, it was observed that teachers devoted minimal time to intercultural teaching and primarily focused on introducing cultural knowledge (See Section 6.3.2 for details). This inconsistency between teachers' perceptions and practices regarding intercultural teaching could be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the recent advocacy of intercultural teaching by the Chinese MoE (Committee of College English Teaching Guidance, 2020; MoE, 2020) has positively impacted teachers' self-reported perceptions of intercultural teaching in both the survey and interview, leading to increased confidence in defining intercultural teaching. Secondly, language teaching has been the main focus of Chinese foreign language education for several decades (Zeng, 2019; Zhang, 2012), with culture teaching often viewed as a mere accessory to language teaching, limited to introducing cultural facts to facilitate text comprehension when time permits (Zhang, 2012). Thus, despite recent advocacy to prioritize intercultural teaching, it may be challenging for teachers to make significant changes in their classroom practices. Thirdly, intercultural teaching in China is a relatively new trend, particularly when compared to western countries, and many teachers may not have received adequate training in this area thus cannot put it into practice (Zhang, 2012). Fourthly, as reported by the interviewed teachers (see Section 6.3.1.3), English language teaching in China is heavily reliant on textbooks, which often do not provide sufficient material for intercultural teaching. Finally,

as noted by teachers in the interviews, intercultural teaching poses various challenges in actual teaching, and may be limited to language teaching in some instances (see Section 6.3.1.4).

Based on the results of the interviews, it was found that most teachers only had a limited understanding of the objectives of intercultural teaching, which is consistent with the findings of Zhou (2011). Specifically, the skills dimension was perceived as the most important objective of intercultural teaching, followed by knowledge, attitude, and awareness dimensions. In contrast, the teachers interviewed in Zhou's (2011) study reported the knowledge dimension as the most important objective. Additionally, two objectives of intercultural teaching identified in Zhou's study (2011), namely promoting students' understanding of their home culture and helping them to develop as a whole person, were not mentioned by interviewees in the current study.

5.4.3 General opinions on intercultural teaching

The survey and interview investigated teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching from different perspectives. Overall, the results showed that participated teachers expressed a clear willingness to engage in intercultural teaching and had a greater awareness of its value in FLT. This positive attitude can also be attributed, in part, to the recent emphasis on intercultural teaching as discussed in Section 5.4.1 and 5.4.2.

However, there were discrepancies between results from the survey and the interview. First, in the survey, teachers generally expressed a positive attitude toward intercultural teaching, while the interview revealed a more narrow-minded view. Specifically, some teachers believed that intercultural teaching was only relevant to specific courses, such as *Intercultural Communication*, rather than being a concern in EGP courses. Second, while the survey indicated that participated university teachers placed greater emphasis on skills dimension than knowledge dimension in intercultural teaching, some teachers in the interview believed that what they did in the classroom was more like introducing cultural knowledge. In addition, they were inconsistent in their responses to different survey items (See Section 5.2.3 for details).

Taken together, the study provides a more comprehensible understanding of Chinese university teachers' attitude toward intercultural teaching. They expressed inconsistent opinions not only within the survey but between the survey and interview, suggesting that their attitude toward intercultural teaching was dynamic and multi-dimensional, rather than stable and uniform.

5.5 Teachers' PPK and their perceptions of intercultural teaching

To probe deeper into teachers' perceptions, this study investigated how their PPK influenced their views on intercultural teaching.

Specifically, this study examined whether teachers' level of education, teaching experience, experience of teaching *Intercultural Communication*, overseas experience, and participation in intercultural teacher training had an impact on their perceptions of intercultural teaching. The teacher groups were treated as the independent variable, while their perceptions of intercultural teaching were the dependent variable. Section 3 of the questionnaire explored teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching, consisting of 24 items that were consolidated into a single variable.

One-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of teachers' education background, years of teaching, and years of teaching IC on their perceptions of intercultural teaching. An independent t-test was performed to assess the impact of teachers' intercultural teachers training experience and overseas experience on their perceptions of intercultural teaching. dependent variables---teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching.

The results indicated that only overseas experience had a statistically significant effect on teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching ($t(222) = 2.45$, $p = .02$), while the other four factors did not have a significant impact.

The results of the study demonstrate that overseas experience is a critical factor influencing teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching. This conclusion is supported by the finding that overseas experience not only significantly impacted teachers' perceptions of ICC (as discussed in

Section 4.4.2), but also their perceptions of intercultural teaching. Specifically, the study revealed that even a relatively short period of overseas experience (i.e., less than 6 months) can positively impact teachers' perceptions. Therefore, it can be suggested that Chinese university EFL teachers would benefit from opportunities to go abroad to enhance their perceptions of intercultural teaching.

Additional significant factors revealed in the interview that influenced teachers' perceptions were the prior experience of intercultural teacher training and teaching *Intercultural Communication*. During the interview, two teachers (Ms. T5 and Ms. T6) exhibited a profound comprehension of intercultural teaching, potentially due to their prior exposure to such experiences, as both teachers explicitly acknowledged the beneficial impact of the experiences. These results highlight the importance of organizing training programs to promote teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching and encouraging them to engage in intercultural teaching practice. Additionally, these results provide encouragement for teachers who aspire to enhance their perceptions of intercultural teaching through short-term stay overseas.

5.6 Summary of the chapter

This chapter explored Chinese university teachers' perceptions regarding intercultural teaching. The results indicated that participated

Chinese university teachers had a multidimensional and internally inconsistent understanding of intercultural teaching. In particular, the following conclusions could be drawn:

Firstly, participated teachers in ordinary Chinese universities demonstrated an increased awareness of the role of culture in FLT and expressed a clear willingness to implement intercultural teaching in their classroom. They perceived intercultural teaching as being of equal importance as language teaching.

Secondly, the survey revealed that teachers held the view that intercultural teaching and language teaching could not be taught separately. Rather, intercultural teaching should be integrated into FLT. However, when faced with time constraints in class, they tended to prioritize language teaching over intercultural teaching.

Thirdly, regarding the objectives of intercultural teaching, Chinese teachers in this study exhibited a greater concern for the skills dimension compared to the knowledge dimension objectives. This suggested that they viewed intercultural teaching as a means of promoting intercultural skills, rather than simply transmitting information in a traditional sense. However, during the interview, some teachers reported that intercultural teaching in their classroom primarily involved introducing cultural background knowledge to facilitate their students' comprehension of the text.

Fourthly, participated Chinese university teachers still attributed significant importance to language teaching as reflected by their prioritization of language learning objectives in FLT. This was consistent with the findings from the interview data, which indicated that intercultural teaching was not a central focus in most EGP courses, but rather in the course dedicated specifically to *Intercultural Communication*. This suggested that language teaching continued to be the foremost priority in EGP courses, while the integration of intercultural teaching into FLT had yet to achieve widespread adoption.

Lastly, the Chinese university EFL teachers in this study believed that language proficiency represented a fundamental precondition for effective intercultural teaching, implying that intercultural teaching should be grounded in students' language proficiency level. Nevertheless, the teachers did not concur with the notion that language proficiency constituted the crux of misunderstandings in intercultural communication. This underscored a certain degree of ambiguity in the teachers' grasp of the intricate interplay between language proficiency and intercultural communication.

Chapter 6 Results and discussions: teachers' practices of intercultural teaching

6.1 Introduction

Following the exploration of Chinese university teachers' perceptions on ICC and intercultural teaching in Chapters 4 & 5, this chapter examines their intercultural teaching practices in classrooms.

To conduct this inquiry, a convergent mixed method was adopted, consisting of a survey questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. The survey questionnaire required the teachers to rate their frequency of involvement with various topics, as well as the frequency with which they practiced specific intercultural teaching activities on a scale of 1 (Never) to 4 (Always). Moreover, they were requested to estimate the average time dedicated to intercultural teaching in the classroom. The semi-structured interview encouraged the teachers to discuss the average amount of time allocated to intercultural teaching, as well as methods, activities, topics, materials employed, and challenges encountered while implementing intercultural teaching. During the classroom observation, the researcher served as a non-participant observer, recording all intercultural teaching practices of the observed teachers.

This chapter commences by presenting the results of the quantitative and qualitative studies separately. Following that, the findings from both

studies are synthesized to develop a comprehensive discussion of intercultural teaching practices in the Chinese university context.

6.2 Results based on quantitative data

6.2.1 Topics for intercultural teaching

The present study employed ten crucial topics pertinent to intercultural teaching, which were adapted from Sercu et al. (2005). Teachers were requested to indicate the frequency with which they covered these topics in the classroom setting on a 4-point scale. To enhance the clarity of the results, the 4-point scale was reduced to a 2-point scale: Not frequently and Frequently. Specifically, Never and Once in a while were grouped under Not frequently, while Often and Always were grouped under Frequently. The results were presented in the form of frequency and percentage for each topic and are detailed in Table 15.

Table 15 The frequency of cultural topics addressed by teachers

Item	Never	Once in a while	Often	Always
	Not frequently		Frequently	
1). Daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink etc.	0.9%	16.6%	51.6%	30.9%
	17.5%		82.5%	
2). Education, professional life	1.3%	25.1%	48.4%	25.1%
	26.4%		73.5%	
3). Values and beliefs	1.8%	34.1%	40.4%	23.8%
	35.9%		64.2%	
4). Traditions, folklore, tourist attractions	0.4%	28.3%	47.5	23.8
	28.7%		71.3%	

Item	Never	Once in a while	Often	Always
	Not frequently		Frequently	
5). Literature	2.7%	43.9%	37.7%	15.7%
	46.6%		53.4%	
6). Other cultural expressions (music, drama, art)	3.1%	56.1%	26.9%	13.9%
	59.2%		40.8%	
7). History, geography, political system of the foreign language	2.3%	45.0%	37.8%	14.9%
	47.3%		52.7%	
8). Youth culture	4.9%	48.0%	35.4%	11.7%
	52.9%		47.1%	
9). Different ethnic and social groups	4.5%	52.5%	32.7%	10.3%
	57.0%		43.0%	
10). International relations (political, economic and cultural) with Chinese culture and other cultures	5.8%	50.2%	29.6%	14.3%
	56.0%		43.9%	

It could be observed from Table 15 that the most commonly addressed topic, as reported by the participating teachers, was “Daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink etc.”, with a vast majority of the teachers (82.5%) reporting that they frequently discussed this topic. Only 17.5% of the teachers addressed that this topic was not frequently addressed. The second and third most popular topics were “Education, professional life” and “Traditions, folklore, tourist attractions”, with 73.5% and 71.3% of the teachers reporting frequent discussion, respectively. The next three frequently addressed topics were “Values and beliefs”, “Literature”, and “History, geography, political system of the foreign language”, with 64.2%, 53.4% and 52.7% of the teachers reporting frequent discussion of these topics, respectively. Interestingly, “Other cultural expressions (music, drama, art)” was the least frequently discussed topic, with 59.2% of the teachers reporting that they did not frequently touch upon this topic. Other

topics that were not frequently discussed included “Youth culture”, “Different ethnic and social groups” and “International relations (political, economic and cultural) with Chinese culture and other cultures”, with more than half of the teachers reporting infrequent discussion of these topics in their classrooms.

Statistical analyses were performed to investigate whether teachers’ demographic information influenced their choice of topics in intercultural teaching practice. The results revealed that teachers’ education level, years of teaching experience, intercultural teacher training experience and overseas experience were all influential factors, whereas their experience of teaching *Intercultural Communication* did not significantly impact their choice of topics. Specifically, significant differences were found among teachers with different degree (F (2,220) =4.99, p = .01), different years of teaching experience (F (5,217) =3.35, p = .01), different durations of overseas stay (F (3,219) =2.88, p = .04), as well as between teachers who had and had not received intercultural teacher training (t (219) = 2.73, p = .01).

Table 16 one-way ANOVA results regarding teachers’ choice of intercultural teaching topics

Measure	Topics to conduct intercultural teaching		F (2,220)	p
Education level	Mean	Standard deviation		
Bachelor’s	3.03	.55	4.99	.01
Master’s	2.67	.54		
PhD	2.94	.55		

Years of teaching experience	Topics to conduct intercultural teaching		F (5,217)	p
	Mean	Standard deviation		
1-5	2.60	.49	3.35	.01
6-10	2.82	.59		
11-15	2.58	.53		
16-20	2.64	.56		
21-25	2.84	.53		
26 and above	3.04	.53		
Overseas experience	Mean	Standard deviation	F (3,219)	p
None	2.63	.53	2.88	.04
Less than 6 months	2.91	.52		
6 months to 1 year	2.80	.67		
Above 1 year	2.77	.55		

*** *The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.*

The results of a one-way ANOVA (F (2,220) =4.99, p = .01) indicated that teachers with different academic degrees had different preferences for cultural topics. Post-hoc tests revealed a significant difference between teachers with a doctorate degree and those with a master's degree (p = .045), suggesting that teachers with a doctorate degree covered a wider range of cultural topics in their intercultural teaching. Regarding years of teaching experience, post-hoc analysis showed significant differences between teachers with 11-15 years of teaching and those with more than 26 years (p =.01), as well as between teachers with 16-20 years of teaching and those with more than 26 years (p = .03). This indicated that teachers with more

than 26 years of experience were more experienced in handling specific cultural topics.

Concerning overseas experience, post hoc analysis indicated that teachers who had stayed overseas for less than 6 months differed significantly from those who had no overseas experience. Teachers who had spent less than six months abroad were more adept at handling various cultural topics. However, no significant differences were found among teachers who had more overseas experience, such as those who had stayed abroad for 6 months to 1 year or more than 1 year. This suggested that a short stay of less than 6 months may be critical for teachers to handle certain cultural topics.

Regarding intercultural teacher training experience, independent t-tests indicated that teachers who had received training on intercultural teaching covered a wider range of topics than those who had not received such training. This suggests that training programs are helpful for teachers to become more confident in dealing with diverse cultural topics, and it may encourage teachers to participate in training programs in the future.

6.2.2 Activities for intercultural teaching

In addition to investigating cultural topics addressed by Chinese university teachers, their instructional activities were also explored to present a more comprehensive picture of their intercultural teaching

practices. To assess teachers' use of instructional activities, a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (always) was used to measure the frequency of teachers' use of 13 instructional activities adapted from Sercu et al. (2005). These activities were selected as they reflected the dimensions of intercultural teaching, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Sercu et al. (2005) categorized the activities as teacher-centered, student-centered, or either teacher-centered or student-centered, depending on how they were most likely to be used. Therefore, the classification was then used to analyze and report the results of the instructional activities practiced by participated teachers. The detailed results are presented in Table 17.

Table 17 The frequency of teaching activities for intercultural teaching

Item		Never	Once in a while	Often	Always
		Not frequently		Frequently	
Knowledge, teacher-centered					
1). I use videos, CD-ROMs or the Internet to illustrate an aspect of the foreign culture.		2.7%	23.2%	47.3%	26.8%
		25.9%		74.1%	
Knowledge and attitude					
teacher-centered	2). I tell my students why I find something fascinating or strange about the foreign culture(s).	0.4%	27.4%	51.6%	20.6%
		27.8%		72.2%	
	3). I talk to my students about my own experiences in the foreign country.	31.8%	26.8%	26.4%	15.0%
		58.6%		41.4%	
	4). I ask my students about their experiences in the foreign country.	22.1%	45.0%	20.3%	12.6%
		67.1%		32.9%	
	6). I invite a person originating from the foreign country to my classroom.	52.9%	35.3%	7.7%	4.1%
		88.2%		11.8%	

Item		Never	Once in a while	Often	Always
		Not frequently		Frequently	
Knowledge and attitude					
teacher-centered or student-centered	9). I talk with my students about stereotypes regarding particular cultures and countries or regarding the inhabitants of particular countries.	5.0%	48.2%	35.1%	11.7%
		53.2%		46.8%	
Skills, teacher-centered or student-centered					
10). I ask my students to contrast an aspect of Chinese culture with that aspect in a foreign culture.		0.4%	31.8%	51.6%	16.1%
		32.2%		67.7%	
11). I ask students to explore connotations and implications. implied in documents/events from the foreign culture.		9.0%	48.4%	32.7%	9.9%
		57.4%		42.6%	
12). I ask students to explore values, beliefs, and ideological perspectives implied in events/documents from English cultures.		5.8%	46.2%	34.1%	13.9%
		52.0%		48.0%	
13). I ask students to explore misunderstandings in communications between Chinese and people from the foreign culture and explain the causes.		1.8%	41.7%	40.4%	16.1%
		43.5%		56.5%	
Attitude and skills, teacher-centered or student-centered					
7). I ask my students to participate in role-play situations in which people from different cultures meet.		13.0%	42.6%	31.4%	13.0%
		55.6%		44.4%	
Knowledge and skills, student-centered or teacher-centered					
8). I ask my students to describe an aspect of Chinese culture in the foreign language.		2.7%	33.6%	47.1%	16.6%
		36.3%		63.7%	
Knowledge, attitude and skills, student-centered					
5). I ask my students to think about what it would be like to live in the foreign culture.		12.6%	47.1%	29.6%	10.8%
		59.7%		40.4%	

Based on the findings presented in Table 17, the most frequently practiced instructional activity by participated teachers for intercultural teaching was a teacher-centered activity that addresses the knowledge dimension of ICC. Specifically, using videos, CD-ROMs or the Internet to

illustrate an aspect of the foreign culture was reported by 74.1% of the participating teachers as a frequently employed activity. In contrast, the least frequently practiced activity was also a teacher-centered one, namely, "I invite a person originating from the foreign country to my classroom", with only 11.8% of the participants reporting its frequent use for intercultural teaching.

Interestingly, only five out of the ten activities were frequently practiced by more than half of the participants, indicating that intercultural teaching may not be fully integrated into their FLT. Nevertheless, the five frequently employed activities covered all dimensions of ICC and utilized both teacher-centered and student-centered method, suggesting that there is no discernable pattern observed in terms of either content or teaching methods employed by the participating teachers for intercultural teaching.

6.2.3 Time distributed to intercultural teaching

To investigate how Chinese university EFL teachers allocate their time between language teaching and intercultural teaching, a question was included in the survey. Specifically, in Question 8, Section 1, teachers were asked to estimate the average amount of time they devoted to intercultural teaching. This question was adapted from Sercu et al. (2005). Participants were presented with six possible distributions and asked to choose one. The results were presented in detail in Table 18.

Table 18 Overview of teachers' time allocation to either language teaching or intercultural teaching

Item	Distribution	Percentage
100% language teaching–0% intercultural teaching	5	2.3%
80% language teaching–20% intercultural teaching	119	53.8%
60% language teaching–40% intercultural teaching	41	18.6%
40% language teaching–60% intercultural teaching	9	4.1%
20% language teaching–80% intercultural teaching	9	4.1%
100% integration of language-and-intercultural teaching	38	17.2%

Based on the results presented in Table 18, it could be observed that over half of the participated teachers (53.8%) reported that they devote 80% of their time to language teaching and 20% to intercultural teaching. The second most common distribution was 60% language teaching and 40% intercultural teaching, reported by 18.6% of the participating teachers. It was worth noting that 17.2% of the teachers reported they integrated intercultural teaching completely into their language teaching. However, there were three teachers who did not select any of the given options, and it would be interesting to infer the reasons behind this. This will be discussed in Section 6.4.2.

Statistical analysis was conducted to examine whether there were significant differences in the distribution of time for language teaching and intercultural teaching based on various factors, such as gender, province, age, department, years of teaching, and education background. Results

indicated that none of these factors had a statistically significant effect on the distribution of time.

However, it was found that teachers who had received intercultural teacher training (t (217) = 2.90, p = .01) and those who had overseas experience (t (219) = 2.37, p = .02) had a significantly different distribution of time compared to those who had not. Specifically, independent t-tests showed that these groups of teachers devoted more time to intercultural teaching compared to their counterparts who did not have such experiences. Moreover, one-way ANOVA revealed that years of teaching the course *Intercultural Communication* (F (5,213) = 6.92, p < .001) also had a significant impact on the distribution of time. Post-hoc analysis revealed that teachers who had taught the course for 1-3 years devoting more time to intercultural teaching than those who had not taught the course at all (p < .001).

Table 19 one-way ANOVA results of teachers' time allocation of intercultural teaching

Measure	Time allocation of intercultural teaching		F (5,213)	p
Years of teaching *Intercultural Communication*	Mean	Standard deviation		
none	2.76	1.42	6.92	< .001
1-3	4.00	1.48		
4-6	4.17	2.04		
7-9	5.00	1.73		
10-12	3.25	.95		
13 and above	4.60	1.95		

***The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.*

In summary, the result suggested that intercultural teacher training, overseas experience, and teaching experience of the course *Intercultural Communication* were beneficial for teachers who were willing to devote more time to intercultural teaching.

6.3 Results based on qualitative data

This section aims to present the qualitative findings on teachers' intercultural teaching practices from two perspectives: self-reported practices and actual practices. The self-reported practices were obtained through the teachers' responses in both the survey and interview, while the actual practices were documented based on their performance in the classroom.

6.3.1 Teachers' self-reported practices of intercultural teaching

6.3.1.1 Time distributed in intercultural teaching

In terms of the time devoted to intercultural teaching, the participated teachers reported that it was somewhat challenging to provide an exact estimate. Of the ten interviewed teachers, half (Ms. T1, Ms. T2, Ms. T3, Mr. T7 and Ms. T8) reported that they typically allocated between 20% to 30% of their class time on intercultural teaching. One teacher (Ms. T4) reported devoting approximately 30% to 40% of her class time, while another teacher (Ms. T9) spent less than 20% of her class time, particularly

in English for general purposes courses. They provided their time estimates by taking their own course as an example. For instance, Ms. T3 used her *Integrated English* course (a basic required EGP course for freshmen and sophomores of English majors) as an example, stating that each unit should be taught within six periods of class (45 minutes per period), and she would allocate one period for intercultural teaching. Similarly, Ms. T8, a college English teacher, stated that each unit should be completed within eight periods of class, and she would spend anywhere from 40 to 80 minutes on intercultural teaching.

It is worth noting that during the interview, three interviewed teachers (Ms. T5, Ms. T6 and Mr. T10) expressed the view that culture and language cannot be separated, making it difficult to delineate the amount of time dedicated to intercultural teaching.

6.3.1.2 Teaching methods, activities and topics

To investigate how Chinese university teachers conduct intercultural teaching in the classroom, the participating teachers were invited to describe their teaching methods, activities, and topics. Based on their self-report, the following practices of intercultural teaching were identified:

Both teacher-centered and student-centered methods were employed. Teacher-centered methods referred to the traditional way of lecturing used to implement intercultural teaching. Half of the interviewed

teachers reported using lecturing to implement intercultural teaching. For example, Ms. T2 mentioned she "shared my personal intercultural experience when travelling abroad with students" (在旅游过程中遇到过的事情，然后可能会跟学生讲述一下); other teachers, such as Ms. T4, Mr. T7, and Ms. T9 introduced cultural knowledge or provided interpretations on cultural issues through lecturing. Meanwhile, the participating teachers emphasized the importance of engaging students in intercultural teaching as much as possible. The student-centered methods mentioned by teachers included discussions (Ms. T3, Ms. T6, Mr. T7, Ms. T8, Mr. T10), presentations (Ms. T4, Mr. T7, Ms. T8), role play (Ms. T4, Ms. T6), questions and answers (Ms. T8, Mr. T10), case analysis (Ms. T6), games (Ms. T1) and debates (Ms. T3). Ms. T8 provided a description of her student-centered intercultural instruction: "Well, generally speaking, before introducing some intercultural background knowledge, I ask students to search for related information, especially the latest information online, so that they can make preparations before class. While in class, I provide some text materials or videos I have prepared to facilitate students' understandings. Additionally, I engage students in classroom interaction through discussions or questions and answers sessions to elicit their understanding or views on the cultural issue." (嗯，一般来讲的话，我要讲到跨文化背景知识之前，我都给学生安排任务，让学生呢在课前，提前去网上，然后呢去寻找一些资料，尤其是了解他最新的这样一种

资料，让学生先，先做一个准备。然后在课上呢，就是我，我自己呢也会在课下就是会准备一些文字材料，或者说一些视频啊什么的，然后呢让学生去了解，完了之后呢就跟学生进行一个互动，比如说通过提问的这样一种形式，或者说让学生进行讨论的这样一种形式，然后呢就是让学生来表达，阐述自己的对这种文化的这样一种理解，他的看法，是这样。).

Her approach was a typical example of student-centered method employed by the interviewed teachers. Ms. T4 reported a similar approach to that of Ms. T7. She asked her students to prepare on given cultural topics before class and then give a presentation on the topic or present their understanding through role play.

The current findings suggest that Chinese university teachers in this study employ a more diversified range of student-centered teaching activities compared to those reported by Zhou (2011) over a decade ago. While discussions, presentations, and questions & answers were commonly used in the past, today's teachers also use case analysis, games, and debates to engage students in more in-depth discussions on certain cultural topics.

Table 20 Methods and activities utilized for intercultural teaching

Methods	Activities	Teachers
Teachers-centered	Lecturing (sharing personal experience abroad)	Ms. T2
	Lecturing (introducing cultural knowledge, interpreting cultural issues)	Ms. T4, Mr. T7, Ms. T9
Student-centered	discussion	Ms. T3, Ms. T6, Mr. T7, Ms. T8

Methods	Activities	Teachers
Student-centered	Student presentation	Ms. T4, Mr. T7, Ms. T8
	Role play	Ms. T4, Ms. T6
Student-centered	Q & A	Ms. T8
	Case analysis	Ms. T6
	Debates	Ms. T3
	Games	Ms. T1

Intercultural teaching as teaching cultural facts. In the interview, most teachers explicitly expressed that their intercultural teaching primarily involved imparting cultural factual knowledge to students. Mr. T7, who was cognizant of this perception, asserted that his intercultural teaching per se was introducing background cultural facts. He stated: "I don't think it is intercultural teaching. Maybe it's more like cultural teaching. I see it as cultural teaching. … introducing background knowledge or expanding upon cultural knowledge [presented in textbooks]." (我觉得不完全是那种跨文化教学，可能是那种文化教学吧，我感觉是文化教学。……背景知识——或者是一些文化知识的拓展。). This is consistent with the pedagogical techniques that the author employed during her tenure as a college English teacher before 2018.

Intercultural teaching as experiential teaching. Ms. T5, who had extensive experience as a key tutor guiding students to be competitive in ICC contest and had launched the course *Intercultural Communication* for both non-English majors and English majors in the past four years, was confident about her own ICC "I consider myself to be an individual with strong intercultural awareness" (……我本人是比较具有跨文化意识的，

我觉得，……) and asserted experiential teaching was the most effective approach to intercultural teaching, stating: “Experiencing is the most … that I have learned... I think, after several years of engaging in the contest and conducting the course, the most important aspect is experiencing. This method is more effective than any other methods, such as case analysis. Specifically, in involves enabling students to experience interpersonal [intercultural] communication inauthentic settings.” (体验，这是我得出来的最……我觉得，就是我带了几年比赛，上了几年课以后，我觉得最重要的就是体验，任何……包括要胜过案例分析的，就是让他在尽量真实的环境中去体验这种人与人之间的交往。). This finding is novel in the context of Chinese universities and has not been previously reported by studies such as Tian (2013) and Zhou (2011).

Compare and contrast intercultural teaching. According to Byram (1991), a comparison and contrast between the home culture and the target culture could be used as a means of experiencing foreign cultural phenomena. Half of the interviewed teachers (Ms. T2, Ms. T3, Ms. T6, Ms. T9 and Mr. T10) reported that they frequently utilized the compare and contrast approach to conduct intercultural teaching. Ms. T6 provided two examples of how she applied this method in her intercultural teaching. In the first instance, she said, “For example, once there was a Western proverb [mentioned in the textbook], I can, I may, guide students to think about whether there was a similar proverb in Chinese traditional culture or

whether there was a similar point of view expressed in Chinese culture. Why was there a difference [between them]?" (比方说有一句西方的谚语，那可以，可能会呃，引导学生去思考，那我们中，中国对此是……我们中国的这种传统文化里头呃，有没有类似的谚语啊，或者说我们的观点是否相似啊，不相，不相同的原因在于什么呀？). In the second case, she said, "For example, I provided students with some Chinese films and their overseas reviews and had them engage in a discussion. We compared and contrasted different reviews on the film home and abroad, as well as different preferences on films." (比方说拿一些我们中国的电影，他在海外的评价来呃，来给……来拿给学生来讨论，这个我们对于电影的这种呃，这种评价的这种差异，或者喜好的这种差异来进行讨论。).

Intercultural teaching as facilitator in classroom teaching. Three out of the ten teachers (Ms. T1, Ms. T3 and Ms. T4) expressed their willingness to incorporate intercultural teaching in their classrooms as they believed it would enhance their teaching. According to Ms. T1, intercultural teaching could make her class more engaging for students, stating, "In fact, it [intercultural teaching] is highly accepted by students. If I devoted more time to it, students would enjoy it very much." (事实上学生对这个的，这个接受程度还是蛮高的，就是假如时间够的话，学生会，会很，会很，会很这个怎么*（说）*enjoy it。). Ms. T3 stated a similar view, stating, "Intercultural knowledge is usually interesting...

Students find it both useful and interesting, although it is beyond the textbook, so they will be willing to focus" (涉及到跨文化知识的点呢，它通常本身就是带有一定的趣味性的…… 其实学生也是会觉得这个课外知识是有用的，有趣的，他也会愿意听，……). Ms. T4 believed that intercultural teaching could activate classroom atmosphere, saying, "… Then I mentioned this [intercultural teaching] because it could arouse students' interest in learning," (……然后我之前会去讲这些，更多的是想激起学生的学习兴趣，……).

In terms of the topics covered in intercultural teaching, each participating teacher provided a list of the topics they often addressed in classroom. This was synthesized and presented in the table below.

Table 21 Topics addressed for intercultural teaching

Teacher	Topics
Ms. T1	Daily life; education
Ms. T2	Daily life;
Ms. T3	Daily life; entertainment; history; literature;
Ms. T4	Daily life; Festivals; biblical stories; fairy tales
Ms. T5	Almost all topics except those related to ideology
Ms. T6	Daily life; customs and traditions; literature, movies; music; arts; religion
Mr. T7	Textbook based topics like race problems, customs and traditions, code of conducts, food and diet
Ms. T8	Politically insensitive topics like education, historical background; cultural movement
Ms. T9	Daily life; food and diet; values; education
Mr. T10	Education; the Bible; school life; issues in America like poverty, race problems, inequality

A diverse range of cultural topics were covered by participated Chinese university teachers as shown in Table 21. The most frequently mentioned topics were related to daily life, education, customs and

traditions. Other topics, such as food and diet, entertainment, and festivals were also frequently discussed, as they are of close relevance and potential interest to students, which is consistent with the findings of Tian (2013). However, topics related to religion and politics were rarely discussed, as they are considered politically sensitive among teachers in China.

6.3.1.3 Materials for intercultural teaching

In response to the question of what materials were employed for intercultural teaching, six out of ten teachers reported that textbooks were their primary source. Textbooks were used to introduce cultural background information, and to facilitate discussions related to intercultural topics. The teachers also supplemented their lessons with additional materials that went beyond the textbook, such as videos, audios, and texts that they found on the Internet. Ms. T6 presented her case as follows, "… intercultural teaching... is mainly implemented through textbooks. They are used for my students' previews before class. While in class, it depends… Sometimes when I make preparations for the class, if I find some materials that match well with the content in the textbooks, I will use them in my class and discuss with my students. … Um, maybe it's half and half. Half from textbooks and half from the additional materials I prepared." (……跨文化教学……主要是通过教材吧，就是教材是让学生呃，提前要预习的，但是课上的内容就是要看了，有时候可能正好

遇到了很好的材料很契合的，那就会拿到课堂上去用。……我觉得可能一半一半吧，一半是教材内容，一半可能是就是自己准备的一些内容。). She further explained by giving a specific example: “Well, for example, when [a reading passage] in the textbook discusses collectivism, it may refer to definitions, conceptions [related to collectivism], or the like. The additional material I prepared and discussed with my students was beyond the textbook. That is, it is not mentioned in the textbook. [For example], why is China a collectivist country? How did China develop into a country of collectivism? This is what I prepare by myself before the class.” (嗯，比方说像教材里面他讲集体主义，嗯，他讲这个内容，他可能主要是定义啊，然后概念呐，呃，那可能自己准备的话就会去呃，让学生去分析一下，唉，那，嗯，教材上面，教材上面没有提到的，中国是如何成为了一个集体主义的国家呀？啊，我们的为什么会是一个集体主义的国家，这个可能就是我自己在这个课外搜索到的一些信息吧。).

In contrast to the six aforementioned teachers, three other interviewees indicated that their intercultural teaching primarily relied on additional materials rather than textbooks. Regarding teaching materials, Ms. T2 stated: “There are more additional materials than those from the textbook. Textbooks, specifically some listening materials in the listening textbooks, serve as sources for intercultural communication or for cultivating students’ ICC.” (辅助材料比较多。教材当中比如说听力教

材当中，听力素材当中的一些啊原文部分也是啊也是跨文化交际，或者是培养学生跨文化能力的一个材料来源之一。). Similar to the previous six teachers, she stated “they were videos, audios or texts downloaded on the Internet” (辅助材料就是在啊互联网上下载的一些视频，或者是，呃，互联网上下载的一些文档。). Ms. T4, clarified that additional materials were predominantly used, stating, “because relatively speaking, they [materials for intercultural teaching] are not always presented in textbooks. That is, there is no specific section [for intercultural teaching] in textbooks, and only intercultural background knowledge was mentioned in topics or themes of some sections in the textbook. ”(因为……我们的教材其实是在这一块内容是，嗯，相对来说不是那么突出的，没有这个板块，教材没有专门的板块，只是说某些板块在设置话题的时候会稍微提到一些跨文化的知识，背景知识。). In addition to videos, audios from the internet, she included literary works, newspapers, and magazines from the UK or the US as sources of additional materials for her intercultural teaching.

One teacher reported that both textbooks and additional materials were employed without giving emphasis to either. Mr. T10 stated, “If the textbook is suitable [for intercultural teaching], I will use it. Um, err, I also use documentaries.” (… if, if the 教材 is good, I use the 教材，啊，嗯， I also…我会用教材，我，我也会……. 看纪录片。).

In conclusion, the results of the study revealed that intercultural teaching in engaged Chinese universities were primarily based on textbook, with additional materials being employed as a supplement to expand the content in the textbooks. The most commonly used additional materials were videos, audios, and texts from the internet. In some cases, literary works, newspapers, magazines, and documentaries were also utilized for intercultural teaching.

6.3.1.4 Challenges for intercultural teaching

The interviewed teachers reported several challenges in implementing intercultural teaching. These challenges included limited class time, a lack of cultural content in the textbook, limited opportunities for intercultural contact, teachers' insufficient intercultural literacy, low student motivation, limited resources for intercultural teaching, the influence of a test-oriented system, and inflexible departmental and school management.

Limited class time for intercultural teaching. The foremost challenge reported by the interviewed teachers was a limited amount of time allotted for intercultural teaching. For instance, Ms. T3 explained, "Each semester, we have a teaching task, that is, required to complete a set number of units in the textbook, leaving me little time for additional topics beyond the textbook... or I may not be able to complete the teaching task." (因为我们需要完成，呃，我们教材上面的一些，呃，单元作为我们一

个学期的教学任务，但是如果我涉及到太多课堂……课外的内容，可能我，我这个教学任务就没法完成。). Ms. T4 echoed this point, stating: “As teaching is based on the textbook, I have to fulfil the teaching requirements every semester. Therefore, while some time can be spent on intercultural teaching when it aligns with the cultural themes in the textbook, there is limited time available due to the pressure to fulfil teaching task within a fixed number of teaching hours in class.” (因为我们的教学是围绕教材展开的，我们每个学期都有一定的教学任务，所以呢跨文化教学，如果在教材当中的某一个那个主题当中会涉及到的话，那老师们可能会相应的就是会涉及到一点，但是也没有太多的时间去展开，也就是说受限于教学课时以及教学任务的压力。). As a result, teachers like Ms. T2 and Ms. T9 do not prioritize intercultural teaching and do not consider it to be a key focus in their classes. Ms. T2, being a college English teacher for more than 15 years, stating: “intercultural teaching is not the main focus in my class as I only spend a quarter of my teaching time on it, …” (因为跨文化在我的课程当中只占 1/4 的时间，所以不是我的主要内容，……). Ms. T9, teaching *Advanced English* for junior and senior English majors, said: “definitely the time [for intercultural teaching] should be reduced as it is not the focus of my course” (这个时间肯定是要压缩的，因为它不是我这个课的这个重点。).

A lack of cultural content in the textbook. This challenge was closely related to the first one. In China, each teacher has a teaching task

to fulfill, which typically requires them to cover several units in the textbook. However, the textbooks often lack cultural content, making it difficult for teachers to incorporate intercultural teaching into their classes. Ms. T3's statement supports this: "I would also like to add another challenge. Textbooks are essential in teaching, but if there is no ready-made [intercultural] content in the textbook, it undoubtedly increases the amount of teachers' preparation time for class. Therefore, whether intercultural teaching is added or not depends on whether teachers are willing to take on the extra workload." (我还，还想补充一点，就是，对，教材这个确实很重要，因为教材没有现成的内容的话，那可能就无形当中就增加了老师的这个备课量，就是如果老师想加入这种跨文化背，背景方面的知识的话，所以这个，所以我说很多时候觉得，嗯，在于老，老师个人愿不愿意去分享这些，愿不愿意去做这些工作，愿不愿意去加这些工作量。).

Limited opportunities for intercultural contact. Ms. T3 identified the lack of opportunities for real intercultural communication as the primary challenge when asked about obstacles to intercultural teaching. She stated: "The first is -- yes, as I mentioned just now, that is, we lack such a situation, err, real situation to experience intercultural communication." (第一个就是——对，就是像我刚才提到就是说我们很多学校啊，就缺乏这样子的一个，呃，跨……真正的实体的跨文化的沟通的场景啊或者说实景。). This view was reiterated by Ms. T6, who

stated: “Challenge? First of all, the first challenge, I think the biggest challenge is that we are becoming more and more aware that in order to cultivate students’ ICC, we need to create opportunities for practice, that is, to provide opportunities for them to communicate with people from different cultures or to work on a project together, thus cultivating students’ intercultural awareness and promoting their ICC.” (挑战？首先第一个挑战，我觉得最大的挑战是现在越来越意识到其实要培养学生的跨文化能力，嗯，非常重要的是能够给他们提供实践的平台，就比方说让他们能够有机会切切实实地与不同文化的人打交道，然后共同完成项目，在这样的实践过程当中去培养跨文化意识和提升跨文化能力。). She further elaborated: “However, [there are two reasons]. One is that we are in Yueyang [a city located in the middle of China with limited opportunities for intercultural contact], the other is the pandemic. There are very few foreign students in our university. Therefore, there is of little chance to create real practical situations for students. Well, I should say it is nearly impossible to make it happen. This is the biggest challenge.” (但是就是，一个是在，这个我们在岳阳，另外一个是受疫情的影响等等因素，学校里面现在连留学生也很少了嘛，所以嗯，给学生创造这种真实的实践环境的这种，嗯，可能性就小了很多，嗯，而且几乎没有做到，这是第一个最大的挑战。).

Teachers’ insufficient intercultural literacy. Some of the interviewed teachers reported that their own lack of ICC made intercultural

teaching a significant challenge. Ms. T4, who received her PhD in America, reflected on her past experiences with intercultural teaching and recognized she had neglected certain aspects due to her incomplete understanding of intercultural teaching. She explained, “well, looking back, there were many things I had neglected. I didn’t really understand [intercultural teaching]. Even though I thought what I taught was good, I conveyed what I knew to my students, but after going abroad, I found that I might have made some mistakes. Therefore, er, I should still say that my own input was... my input was not sufficient, or not very accurate.” (……现在回过头来看，嗯，还是忽略了很多东西，呃，甚至也不是很懂，啊，哪怕以前我认为很好的教，教……呃，传达给了学生我知道的一些东西，但是自己，当自己走出国门的时候，呃，发现可能自己也会犯一些错误，所以，呃，应该还是说以前自己的是……自己的 input 都不是很够，或者说不是很准确。). She further explained the incompetency could attribute “not only to insufficient knowledge, but insufficient skills and experiences hence teachers needed chances to receive professional development.” (不仅知识上的，呃，能……这个技巧上的，经验上的都是需要一些，呃，就是，就是老师还是需要一些这个，这个 professional development 的机会的。). Ms. T5, who was confident about her own intercultural awareness, identified the greatest challenge to conducting intercultural teaching as being uncertain about the target culture. She stated: “The challenge I had encountered, or what

confused me most was culture, the target culture. That is, there was no reference to decide [whether certain behaviors or manners] in communication was acceptable or not [in target culture]. Sometimes I was just not so sure about this. Yeah, I had always been perplexed by this uncertainty." (我所遇到的挑战，其实我现在最大的疑惑还是来自于我对对方的文化，目的语的文化，我没有一个评判的这样的标准，所以我有的时候不是特别的确定，……就说他因为这个交际他到底对还是不对，我有时候总是这种有点没着没落你知道吧？这种，这种感觉就是一直有的，). Similarly, Mr. T7 acknowledged that the challenge for him to implement intercultural teaching "was partly due to my own limited stock in this aspect, so I had to spend considerable time searching for resources to convey more culture-related information or background knowledge to students…" (……所以有时候那个自己的知识储备其实不够。嗯，如果想让学生能够更多的了解一些嗯，这些文化方面的内容，背景知识的话，嗯，就得去花很多的时间去找一些资料。). This finding is consistent with previous studies that suggests "non-native" language teachers may frequently experience a lack of confidence when operating within a sociocultural milieu that is not their own (Borg, 2006; Kramsch et al., 1996).

Low student motivation. Ms. T3 and Ms. T6 highlighted that challenge of low student motivation in intercultural teaching**.** Ms. T6, a young teacher teaching *Integrated English* for freshmen and sophomores

of English majors and *Intercultural Communication* for juniors of English majors, identified three challenges associated with intercultural teaching, two of which were related to low student motivation. She elaborated it as follows: “Then the second biggest challenge is that, to the concept ICC, I have to constantly explain to my students the importance of ICC in order to motivate them to develop their ICC. They are with low motivation to ICC and theories of ICC. Some students, particularly those who believe ICC as having no relevance to their future careers, lack the necessary motivation [in intercultural learning].”（然后可能第二大的挑战就是，呃，嗯，学生，我们，我们的学生整体而言，他对于提升跨文化能力这样一个概念，他需要，不断的去给他，嗯，去，去跟他解释，嗯，这个为什么重要，它的重要性在哪里，就是让学生有这个学习的动机。……就是对于跨文化能力的这种，嗯，噢，不对，对跨文化的这种，这种理论，或者说这些东西他并没有十足的动机，尤其是一些学生，他认为他可能以后成，成……这个从事的工作，并不太需要用到这些知识，所以它动力方面不足。）. Ms. T6 further stated that the third challenge could be attributed to students’ low motivation as well. She said: “The third challenge is... my course [*Intercultural Communication*] was delivered to juniors. They are not willing to spend time completing assignments with high quality, particularly when required to do exploration or research due to their heavy school workload, more accurately, due to their low motivation as they failed to recognize its importance.” (第三个

就是，……我们现在是开的大三嘛，然后大三的学生他课业很重，你如果给他布置过多的这种嗯，exploration 之类的，这种 research 之类的这种任务的话，他，嗯，就是未必非常愿意花许多的时间去高质量的完成。嗯，就是主要是学习动机没有激发起来了，就是他们主要还是看不到这个这个内容，它的价值。). Students' low motivation may stem from the environment in which they live. The interviewed teachers were all teachers from ordinary universities where many students might not have exposure to intercultural communication, leading them to believe it was not a necessary skill to acquire. Additionally, the ordinary universities studies are located in cities with few opportunities for students to engage in intercultural communication in their everyday lives, as they primarily interacted with people of the same cultural background. This lack of intercultural contact opportunities was also evident in the interviews with Ms. T3 and Ms. T6, which was presented above in limited opportunities for intercultural contact.

Limited resources for intercultural teaching. Ms. T4 and Mr.7 mentioned that limited resources were also a challenge for intercultural teaching, which required teachers to search related resources themselves, thereby increasing their workload to a considerable extent. Ms. T4 stated, "… the other challenge is that there is limited access to resources in the domestic context, … and there is a long way to go." (而也就是那个国内也很能……能获得的材料，……还是也有很大的空间的。). Mr. T7

expressed a similar idea: “Well, sometimes I cannot find well-matched resources. I think one reason is related to myself, while the other is that I have difficulty accessing the resources.” (嗯，有时候找的资料的话也不是很理想，所以我觉得这，一个是自己的原因，另外一个就是资料收集的这个困难。).

The influence of a test-oriented system. Ms. T4 identified the impact of China’s test-oriented system as a challenge when discussing the limited allocated time to intercultural teaching. She stated: “Because after all, there is also the exam-oriented influence. The exams are textbook based, right?” (因为毕竟还有一个，一个那个 exam oriented 的影响，因为毕竟我们考试它是就考课文的这些东西对吧？). As illustrated in the second challenge --- a lack of cultural content in the textbook--- there is little content dedicated to intercultural teaching. However, Chinese university students must pass exams to graduate, and these exams are textbook based. Therefore, it is undoubtedly the case that intercultural teaching beyond the textbook is reduced to cater for the test-oriented system.

Inflexible departmental and school management. Ms. T8 reported that inflexible management in the department or the university posed a significant challenge to intercultural teaching. This challenge was intertwined with the textbook-based teaching adopted by Chinese universities. At the beginning of each semester, teachers were required to

create a teaching plan based on the textbook and submitted it to the administration department. Teaching in the semester should align with this plan, leaving little room for flexibility in actual classroom teaching. Ms. T8 argued that this inflexibility made it challenging to conduct intercultural teaching, as teaching in the classroom had to adhere strictly to the teaching plan. Any deviation from the plan could result in accountability measures such as talks or name-and-shame tactics. She said: “Teaching supervision is enforced in my university, which demands adherence to the teaching plan. Despite preparing sufficient teaching materials, including additional materials [beyond the textbook], I can only use a limited amount of such resources [in real teaching under this supervision] due to the strict adherence to the teaching plan … For example, while preparing two or three [videos], I can only employ one of the most representative for discussion, limiting the scope of [intercultural teaching].” (因为学校施行的有这个督导听课呀什么的，可能我们准备的材料会很多，嗯，但是要，要按照这个教学计划来，所以呢，那有一些准备的就是比较充分的教学资料，那，那个叫额外的补充的这个资料呢，可能就会用…… 不能用太多…… 可能也会首先可能我我都准备有两三个，但是呢，我在给学生讲的时候，我放的时候，可能只能选择其中的一个更具有代表性的，这个是目前比较受限的。).

6.3.2 Teachers' actual practices of intercultural teaching

The study aimed to explore the actual practices of intercultural teaching. Three Chinese university teachers granted classroom observation in their class. The three teachers observed were Ms. T3, Mr. T7 and Mr. T10, with two successive periods (45 minutes per period) of class observed for each teacher. However, due to my brief stay in China, the observation was conducted in December 2020, towards the end of the semester. This timing resulted in the unavailability of one observation. Specifically, Mr. T10 did not conduct a traditional teaching session during the observation; instead, he had his students give presentations which was actually part of the final exam in his course. Therefore, no intercultural teaching activities were observed in his class. As a result, only the classes of Ms. T3 and Mr. T7 were analyzed and discussed in this study.

Ms. T3, a lecturer in her early 30s with a master's degree, had been an EFL university teacher for 7 years. She lacked previous experience in teaching *Intercultural Communication* and had not undergo intercultural teaching training. Additionally, she had a brief overseas stay for travel purpose. She had been responsible for teaching *Integrated English* to English majors for approximately 5 years. This course was compulsory for freshmen and sophomores in the English department. Based on the Teaching Guide, Ms. T3's department has developed its own teaching

quality standards for this course. The stated objective of the course is described as follows:

> *Integrated English* is the main basic course for English majors. The objective of the course is mainly to teach the linguistic knowledge of English language, as well as to train basic skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation in a comprehensive and rigorous manner. Additionally, the course aims to promote students' practical use of the language, develop logical thinking skills, enhance their sensitivity to cultural differences, and establish a strong foundation for *Advanced English* and other courses in the third and fourth years (School of Foreign Languages & Literature, 2017, p. 6). (综合英语是英语专业的主要基础课程，其教学任务和目的主要是传授英语语言知识，对学生进行全面的、严格的听、说、读、写、译等基本技能训练，培养学生实际运用语言的能力，培养学习逻辑思维能力，增强学生对文化差异的敏感性，为学生升入高年级的高级英语和其他专业课程的学习打下扎实的基础。).

During the classroom observation, Ms. T3 was teaching Unit 10 of *Integrated English*, Book 3, published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press. The title of the text was The Transaction, written by William Zinsser. The teaching process was presented in the following table.

Table 22 Ms. T3's teaching process

Period	Teaching content	Time distributed
1	Enjoy an English song: Blue Christmas	2 minutes
1	Teaching routine: student presentation entitled On Solitude	15 minutes 30
1	T and Ss's interaction on the presentation	17 minutes 30
1	T gave comments on the presentation	3 minutes
1	Unit 10 The Transaction Para.6	13 minutes
2	Teaching routine: News Report shared by a student	3 minutes 30
2	Unit 10 The Transaction: sentence by sentence reading	41 minutes

Mr. T7, a professor in his early 50s with a PhD, had taught *Advanced English* and *English Essay Reading* to English majors for over ten years. He lacked previous experience in teaching *Intercultural Communication* and had not received intercultural teaching training. He had over a year of

overseas experience, including a visiting scholar position at an America university. *Advanced English* was a follow-up course to *Integrated English*, offered to third-year English majors. In the standard of teaching quality created by Mr. T7's department, the course was defined as follows:

> *English Essays Reading (1)* is a professional-skill course for English majors in the third year. As stated by the National Standard, this course aims to 'train students' comprehensive English skills with an emphasis on reading comprehension, figures of speech and writing'. By reading and analyzing a broad range of materials on politics, economy, society, language, literature, education, philosophy and other domains, the course aims to broaden students' knowledge horizons, deepen their understanding of society and life, improve their ability to analyze and appreciate renowned essays, develop their logical and independent thinking skills, and consolidate and enhance their English language skills. The course prioritizes both language skills and knowledge acquisition, and the teaching mission was to improve students' English output skills like speaking and writing (School of Foreign Languages & Literature, 2017, p. 8). (《英美散文选读》(1)是为英语专业学生在高年级阶段开设的一门专业技能课程。《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》对该课程的表述是"一门训练学生综合英语技能尤其是阅读理解、语法修辞与写作能力的课程"。本课程通过阅读和分析内容广泛的材料，包括涉及政治、 经济、社会、语言、文学、教育、哲学等方面的名家作品，扩大学生知识面，加深学生对社会和人生的理解，培养学生对名篇的分析和欣赏能力、逻辑思维与独立思考的能力，巩固和提高学生英语语言技能。本课程的学习不仅仅是对知识的获取，更重要的是语言技能的培养。所承担的教学任务是训练学生的英语输出技能，包括口语与写作。).

During the observation, Mr. T7 was teaching Lesson 5 of *Advanced English*, Book 1, published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. The text was Speech on Hitler's Invasion of the U.S.S.R written by Winston Churchill. His teaching process was presented as follows.

Table 23 Mr. T7's teaching process

Period	Teaching content	Time distributed
1	General reading Para. 11-13 with 6 questions	13 minutes
1	Detailed reading: analyze long and complicated sentences and figures of speech used in the 3 paragraphs	31 minutes 54
2	A summary of figures of speech	Around 5 minutes

Period	Teaching content	Time distributed
2	A quiz	20 minutes
2	T gave brief comments on the quiz	2 minutes
2	T Gave some tips for Ss to get prepared for the Teacher Certification interview	18 minutes

The following themes were used to code the field notes from classroom observations: time allocated for intercultural teaching, teaching methods, activities and topics, and materials used for intercultural teaching. By connecting the coded themes, the findings of the observations were summarized as follows: Firstly, the classes were predominantly focuses on teaching language points, and very little time was specifically devoted to intercultural teaching. In Ms. T3's class, intercultural teaching was limited to two minutes spent on listening to an English song *Blue Christmas* at the beginning of the two-period class. Similarly, In Mr. T7's class, one and a half minutes were spent introducing a piece of cultural knowledge when reading Paragraph 11. In the paragraph, there was a sentence "This is no class war, but a war in which the whole British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations is engaged, without distinction of race, creed, or party." Mr. T7 spent one and a half minutes to explain "British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations" to students. Both teachers did not implement intercultural teaching beyond these brief moments. Secondly, Ms. T3 employed a more student-centered teaching method, while Mr. T7's teaching method was more teacher centered. Ms. T3 emphasized interaction with students and students' active participation in the class,

whereas Mr. T7 primarily analyzed and explained difficult sentences for students, and students were quiet and focuses on taking notes. This was consistent with Mr. T7's comments during the interview where he expressed a desire to receive training on intercultural teaching to learn more teaching methods. Thirdly, intercultural teaching was a secondary activity, often presented as a "by the way" occurrence during language teaching. Lastly, intercultural teaching in these observed classes, which was based on the textbooks, was limited to introducing cultural facts, with no other activities or discussions on intercultural topics.

Compared Ms. T3's and Mr. T7's actual practice to their self-reported intercultural teaching in the interview, the results revealed a mixed picture, as some aspects of their actual practices were consistent with their self-reported practices while others were inconsistent. Specifically, both teachers were consistent in their view that language teaching should precede cultural teaching in FLT, which was evident in the observed classes. Additionally, both teachers viewed intercultural teaching as primarily conveying background knowledge to students, as shown by Ms. T3's use of an English song and Mr. T7's explanation of the meaning of "British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations" in their classes. However, both teachers emphasized the importance of intercultural teaching in their interview, but the observed classroom practices showed that intercultural teaching was not implemented in every class. In addition, the time allocated

to it was much less than what they had reported. For example, Mr. T7 claimed “If I’m asked to estimate, well, in fact, every period of class may involve [intercultural teaching]. Well, if measuring the time, it would be -- well, I think it should be about 20 minutes in a 90-minute long class [that is two periods of class]” (如果估算的话，嗯，其实每一节课里面都可能会涉及到，嗯，如果测算时间的话，可能应该是有——嗯，我觉得一次课 90 分钟的话，可能会牵涉到的话，应该会有在 20 分钟左右吧。). However, in the observed classroom teaching, only about 2 minutes were devoted to intercultural teaching. The inconsistency highlighted the potential gap between teachers’ actual practices and their self-reported practices, underscoring the need for further investigation, especially considering that only two Chinese university teachers were observed in this study.

6.4 Discussion

This section presents a discussion of key results from both quantitative and qualitative studies on the practice of intercultural teaching among Chinese teachers. The discussion is organized into two aspects: what to teach for intercultural teaching and how to teach for intercultural teaching. What to teach convers topics, activities and materials utilized as well as challenges confronted in the implementation of intercultural teaching,

while how to teach refers to the time allocation and to the teaching methods employed.

6.4.1 What to teach for intercultural teaching

The results of the survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview indicated that Chinese university EFL teachers in this study covered a range of cultural topics in the classroom. Six out of ten important topics in the survey were frequently discussed by teachers. There findings were consistent with the semi-structured interview, where teachers mentioned topics related to daily life, education, customs and traditions, food and diet, entertainment and festivals. Comparing with previous studies Tian (2013) and Zhou (2011), the present study found that participated Chinese university EFL teachers had more similarities than differences in their frequently discussed cultural topics. Tian (2013) reported that the most frequently topics by her participants were “cultural differences”, “literature, music, theater, film”, “values and beliefs”, and “daily life and routines” (p. 91). Zhou (2011) found that “customs”, “conventions of communication” and “movies” were the top three topics addressed by teachers (p. 87), followed by “people’s values and beliefs”, “history”, “education system”, “literature”, and “cultural taboos” (p. 89). However, topics related to politics and religion were not frequently discussed as teachers were instructed not to discuss politically sensitive or ideological topics.

One possible explanation for the prevalence of topics related to daily life, values and beliefs, education, movies and music in intercultural teaching among college students is that these topics are familiar and relevant to their lives. As these topics are close to college students' life, and teachers reported in the interview intercultural teaching was used to stimulate students' interest in English learning, these topics were effective in creating an engaging classroom atmosphere. Additionally, from the teachers' perspective, these topics may be easier for them to handle. As teachers stated in the interview, intercultural teaching was primarily textbooks-based and there was little content available. By using topics that are close to college students' lives, teachers could more easily prepare and deliver intercultural lessons.

Based on the converging results from the survey and the interview, participated teachers at Chinese ordinary universities utilized diversified activities to conduct intercultural teaching. The most frequent practiced activity, which was revealed both in the survey and the interview, was a teacher-centered activity that focused on the knowledge dimension of ICC, that is, using videos, CD-ROMs or the Internet to illustrate an aspect of the foreign culture. As many as 74.1% of the participating teachers reported that they frequently employed this activity to conduct intercultural teaching. This finding was consistent with what was observed in Mr. T7's class, where the only aspect of intercultural teaching that he covered was

introducing “British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations” to his students. Mr. T7 acknowledged this in the interview, stating that intercultural teaching in his class was introducing background knowledge to expand students’ cultural knowledge based on textbooks. Zhou (2011) also found that student-centered activities like role-play and debates were not commonly utilized in teachers’ classes (p. 99). This result might be attributed to decades of language-oriented FLT in China, which was mostly teacher-centered. Furthermore, from my experience as a university EFL teachers in mainland China for over ten years, teachers normally face large class sizes with English majors typically having around 30 students. College English classes usually have at least 50 students, and 100-student classes are not uncommon. Therefore, to handle large classes more efficiently, teachers may tend to rely on teacher-centered activities.

The results from the survey indicated that teachers did not demonstrate any discernible patterns in their selection of instructional activities while implementing intercultural teaching, indicating intercultural teaching was conducted in a non-systematic manner. This was consistent with Zhang’s (2012) observations, intercultural teaching was commonly treated as a subordinate aspect of language teaching and was conducted on an ad hoc basis, contingent on available time and resources, which resulted in a non-systematic and fragmented approach to intercultural education (p. 5). This was also consistent with teachers’ actual

practices observed in the class which appeared to be delivered randomly and in a fragmented manner. Moreover, the non-systematic approach in conducting intercultural teaching suggests that the dimensions of ICC involved in the classroom are largely influenced by the teachers' personal experience and abilities. This is confirmed in the interview with the teachers. The finding provides evidence in support of the argument that teaching practice is guided by teachers' personal curriculum, which is shaped by their teacher knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Xu & Connelly, 2009). Accordingly, teachers function as curriculum planners rather than mere implementers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). What matters in their personal curriculum is their individual interpretation of intercultural teaching and their conception of effective and comfortable instruction within their classroom context. For example, Ms. T3, who majored in English literature for her master's degree, incorporated literary works into her intercultural teaching. Similarly, Mr. T10, being an American, tended to choose American documentaries or phenomena in American society to discuss with his students. Ms. T8 acknowledged that her increased focus on intercultural teaching in her EGP course may be attributed to her culture-orientation during her M.A.

Findings from the interviews revealed that textbook-based materials constitute primary teaching resources. Nevertheless, teachers commonly employ supplementary resources including internet-based videos, audios

and texts that align with the textbook themes. However, given the need to source and select such resources independently, teachers must invest significant effort and time in curating them for intercultural teaching, thereby resulting in a lack of consistency with respect to both the quality and quantity of such resources. Consequently, the availability and efficacy of supplementary resources for intercultural teaching remain subject to randomness and uncertainty.

It was worth noting that teachers reported a wide range of challenges they had encountered in conducting intercultural teaching during the interview. This is consistent with prior research by Tian (2013) and Zhou (2011), who identified similar constraints on intercultural teaching. Zhou (2011) identified six factors that constrained intercultural teaching, including "limited class time, students' interest and motivation, the test-oriented system, curriculum requirements, a lack of cultural issues in the textbooks, and teachers' lack of cultural knowledge" (p. 153). Likewise, Tian (2013) found that "limited teaching resources, limited time in each teaching period, and limited cultural contents in the textbooks and teaching materials" (pp. 122-123) were the primary barriers to implementing intercultural teaching, with additional obstacle such as "teachers' lack of cultural knowledge, the test-oriented system, curriculum requirements, and students' limited language proficiency" (p. 123). The findings suggest that Chinese university EFL teachers in this study continue to encounter similar

challenges as teachers did a decade ago. Moreover, the present study reveals that teachers lacked opportunities to engage in intercultural contacts themselves and that inflexible management within the department and university constrains their implementation of intercultural teaching.

In summary, the present study adds to the growing body of research on intercultural teaching and provides further evidence of the challenges faced by Chinese university EFL teachers. These findings might have important implications for intercultural teaching training programs and curriculum development in China.

6.4.2 How to teach for intercultural teaching

The study on how to teach revealed how much time Chinese university teachers allocated to intercultural teaching, as well as the teaching methods they employed.

Results from both the survey and interviews suggest that a majority of teachers allocated a larger portion of their instructional time to language teaching than to intercultural teaching. Specifically, over half of the surveyed teachers (53.8%) reported devoting 80% of their class time to language instruction and 20% to intercultural teaching, consistent with responses from the interviewees. During the interviews, seven out of ten teachers stated that they allocated 20-30% of their instructional time to intercultural teaching, despite expressing a clear willingness and interest in

this aspect of pedagogy. For example, Ms. T3, who teaches *Integrated English*, a required course for freshmen and sophomores majoring in English, stated that she allocated one period (45 minutes) per unit to intercultural teaching, while Ms. T8, a college English teacher, indicated that she devoted anywhere from 40 to 80 minutes per unit to intercultural teaching within an 8-period (45 minutes per period) class.

However, despite their reported willingness and interest in intercultural teaching, this study observed limited evidence of its complementation in actual teaching practice. For instance, in the observed class, Ms. T3 played an English song, "*Blue Christmas*" at the start of her 90-minute class but did not incorporate any other intercultural teaching elements into the lesson. Similarly, Mr. T7 devoted just one and a half minutes explaining the phrase "British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations" during his 90-minite class, representing the entirety of his intercultural teaching during that session.

The inconsistencies observed in the study may be attributed to several factors, as highlighted in both the interviews and survey responses. Foremost among these was the challenge posed by limited time and curricular constraints. Teachers reported that their teaching were bound by the textbooks prescribed for each semester, which prioritized language teaching over intercultural teaching. Moreover, the end-of-semester exam placed a strong emphasis on language proficiency, which may have

undermined student motivation to engage with intercultural content. Secondly, teachers cited a lack of teaching materials as an impediment to integrating intercultural dimensions into language teaching. They noted that while textbooks formed the basis of classroom instruction, these resources did not contain sufficient intercultural content. Consequently, teachers had limited scope to integrate intercultural teaching into their language teaching. A third factor that may have contributed to the observed inconsistencies was teachers' inadequate intercultural literacy. Almost half of the surveyed teachers (48.2%) had not experienced living abroad, and during the interviews, some expressed a lack of confidence in conducting intercultural teaching due to their limited familiarity with the target culture and the diversity of approaches to intercultural teaching.

It is worth noting that a few teachers encountered difficulties in accurately estimate the time devoted to intercultural teaching. For instance, during the interview, three out of ten teachers (Ms. T5, Ms. T6 and Mr. T10) expressed culture and language were inseparable, making it challenging to demarcate the two. Furthermore, in the survey, 17.2% of teachers reported complete integration of intercultural teaching into language teaching, possibly attributable to the concerted effort of the Chinese MoE in recent years. This was achieved by incorporating ICC into the objectives of FLT and taking effective measures to promote intercultural teaching, which may have influenced these teachers'

perceptions and led to a tendency to eschew a clear separation between language and intercultural teaching. Consequently, these teachers opted for a fully integrated approach to language and intercultural teaching.

Another issue that warrants discussion is the design of the survey question itself. Participants were asked to circle the best option that corresponds to "the average distribution of teaching time over 'language teaching' and 'intercultural teaching'". This design of the question itself seemed to separate language teaching and intercultural teaching, which may have generated a misunderstanding among participants and possibly misguided their responses. Ms. T5, one of the interviewees, believing she held strong awareness of ICC, expressed similar viewpoint during the interview "It seems the question is [problematic]… First, it makes me a bit difficult to answer, and second, it is a bit misleading…" (你这个设置有一点……，第一让我有点难回答，第二它有一点点误导). She also remarked that a teachers might not find it problematic unless she/he possessed a robust understanding of ICC. Therefore, this limitation of the study suggests the need for a revision in the question design to better capture the time distribution of intercultural teaching.

The findings from the survey and the interview data indicated that both teacher-centered and student-centered methods were utilized in implementing intercultural teaching, yet the observed classroom practices tended to be more teacher-centered. Notably, results from the survey

indicated that the top two frequently practiced activities were teacher centered, suggesting that participated teachers in China, influenced by decades of teacher-centered language-oriented FLT, continue to favor this approach when facing a new dimension like intercultural teaching. Furthermore, as reported by teachers in the interviews, intercultural teaching was often constrained by time. Thus, a teacher-centered method, less time-intensive, was preferred over a student-centered approach, which is more time-consuming.

Based on the survey, no noticeable pattern was observed in teachers' selection of teaching methods. However, when combined with the interview data, a more comprehensive understanding was revealed about teaching methods for intercultural teaching. According to the survey results, the most frequently employed activity was a teacher-centered one and focused on demonstrating knowledge of a particular aspect of foreign culture. The finding was corroborated by the interview data, with teachers like Mr. T7 indicating that intercultural teaching was primarily viewed as teaching cultural facts. Moreover, the survey data indicated that the third most frequently practiced activity was asking students to compare and contrast aspects of Chinese culture with the foreign culture. Similarly, half of the interviewed teachers reported frequently employing this method in their intercultural teaching. Furthermore, the results of the study are consistent with previous research conducted by Zhou (2011) and Tian

(2013), which concluded that the compare and contrast method was a preferred approach among Chinese university EFL teachers. These findings suggest that intercultural teaching in China tends to be approached in a one-dimensional manner, with an emphasis on introducing cultural knowledge.

6.5 Teachers' PPK and their practices

Regarding intercultural teaching practices, this study found that four out of five aspects of PPK had a statistically significant influence. Specifically, education level ($F(2,221) = 3.87$, $p = .02$), years of teaching experience ($F(5,218) = 2.74$, $p = .02$), overseas experience ($F(3,220) = 4.51$, $p = .00$) (See Table 24), and training experience ($t(220) = 2.66$, $p = .01$) all demonstrated significant effects, with the exception of years of teaching *Intercultural Communication*. Notably, teachers with a doctorate degree exhibited higher performance than those with a master's degree. Teachers who had taught for 26 years or more also demonstrated better intercultural teaching practices. Additionally, teachers who had received teacher training and who had been abroad exhibited better intercultural teaching practices compared to those who had not received such training or experiences.

Table 24 one-way ANOVA results regarding teachers' practice of intercultural teaching

Measure	Practice of intercultural teaching		F (2,221)	p
Education level	Mean	Standard deviation		
Bachelor's	2.74	.54	3.87	.02
Master's	2.56	.50		
PhD	2.83	.59		
Years of teaching experience	Mean	Standard deviation	F (5,218)	p
1-5	2.60	.49	2.74	.02
6-10	2.82	.59		
11-15	2.58	.53		
16-20	2.64	.56		
21-25	2.84	.53		
26 and above	3.04	.53		
Overseas experience	Mean	Standard deviation	F (3,220)	p
none	2.49	.51	4.51	.00
Less than 6 months	2.83	.49		
6 months to 1 year	2.66	.42		
1 year and above	2.67	.61		

*** *The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.*

However, while statistical analysis did not reveal a significant influence of intercultural teaching experience, data obtained from the interview provided evidence to support its importance. In comparison to other interviewees who lacked the experience of teaching *Intercultural Communication*, Ms. T5 and Ms. T6, who had taught *Intercultural Communication*, exhibited a broader range of intercultural teaching practices. For instance, Ms. T5 reported covering diverse topics in her implementation of intercultural teaching, excluding those related to

ideology. She also employed experiential teaching method to conduct intercultural teaching which she believed to be the most effective. Similarly, Ms. T6 stated that teaching *Intercultural Communication* had raised her awareness of incorporating intercultural discussions into her general English courses. As she stated: "… I think I have become more sensitive to integrate intercultural discussions into foreign language teaching after teaching IC." (……我觉得还是自从教了跨文化[交际]之后，还是比较有意识的在外语教学当中去融入跨文化的一些一些讨论。). On the other hand, this might be also evident in the classroom observation. Two observed teachers Ms. T3 and Mr. T7, who lacked previous experience of teaching *Intercultural Communication*, almost did not integrate intercultural teaching in their class. Nevertheless, given the limited sample size, this study recommends further research into the influence of teaching *Intercultural Communication* on intercultural teaching practices. In light of the findings of this study, it is also suggested that future research be conducted to compare intercultural teaching practices between teachers with and without teaching *Intercultural Communication*. This would enable a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of teaching *Intercultural Communication* on the development and implementation of intercultural teaching practices, further contributing to the knowledge base in this area.

6.6 Possible relationship between teachers' perceptions and practices

This section addresses the fourth and final research question of the present study, which examines the impact of teachers' perceptions on their intercultural teaching practices in the classroom. Regression analysis is employed to examine the relationship between the variables. In statistical analysis, regression analysis is commonly utilized to "measure relationships between two variables" (Field, 2009, p. 197). Specifically, this analytical approach involves the prediction of an outcome variable from either one (simple regression) or two or more predictor variables (multiple regression) (Field, 2009). This study employs a simple regression analysis to the extent to which teachers' perceptions of ICC and perceptions of intercultural teaching influence their intercultural teaching practices, respectively. Furthermore, a multiple regression analysis is implemented to the joint effect of both perceptions of ICC and perceptions of intercultural teaching on teachers' intercultural teaching practices.

Simple regression analysis revealed that both variables, perceptions of ICC and perceptions of intercultural teaching, significantly influenced teachers' practices of intercultural teaching. Specifically, when perceptions of ICC were used as the predictor variable, the correlation coefficient R for the relationship between teachers' perceptions of ICC and their intercultural teaching practices was .26, with the R^2 value of .07 ($p < .001$), indicating that perceptions of ICC can account for 7.0% of the variance in

teachers' practices. Similarly, when perceptions of intercultural teaching were used as the predictor variable, the R value for the relationship between teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching and their practices was .33, with an R^2 value of .11 ($p < .001$). This result suggests that perceptions of intercultural teaching had a 11.0% influence on teachers' intercultural teaching practices. It is worth noting that the influence of perceptions of intercultural teaching was slightly higher than that of perceptions of ICC, indicating perceptions of intercultural teaching had a more direct impact on teachers' intercultural teaching practice.

Table 25 Simple regression results illustrating the effect of teachers' perceptions of ICC on their instructional practice

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.261[a]	.068	.064	.50609	.068	16.180	1	222	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), ICC

Table 26 Simple regression results illustrating the effect of teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching on their instructional practice

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.331[a]	.109	.105	.49473	.109	27.246	1	222	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), IT

While the perception of ICC showed a minimal and the perceptions of intercultural teaching a moderate influence on teachers' practices separately, the prediction was statistically significant. To further explore the relationship between perceptions and practices, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the combined effect of both predicable variables on teachers' practices. The result reported that R was .37, R^2

was .13, p = .01, indicating that the combination of both predicable variables had a statistically significant influence of 13.3% on teachers' intercultural teaching practices.

Table 27 Multiple regression results illustrating the joint effect of teachers' perceptions of ICC and intercultural teaching on their instructional practice

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.365[b]	.133	.125	.48916	.024	6.086	1	221	.014

a. Predictors: (Constant), IT, ICC

While the influence of perceptions, including the perceptions of ICC, perceptions of intercultural teaching, and the joint effect of both, was statistically significant, it appeared to be positive but not particularly strong. The results of the present study did not support Freeman's (1992, 1993) earlier claims that perceptions exert a potentially powerful and positive influence on teaching practices. Instead, the current findings suggested that the relationship between perceptions and practices was complex (Basturkmen, 2012; Buehl & Beck, 2015; Zheng, 2015) and dynamic (Zheng, 2015). The strength of this relationship may vary across individuals and contexts, as well as the type of beliefs and practices being assessed (Buehl & Beck, 2015, p. 70).

Given the positive but not particularly strong influence of perceptions of ICC and intercultural teaching, future research can benefit from using a larger sample and more advanced statistical techniques, such as structural equation modelling that specifies the variables assumed to affect other variables and the directionality of these effect (Kline, 2023). Moreover,

since the current study revealed a minimal and modest direct relationship between perceptions of ICC and intercultural teaching, future studies are encouraged to examine indirect relationships, such as mediated or moderated effects, which have not yet been explored in this field.

6.7 Summary of the chapter

The present chapter was primarily concerned with delving into intercultural teaching practices of Chinese university teachers. To accomplish the objective, the study utilized a combination of surveys, interviews and class observations to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the subject. In addition, the chapter investigated the impact of teachers' PPK on their intercultural teaching practices, as well as the extent to which their perceptions shape their practices. The findings were presented below.

Firstly, drawing on the results from the survey and interview, the present study provided an overview of teachers' self-reported intercultural teaching practice. The results suggested that, on average, teachers dedicated approximately 20%-30% of their class time to intercultural teaching. In general, their intercultural teaching practice was primarily textbook-based, complemented by supplementary materials such as videos, audios and texts from the Internet. Teachers employed various topics and instructional activities to facilitate intercultural teaching, with the topics

often relating to students' familiar experiences to enhance their engagement in class. Topics that enjoyed greater popularity include daily life, food and drink, education and professional life, traditions, folklore and tourist attractions, values and beliefs, literature, history, geography and political system in the target language culture. However, topics deemed politically sensitive and ideological topics were often avoided. Instructional activities employed by participated Chinese university EFL teachers were equally diverse and encompassed various dimensions of ICC. The most frequent instructional activity practiced was teacher-centered, particularly in relation to the knowledge dimension. Nevertheless, the most frequently employed activities employed both teacher-centered and student-centered methods, with teacher-centered activities typically consisting of sharing personal experience, introducing cultural knowledge and interpreting cultural issues through lectures. Student-centered activities, on the other hand, entailed discussions, student presentation, role play, Q&A, case analysis, debates and games. Compare and contrast emerged as the most frequently employed method in implementing intercultural teaching. It is noteworthy that one interviewed teacher reported she frequently employed experiential teaching, a novel approach to conduct intercultural teaching utilized by Chinese university teachers in current study. Moreover, the study revealed that many challenges faced by teachers in implementing intercultural teaching. Main challenges included

limited class time, limited cultural content in the textbook, insufficient opportunities for intercultural contact, teachers' inadequate intercultural literacy, low student motivation, limited resources for intercultural competence development, the influence of test-oriented system, inflexible departmental and school management policies.

Secondly, the analysis of teachers' actual intercultural teaching practice revealed a significant discrepancy between the reported and observed time allocation. Contrary to their self-reported time allocation, the observed teachers spent significantly less time on intercultural activities. Specifically, in a 90-minute class, only one or two minutes in are devoted to explicating a culture-embedded phrase in the textbook or playing an English song at the start of the lesson. Moreover, the method employed was predominantly teacher centered. In summary, class observation suggested that actual intercultural teaching predominantly revolved around textbook-based teacher-centered activities like introducing cultural knowledge.

Thirdly, by synthesizing the results from the survey, interview and classroom observation, the study concluded that the distribution of time, selection of topics and activities, and application of materials in intercultural teaching were largely shaped by teachers' PPK. As such, teachers played a pivotal role not only as implementers, but also as curriculum planners in intercultural teaching. These results suggested that

intercultural teaching, especially in Chinese ordinary universities engaged in this study, was primarily conducted in a random and non-systematic approach, highlighting that intercultural teaching was still not a regular component in actual teaching practices. Furthermore, these results suggested that intercultural teaching had yet to be fully integrated as an integral part of FLT in China.

Fourthly, the present study investigated the influence of five dimensions of teachers' PPK on their teaching practice. The quantitative data revealed that four out of the five aspects of teachers' PPK including teachers' education level, years of teaching, intercultural teacher training experience and overseas experience exerted a statistically significant influence on their intercultural teaching practice, except for teachers' experience of teaching *Intercultural Communication*. However, the qualitative study shed light on the critical role of teachers' experience of teaching *Intercultural Communication*. Given that years of teaching *Intercultural Communication* was the first time examined in the field, the study recommends further research to expand upon this dimension.

Finally, the present chapter addressed the extent to which teachers' perceptions influenced their teaching practices. The statistical analysis revealed that the influence of teachers' perceptions on their teaching practices was statistically significant, albeit not particularly strong. Thus, the study suggested that future research should adopt a larger sample size,

more advanced statistical techniques and investigate the potential mediated or moderated effect between teachers' perceptions and their practices to provide a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between these factors.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The concluding chapter begins with a synopsis of the findings of the study, followed by a discussion of the research limitations. Drawing upon these limitations, recommendations for future research are suggested. Finally, implications and contributions of the study are explained.

7.2 Conclusions of the study

The principle aim of the present study was to examine the perceptions of ICC, the perceptions of intercultural teaching, as well as intercultural teaching practices among Chinese university EFL teachers. To accomplish this objective, four research questions were developed to thoroughly explore teachers' perceptions and practices concerning ICC and intercultural teaching. The research questions were as follows:

RQ1: What are perceptions of Chinese teachers regarding ICC within the context of EFL education at the University level?

RQ2: How do Chinese university teachers perceive and implement intercultural teaching within the EFL classroom setting?

RQ3: Are there any differences in teachers' perceptions due to their PPK such as: a) level of education, b) additional intercultural

training, c) previous teaching experience, d) previous intercultural teaching experience and e) overseas experience?

RQ4: To what extent, do teachers' perceptions influence their practices of intercultural teaching in the classroom?

To investigate these research questions, a convergent mixed research method was implemented. The findings of the study are presented through a comprehensive summary of the key outcomes, which are organized according to the aforementioned research questions.

Research question 1 (RQ1) aimed to investigate the perceptions of Chinese university EFL teachers regarding ICC within the context of higher education. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to provide a comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions of ICC. The results of the survey indicated that participated Chinese EFL teachers held positive perceptions of ICC, and there has been a noticeable improvement in their perceptions over the past decade. The findings also suggested that teachers placed more value on the dimension of skills and awareness than the knowledge dimension, which suggested a shift from a traditional focus on knowledge transmission towards an emphasis of intercultural skills and awareness in developing ICC. However, the results of the semi-structured interview indicated that only two out of ten interviewees had a clear understanding of the concept, while the others

tended to define it by using vague and indirect language, indicating difficulties in comprehending the concept.

Research question 2 (RQ2) focused on Chinese university EFL teachers' perceptions and current practices of intercultural teaching in their classroom.

Perceptions of intercultural teaching. The convergent results obtained from both the survey and interview revealed that Chinese university EFL teachers in this study exhibited a positive attitude toward implementing intercultural teaching and were willing to do so. Moreover, they perceived intercultural teaching more in promoting intercultural skills than transmitting knowledge in the traditional sense. Nevertheless, their understanding of intercultural teaching was found to be multidimensional and internally inconsistent. Firstly, while the teachers acknowledged the importance of intercultural teaching, they still ranked a language learning objective as the top priority. The interview data further confirmed that language teaching continued to enjoy a higher level of priority. The teachers stated that language teaching remained the primary concern in general English courses, while intercultural teaching was not given much attention. Second, the teachers perceived intercultural teaching as an integrated part of FLT, but they also believed that it should give way to language teaching in the face of time constraints, a common occurrence in the context of Chinese higher education (Zeng, 2019; Zhang, 2012). This

indicated that intercultural teaching was not fully integrated into language teaching, and the two were viewed as separate entities. Third, the teachers believed that language proficiency was the foundation for intercultural teaching. However, they disagreed that language problems were the root cause of misunderstandings in intercultural contacts.

Practices of intercultural teaching. The present study utilized a combination of methods, including surveys, interviews, and classroom observation, to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of Chinese university EFL teachers' intercultural teaching practices. While the survey and interview data focused on self-reported practices, the classroom observations allowed for a closer examination of the teachers' actual implementation of intercultural teaching in the classroom. The classroom observation confirmed that materials utilized for intercultural teaching were predominantly based on textbooks. Supplementary materials such audios were also incorporated into the observed class. However, it was important to note that the observed practices differed significantly from the teachers' self-reported practices. Firstly, teachers reported that on average they allocated 20%-30% of class time to intercultural teaching. However, the observed class revealed that teachers spent less than two minutes out of a 90-minute class period on intercultural teaching. Secondly, teachers reported employing various and diversified topics and activities for intercultural teaching, while in the observed class, very few topics and

activities were used. Thirdly, the teaching methods employed by teachers, as reported by them, encompassed both teacher-centered and student-centered approaches. However, the observed class demonstrated the only use of teacher-centered methods. These significant discrepancies between self-reported and observed practices suggested that intercultural teaching was not yet a regular component in Chinese FLT. In addition, teachers' reported challenges in implementing intercultural teaching further highlighted the obstacles to its effective implementation. Therefore, these findings indicated that intercultural teaching still had a long way to go in becoming an integral part of FLT in China. Also, these results highlighted the urgent need for collaborative and coordinated initiatives aimed at to incorporating intercultural teaching into the foreign language curriculum in China.

Research question 3 (RQ3) sought to investigate the potential influence of teachers' PPK, including a) level of education, b) additional intercultural training, c) previous teaching experience, d) previous intercultural teaching experience and e) overseas experience on their perceptions of ICC and intercultural teaching, as well as intercultural teaching practices.

While the survey data constituted the primary source of analysis, the interview data provided additional insights into the research question.

Regarding teachers' perceptions of ICC, the statistical analysis conducted on the survey data revealed that three of the five aspects related to PPK were significantly associated with teachers' conceptualization of ICC. Specifically, previous intercultural teaching experience (specifically, the experience of teaching *Intercultural Communication* in the current study), additional intercultural teacher training, and overseas experiences were found to be significant influential factors.

In terms of teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching, the statistical analysis indicated that only overseas experience had a significant impact.

Furthermore, the quantitative data revealed that four out of the five aspects of teachers' PPK, including their education level, years of teaching, intercultural teacher training experience and overseas experience had a statistically significant influence on their intercultural teaching practice. However, the experience of teaching *Intercultural Communication* was not found to be a significant factor.

Therefore, these findings highlight the importance of teachers' PPK, particularly overseas experience, in shaping their conceptualization of ICC and intercultural teaching, as well as intercultural teaching practices. Furthermore, the study revealed that a brief duration of stay (less than 6 months) significantly contributed to enhancing teachers' perceptions and practices.

The interview shed light on supplementary insights into the influence of teachers' PPK. It highlighted that the experiences of teaching *Intercultural Communication* and additional intercultural teacher training were crucial in shaping teachers' perceptions and practices regarding intercultural teaching.

In conclusion, taking into account the results from both the survey and interview, this study established that teachers' PPK, specifically overseas experience, previous intercultural teaching experience, and additional intercultural teacher training, were significant factors that shaped their perceptions and practices regarding ICC and intercultural teaching.

Research question 4 (RQ4) aimed to explore the effect of teachers' perceptions of ICC and intercultural teaching on their actual intercultural teaching practices within the classroom setting.

The results of the simple regression analysis indicated a statistically significant influence of teachers' perceptions of ICC and intercultural teaching on their intercultural teaching practice, respectively. Moreover, the findings from the multiple regression analysis revealed a significant joint effect of perceptions of ICC and intercultural teaching on their practices. However, while both individual and joint perceptions demonstrated a significant impact, neither had a strong level of confidence in their ability to influence intercultural teaching practices.

7.3 Implications

The present study utilized a convergent mixed research method to investigate perceptions and practices of the intercultural dimension among Chinese university EFL teachers. The findings hold significant implications for FLT, particularly for organizers of intercultural teacher training programs, textbooks developers, Chinese EFL teachers and administrators.

Firstly, the study's qualitative data reveal that teachers' perceptions and practices regarding intercultural dimension underscored the need for intercultural teacher training. Moreover, the study provides empirical evidence to support the proposition that such training can substantially enhance teachers' perceptions and practices in this domain. Additionally, the study conducts a needs analysis through semi-structured interviews, where participating teachers articulated their expectations from an intercultural teacher training program. The top needs identified included a desire for various and diversified materials, activities and teaching methods for implementing intercultural teaching, opportunities to experience intercultural contacts, as well as guidance on designing intercultural teaching. Furthermore, the interviewed teachers express a desire to deepen their understanding of foreign cultures and undertake research on intercultural teaching, with the hope of benefiting from the training program.

Secondly, the study identifies that FLT in China is heavily reliant on textbooks, with a lack of intercultural teaching materials. This absence of intercultural teaching materials emerges as a primary reason why intercultural teaching is scarcely observed during classroom observations. Hence, it is essential for textbooks developers to incorporate sufficient intercultural teaching materials in their textbooks to address this gap in foreign language teaching.

Thirdly, the study's findings provide valuable insights for teachers seeking to implement intercultural teaching. To this end, the study recommends that interested teachers undertake intercultural teacher training or pursue short-term overseas opportunities (i.e., less than six months). Additionally, the findings suggest that actively engagement in teaching *Intercultural Communication* is shown to be a highly effective means of promoting teachers' perceptions and practices regarding intercultural teaching.

And fourthly, the participating teachers highlight a number of challenges in implementing intercultural teaching during the interviews. Notably, inflexible departmental and school management policies emerged as a significant obstacle to promoting intercultural teaching. Given this, administrators can play a pivotal role in overcoming this challenge by adopting flexible management policies that foster intercultural teaching.

7.4 Limitations of the study

The present study has some limitations that are primarily related to the research methodology, particularly the method of sampling and the sample size.

As mentioned in Section 3.4, convenience sampling was utilized as the primary sampling method to recruit participants in the survey, which is not considered as the most representative sampling in nature (Creswell, 2015). However, Creswell (2015) has acknowledged that this method of sampling can provide valuable insights into research questions and hypotheses (p.144).

With respect to the sample size, nearly 300 Chinese university EFL teachers participated into the survey, and 228 questionnaires were valid for analysis. While the number is not small, it is small in comparison to the vast population of university EFL teachers in China. Moreover, China is a vast country with universities at various levels, as mentioned in Section 3.3. The majority of the participants in this study were from ordinary universities, with only a few from prestigious and excellent ones. While ordinary universities constitute the largest number of universities in China and may represent the whole population, it would be desirable to include more prestigious and excellent university EFL teachers in the sample. Additionally, due to the limited duration of the researcher's stay in China and the reluctance of Chinese teachers to participate in empirical research,

only three teachers agreed to classroom observations in their class. Therefore, caution should be exercised when attempting to generalize these findings to the entire population of university EFL teachers in China.

7.5 Recommendations for future research

Given the empirical findings and methodological limitations of the current study, a number of recommendations for future research are proposed.

Firstly, the study identified that overseas experience, intercultural teacher training and intercultural teaching experience were salient factors that significantly influenced teachers' perceptions and practices regarding ICC and intercultural teaching. Notably, the latter two factors have received limited attention in the existing literature. Additionally, the study uncovered a novel finding that short-term overseas experience (i.e., less than 6 months) could also shape and promote teachers' perceptions and practices in the domain. Accordingly, it is suggested that further investment be made in the examination of these factors to enrich insights to teachers training programs.

Secondly, while the study primarily focused more on the effect of perceptions on practices, the semi-structured interview revealed the critical role of intercultural teaching experience in enhancing teachers' perceptions. Thus, it is recommended that future research expand the scope of inquiry

by investigating the reciprocal relationship between perceptions and practices.

Lastly, the methodological limitations of the study, particularly with respect to sampling methods and sample size, call for greater rigor in future research. Specifically, it is advised that more stringent sampling methods and larger sample sizes be employed to ensure the robustness and external validity of the findings. Additionally, the use of more advanced statistical techniques may yield more nuanced insights into the mechanisms underlying teachers' ICC perceptions and practices.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

Title of Project: Exploring Perceptions and Practices of the Intercultural Dimension in EFL Teaching Among Chinese University Teachers

Name of Researcher: Anan Zhou

1. I have read and understood the attached information sheet giving details of the project. □

2. I have had the opportunity to ask the researcher any questions that I had about the project and my involvement in it, and I understand my role in the project. □

3. My decision to consent is entirely voluntary and I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. □

4. I understand that data gathered in this project may form the basis of a report or other form of publication or presentation. □

5. I understand that my name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation, and that every effort will be made to protect my confidentiality. □

Participant's signature:
Date:

Participant's name (in CAPITALS)

Researcher's signature: Anan Zhou Date: 06. October 2020

Attachment (information sheet)

Appendix B: Participants Information Sheet

Study Title: Exploring Perceptions and Practices of the Intercultural Dimension in EFL Teaching Among Chinese University Teachers

My name is Anan Zhou, and I am a research student from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UK). I would like to invite you to take part in my PhD research project, which is entitled "Exploring Perceptions of the Intercultural Dimension in EFL Teaching Among Chinese University Teachers". The research includes a half-hour interview with me, either face-to-face in a conference room in your university or, if possible, through Skype video conferencing in April 2021.

Before you decide whether to participate, you need to understand why the research is being conducted and what it would involve on your part. Please take time to read the following information carefully and talk to others about the study if you wish.

Please do ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

My contact email is: 1904869@student.uwtsd.ac.uk

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1. **What is the purpose of the study?**
   This research aims to investigate Chinese university teachers' understanding of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) and their practice of Intercultural Teaching (ICT) in an EFL University Context, and the current study will go in-depth to explore the possible influence of teachers' personal practical knowledge on their perceptions of ICC and ICT, as well as the potential effect of their existing perceptions on their practice of intercultural teaching, so as to shed light on teachers' professional development in the future and generate implications for ICT in the EFL university context.

2. **Why have I been invited?**
   As a teacher in a Chinese university, you will already have knowledge and experience of the intercultural dimension in your teaching.

3. **Do I have to take part?**
   Your participation is entirely voluntary, and it is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. I will describe what I am aiming to find out in this study and go through this information sheet with you before you attend the interview. I will then ask you to sign a consent form to show that you have agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

4. What type of study is this?

The study is a mixed method study, that is, a survey questionnaire, a semi-structured interview and classroom observation will be employed. All of them will be conducted face-to-face. However, interviews can be conducted through Skype video conferencing if it is preferable.

5. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign a consent form. The researcher will arrange a specific time for the survey, interview and observation. The interview and observation will be audio-recorded.

6. What will I have to do?

You are required to answer the questions based on your personal knowledge and experience during the interview. However, you can refuse to answer any questions which you feel uncomfortable with, and you can stop the interview at any time.

7. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

This research will be conducted according to the guidelines set out in the University's *Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice*. However,
during the interview, you might be asked questions about certain topics which are sensitive or may upset you. You can refuse to answer any questions which you feel uncomfortable with, or you can stop the interview at any time.

8. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. We will follow ethical practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence.

The recorded conversation will be transcribed by the interviewer. Only the interviewer and the supervisor will have access to the audiotape. All information will be coded and anonymised. Once the transcript has been completed and checked by the interviewer for accuracy.

The information we have collected as paper copies will be stored in a safe place, while the electronic data can only be accessed with a secure password. Only the researcher and the supervision team will have access to the data.

The data I collect will be used mainly for the purpose of this research and possibly for future publication.

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

9. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will be kept in the library of the university. You will not be identified in any report, publications or presentation without seeking your full consent. Direct quotes from the interviews may be used in reports and publications; however, the quotes will be anonymized to ensure that you cannot be identified.

Appendix C: Questionnaire (English version)

Questionnaire of Exploring Perceptions and Practices of the Intercultural Dimension in EFL Teaching Among Chinese University Teachers

Section 1: Background

[Please circle the correct answer]

Q1. Gender

(a) Female (b) Male

Q2. Age

(a) 20-25 (b) 26-30 (c) 31-35

(d) 36-40 (e) 41-45 (f) 46 and over

Q3. Highest degree you receive

(a) Bachelor (b) Master (c) PhD

Q4. Years of teaching English

(a) 1-3 (b) 4-6 (c) 7-9

(d) 10-12 (e) 13-15 (f) 16 and over

Q5. How many hours do you teach per week?

(a) 5-10 (b) 11-15 (c) 16-20.

(d) 21-25 (e) 26-30 (f) 31 and over

Q6. What types of courses do you teach?

[You may circle more than one answer]

(a) College English courses (b) English major courses

(c) Both (a) and (b). (d) Others

Q7. Experiences of teaching *Intercultural Communication* course

(a) none (b) 1-3years (c) 4-6 years

(d) 7-9 years (e) 10-12 years (f) 13 years and over

Q8. Average distribution of teaching time over 'language teaching' and 'intercultural teaching'

(a) 100% language teaching–0% 'intercultural teaching

(b) 80% language teaching–20% 'intercultural teaching

(c) 60% language teaching–40% 'intercultural teaching

(d) 40% language teaching–60% 'intercultural teaching

(e) 20% language teaching–80% 'intercultural teaching

(f) 100% integration of language-and-'intercultural teaching

Q9. Have you ever received additional intercultural training?

(a) Yes (b) no

Q10. Do you have overseas experience?

(a) Yes (b) no [If NO, please go to section 2]

If YES, please fill out the table bellow:

Name of the country	Purpose (work, holiday, visit, study)	Length of stay

Section 2 Teachers' perceptions of ICC

Q11. Please rate your ability, knowledge, or willingness regarding ICC. *[Please circle the answer]*

(0=Not at all, 1=Very low, 2=Low, 3=Average, 4=High, 5=Very high)

1. I am familiar with the cultural norms and expectations of English culture (e.g., food, eating manner, clothing, greetings, public behaviors, etc.).	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. I can contrast communicative behaviors of Chinese and foreign people in social settings (e.g., family, school, office, etc.).	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am able to find out unfamiliar cultural information I come across in oral or written communication situations.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. I can describe how some events in China are perceived by people from foreign countries.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. I can describe some important historical/social/political events that have shaped English cultures.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6.. I can describe the history of relationships between China and foreign countries.	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. I can recognize when some Chinese people communicate inappropriately to people from other cultures.	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am able to identify how some misunderstandings happen in interactions between Chinese and people from other cultures.	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am interested in knowing unfamiliar aspects of English culture (e.g., history, traditions, and people's values, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am willing to understand differences between Chinese and foreign people in their behaviors, values, and beliefs.	0	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am interested in knowing the different ways that foreign people see a particular event in China.	0	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am willing to question my values and beliefs which are perceived differently by people from other cultures.	0	1	2	3	4	5
13. While interacting with people from other cultures, I adjust my behavior, body language, and gesture according to what is considered appropriate by them.	0	1	2	3	4	5
14. Before I talk or write to people from other cultures, I think about how they, with different cultural backgrounds, will feel about or react to what I am going to say or write.	0	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am able to understand an English document in its own cultural context.	0	1	2	3	4	5
16. I think I should not judge people from other countries, because their behaviors might just be the result of cultural differences.	0	1	2	3	4	5

17. I am aware of the diversity in cultures (e.g., differences in race, class, gender, and profession, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4	5
18. I demonstrate awareness of how my values and ethics are reflected in specific situations in my interaction with people from other countries.	0	1	2	3	4	5
19. I demonstrate awareness of foreign people's reactions to me which reflect their cultural values.	0	1	2	3	4	5
20. I demonstrate awareness of seeing myself as a "culturally conditioned" person with personal habits and preferences.	0	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3 Teachers' perceptions of intercultural teaching

[Please circle the number that best represents your opinion]

(0=Undecided, 1=Disagree completely, 2=Disagree to some extent, 3=Agree to some extent, 4=Agree completely)

Q12. How do you perceive the **objectives** of **foreign language teaching**?

1. Assisting my students to acquire basic skills in language learning (such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4
2. Assisting my students to acquire skills that will be useful in other subject areas (memorize, summarize, give a presentation, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4
3. Assisting my students to pass certain examinations (such as College English Test Band 4, Test for English Majors, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4
4. Promoting my students' interest in English learning.	0	1	2	3	4
5. Promoting my students' familiarity with English cultures.	0	1	2	3	4
6. Promoting the acquisition of an open mind and a positive disposition towards unfamiliar cultures.	0	1	2	3	4
7. Promoting my students' language proficiency to enable them to apply the language in real-life contexts.	0	1	2	3	4
8. Assisting my students to develop a better understanding of their own identity and culture.	0	1	2	3	4

Q13. To what degree do you perceive the following **objectives** of **intercultural teaching**?

1. Provide information about English culture (daily life and routines, history, geography, political conditions, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4
2. Provide experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions (literature, music, theatre, film, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4
3. Develop attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures.	0	1	2	3	4
4. Promote reflection on cultural differences.	0	1	2	3	4
5. Promote increased understanding of Chinese culture.	0	1	2	3	4
6. Promote the ability to empathize with people living in other cultures.	0	1	2	3	4

7. Promote the ability to handle intercultural contact situations.	0	1	2	3	4

Q14. Please circle the statement that best matches your opinion.

1. In a foreign language classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the foreign language.	0	1	2	3	4
2. Before I can teach culture or do anything about the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students have to possess a sufficient proficiency in the foreign language.	0	1	2	3	4
3. When I only have a limited number of teaching periods, culture teaching has to give way to language teaching.	0	1	2	3	4
4. Language problems lie at the heart of misunderstandings in international contacts, not cultural differences.	0	1	2	3	4
5. Language and culture cannot be taught in an integrated way. I have to separate the two.	0	1	2	3	4
6. A foreign language teacher should present a positive image of the foreign culture and society.	0	1	2	3	4
7. I would like to teach intercultural competence through my foreign language teaching.	0	1	2	3	4
8. In the foreign language classroom students can only acquire additional cultural knowledge. They cannot acquire intercultural skills.	0	1	2	3	4
9. Foreign language teaching should not only touch upon foreign cultures. It should also deepen students' understanding of their own culture.	0	1	2	3	4

Section 4 Teachers' practices of intercultural teaching

[Please circle the number that best represents your opinion]

(1=Never, 2=Once in a while, 3=Often, 4=Always)

Q15. How often do you deal with the following particular cultural aspects of a foreign language?

1. Daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink etc.	1	2	3	4
2. Education, professional life	1	2	3	4
3. Values and beliefs	1	2	3	4
4. Traditions, folklore, tourist attractions	1	2	3	4
5. Literature	1	2	3	4
6. Other cultural expressions (music, drama, art)	1	2	3	4
7. History, geography, political system of the foreign language	1	2	3	4
8. Youth culture	1	2	3	4
9. Different ethnic and social groups	1	2	3	4
10. International relations (political, economic and cultural) with Chinese culture and other cultures	1	2	3	4

Q16. How often do you practice the intercultural teaching activities below in your classroom?

1. I use videos, CD-ROMs or the Internet to illustrate an aspect of the foreign culture.	1	2	3	4
2. I tell my students why I find something fascinating or strange about the foreign culture(s).	1	2	3	4
3. I talk to my students about my own experiences in the foreign country.	1	2	3	4
4. I ask my students about their experiences in the foreign country.	1	2	3	4
5. I ask my students to think about what it would be like to live in the foreign culture.	1	2	3	4
6. I invite a person originating from the foreign country to my classroom.	1	2	3	4
7. I ask my students to participate in role-play situations in which people from different cultures meet.	1	2	3	4
8. I ask my students to describe an aspect of Chinese culture in the foreign language.	1	2	3	4
9. I talk with my students about stereotypes regarding particular cultures and countries or regarding the inhabitants of particular countries.	1	2	3	4
10. I ask my students to compare an aspect of Chinese culture with that aspect in a foreign culture.	1	2	3	4
11. I ask students to explore connotations and implications. implied in documents/events from the foreign culture.	1	2	3	4
12. I ask students to explore values, beliefs, and ideological perspectives implied in events/documents from English cultures.	1	2	3	4
13. I ask students to explore misunderstandings in communications between Chinese and people from the foreign culture and explain the causes.	1	2	3	4

Appendix D: Questionnaire (Chinese version)

中国高校外语教师跨文化维度认知与实践调查问卷

第一部分：背景信息 *[请圈出符合您实际情况的选项]*

1. 您的性别是：

(a) 女 (b) 男

2. 您的年龄是：

(a) 20-25 岁 (b) 26-30 岁 (c) 31-35 岁

(d) 36-40 岁 (e) 41-45 岁 (f) 46 岁以上

3. 您的最高学位是：

(a) 学士 (b) 硕士 (c) 博士

4. 您的教龄有：

(a) 1-5 年 (b) 6-10 年 (c) 11-15 年

(d) 16-20 年 (e) 21-25 年 (f) 26 年以上

5. 您的周课时是：

(a) 1-4 节 (b) 5-10 节 (c) 11-15 节

(d) 16-20 节 (e) 21-25 节 (f) 25 节以上

6. 您任教的课程属于：**（可以多选）**

(a) 大学英语课程 (b) 英语专业课程

(c) 以上两者都有 (d) 其他

7. 您从事《跨文化交际》课程的教学年限是：

(a) 没有 (b) 1-3 年 (c) 4-6 年

(d) 7-9 年 (e) 10-12 年 (f) 13 年以上

8. 在您的课堂中，用于语言教学和跨文化教学的时间分配比例是：

(a) 语言教学 100%–跨文化教学 0%

(b) 语言教学 80%–跨文化教学 20%

(c) 语言教学 60%–跨文化教学 40%

(d) 语言教学 40%–跨文化教学 60%

(e) 语言教学 20%–跨文化教学 80%

(f) 跨文化教学完全融入语言教学中

9. 您是否接受过跨文化教学的培训？

(a) 是 (b) 否

10. 您是否有出国的经历？

(a) 有 (b) 无 [若无出国经历, 请看第二部分]

若有，请填写下面的表格：

到访国家	出国目的是 (工作, 度假，访学，学习)	停留时长

第二部分 教师对跨文化交际能力的认知 *[请<u>圈出</u>最符合您实际的数字]*

11. 请对您在跨文化交际方面的能力、知识或意愿进行评分。（0=完全不得分；1=得分很低；2=得分较低；3=平均分；4=得分较高；5=得分很高）

1). 熟悉英语文化的文化规范和期望（如食物、饮食方式、衣着、问候、公共场合的行为举止等）。	0	1	2	3	4	5
2). 能发现中外人士在社交场合（如家庭、学校、办公室等）中交际行为的差异。	0	1	2	3	4	5
3). 在口头或书面交流中，能够找出不熟悉的文化信息。	0	1	2	3	4	5
4). 能描述外国人士是如何看待一些中国发生的事件。	0	1	2	3	4	5
5). 能描述一些塑造英语文化的重要历史/社会/政治事件。	0	1	2	3	4	5
6). 能描述中外关系的历史。	0	1	2	3	4	5
7). 能识别中国人在与来自其他文化背景的人进行交流时采用的不恰当的交际方式。	0	1	2	3	4	5
8). 能指出中国人和其他文化的人在交往中是如何产生误解的。	0	1	2	3	4	5
9). 有兴趣了解英语文化中不熟悉的方面（如历史、传统和人们的价值观等）。	0	1	2	3	4	5
10). 愿意了解中国人和外国人在行为、价值观和信仰上的差异。	0	1	2	3	4	5
11). 有兴趣了解外国人对中国某一事件的不同看法。	0	1	2	3	4	5
12). 愿意质疑自身不同于其他文化的价值观和信仰。	0	1	2	3	4	5
13). 在与有其他文化背景的人交流时，会根据他们认为合适的方式来调整自己的行为、肢体语言和手势。	0	1	2	3	4	5
14). 在与其他文化背景的人进行口头或书面交流之前，会设想他们会对我要表达的内容作何感受或反应。	0	1	2	3	4	5
15). 能从英语文化背景的角度理解该文档。	0	1	2	3	4	5
16). 认为不应该评判其他国家的人，因为他们的行为可能只是文化差异的结果。	0	1	2	3	4	5
17). 意识到文化的多样性（例如，种族、阶级、性别和职业等方面的差异）。	0	1	2	3	4	5
18). 意识到自身的价值观和道德观体现在我与其他国家的人的交往中。	0	1	2	3	4	5
19). 意识到外国人对我的反应体现了他们的文化价值观。	0	1	2	3	4	5
20). 意识到自己是有着个人习惯和偏好的“文化制约”的人。	0	1	2	3	4	5

第三部分 教师对跨文化教学的认知 *[请**圈出**最能代表您意见的数字]*

（1=完全不同意，2=某种程度上不同意，3=不确定，4=某种程度上同意，5=完全同意）

12. 您如何看待外语教学的目标？

1). 帮助学生掌握语言学习的基本技能（如听、说、读、写等）。	1	2	3	4	5
2). 帮助学生掌握其他有用的技能（记忆、总结、演讲等）。	1	2	3	4	5
3). 协助学生通过某些考试（如大学英语四级考试、英语专业等级考试等）。	1	2	3	4	5
4). 提升学生英语学习兴趣。	1	2	3	4	5
5). 提升学生对英语文化的熟悉程度。	1	2	3	4	5
6). 培养学生对其他文化开放、积极的态度。	1	2	3	4	5
7). 提高外语水平，使学生能够将外语应用于实际。	1	2	3	4	5
8). 帮助学生更好地了解自己的身份和文化。	1	2	3	4	5

13. 在多大程度上，您认同下面所列出的跨文化教学目标？

1). 帮助学生了解有关英语文化的信息（日常生活、历史、地理、政治等）。	1	2	3	4	5
2). 提供丰富的渠道（文学、音乐、戏剧、电影等），以便使学生体验英语文化。	1	2	3	4	5
3). 培养学生对其他民族和文化开放和宽容的态度。	1	2	3	4	5
4). 培养学生对文化差异进行反思。	1	2	3	4	5
5). 增进学生对中国文化的了解。	1	2	3	4	5
6). 提高学生对其他文化中的人的移情能力。	1	2	3	4	5
7). 提高学生处理跨文化交际中出现问题的能力。	1	2	3	4	5

14. 请**圈出**最符合您观点的数字。

1). 在外语课堂上，文化教学与语言教学同等重要。	1	2	3	4	5
2). 学生必须具备足够熟练的外语水平，才能开展跨文化教学。	1	2	3	4	5
3). 当教学时间有限时，跨文化教学应该让位于语言教学。	1	2	3	4	5
4). 跨文化交际中产生误解的关键是语言障碍，而不是文化差异。	1	2	3	4	5
5). 文化教学不能融入语言教学之中，两者需分开。	1	2	3	4	5
6). 外语教师应该向学生展示正面的外国社会文化形象。	1	2	3	4	5
7). 愿意通过外语教学来培养跨文化能力。	1	2	3	4	5

8). 在外语课堂上，学生只能获得跨文化知识，无法获得跨文化技能。	1	2	3	4	5
9). 外语教学应不仅只关注外国文化，还应该加深学生对自身文化的理解。	1	2	3	4	5

第四部分 教师跨文化教学实践 *[请<u>圈出</u>最能代表您意见的数字]*

（1=从不，2=偶尔，3=经常，4=总是）

15.在跨文化教学中，您会经常涉及以下话题吗？

1). 日常生活、生活条件、饮食等	1	2	3	4
2). 教育，职业生活	1	2	3	4
3). 价值观和信仰	1	2	3	4
4). 传统、民俗、旅游景点	1	2	3	4
5). 文学	1	2	3	4
6). 其他文化表现形式（如音乐、戏剧、艺术等）	1	2	3	4
7). 外国的历史、地理、政治制度	1	2	3	4
8). 青年文化	1	2	3	4
9). 民族和社会群体	1	2	3	4
10). 中国和其他国家的关系（政治、经济和文化等）	1	2	3	4

16. 在跨文化教学中，您会经常开展以下教学活动吗？

1). 利用视频、光盘或互联网上的数字资源来讲解外国文化。	1	2	3	4
2). 引导学生思考外国文化中的一些有趣或奇特的现象。	1	2	3	4
3). 跟学生分享我在国外的经历。	1	2	3	4
4). 引导学生分享他们在国外的经历。	1	2	3	4
5). 引导学生设想在国外生活的场景。	1	2	3	4
6). 邀请外国人进课堂。	1	2	3	4
7). 引导学生通过角色扮演，体验跨文化交际过程。	1	2	3	4
8). 要求学生用外语讲述中国文化的某一方面。	1	2	3	4
9). 引导学生讨论某一外国文化或某一族群的文化定势。	1	2	3	4
10). 引导学生就中外文化的某一方面进行对比。	1	2	3	4
11). 引导学生研讨外国文献/事件所隐含的文化内涵。	1	2	3	4
12). 引导学生解读英语文化背景下事件/文献所隐含的信仰、价值观和意识形态。	1	2	3	4
13). 引导学生分析中国人与外国人在交际中产生的误解及其原因。	1	2	3	4

Appendix E: Interview Guide

1. Overseas experience, experience of additional intercultural training, intercultural teaching experience
2. Perceptions of ICC
3. Perceptions of intercultural teaching
4. Objectives of foreign language teaching
5. Objectives of intercultural teaching
6. Time allocation for intercultural teaching
7. Intercultural teaching practice in the classroom
8. Challenges/concerns about intercultural teaching
9. Expectations for in-service teacher education on intercultural teaching

Appendix F: Byram's (1997) savoirs for developing ICC (pp. 57-64)

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 phenomenacultural 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 behaviours 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 behaviour from foreigners.

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.

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 organisations 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 socialisation, 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 socialisation 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 one's interlocutor's

The intercultural speaker knows about the social distinctions dominant in the two countriese.g. those of social class, ethnicity, gender, profession, religionand how these are marked by visible phenomena such as clothing or food, and invisible phenomena such as language varietye.g. minority languages, and socially determined accentor non-verbal behaviour, or modes of socialisation 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 countriese.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 behaviour 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.

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):
(a) identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins

The intercultural speaker: can 'read' a document or event, analysing its origins/sourcese.g. in the media, in political speech or historical writingand 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 behaviour, proxemic and paralanguage 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.

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 form 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 contacts 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.

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.