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**Dissertation Title: The Reflection of the Intercultural
Communication Teaching: A Study of Two Courses of the
Chinese-foreign Cooperative Education Program**

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Abstract

Against the background of increasing internationalization, Chinese-foreign cooperative education programs are growing in the Chinese higher education sector. With the international teaching environment combined with the local IC education concept, Chinese-foreign cooperative education programs are potentially the ideal platform for the complete realization of the entire process of intercultural language teaching and learning in higher education. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research on intercultural communication (IC) teaching in Chinese-foreign cooperative education programs. Moreover, the contents of IC courses offered in Chinese higher education, including the Chinese-foreign cooperative education programs, is not conducive to developing Chinese learners' intercultural communication competence (ICC). To investigate the effectiveness of IC teaching on developing students' ICC in Chinese higher education, this paper focuses on a Chinese-Hong Kong cooperative education program, adopting a qualitative approach to conduct in-depth interviews in two undergraduate curriculums, *Language and Intercultural Communication* (LIC) and *English Oral Communication* (EOC), to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of intercultural teaching in the program and to find out the reasons why learners of the courses have difficulties in mastering ICC and preparing for overseas study from a pedagogical perspective. This paper finds that both the two courses neglect the role of translanguaging practices in developing learners' ICC. Meanwhile, there is also an excessive focus on essentialist perspectives and Euro-American cultures in the LIC and EOC courses, respectively. Furthermore, both courses also neglect the importance of various forms of practice and, more critically, intercultural contact in developing learners' ICC. Such reflective issues that do not play to Chinese-foreign cooperation education program strengths and have a negative impact on cultivating learners' ICC. The shortcomings demonstrated by these

courses also reflect a series of shortcomings in the IC teaching of Chinese higher education. Based on the research findings, this research proposes that the IC teaching in Chinese universities should be transformed from the Euro-American IC model as the main content and the essentialist perspective. Moreover, IC teaching in China should also attach importance to the role of translation competence in facilitating learners' ICC. In addition, the role of intercultural contact in the IC class for cultivating learners' ICC also needs to be emphasized.

Keywords: Intercultural communication competence; intercultural communication teaching; intercultural communication; translanguaging practice; intercultural contact

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The Reflection of the Intercultural Communication Teaching: A Study of Two Courses of the Chinese-foreign Cooperative Education Program

1. Introduction

1.1 Research background and rationale

In recent years, with the continuous advancement of globalization, the demand of Chinese learners to learn foreign knowledge and culture has increased dramatically. The statistics of MOE (2021) demonstrate that the number of Chinese overseas students has reached 703,500 in 2021. Among them, Chinese students studying in English-speaking countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) account for the majority (UNESCO, 2014). In the UK case alone, there are more than 100,000 Chinese students studying there every year. Equally important, Altbach and Knight (2007) point out that globalization is not only accompanied by a growth in the number of Chinese overseas students, but the internationalization of Chinese higher education is also benefiting from globalization. According to Graddol (2006), with globalization as a convenient platform, in order to introduce ‘quality education resources from abroad’ and to enhance the quality and reputation of Chinese higher education, China has been conducting cooperative programs with overseas higher education institutions since the 1990s. As of June 2020, China has 1,196 Chinese-foreign cooperative education programs at the undergraduate level and above, as well as 10 Chinese-foreign cooperative universities. Meanwhile, MOE (2020) finds that there are more than 450,000 students are already enrolled in these universities.

According to MOE (2019a), the Chinese-foreign cooperative education programs, also known as Transnational Higher Education (TNHE), refer to higher education institutions in China run by Chinese universities in partnership with overseas

universities, including those in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. These universities mainly adopt English medium instruction (EMI) and emphasize an English immersion learning environment (Jenkins, 2017). Furthermore, these universities employ a large number of teaching staff with international backgrounds and introduce as well as draw heavily from overseas curricula. Therefore, Hou et al. (2014) claim that Chinese-foreign cooperative universities have gained rapid growth due to their highly international nature. Meanwhile, these programs are effectively meeting the study requirements of students who cannot go abroad for various reasons, thus attracting a large number of Chinese students to study and increasing the share of Chinese higher education in the international market (Hou et al., 2014; MOE, 2019b).

It is noteworthy that due to the internationalization of Chinese higher education and the learning environment of EMI, both learners and teachers live in a dynamic environment of interaction with people from different sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds (Ou et al., 2020). Additionally, more and more Chinese university students are eager to learn about cultures different from their own based on their interests or learning needs. Such an atmosphere makes intercultural communication (IC) an important consideration in Chinese higher education. Sun (2016) argues that a significant number of Chinese universities already offer a variety of courses related to IC and mainly aim to develop learners' intercultural communication competence (ICC) as the ultimate goal of the course.

As the ideal platform for IC and the pioneer in the internationalization of Chinese higher education, Sun (2016) also asserts that the Chinese-foreign cooperative program is well suited to 'introduce and offer IC courses that follow the current research trends and provide reference for Chinese intercultural higher education' (p. 2). In recent years, research on IC teaching and learning in Chinese higher education has emerged, focusing

on the effectiveness of intercultural courses in Chinese universities (Bi, 2009; Hu, 2015; Sun, 2016). In particular, the study on IC courses in Chinese-foreign cooperative programs focusing on the pedagogy and language policies applied in these EMI courses (Hu et al., 2014; Song, 2019; Wan & Gao, 2019; Zhang, 2018). Nevertheless, there is still a lack of pedagogical research on IC courses offered in Chinese-foreign cooperative universities (Ou et al., 2020). Moreover, the aforementioned studies have mainly examined the positive factors exhibited by intercultural education in Chinese universities. In reality, even as the frontier of Chinese higher education, the intercultural curriculums offered by Sino-foreign cooperative universities are gradually revealing various issues that not only fail to effectively develop learners' ICC, but also adversely affect the quality and even the reputation of Chinese intercultural education.

Nevertheless, studies on reflecting and analysing the deficiencies in IC courses represented by Chinese-foreign cooperative programs are scarce and neglected, with only Hou (2016) conducting an ethnographic study of a Chinese-English cooperative program and stating that instead of improving their ICC from it, the Chinese students developed a stereotype for British. These worrisome phenomena indicate the urgency and necessity for the researchers to study the IC courses contents conducted in Chinese-foreign cooperative universities. And it is equally important to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of these IC courses to find an effective approach to improve teaching quality and cultivate ICC. It should be noted that the author was once an undergraduate student studying at a Sino-Hong Kong cooperative university. Based on the above intercultural education trends and research status, as well as the study experience, the author is motivated to investigate two IC courses from this joint university, namely *Language and Intercultural Communication (LIC)* and *English Oral Communication*

(EOC), to explore the possible shortcomings in the teaching contents and the pathways to ameliorate them.

1.2 Research propose and significance

Utilizing basic qualitative study approach, including a combination of interview data and course documentations, this paper aims to reveal the strengths and shortcomings of the IC courses at the Chinese-foreign cooperative university. It shows the phenomenon of IC education in Chinese universities at this stage, and lays the theoretical foundation for the reflections of IC courses in Sino-foreign cooperative universities and even in Chinese higher education. It interrogates the following research questions (RQs):

- (1) What are the advantages of the IC curriculums offered by the Sino-foreign cooperative university?
- (2) What are the shortcomings of the IC curriculums offered by the Sino-foreign cooperative university? Why do these shortcomings generate?
- (3) How to address these shortcomings of the IC curriculums?

This study will fill the research gap in studies on IC courses in Sino-foreign joint universities. Meanwhile, while recent studies of Chinese IC teaching focus on the specific processes and positive impacts of these courses on the development of learners' ICC (Sun, 2017), this paper provides a reflective perspective for critically analysing the development of ICC and IC courses in Chinese universities. This study will also help to enhance the quality of IC teaching and the development of learners' ICC in Chinese higher education.

1.3 Structure of the article

This paper contains five chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction about the background of this study and its rationale. Chapter 2 will then discuss the concepts and theoretical framework of IC covered in this paper, followed by a review of research on IC teaching in higher education academia in Western countries and China. Next, Chapter 3 will elaborate on the research methods, including the context of the research participants, adopted paradigm, sampling, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, and trustworthiness. Chapter 4 will continue to present the research findings and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching contents based on the findings of the two courses. In the process, relevant literature and course outlines will also be cited to support the discussion. Finally, a conclusion of the study and implications for the future of the field will be presented. Equally important, the shortcomings of this study will also be analysed.

2. Literature review

2.1 The research of IC teaching from the Western perspective

First of all, according to Hall's (1989) definition, IC is precisely based on communication between people from different cultural backgrounds. Since the introduction of this concept, there has been a wealth of European and North American studies have explored specific approaches to teach this concept to learners in the classroom and to develop related competencies. North American and European academics' studies on IC mainly focus on the conceptual framework for constructing IC (Kramsch, 2011; Uryu et al., 2014), developed features of IC (Deardorff, 2009; Risager, 2014; Tannen, 1984), as well as the pathways to develop IC in the authentic

IC context (Bennett, 2009; Huth, 2010). These studies provide theoretical apparatus and practical references for IC and ICC teaching research. Nevertheless, Gao (2016) argue that such studies do not consider how these concepts are taught in language classroom situations in higher education. That said, the above studies provide a very limited reference for the practice of IC language classrooms in higher education.

On the other hand, the European and North American scholars have gone beyond the study of how to prepare learners to be equipped to perform IC in different contexts, and have produced rich results by studying specific ICC teaching models and methods from the perspective of language education. Schmidt (1998) proposes to enhance the understanding of target culture and self-culture by comparing and analysing significant events in different national cultural contexts in the language class. The development of a 'third space' for learners in the language classroom has also been put forward as a way to equip learners with an understanding of two different cultures and thus improve the ICC (Kramsch, 2019). Houghton (2012, 2013) proposes the Intercultural Dialogue Model to enhance learners' ICC, which focuses on analysing learners' value systems and personal identity development during the IC process. Moreover, Byram (1997) suggests his ICC model and practices it in different contexts of foreign language education. Based on the ICC model, Byram (2008) further advocates 'discovery', 'comparison' and 'analysis' as the main components of IC language teaching (p. 25). According to Hou et al. (2014), the ICC model further clarifies the goals of integrating ICC into language teaching and learning and is closely related to the traditional goals of language knowledge and language communication. Due to its ease of application and its close connection to language teaching objectives, Byram's ICC model has been extensively adopted in the IC courses of higher education around the world, including the IC curricula of the university studied in the paper. Furthermore, based on reviewing

and evaluating Byram and Dearsdorff's IC teaching concepts, Moeller and Osborn (2014) argue that existing theories are not sufficient to fully meet the complex phenomenon of intercultural language learning classrooms, and they present a series of goals, principles, and methods of classroom activities for teaching IC that enrich the classroom practice of IC to some extent.

Nevertheless, both Sun (2017) and Huang (2015) conclude that the aforementioned studies focused too much on developing learners' ICC at the expense of an approach to integrating language and IC concepts. Equally important, the above studies do not take into account the context of Chinese higher education. Bush et al. (1998) assert that Chinese higher education is a complex and large system with a great deal of IC learners. In a like manner, the individual Chinese IC learners are also complex in nature. The above research and theories do not incorporate the Chinese reality and are likely to be inapplicable to the IC teaching in Chinese higher education. Moreover, such studies invariably emphasize the differences between cultures and adopt an individual-centred perspective to interpret the diverse cultures, which is a typical essentialist view that does not objectively reflect the reality of IC in the localization context (Halliday et al., 2004). Significantly, there is also a lack of research on the pedagogical process and effectiveness of these studies, indicating that not all the learners evaluate these pedagogical approaches from a Western perspective positively. The potential shortcomings with these studies suggest that IC teaching in Chinese universities cannot simply copy from the Western IC pedagogical theories, but need to consider the realities of Chinese higher education and learners themselves.

2.2 Research on IC teaching in Chinese higher education

Compared to North American and European scholars' research on IC teaching, the research on IC teaching in Chinese higher education started late and is deeply influenced by European and North American concepts, especially Byram's ICC model. Zheng and Gao (2019) divide the development of IC teaching in China in the past three decades into three stages, namely, the *beginning* stage, the *broadening* stage and the *institutionalizing* stage, which provides a useful idea for this study to review the development of Chinese IC teaching in stages. The three stages are interpreted in this paper as the beginning of Chinese IC teaching, its continuous enrichment, and its institutionalization as a core component of the university language teaching curriculum.

2.2.1 The historical development of IC teaching in China and Byram's ICC model

First and foremost, in the *beginning* stage, since the early 1990s, some classic publications in the field of IC and IC teaching have been introduced to Chinese readers (Lin, 1996; Hu & Gao, 1997). By 1995, the formation of the Chinese Association for Intercultural Communication (CAFIC), a group of English educators from across China, marked the official beginning of the field. Meanwhile, Qiu (1994) points out that the social communicative function of language was intensified in foreign language teaching in Chinese universities as a result of the introduction of sociolinguistics into China. During this period, the foreign language teaching in Chinese universities has already adopted English as the language of instruction in the classroom. According to Hu (1990), language classes in Chinese universities during this period aimed to train learners to apply the language they learned to communicate effectively and appropriately in 'different contexts with different audiences', thus the emphasis was on the need of teaching for learners' future communication (p. 17). In contrast to the focus on the communicative function of language, the focus and understanding on the culture

of the target country was only beginning to emerge. Although some research articles comparing Chinese culture with that of English-speaking countries have appeared in this period (Deng & Liu, 1989), and some Chinese universities had offered some IC courses on different cultural connotations of language and avoiding communicative conflicts (Hu, 1992), Sun (2017) points out that there was little empirical research on IC teaching during this period. Moreover, Zheng and Gao (2019) argue that the studies related to IC teaching in this period began to focus on cultures only with the British and American cultures to which native English speakers belong, with a global perspective and more in-depth comparative cultural studies still to be developed.

Since the development of IC teaching in China in the last two decades, that is, in the latter two stages, is closely related to Byram's model, it is necessary for this research to introduce his ICC model before continuing the review. According to Byram (2000), people with a degree of ICC are those who 'see the relationships between cultures and have a critical understanding of their own culture and other cultures' (p. 9). Byram (2008) further proposes the concept of ICC, which includes the following five dimensions:

The competence	Content
(1) Attitudes	Curiosity and open-mindedness, suspending the conviction of one's own culture and the distrust of other cultures
(2) Knowledge	Knowledge of the customs, products, and general procedures of social interaction of your own and the other person's cultural group
(3) Skills of interpreting and relating	The ability to interpret documents and events from other cultures and to be able to do so in relation to the documents of one's own culture
(4) Skills of discovery and interaction	The ability to acquire new knowledge about a culture and its customs, and the ability to apply knowledge, attitudes and skills in practical interactions
(5) Critical cultural awareness	The ability to critically evaluate clear standards, perspectives, habits, and products of one's own culture and those of other cultures

Table 1. Byram's (2008) ICC model. (p. 49-53)

Among them, Byram (2012) states that *attitudes* and *knowledge* are necessary to maintain interpersonal relationships, involving *skills of interpretation and relating* and *skills of discovery and interaction*. *Critical cultural awareness*, on the other hand, is a core component of this model and a key dimension of language teaching. In the model, learners are communicating as intercultural speakers rather than native speakers. This model has been developed for the purpose of language education and contains a series of practical suggestions. As a result, it has been widely applied as a theoretical foundation for innovative ICC language teaching practices (Byram et al., 2001).

After transitioning to the *broadening* stage, Yang and Zhuang (2008) find that since the 21st century, although the learning of culture in the IC teaching in Chinese higher education still served the improvement of language proficiency, the consideration of culture in the teaching process has gradually increased. Lin (2006) suggests that university IC courses should not only teach the surface aspects of culture but also address the deeper aspects of culture, i.e., focus on material culture, institutional culture, and conceptual culture, respectively, to enable students to develop intercultural communication awareness (ICA) and foster ICC. Meanwhile, Gao (2001) also notes that IC teaching in this period has moved away from the language and culture of native English speakers as the ‘sole object of learning and imitation’ and has gradually moved beyond country-specific language and culture, aiming to develop humanistic qualities in general. It was also during this period that the term ‘intercultural competence’ or ‘intercultural communication competence’ proposed by Byram was increasingly applied as an explicit conceptualization term and established as an important content of curriculum for teaching IC in Chinese universities (Zhang, 2007). It is evident that the teaching of IC in this period began to move away from seeking relevance to English-

speaking cultures alone, and increasingly sought to relate to the broader goal of improving ICA.

Through the above review of relevant research from this period demonstrates that IC research in China during the broadening period had multiple theoretical resources and interdisciplinarity in the process of constructing the IC language teaching model. Nevertheless, Zhang (2007) warns that such IC teaching model developed learners' mastery of the target country's culture and language as the teaching objective, which may lead to learners' departure from their own culture and assimilation into the target culture. This phenomenon, also defined as 'Chinese cultural aphasia', revealed the prevalence of a focus on exposing learners to foreign culture at the expense of their own Chinese culture in the IC teaching in the *broadening* period, and had received critical attention by the scholars (Xiao et al., 2010). To reverse this situation, some Chinese universities tried to integrate the teaching of Chinese culture into IC teaching. Guo et al. (2002) also find that the co-teaching by Chinese and foreign instructors was also beginning to emerge in order to promote the interaction between the native speaker culture and the target culture. This adaptation was thought to enhance learners' identification with their own culture and improve their ICC. Equally important, language teachers' ICC were beginning to gain traction as 'essential qualities' for language teachers. However, Hu (2013) notes that the number of courses on the interaction between Chinese and foreign cultures still remained relatively low during this period. Moreover, the focus of IC teaching was on the teaching of IC theories and IC phenomena, and the development of practical competencies about them was hardly considered.

Moving to the *institutionalizing* stage, Xu and Sun (2013) argue that a prominent sign of the institutionalizing of IC teaching in China is that it has, at least in the

theoretical aspect, further sought to go beyond the goal of familiarizing learners with just British and American cultures and to encourage them learn about the cultures in non-English speaking countries with a global perspective. Moreover, the importance of learning how to introduce Chinese culture to people from other countries and cultures is increasingly emphasized (Wen, 2016). Equally important, in recent years, the new *Guidelines for College English Teaching* and the *National Standards of Teaching Quality for Undergraduate English Majors*, published successively by the Ministry of Education of China, have included IC as a major component of university language teaching as well as placed ICC development in a very prominent position (MOE, 2017, 2018), which marks the transformation of IC in Chinese higher education from one of the components of English language teaching to a major teaching component, and Byram's model for developing ICC has become a 'core goal' of Chinese IC teaching (Zheng & Gao, 2019).

2.2.2 The controversies and alternatives to Byram's ICC model in China

Meanwhile, Wen (2016) also summarizes that IC teaching in the new phase has transitioned from a focus on communicative competence and cultural knowledge of language to the development of ICA and ICC, and further emphasized the importance of practice in IC teaching. Plenty of empirical studies and pedagogical models for developing learners' ICC in the IC classroom has emerged rapidly and are considered to be the upgrade to Byram's ICC model. Some of the more influential models include the 'ACROSS' curriculum design model proposed by Hou (2014). The main elements of this model are as follows.

Under the 'Assessment for Learning' system, learning is more than the transfer of information but is based on guided discovery; teachers are transformed from knowledge transmitters to organizers of classroom activities and become the 'Co-learner' of the learning process; learners and teachers work together on 'Research-based Learning', co-discovery and 'Original Contribution'; and in the 'Social Activity' of language learning,

they experience first-hand the process of conflict, negotiation and cooperation in IC to develop learners' Self-regulation competence. In these ways, the model focuses on the learner's critical thinking, ICC, and research competence (Hou, 2014, p. 24).

To sum up, this IC teaching model is characterized by the rejection of the 'banking education' view of the teacher as the authority and the emphasis on the learner as the leading role in the classroom and the importance of classroom practices to promote ICC (Freire et al., 2020). In the same period, Sun (2016) proposes the CREED principle for teaching IC, which includes the steps of 'critiquing, reflecting, exploring, empathizing and doing' in teaching IC to develop learners' ICC (p. 20). This model is considered more convenient and intuitive by many Chinese scholars compared to Byram's ICC model. Furthermore, there is also a growing number of empirical studies that try to develop learners' ICC through different means such as sharing life experiences, IC reflection, and information technology (Gao, 2008; Huang, 2015). It is also during this period that Hou (2016) notes that Chinese-foreign cooperative universities integrate Chinese and foreign IC teaching theories and multiculturalism, are the ideal place to build a 'third space' of cultural adaptation for learners.

Nevertheless, the latest *institutionalizing* phase has also seen plenty of criticisms directed at the IC teaching contents. Hu (2013) argues that teaching IC at today's phase does not effectively enhance learners' ICC by relying solely on theoretical instruction and a series of 'scenario-based' practices, and further argues that ICC development relies on extended contact with people from different cultures, whether these interactions occur outside or inside the classroom. This enlightens this study to focus on whether the IC teaching at universities in the Chinese context carries out the practice of intercultural contact. Moreover, both Hu (2013) and Sun (2016) point out that the Chinese IC teaching at the *institutionalizing* stage still focuses on the culture and theories of English-speaking countries represented by the US and UK. Wang and

Kulich (2015) argue that such phenomenon still exists because the culture and language of mainstream English-speaking countries are considered to be highly relevant to work and academic achievement, and learning these cultures and languages in IC is widely considered to be better for obtaining high scores on language exams and for accessing study and work opportunities related to these countries.

There are also growing controversies of Byram's ICC model, which is held as a core component of Chinese IC teaching. Gu (2016) finds that despite the high level of language proficiency of language teachers in Chinese universities, most of them consider ICC as merely 'the specific social norms and standards to be followed in mainstream English-speaking countries' and do not focus on developing learners' values about cultures other than English-speaking countries (p. 264). This excessive esteem for European and American culture and IC-relevant theories is also manifested in the long-standing essentialist teaching. Some scholars further argue that models such as Byram's ICC and Hofstede's National Culture Model which are extensively cited and used as pedagogical goals, place a heavy emphasis on cultural differences rather than similarities, undoubtedly neglecting the complexities of individuals and does not indicating how these competencies can be achieved through language teaching (Gyogi & Lee, 2016; McSweeney, 2002). Likewise, the ICC model is also considered to be held the view of culture as static versus bounded and fails to see the fluidity of cultures (Phipps & Gonzalez, 2004; Hoff, 2014). In addition, Simpson and Dervin (2017) point out that the European and North American IC studies represented by Byram's ICC model have a distinct 'Western-centrism' overtone. The obsession with these theories without considering the diverse needs of Chinese IC learners and the complexities of Chinese IC teaching remains the reality of Chinese IC teaching today. Unfortunately, there is a paucity of research to date that critically examines the effects of these Chinese

IC teachings and reflects IC learners' perceptions of them, let alone studies that do so in the context of Sino-foreign cooperative universities. Combined with the research found by Hou (2016) on the problems of IC courses in such joint programs, both the current status and the shortcomings of IC courses in Chinese higher education prompt the author to focus the perspective on Chinese-foreign cooperative universities to explore whether the IC courses offered have similar problems or have additional shortcomings.

2.3 Translanguaging practices in IC teaching: the theoretical foundation

It can be seen that as IC teaching has become more diverse globally, it also faces its own problems and application dilemmas in mainstream concepts. Meanwhile, the multilingual turn that has emerged in the field of language education has gradually begun to be associated with IC teaching (Meier, 2016). According to Li (2018), this multilingual shift manifests itself as the translanguaging phenomenon in the language class, referring to the practices of language learners using two or more languages to communicate, and it includes code-switching as well as translation. The translanguaging practice represented by translation is also known as translation competence and is also considered to be part of the ICC (Gyogi, 2015; Sun, 2017). Kramsch (2019) also emphasizes the role of translation in facilitating IC. Since translation facilitates the understanding and communication of different human cultures, and translation is the understanding and accurate expression of different cultures, translation can undoubtedly serve as a 'bridge' between people of different language and cultural backgrounds. Translation involves the foreign language and the mother language and can reflect the cultural characteristics of both languages.

Several studies have discussed the potential of translation in developing learners' plurilingual competence and in dealing with language and culture in the language classroom (Laviosa, 2014; Ortega, 2013; Tsagari & Floros, 2013). However, there is a lack of research on applying translation in IC teaching of universities with the Chinese background, and Lee and Gyogi (2018) investigate the effect of having students translate Japanese culture-specific lexis (CSL) into English on the promotion of ICC and language proficiency. This also inspires the research to explore whether such translanguaging practices are adopted in IC courses in Sino-foreign cooperative university and its assessments.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

After reviewing the different perspectives on IC teaching and learning research and its development, this study adopts a basic qualitative method to explore the evaluations of instructors and learners on two IC-related courses in a Sino-foreign cooperative university. Based on the translanguaging practices, this study seeks to reveal and introspect whether these two courses were effective in enhancing learners' ICC. Specifically, the strengths and weaknesses of these two IC courses will be discussed. Therefore, the RQs of this study are as follows.

- (1) What are the advantages of the IC curriculums offered by the Sino-foreign cooperative university?
- (2) What are the shortcomings of the IC curriculums offered by the Sino-foreign cooperative university? Why do these shortcomings generate?
- (3) How to address these shortcomings of the IC curriculums?

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), the interpretivism assumes that each individual has a different interpretation of a given social situation. Based on such an interpretivist paradigm, the author argues that RQs need to be addressed by virtue of the different interpretations of individual participants, i.e., the perspectives and experiences of learners and teachers from different perspectives. Because these participants have different backgrounds, they can form different views of the curriculums through their different experiences (Ryan, 2018). Therefore, this study is based on a relativist ontology that acknowledges the complexity and differences of the participants and attempts to analyse the multiple realities they experience (Scotland, 2012). Moreover, due to each participant's different learning and teaching experiences in the cooperative university and the influence of various social factors, they also have different constructs of the phenomenon in question during their interactions, which marks the constructivist epistemological position of this study (Creswell, 2007).

Based on such a philosophical stance, a qualitative method is adopted in the two IC teaching cases at a Sino-foreign joint university. According to Maxwell (2013), qualitative research aims to understand how people make sense of their experiences. It provided a foundation for analysing how the participants evaluated the IC courses they experienced to better interpret the two IC courses. In addition, the dynamic nature of this method allows for the exploration of additional perspectives regarding the evaluations of these two courses.

3.2 Research context

The study focused on two IC courses at a Sino-foreign cooperative university in south-eastern China. This university is a joint university between a leading public university in Hong Kong and a top normal university in Mainland China. The university uses EMI

and has approximately 6,000 undergraduate students and 224 professional faculty members. 72 percent of the students are from different parts of China, and the faculty and staff are from more than 70 countries, with the vast majority having studied or worked overseas, and together they form a multilingual and multicultural learning environment.

The two undergraduate courses under study in this paper are *Language and Intercultural Communication* (LIC) and *English Oral Communication* (EOC). The LIC course is a Major Requirement (MR) course in the Program of English Language and Literature Studies (ELLS) that is taken in the Year 3. Nevertheless, it is not only not available to students in other non-Divisions of Humanities and Social Sciences (DHSS), but also not available to Year 3 students in related majors. Specifically, the English Professional Communication (EPC) students who are split from the ELLS program are the only ones who have the opportunity to take this course. According to the Course Information of Language and Intercultural Communication (2018), the course is designed to develop ‘learners’ ICC in different cultural identities and contexts and to apply the course knowledge to approach IC effectively’ (p. 15). Its course arrangements are shown in the table below.

Week	Topic(s)
Week 1: 2/17-2/21	What is Intercultural Communication?
Week 2: 2/24-2/28	Previous Approaches of Intercultural Communication
Week 3: 3/2-3/6	Research Methods of Intercultural Communication
Week 4: 3/9-3/13	Culture and Identity (1)
Week 5: 3/16-3/20	Culture and Identity (2)
Week 6: 3/23-3/27	Culture and Othering (1)
Week 7: 3/30-4/3	Culture and Othering (2)
Week 8: 4/6-4/10	Culture and Representation
Week 9: 4/13-4/17	Intercultural Communication in Business
Week 10: 4/20-4/24	Corporate & Institutional Culture
Week 11: 4/27-5/1	Culture and Education
Week 12: 5/4-5/8	Culture and Online Education
Week 13: 5/11-5/15	Group Presentation
Week 14: 5/18-5/22	Group Presentation
Week 15/16	Final Examination

Table 2. The tentative course schedule. (The Course Information of Language and Intercultural Communication, 2018, p. 15-16)

As for the EOC course, it is a Year 3 free elective (FE) course, which means that all Year 3 students at this university can choose to take the course, regardless of what their majors are. During the course, students will learn the culture of Europe and the United States, including the geographical location and customs of some representative cities. Students also explore IC conflicts such as culture shock that they may encounter in these countries through various forms of discussions organized by the course instructor as well as simulations. Throughout the course, knowledge will be taught in the form of listening exercises and interactive sessions to develop students' listening and speaking skills. Students will also be required to complete appropriate listening, speaking assignments, and group presentations. It is hoped that this course will 'effectively enhance students' ICC through listening and speaking instruction on IC, so that they will be prepared for their future overseas studies' (The Course Information of English Oral Communication, 2017, p. 12). Under such circumstances, the variability of the two courses in terms of course categories and the diversity of their contents provide the ideal place for selecting targeted participants for this study.

3.3 Participants

According to Coe et al. (2017), sampling is designed to purposefully select a smaller number of participants. Whereas purposeful sampling allows for studies with a particular need for typicality, this is considered appropriate for qualitative studies of IC education. With this in mind, this research adopted a purposeful sampling strategy to recruit participants (Merriam, 2009), including outreach and recruitment via Chinese social media such as WeChat, QQ, and email to the learners and teachers who had taken

and taught the two courses. A total of seven participants were recruited, including five students and two course instructors. All five of these students had previously taken the EOC courses as the undergraduate Year 3 students from February to May 2020. However, because the LIC course is a restricted MR course, only two of these learners had ever taken this course from February to May 2020. Two course instructors had taught the LIC and EOC courses respectively. The basic information about the participants is shown in table 3.

Code	Anonymity	Gender	Nationality	Position
LIC01	Liang	male	China	student
LIC02	Hao	female	China	student
LIC03	Lee	male	Korea	teacher
EOC01	Li	female	China	student
EOC02	Jonathan	male	United Kingdom	teacher
EOC03	Zhao	male	China	student
EOC04	Qing	male	China	student

Table 3. Demographic information of the research participants.

3.4 Data collection and analysis

In terms of data collection, to gain insight into the strengths and shortcomings of the IC courses at the Chinese-foreign cooperative university, especially the effectiveness of these courses in developing learners' ICC, the research conducted semi-structured interviews to help participants report their perceptions about the teaching of the two IC courses designed to develop learners' ICC. The reason for adopting semi-structured interviews is that this research method allow flexibility in adapting the interview content to the participant's situation in time and to obtain detailed and comprehensive information (Arthur et al., 2012). The one-to-one interviews with each participant lasted 30-40 minutes and were conducted by video call. The interviews were conducted in Chinese for student participants and in English for teacher participants, so that differences in English proficiency could be reduced by communicating in the

participants' first language. All interviews were recorded and transcribed into texts. In addition, because the student participant interviews were in Chinese, the transcriptions of the relevant interviews were also translated into English. An example of the interview transcript is shown in Appendix 3.

As for the data analysis, this study adopted grounded theory to analysis the interview data. In recent years, grounded theory has been widely applied in empirical studies in the educational field (Charmaz, 2015). According to Charmaz (2006), this approach avoids making preconceived assumptions about the research subjects, and instead generalizes the findings based on extensive literature reading and in-depth observations. This is considered particularly suitable for research on IC courses offered by emerging Sino-foreign cooperative universities. Furthermore, critical discourse analysis (CDA) method was also adopted to analyse interview data. Mullet (2018) argues that CDA focuses on the operations of power and ideology hidden behind the discourse and becomes a way to reveal how the classroom purposefully instils knowledge in students and defines the course contents and social relations, and is considered well suited to discuss the handbooks of both courses as well as participant interview data.

3.5 Ethical considerations and trustworthiness

The study followed the ethical guidelines of BERA (2018) and approval for the study was obtained from the ethics committee. The information sheet and consent form were sent to the participants and their electronic signatures were obtained to indicate their consent before the data collection started (see Appendix 2). The study also respected the participants' right to withdraw at any time. Moreover, the study protected the

privacy of the participants, all data about the participants were anonymously coded and the interview data were securely stored in a password-protected computer.

Since this study belongs to the qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba's (2006) theories of transferability, dependability, credibility and confirmability can be adopted to measure its trustworthiness. Firstly, since transferability and dependability require transparency of the complete process and background information of the study to offer reference for future research, this study detailed the background information of the research objects available for reference and the entire research process to ensure these two points (Cho & Trent, 2006). In terms of credibility, Shenton (2004) claims that it is concerned with the consistency between findings and reality. Therefore, this study adopted the participants' first language during the interviews to enhance credibility. Moreover, this study also adopted member checking to ask participants to 'provide feedback on the accuracy of the interview transcripts' to improve the credibility of findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Equally important, considering that researchers belonging to a group familiar with the participants and having similar experiences may introduce researcher bias that could compromise confirmability, strangers who volunteered to participate were recruited for this study to prevent bias resulting from the relationship between the participants and the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 2006). In addition, the author consciously avoided projecting his personal experiences onto the participants to prevent researcher bias.

4. Findings

On the basis of interview data, this study finds the following recurrent circumstances: the LIC course covered as much IC concepts and cases as possible in a limited time and was free from the constraints of the common textbook. Nevertheless, the curriculum

was taught from an essentialist perspective, neglecting the importance of developing language skills and conducting practices to develop learners' ICC. On the other hand, although the EOC course was very practical and effective in improving learners' oral competence, its IC contents only covered Euro-American culture and lacked intercultural contact, and therefore did not effectively improve learners' ICC as well.

4.1 The LIC curriculum

4.1.1 Conceptualizing IC knowledge

For the LIC course, the first interview question asked in this study was 'What do you think are the advantages of the LIC course in terms of imparting knowledge?'. The excerpt below shows the student participant Liang gives a positive assessment of the course contents based on the richness of the IC content covered in the course and its interesting nature:

This course is only available to our EPC major students. In the short semester, we studied not only Hofstede and Byram's models, but also IC contradictions such as othering, identity and its examples. I find the content very plentiful and interesting. (LIC01, Liang)

Liang believed that the LIC program gave EPC major students like him a unique opportunity to learn professional IC, and in his opinion the IC curriculum should be as comprehensive as possible, including examples of relevant IC concepts and applications. Combined with the course handbook, this course not only taught Hofstede's and Byram's models, which were considered 'essential concepts' for IC courses, but also introduced IC issues including identity and othering and their typical examples. Furthermore, the course covered the application of IC in different scenarios (Zu, 2015). This learner also found the LIC course to be different from traditional language teaching courses in that it covered social, language and cultural aspects, so it was very innovative and met his need to learn about different cultures (Hu, 2015).

Based on this perception and the course content, this participant gave the above evaluation.

For the interview question, the teacher participant Lee thought that despite the time constraints, this course had some advantages over traditional Chinese IC courses, such as being free from the constraints of the textbooks prescribed by the official:

I teach a combination of theories and concrete examples, and then let students read some of the relevant literature each week. Moreover, my teaching style is to use designed slides and handouts instead of the official textbook, so that I can avoid teaching rigidly and restrictively. (LIC03, Lee)

In his opinion, to cover as much IC content as possible in a limited time, the combination of concepts and practical examples as well as extensive reading can undoubtedly 'enable the learner to acquire comprehensive IC knowledge in a short period of time based on easy understanding of the course content' (The Course Information of Language and Intercultural Communication. 2018, p. 1). On the other hand, the data reveals that Lee believes that the use of textbooks developed by the Ministry of Education of China will lead to a rigid curriculum model. The exercises in the official textbook are also limited and boring, which are not conducive to students to expand their horizons and maintain their enthusiasm (Hou, 2016). Based on such awareness, Lee adopted a flexible model, i.e., using self-published contents to teach a wide range of IC concepts and related applications. He believed that such a teaching approach not only got rid of the limitations of official textbooks on teaching contents, but also enhanced learners' interest in learning and mastering comprehensive ICC to achieve the teaching objectives.

4.1.2 An essentialist view of IC teaching

On the other hand, when the interview question 'What do you think is lacking in the LIC course teaching contents?' was asked, the participant Hao felt that most of what he learned in the LIC course was from an essentialist perspective.

The main theories and readings we have studied both classify people from directly into different cultural categories. Moreover, the non-essentialist contents were rare, only the brief definitions are presented. So many of us think we do not have a deep understanding of the IC finally. (LIC02, Hao)

According to Hao, the course was too focused on essentialist teaching. It is reflected in the course content such as Hofstede's model of national cultural differences and Byram's ICC model which both classify people from different countries directly into different cultural categories, emphasizing the differences between groups (Block; 2007; McSweeney, 2002). By reviewing the course literatures, what Hao refers to also includes the publications of Samovar et al. (2010) with Oxford and Anderson (1995). These literatures are likewise essentialist in their views. Nevertheless, some students, including this participant, also wanted to learn in depth about the emerging non-essentialist perspective of IC, which was apparently not being focused on by the LIC curriculum. Even in many of the disputed IC concepts chapters, the non-essentialist perspectives only involved foundational definitions and a few examples that were not explored in depth. As the participant added: 'The class just mentioned a few examples like white teacher's prejudice against black students without explaining it in depth' (LIC02, Hao). Based on the facts, the learners did not grasp the non-essentialist IC. Therefore, Hao thought that he only mastered an essentialist competence in common IC at the end of the course and was not able to carry out IC effectively.

For the interview question, Lee recognized that essentialist teaching is a potential deficiency. However, he regarded this approach as the most efficient way of IC pedagogies:

I have to maximize students' mastery of effective IC in the limited time, and essentialist contents are certainly the most likely methods of achieving these goals. Further, a full understanding of culture and the differences between countries is sufficient for most learners. (LIC03, Lee)

From Lee's perspective, due to the short duration of the semester and the need to develop sufficient ICC of learners, essentialist IC teaching is the most feasible approach. Since essentialist IC shows the cultural differences of different groups, it is a fast and easy way to achieve for IC (Mahon, 2006). Furthermore, his response also demonstrates the view that IC is mainly about effective communication between people of different cultures. Based on these considerations, Lee believed that essentialist teaching was sufficient and the fastest way to develop ICC. Therefore, he adopted such pedagogy even though he realized that it might not be conducive to developing learners' ICC in the long run.

4.1.3 Neglect of translanguaging and practices

Moreover, when it came to the interview question 'Do you think the LIC course is helpful for ICC development in terms of practice?', Hao stated that the course ignored the role of language skills in developing learners' ICC:

This course did little to develop my language skills which is crucial. Except for group presentation assignment, the contents were in the form of imparting knowledge. I think the reason was the teacher thought Chinese learners are rather silent and did not conduct language training. (LIC02, Hao)

The importance that Hao and some other learners place on language proficiency demonstrates the important role that language plays in the IC process: bilingualism is seen as a way to communicate one's language and culture to the other in IC (Sun, 2016). Nevertheless, as a course called 'Language and Intercultural Communication', the participant thought that this course only introduced the IC concepts to learners by the instructor, and the language involved in IC is limited to group presentations. That is, the curriculum had a limited stress on language competence, specifically, the approach to introduce their own culture by developing intercultural learners' translanguaging including translation competence was not considered. From the response of the

participant, this neglect of language competence may be due to the instructor's essentialist belief that the Confucian cultural identity of Chinese learners makes the translanguaging development ineffective (Halliday et al., 2004). In result, the participant believed many learners of the course were unable to adopt translanguaging for IC effectively and therefore do not have competitive ICC.

Another participant, Liang, further noted the lack of practices in this course.

I want to have the opportunity to interact with people from other cultures as an effective way to improve my ICC, but we simply didn't have that opportunity. The course was not even organized us to discuss or simulate like how stereotypes and othering are represented in IC. (LIC01, Liang)

According to Hou (2016), since many students at Chinese-foreign cooperative universities have a strong motivation to go abroad and to integrate into foreign cultures, they are not only eager to learn about IC. This was also reflected in the fact that this participant also wanted to interacted with foreigners of different cultures. However, Liang's response shows that this course lacks various forms of IC practices evidently. Hu (2013) claims that these applications contained discussions and simulations of IC phenomena are crucial to developing learners' ICC. Hence, Liang believed that he had not personally experienced and applied the IC scenario and the IC conflicts and was not able to master the ICC.

4.2 The EOC curriculum

4.2.1 Practical IC teaching contents

Comparing the findings of LIC courses, there are similarities and differences in the findings of the EOC course. For this course, the first interview question in this study was 'What do you think are the advantages of the EOC course in terms of teaching contents?'. The participant Zhao replied that the course contents was very practical and helped him adapt to overseas study and life.

The course introduced some Euro-American cities where many people will go to study later. It also included many relevant listening and speaking exercises. I think the course content is very applicable and relevant to life. (EOC03, Zhao)

Zhao thought that since this course introduced many of the European and American cities where students will be studying, it allowed students to familiarize themselves with life abroad in advance. According to the course handbook, the content covered the geography, history and culture of these cities. Moreover, this learner mentioned the listening and speaking exercises in the course. Specifically, these exercises covered how to address IC conflicts in Euro-American cities. For example, ‘what to do if you experience culture shock in the UK and what to do if you lose your passport in a European airport’ (The Course Information of English Oral Communication, 2017, p. 10). These simulations and experiences of IC scenarios can provide references to IC. Under such circumstances, Zhao believed that the content was practical and it would inform him in the future when conducting IC abroad.

4.2.2 Excessive emphasis on Euro-American cultures

The research then moved to ask ‘What do you think is lacking in the EOC course teaching contents?’. For this interview question, the participant Li felt that the course, which only taught European and American culture, was not effective IC instruction in her opinion.

This course covered only the teaching of European and North American cultures throughout. But not everyone just goes to these countries to study or work. (EOC01, Li)

Likewise, Liang, the participant who has also taken the LIC course, thought that this teaching style was also a form of essentialism.

This course identified all students as only going to study in Europe and America, believed that it was unnecessary for them to learn about other cultures. We all know that ICC is supposed to be a competency with a global perspective. (LIC01, Liang)

The data indicates clearly that learners felt that the EOC course only emphasized IC in the European and American context and this was also an essentialist view. According to the participants, not all learners just go to Euro-American countries for overseas study or living. Their negative evaluations reveal not only that there are many Chinese IC learners who not only have as their goal to further studies outside of Euro-American countries, but also that there are more and more Chinese learners who want to develop a global perspective of ICC rather than one that is based on the norm of Euro-American countries (Wang & Kulich, 2015; Xu & Sun, 2013). Under such perceptions, the learners felt that they did not have a global perspective on IC in the course and therefore did not significantly improve their ICC.

On the other hand, faced with this interview question, the teacher interviewee Jonathan thought that while the focus on European and American content was a potential problem, it was an arrangement that was realistic for most learners.

I know this really doesn't meet the learning needs of some students for other regional cultures. But most students here are required to prepare for language texts to go to these countries. So, I believe that the scope of ICC is also mainly the competence that needs to be mastered in these countries. (EOC02, Jonathan)

Jonathan considered that IC instruction needed to meet the learning objectives of most learners. From his point of view, the IC contents and related exercises covering the scope of Euro-American countries can already meet the common requirement of learners in this course, which is to meet the ICC to study and work in these European and American countries. Furthermore, his response also demonstrates that popular language exams such as IELTS and TOEFL, which are necessary for Chinese students to study and work in English-speaking countries, are linked to the ICC in these countries (Hou, 2014). Besides, relevant experiences and perceptions also prompted Jonathan to consider ICC as a competency for IC primarily with Euro-American countries. All of

these factors led Jonathan choose to neglect the IC content for the global perspective which was ‘appeared to be a small portion of the requirements of learner’ and implemented Euro-American contents mainly in the IC instruction.

4.2.3 Lack of intercultural contact

In addition to the above-mentioned shortcomings, when the interviewer was asked ‘Do you think the EOC course is doing well in terms of practice?’, the learner Qin mentioned the lack of real intercultural contact in the EOC course.

I was expecting a lot of opportunities to interact with foreigners or have the intercultural exchanges in this cooperative university course, but the truth was that there were almost none in this course. I felt that I could not experience the real IC in this course. (EOC04, Qing)

According to the excerpt, Qin thought that the intercultural contract of interacting with people from different countries or cultures played an irreplaceable role in developing learners’ ICC (Hu, 2013; Hou & McDowell, 2014). The participant also highlighted as an international university, it behaved to make use of its internationalization and global resources. Nevertheless, as a curriculum offered by such ideal platform, the EOC course did not provide learners with international contact, such as interactions with foreigners or international exchanges. Regarding the dilemma of the lack of IC field contact, this participant felt that no amount of simulations, discussions and practices could replace the real IC in this course (Byram, 2008; Tian & Lowe, 2014). Therefore, Qin was not satisfied with the teaching of the course about practice and considered that his ICC had not been substantially improved in this course.

5. Discussion

5.1 The shortcomings of LIC course

According to Han (2014), reflecting on the experiences of learners and teachers regarding the language classroom can reveal deficiencies in the teaching and learning process. First of all, there are undeniable strengths of the LIC course, including the richness of the knowledge and the departure from the limitations of the traditional official textbook. Ou and Gu (2018) argue that this is also an advantage embodied in Chinese-foreign universities, and the full autonomy given to language teachers to use teaching materials, while the teaching contents are also taught from a diverse perspective. Nevertheless, this study also notes the existence of essentialist pedagogical issue from the participant's response. Through the combination of the interviewees' comments and CDA theory, the study finds that the course instructor believes essentialist teaching content is the best way to facilitate and teach as much IC content as possible. With this in mind, the instructor underlines concepts that categorize groups and cultures into different categories by an essentialist perspective, such as introducing Hofstede's (1984) model of national cultural differences and Byram's (1997) ICC model in the chapters of *Culture and Representation* and *LIC in Business*, as well as the adoption of such mind to teach controversial IC fields such as othering and identity (The Course Information of Language and Intercultural Communication, 2018). Also, the reading materials for learners includes a number of academic works that directly categorize different countries as different cultural groups such as Samovar et al. (2010) and Oxford and Anderson (1995) mentioned above. In contrast, non-essentialist perspectives that consider the individual complexities of IC are 'not given enough power and space' in the course content and are deliberately neglected (Blommaert &

Bulcaen, 2000). This essentialist approach, which has existed in the teaching of IC education in China since the *broadening* stage, is not effective in developing learners' ICC, as evidenced by the participants' responses. Both Hou (2016) and Sun (2017) summarize and find that the emphasis on essentialist IC theories and the essentialist perspective of teaching and learning are still dominant in Chinese IC education, and these simple approaches of categorizing cultures are also clearly detrimental to IC learners' full awareness of individual complexities and cultural similarities in IC, and the obstacles to eliminating stereotypes remain significant. Equally important, Shi and Longman (2012) also point out that such IC teaching is also highly likely to lead to intercultural conflicts in application by learners. Unfortunately, this pedagogical status quo still seems to prevail, and there is a lack of relevant Chinese literature to critique it.

In terms of the lack of translanguaging practice deficit of the curriculum, it demonstrates that the learner has a strong motivation to promote ICC through translanguaging strategies such as translation. This LIC course, however, lacks relevant language proficiency development. From the participant' feedbacks, this study notes that the course instructor also adheres to an essentialist view of Chinese students, who are generally silent and non-expressive in their language skills. Based on such ideology and perception, the instructor does not provide much oral interaction or literacy development related to translanguaging in this course, but rather cultivates the learners' ICC through lectures only in terms of theories. In reality, translanguaging has an important role in the development of learners' ICC. Sun (2017) places the importance of Chinese intercultural communicators also having the confidence and competence to communicate Chinese culture. The translanguaging, represented by translation competence, can undoubtedly make effective use of learners' bilingualism and act as a 'bridge' between different languages and cultures. By applying this bi/multilingual

competence, learners can introduce some special cultures they are familiar with to each other in IC. In the process, both the learner's language skills and IC are enhanced (Lee, 2015). Apparently, this course is undervalued the positive significance of translanguaging for developing learners' ICC, which also makes learners feel that the effectiveness they receive about developing ICC is insufficient.

As for the lack of practice suggested by the participant, Hu (2013) has pointed out that ICC is an integrated competency whose development is a long-term process that cannot be achieved in the classroom only by imparting knowledge. Nevertheless, the LIC course attaches importance to the theoretical teaching and lack of practice, which may lead to the scarce application of learners' intercultural awareness, thus affecting the improvement of ICC (Hu, 2013; Hou, 2014). In addition, it is worth noting that the information provided by the participant also demonstrates that this IC language course, which has a lot of spaces for improvement, can actually only be taken by EPC major students at this university. This circumstance further reveals that this Chinese-foreign cooperative university, even though it has 70% of students who choose to pursue their further studies overseas and faculty members with international backgrounds, does not focus on the IC education in the current stage (UIC, 2022).

5.2 The shortcomings of EOC course

On the other hand, the practical nature of the EOC course, as reflected by the student participant, suggests that the IC courses has begun to combine IC knowledge with language-related ICC development. Meanwhile, the course does take advantage of some strengths of Chinese-foreign cooperative universities, namely the simulation of different cultural situations in class through teachers with international backgrounds

combined with their own experiences (Hou, 2016). Such an approach develops learners' ICC at both the knowledge and skills levels (Byram, 2008).

More importantly, the shortcoming noted by the interviewee concerning only Euro-American cultures reveal that the IC teaching practices in this Chinese-foreign cooperative university, although focus on skills and knowledge-oriented development, are still centred on native English speakers (Wang & Kulich, 2015, p. 41). Through CDA principles, this research finds that the EOC instructor believes the learners will go to study or work in mainstream English-speaking countries in the future. Hence, they only need to master IC related to European and American countries because ICC is simply the 'socially pragmatic norms and specific knowledge of mainstream English-speaking countries', and it is seen as a standard to be followed and a means to promote interactive competence and language skills in those countries. Moreover, his perception also demonstrates the utilitarian goal of Chinese language education for the pursuit of European and American norms, that is, to meet the requirements of European and American-dominated language exams as the teaching guide (Bolton & Botha, 2015). Based on such ideology and his own relevant experience, the instructor covers only the IC teaching in these countries in the EOC curriculum. Despite the unprecedented emphasis on ICC in language teaching during the *institutionalizing* stage, Gu (2016) notes in a survey of 1,000 teachers from 39 Chinese universities on their ICC that most of these teachers were native English speakers and their ICC was not well represented. Such a situation is also consistent with the case of this study, which demonstrates that the Chinese IC teaching involves only Euro-American backgrounds and the one-sided perception of ICC by teachers are by no means an isolated case. According to Sun (2017), Chinese intercultural communicators should also have a global perspective. Such one-sided IC content certainly does not prepare learners to become global citizens

who master ICC, nor does it consider learners' learning needs for understanding cultures beyond Euro-American countries (Risager, 2008; Teng, 2018). Eventually, as the findings of this paper reveal, learners' ICC development is weakened in this way.

As for the lack of intercultural contact identified in this study, Hu (2013) has pointed out that Chinese IC teaching generally lacks field experience and conditions for IC with people from different cultures, and that it is difficult to develop *skills of discovery* and interaction as well as *critical cultural awareness* in ICC by providing only lectures on knowledge and skills training. Arguably, these forms of intercultural contact play an irreplaceable role for ICC development. Admittedly, the recent COVID-19 epidemic has been a 'significant impediment' to international communication and exchanges (Zhao et al., 2021). Nevertheless, this course has been offered for more than three years, but similar activities have been rare, and an alternative form of online IC has not been applied to this course. Therefore, the impact of the lack of intercultural contact is also reflected in the negative responses from the participants who do not feel they can apply what they have learned in a real IC abroad.

Given the research gap in the ICC teaching at Chinese-foreign cooperative universities and the various disadvantages of IC curricula as revealed by the research findings, this study analyses the research data thoroughly based on Charmaz's (2006) principles of grounded theory and concludes that IC courses offered by Chinese-foreign cooperative universities, as exemplified by this study, and even IC education in Chinese universities, are still widely characterized by essentialist perspective, teaching contents that only involves Euro-American cultures and neglecting translanguaging. In addition, the existing IC courses offered by Chinese and foreign cooperative universities are also dominated by the development of attitudes, skills, and interpretative dimensions of the ICC model, and lack the practices of intercultural contact, that is, the development of

interactive and critical cultural awareness dimensions. Many of the shortcomings have existed since the *beginning* stage of Chinese IC teaching. Therefore, such IC pedagogies do not take advantage of its internationalization and is not effective in developing learners' ICC. Correspondingly, only Hou (2016) notes that IC teaching in Chinese-foreign cooperative education programs at the *institutionalizing* stage still has a large adoption of the archaic IC theories proposed by Euro-American academics as well as unquestioning utilitarian goals for languages and cultures of those regions, which leaves Chinese learners' ICC not thoroughly developed and may even lead to the 'colonization of these learners by Western values' (Simpson & Dervin, 2019). After discussion and further reflections on the research findings, this study claims that even at the stage of *institutionalizing* stage where ICC development has become an official requirement for language teaching in Chinese higher education, the shortcomings of IC courses in Sino-foreign cooperative universities, which are pioneers of Chinese IC education, are still significant, and such a current state of IC teaching is certainly worrisome.

5.3 Future improvement of IC courses in Sino-foreign joint universities

In response to the current state of IC courses offered by Chinese-foreign universities as reflected in the above study, language teachers need to make appropriate adjustments. Firstly, the IC contents with a global perspective rather than a preference toward mainstream English-speaking countries needs to be a staple of today's Chinese IC classrooms. Such a shift would also meet learners' requirement for learning about cultural diversity and developing global citizens (Risager, 2008). Zheng and Gao (2019) further argue that there is a need to improve the ICC of language teachers to achieve this process.

Equally important, regarding the amelioration of essentialist IC instruction, this study considers the ‘productive bilingualism’ pedagogy proposed by Zheng and Gao (2017) as a suitable reference. According to Zheng and Gao (2017), the pedagogy learns the target language and culture based on the learners’ first language and native culture. By first teaching the differences between Chinese culture and other cultures, the teacher guides learners to make continuous observations and notes about the unfamiliar group in question. As learners gradually identify such problematized biases and nationalistic tendencies, teachers further guide learners to reflect on the sources of such biases, such as values and familiar cultural frameworks. Finally, the teacher leads learners to reconstruct their perceptions of cultural differences and develop new attitudes to create solutions to IC contradictions. For example, ‘Since Chinese students are not all silent, is silence necessarily a bad thing’ (Gao et al., 2016)? In this pedagogy, different cultures are given equal dialogue with each other (Gao, 2000). Empirical studies have also shown that learners’ critical cultural awareness is developed under such pedagogy, and they question their stereotypes and habitual thinking more often (Snow, 2015). Moreover, learners become more open to understanding other cultures and more confident in their own culture (Gao, 2014). This non-essentialist pedagogy takes into account the IC development in the context of globalization and the fluidity of language and is considered to be more suitable for use in IC language teaching of EMI universities than essentialist pedagogy and the inculcation of non-essentialist concepts (Blommaert, 2010; Pennycook, 2007).

The application of bi/multilingual competencies involved in the above pedagogy is also a powerful method to promote learners’ ICC as proposed in this study. Researchers should be aware of the long-standing labelling and political naming of English and other languages in English-speaking countries, that is, the differentiated labelling of

languages other than English as ‘immigrant’ versus ‘foreign’ languages. As Li (2022) argues, the consequences of the political naming are that languages become highly racialized and that languages labelled as ‘foreign language’ have little chance of becoming languages of instruction (p. 175). Moreover, considering the state of static knowledge teaching presented in the study case, the speakers of these languages are perpetually stigmatized in their language practices, such as consistently experiencing discrimination and stereotyping in IC (Archer & Francis, 2006). Educators need to perceive the long-term consequences of suppressing learners’ multilingualism in ICC development and stigmatizing attitudes. Under such circumstances, García (2019) and Li (2022) both suggest that the potential of translanguaging in decolonizing language concepts lies in challenging linguistic inequalities and racial ideologies.

This is likewise thought to facilitate the development of ICC for learners. Lee and Gyogi’s (2018) proposed translanguaging approach of having students translate CSL in IC instruction is found to be effective in promoting learners’ ICC. Bi (2009) provides a CSL example *xiǎo jiě* 小姐 ‘miss’ that has different connotations in different historical periods, as shown below.

Historical periods	Connotations
(1) Before 1000 A.D.	Negative: place maid, concubine, artist
(2) 1000-1949	Positive: the unmarried daughter of a wealthy family
(3) 1949-1978	Negative: the rich girl who is keen on hedonism
(4) 1978- 21st Century	Positive: fashionable and beautiful woman
(5) Since 21st Century	Negative: Bar and nightclub attendants; prostitute

Table 4. The connotations of the lexis ‘小姐’ in different historical periods. (Bi, 2009, p. 110)

There are many other CSLs like ‘miss’ in Chinese, and their multiple meanings are not the same as those in English. Through this form of translating meanings of CSL as well as taboo terms, both Lian (2010) and Gyogi (2015) argue that this approach puts the two languages on an equal footing. It can bring out the bilingualism of the learners

while spreading the distinctive language and culture of their own country. Equally important, since translating CSL also requires considering the culture of the target audience, this fits right in with the mediation across intercultural boundaries involved in ICC (Byram, 2000). Therefore, such an approach can also reduce IC conflicts caused by language ideologies and stereotypes.

As for the lack of practices such as intercultural contact, this study argues that Sino-foreign cooperative universities should take advantage of internationalization. It is not enough to rely on teachers with international backgrounds to teach and to simulate and discuss IC in the language class. Empirical research indicates that intercultural contact, including immersive experiences and reflective journals that invite students from different countries to learn together in the same classroom, allows learners from different cultural backgrounds to experience processes of conflict, negotiation, compromise, and cooperation (Hou & McDowell, 2014; Tian & Lowe, 2014). These processes allow learners to effectively experience differences and reconstruct their perceptions to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes. Hou (2016) also suggest that such an approach is an important way to enhance ICC as it allows both parties to experience IC and therefore effective in developing *skills of discovery and interaction* as well as *critical cultural awareness*. In the long run, realizing these potential ways to enhance IC teaching at Chinese-foreign cooperative universities and indeed in Chinese higher education may be a lengthy process. Given the complexity of Chinese higher education and the cost of creating intercultural contact, this will require adjustments not only by language teachers, but also by the efforts of decision makers in Chinese IC education to make it possible (Wang & Xie, 2018).

6. Concluding remarks

6.1 Summary

In conclusion, IC courses offered by Chinese and foreign partner universities have proven to be flawed and in need of reflection. To reach this conclusion, this study begins with a review of IC education in the academia of Euro-American countries and China. The review indicates that Euro-American relevant research has gradually focused on how to develop learners' ICC in language teaching and learning, yet these studies do not consider the Chinese context. On the other hand, influenced by the European and North American studies, the research on IC teaching in China has undergone a shift from only imparting knowledge of European and North American cultures to emphasizing the development of learners' communication skills, and then to institutionalizing an emphasis on learners' comprehensive ICC. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of research on teaching IC in Sino-foreign cooperative universities. Moreover, the lack of practice and the essentialist pedagogical issues of over-promotion of Byram's ICC models and Euro-American cultures are still prominent in IC teaching of Chinese higher education. It is noteworthy that the translanguaging turn in IC language education has also been neglected by Chinese IC education. Such research status prompt this paper to focus on what are the shortcomings of IC teaching in Chinese-foreign cooperative universities and how they can be improved.

Based on the above research background, this study investigates two IC courses, also known as LIC and EOC courses, at a Sino-foreign cooperative university to explore the strengths and weaknesses that exist in these courses. For this purpose, data were obtained from the semi-structured interview with two teachers and five students who had been a part of these two courses. Firstly, for the first RQ 'What are the advantages

of the IC curriculum offered by the Sino-foreign cooperative university?', the research notes that the LIC course is positively evaluated by learners due to their plentiful IC contents and flexible course materials, while EOC course has the advantage of practical IC contents. Moving to the second RQ 'What are the shortcomings of the IC curriculum offered by the Sino-foreign cooperative university? Why do these shortcomings generate?', this research finds that due to the instructor's essentialist conception of Chinese learners, the LIC course neglects to teach non-essentialist content and translanguaging practices. The EOC course, on the other hand, suffers from an over-focus on Euro-American cultures due to the instructor's utilitarian view of English-speaking countries. Furthermore, the EOC curriculum also does not consider the importance of intercultural contact to develop learners' ICC. On these grounds, this study argues that these two courses neglect the development of interactive and critical cultural awareness dimensions of the learners' ICC development. These two course deficiencies lead to learners' perceptions that their ICC is not being effectively developed. As for the third RQ 'How to address these shortcomings of the IC curriculums?', this study proposes a global perspective and a 'productive bilingualism' pedagogy that changes learner stereotypes, and an approach for learners to translate CSLs to enhance IC teaching and develop learners' ICC in all dimensions. At this point, all the RQs are considered to be fully answered and addressed.

6.2 Implication

Equally important, the research has pedagogical implications for a wide range of Chinese-foreign cooperative IC courses and even Chinese higher intercultural education at this stage, where the teaching goal is to develop learners' ICC. At the level of theoretical teaching, although Euro-American IC still has an important position today,

as more and more Chinese learners has taken into account cultures other than those of English-speaking countries for purposes such as further study or interest, teaching IC in Chinese universities, whether in the form of EMI or in the learners' first language, requires a global perspective in teaching IC to cultivate 'Chinese intercultural communicator'.

As for the practical level, translanguaging practices, especially translation strategies, and intercultural contact in the Chinese IC teaching also need to be brought into focus. These pedagogical approaches can facilitate learners' ICC from the dimensions of skills of *discovery and interaction* and *critical cultural awareness*, respectively, which are currently lacking in Chinese IC education. As the paper mentioned earlier, given the complexity of Chinese IC education, the full introduction of these contents into IC teaching may be a long-term process that requires a change in the inherent perceptions of Chinese education policy makers.

6.3 Limitation and future research

Despite the above research significances, there are still some limitations in this study. First and foremost, the case of this research is two IC courses of a Sino-foreign cooperative university. This may be a limited reference for IC education in most typical Chinese universities. Therefore, the similar studies in the future can commence with comparing the IC courses of the Sino-foreign cooperative universities with those of the traditional Chinese universities.

Secondly, another limitation of the study is the restricted time available to conduct the study due to the COVID-19. This led to the inability of this research to adopt ethnographic approach for long-term observation of the research objects, which adversely affected the richness of the data (Flynn, 2010). This study concludes that the

best period of study should be a six-month period of visitation and observation of the two courses.

Last but not least, the bias in this research may not be completely eliminated. Since the researcher is the former learner of the two IC curriculums. Hence, despite the efforts made for this study, there is still a possibility that the past experiences of the researcher regarding these courses may be unconsciously exposed and exert a negative impact on the credibility of the data.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Gender (性别):

Nationality (国籍):

Position (职位):

1. What do you think are the advantages of the LIC course in terms of imparting knowledge?

你认为 LIC 课程在传授知识方面有什么优势?

2. What do you think is lacking in the LIC course teaching contents?

你认为 LIC 课程的教学内容缺少什么?

3. Do you think the LIC course is helpful for ICC development in terms of practice?

你认为 LIC 课程在实践上对跨文化交际能力的发展有帮助吗?

4. What do you think are the advantages of the EOC course in terms of teaching contents?

你认为 EOC 课程在传授知识方面有什么优势?

5. What do you think is lacking in the EOC course teaching contents?

你认为 EOC 课程的教学内容缺少什么?

6. Do you think the EOC course is doing well in terms of practice?

你认为 EOC 课程在实践方面做得好吗?

Appendix 2: Information sheet and consent form



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INFORMATION SHEET 信息表

PROJECT TITLE

研究项目标题

The Reflection of the Intercultural Communication Teaching: A Study of Two Courses of the Chinese-foreign Cooperative Education Program

跨文化交际教学的反思：一个有关某中外合作办学项目中两门课程的研究

INVITATION

邀请

My name is Junjie Ma and I am a postgraduate student from Edinburgh University in the UK. I am currently researching the content and effectiveness of intercultural courses offered in a Chinese-foreign Cooperative Education Program. I am inviting you to participate in the following research study:

我叫马俊杰，是一名来自英国爱丁堡大学的研究生。我目前正在研究中外合作办学项目中开设的跨文化有关课程的内容及其效果。我邀请您参与以下研究。

In the context of internationalization, the number of intercultural programs in Chinese higher education is increasing, mainly with the ultimate goal of improving students' intercultural communication competence. Under such tendency, an increasing number of intercultural courses are also being offered in the rising Chinese-foreign cooperative education programs (Sun, 2017). Nevertheless, there is a lack of research on the content and effectiveness of these courses. Therefore, my research aims to explore the strengths and weaknesses of intercultural teaching and learning in Chinese higher education with the example of Chinese-foreign cooperative education programs. The content and effectiveness of the intercultural courses will be the core of this study. It will be a small-scale research taking two intercultural-relevant courses of a Chinese-Hong Kong cooperative education program as the setting and interviews are considered as the data collection method. But due to the epidemic and travel expense, this research intends to be conducted through telephone interview or internet video chat. There will be 7 participants (including 5 students and two course instructors) from the program in my research study. Meanwhile, if you are interested in my research findings, I will provide you with a feedback after finishing my research.

在国际化的背景下，中国高等教育中的跨文化课程越来越多，主要是以提高学生的跨文化交际能力为最终目标。在这种趋势下，越来越多的跨文化课程也在不断增加的中外合作办学项目中被开设（孙，2017）。然而，对这些课程的内容和效果的研究还很缺乏。因此，我的研究旨在以中外合作办学项目为例，探讨

中国高等教育中跨文化教学的优势和劣势。跨文化课程的内容和有效性将是本研究的核心。这将是一个小规模的研究，以某中国内地与香港合作办学项目的两门跨文化有关课程为背景，并考虑以访谈作为数据收集方法。但由于疫情和旅行费用的原因，本研究打算通过电话采访或网络视频聊天进行。在我的研究中，将有七名来自于此合办项目的参与者（包括五名学生和两名老师）。同时，如果你对我的研究结果感兴趣，我将在完成研究后给你一个反馈。

My research questions thus focus on three points outlined above:

- (1) What are the teaching contents of these two intercultural courses offered by the Chinese-foreign Cooperative Education Program?
- (2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of these two intercultural courses?
- (3) How does the perceptions of the teaching of these two intercultural courses guide the future development of intercultural teaching in Chinese higher education?

因此，我的研究问题集中在上述三点。

- (1) 这两门中合作办学开设的跨文化课程的教学内容是什么？
- (2) 这两门跨文化课程存在着哪些优势与不足？
- (3) 有关这两门跨文化课程教学的评价如何指导中国高等教育的跨文化教学在未来的发展？

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

接下来会发生什么

If you are interested in my research topic and agree to participate in voluntarily, you will be involved a semi-structured online interview to answer several questions in terms of my research topic. But the interview for the students and course instructors are completely separate and anonymous. With your agreement, the interview will be audio-taped by the researcher and later transcribed for the purpose of data analysis. Afterwards, a copy of the transcription will be sent to you to check for accuracy.

如果你对我的研究课题感兴趣并同意自愿参与，你将参与一个半结构化的在线访谈，回答我研究课题方面的几个问题。但对学生与课程老师的采访是完全分开与匿名的。在征得你的同意后，研究人员将对访谈进行录音，随后为数据分析的目的进行转录。之后，转录的副本将被寄给你，以检查其准确性。

TIME COMMITMENT

付出的时间

The whole interview will not be longer than 40 minutes.

整个访谈的时间将不会超过四十分钟。

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

受访者权利

You are entitled to all information about this research project, including the research objectives, the procedure of research and the results of research.

You have right to decide whether to participate the research project at any time without being pressured. If any changes occur in the process of research, you can withdraw or destroy the data you have supplied at any steps.

You have right to express your views freely in all the matters affecting you. Likewise, you have right to omit or refuse to answer any questions that is asked of you.

你有权获得有关本研究项目的信息，包括研究目标、研究程序和研究结果。你有权在任何时候决定是否参与该研究项目，而不会受到任何压力。如果在研究过程中发生任何变化，你可以在任何步骤撤回或销毁你所提供的数据。你有权对影响你的所有事项自由表达你的意见。同样，你也有权省略或拒绝回答任何被问及的问题。

BENEFITS AND RISKS

收获与风险

This study has positive implications for understanding the shortcomings of intercultural teaching in Chinese higher education, including Chinese-foreign cooperative education programs. It is expected that this research can improve intercultural teaching and learning in Chinese-foreign cooperative education programs and promote the development of intercultural education in Chinese higher education.

There are no risks for participants in this study.

本研究对了解中国高等教育（包括中外合作办学项目）中跨文化教学存在的不足具有积极意义。预计本研究可以改善中外合作办学项目中的跨文化教学质量，促进中国高等教育中跨文化教育的发展。

本研究对参与者没有任何风险。

COST

费用

It should be totally voluntary if you decide to participate in this research study. Even though the researcher will not visit you, the communication between participants and the researcher will through audio call on Wechat. Therefore, there may not be cost to you.

如果你决定参加这项研究，应该是完全自愿的。尽管研究人员不会来亲自探访你，但参与者和研究人员之间的交流将通过微信的语音电话进行。因此，你不需要支付任何费用。

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

保密性/匿名

Your individual data are completely anonymous and confidential since all information you provide will become one part of the research. The data you provided thus will not be shared to the public. Moreover, all the data I collect will not point out to your personal information such as real name, address and occupation and your background information will only be used as the criteria of selecting participants. The data will be stored in a password protected computer file to ensure that only the researcher can obtain it. The raw data will be stored in university for a year after completing my dissertation.

你的个人数据是完全匿名和保密的，因为你提供的所有信息将成为研究的一部分。因此，你提供的数据不会向公众分享。此外，我收集的所有数据都不会指出你的个人信息，如真实姓名、地址和职业，你的背景信息将只被用作选择参与者的标准。这些数据将被储存在受密码保护的计算机文件中，以确保只有研究人员可以获得这些数据。在完成我的毕业论文之后，原始数据将在大学里保存一年。

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH THE RESEARCH AFTERWARDS?

在这个研究之后我要做什么

This research study will be conducted as a dissertation for my master degree in the Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh. Findings may also be used in future academic publications in academic journals. I will also share with you a summary of anonymized findings after this project is completed in August 2022.

这项研究将作为我在爱丁堡大学莫雷教育学院的硕士学位毕业论文进行。研究结果也可能用于未来在学术期刊上的学术出版物。在 2022 年 8 月这个课题完成后，我还将与你分享一份匿名的研究结果摘要。

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

如需了解更多信息

I can be contacted for further information by email s2168595@ed.ac.uk.

If you have any questions for this information sheet, please feel free to contact me on the email given above.

如需了解更多信息，可通过电子邮件与我联系：s2168595@ed.ac.uk。

如果您对本信息表有任何疑问，请随时通过上述电子邮件与我联系。

NAME: Junjie Ma (马俊杰)

DATE: 3 May 2022



THE UNIVERSITY
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Participant Consent Form

参与者知情同意表

Study Title: *The Reflection of the Intercultural Communication Teaching: A Study of Two Courses of the Chinese-foreign Cooperative Education Program*

研究课题：跨文化交际教学的反思：一个有关某中外合作办学项目中两门课程的研究

	<p>Please tick the blank to confirm you agree with the following: 请在表格空白处打钩以确认你同意以下内容</p>
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<p>1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study. 本人确认已阅读并理解上述研究的参与者信息表。</p>	
<p>2. I have been given the opportunity to consider the information provided, ask questions and have had these questions answered to my satisfaction. 我有机会考虑所提供的信息，提出问题，并得到了我满意的回答。</p>	
<p>3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can ask to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. 我明白我的参与是自愿的，我可以在任何时候要求退出而无需给出理由。</p>	
<p>4. I understand that my anonymised data will be stored as detailed in the information sheet. 我明白我的匿名资料将会详细地储存在资料表中。</p>	
<p>5. I agree to take part in this study. 我同意参与本研究。</p>	

Name of person giving consent:

Date:

Signature:

Name of person taking consent:

Date:

Signature:

Appendix 3: An example of the interview transcript

R—the researcher

P—the participant (Liang)

R: Hello Mr Liang, thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview today. This interview focuses on the effectiveness of these two courses on intercultural communication in developing learners' intercultural communication competence, so I will be asking you some questions about the LIC course versus the EOC course contents.

P: OK.

R: Okay, so let's get started. First of all, I would like to ask you some questions about the LIC course. What do you think are the advantages of the LIC course in terms of imparting knowledge?

P: I think I have such a good opportunity to learn about systematic intercultural communication. I think one of the strengths of this course is that it covers many concepts and examples in the field of intercultural communication.

R: In other words, you think the strength of the LIC program is mainly that the course covers a wealth of LIC knowledge. Can you explain to me in detail how this course reflects this advantage?

P: Sure. Our semester lasts less than three months, and in that time, we learned a comprehensive range of IC theories, such as Hofstede's model, Byram's ICC model, the concepts of stereotypes and othering, as well as the identity issues in intercultural communication, which cover most of the essential IC knowledge. After teaching each concept, the course instructor also introduced relevant IC examples to show how these concepts are reflected in IC, which made it easier for us to understand and master these concepts. Many of the concepts were new and interesting to me as it was the first time I actually learned and tried to apply them. And I am not aware of any other DHSS students or even the non-EPC major students of ELLS program who have had the opportunity to take this unique course.

R: Well, this is really a unique opportunity to learn about intercultural communication. And do you see any other advantages to this course?

P: I don't think the course is rigid, and the learning materials we use for learning are flexible. I know a lot of students at other universities who are using official textbooks for similar courses, and I think that would be a very rigid and boring way to learn things.

R: You mentioned that the LIC course does not use textbooks to teach, so what are the learning materials you use?

P: We used clear and concise slides and then read a few required academic papers each week. I think this way we can learn a deeper level of intercultural communication. I

think this gives me the freedom to think based on the theories I've learned and the examples I've seen, rather than limiting my thinking.

R: Got it. And my second question is: What do you think is lacking in the LIC course teaching contents?

P: The main theories we have studied such as Hofstede and Byram's model both classify people from different countries directly into different cultural categories, emphasizing the differences between groups. This seems to be the case in all of our inherent perceptions. But I know at the very least that this cannot be applied to every individual. And some of the readings I was given to read such as the works of Samovar et al., Oxford and Anderson also support this view. This view would be the essentialist view, and most of the concepts in our course fall into this category.

R: So you think one of the shortcomings of such a course is that there's too much emphasis on an essentialist view of intercultural communication, right?

P: Yes. Moreover, there was very little theories about the non-essentialist view that I want to learn more about, only the brief definitions are presented. Similarly, in the chapters on stereotypes and othering, it did provide few examples of the essentialist view that contradicts it such as one white teacher's perception that all African students are weak in English, but that is about it. So I end up feeling that I still only know about the universal differences in cultures and do not have a deep understanding of the intercultural communication complexity.

R: OK. Can I understand that you think the non-essentialist perspective of teaching the LIC curriculum is grossly inadequate, right?

P: Correct.

R: Got it. So my next question is: Do you think the LIC course is helpful for intercultural communication competence development in terms of practice?

P: I think this course was overloaded with knowledge told by the instructor. This does look like a very convenient form. But I want to have the opportunity to interact with people from other cultures as an effective way to improve my intercultural communication competence. We simply didn't have that opportunity.

R: Can you tell me specifically how this course has neglected practice? For instance, give some specific examples.

P: The course was not even organized us to discuss or simulate like how stereotypes and othering are represented in intercultural communication. Moreover, this course is a language teaching course. It should include the role of language in facilitating intercultural communication. We should also be developed language practices. But there is also very little relevant practice. I think the reason for all this is perhaps that the teachers think that we Chinese students are generally not active and interactive.

R: And do you think your intercultural communication competence have been improved finally in this course?

P: I don't think so. I think I only have the most basic knowledge of intercultural communication, as well as knowing a very broad range of cultural differences and the attitudes I should have about them. I think I still have a lot of stereotypes about other cultures that are deeply ingrained in me, and I struggle with how to break them. And I haven't had much opportunity to use my bilingual competence to spread Chinese culture, nor do I feel confident enough to deal with real-life scenarios of intercultural communication, such as communicating with foreigners about my country's cultures or studying overseas. How can we master such competence when we haven't even experienced and applied these intercultural communication scenarios?

R: Okay. I know you took the EOC course as well, so let's move on to your thoughts on the EOC course, very similar to our previous interview. My next question is what do you think are the advantages of the EOC course in terms of teaching contents?

P: First of all, I think the teacher of the course is very funny and interesting, probably a lot of teachers who teach speaking or listening classes are like that. He is British and speaks very slowly and with an easy-to-understand accent. Thus, we didn't find it hard to follow him or felt very stressed. I think the content of this course is very practical and there is a lot of contents that will be very helpful to us, and even likely to happen, such as communicating with people from other background in various situations. As you know, many of us will choose to study or work overseas later.

R: Can you talk to me about how practical the content of this course is?

P: The teacher introduced the history, geography and cultures of some major Euro-American cities such as London, Paris, Manchester, and New York, which are also places where many people like us will go to study in the future. These contents made me no longer unfamiliar with the life of overseas study. The course also included many listening and speaking exercises and assignments, including group discussions and scenario simulations, and listening exercises to address the intercultural conflicts that I might encounter during our future study in Europe or America.

R: Interesting, can you give me some specific teaching examples?

P: For example, what to do in the UK in case of culture shock and how to deal with losing the passport at some specific European airports. I feel that all these contents are very practical and I may encounter them in the future. The instructor also incorporated his own experiences in these contents, which gave us a reference for intercultural communication. These listening and speaking exercises were also very helpful for my IELTS exam. I think the course content is very applicable and relevant to life.

R: It sounds like a really practical intercultural communication course to practice listening and speaking skills. Next, what do you think is lacking in the LIC course teaching contents?

P: I noticed that this course covered only the teaching of European and North American cultures throughout. But not everyone just goes to these countries to study or work, don't they? We have a lot of Chinese students, including myself, who want to learn about cultures outside of the English-speaking countries in the world that we may encounter in the future. For example, Indian culture and the cultures of those Middle

Eastern countries, which we lack understanding of, let alone communicating with, and we certainly have the possibility to encounter those cultures or study in those countries. It is a fact that many Chinese people, even university students, have a lack of knowledge and prejudice about cultures outside of these English-speaking countries. Thus, I think just having intercultural communication with Europeans and Americans is definitely not enough.

R: So you think the EOC course focuses too much on intercultural knowledge of Europe and America?

P: Yes. This course identified all students as only going to take the English language exam and study in Europe and America, believed that it was not necessary for them to learn about cultures other than those in Europe and America. We all know that the intercultural competence is supposed to be a competency with a global perspective. As the Chinese university students in the new era, we should also see ourselves as the global citizens.

R: Okay, so let's get to the last question of the interview, do you think the EOC course is doing well in terms of practice?

P: I think this course does have relevant practices, for instance, there are group discussions and mock listening and speaking exercises every week, as well as several group presentations at midterm and final. I think it is definitely the basic requirement that all listening or speaking practice classes should be able to achieve. But it is far from enough, which is a bit disappointing to me, I guess.

R: Thus, you think that the EOC course does not meet your expectations in terms of practical aspects of teaching. Can you give me some specific details?

P: I was expecting a lot of opportunities to interact with foreigners from different countries and cultures or have some intercultural exchanges in this Sino-foreign cooperative university course. Isn't that supposed to be the advantage of a university like this? Even if there are only one or two events of this type, it is enough for me. I've heard that the university has been running summer programs to many universities in Europe or North America during the summer, but these are expensive and cumbersome. This course is perfectly suited to take advantage of some of the international exchange activities that are available. But the truth was that there were almost none in this course. We were only able to communicate with our classmates or instructors to learn.

R: I see, so do you think your intercultural communication competence have been improved in this course?

P: I think that no amount of simulations, discussions and practices can replace the effect of interacting with real people. Like I said earlier, I felt that I could not experience the real intercultural communication in this course. This meant I didn't get the field experience and hands-on experience. I felt that my ability to really apply my knowledge and communicate is not enough. So ultimately my intercultural communication competence in the course did not improve significantly. I think it may have something to do with the pandemic too but certainly not the main reason. I hope the university can deal with this in the future.

R: Got it. Are there any ideas you feel that were left out that you would like to tell me?

P: No. Everything is fine.

R: Okay, this concludes the interview. Thank you very much for your participation today.