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**How to integrate intercultural communication in  
Chinese language teaching: An interpretive study of  
the perspectives and experiences of teachers in  
Confucius Institutes in the United Kingdom**

Yiyi Cao

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy in the University of Durham



School of Education

Durham University

November 2021

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## **Abstract**

This study adopts a social constructionist approach to investigate Chinese teachers' perspectives on teaching Chinese culture and intercultural communication in Confucius Institutes. It explores the teachers' reflections on their original understandings through a 1-year intercultural teaching experience in the United Kingdom. Cultivating learners' intercultural communicative competence as an important goal of Chinese language teaching has been theoretically recognised by many researchers; however, how to put IC teaching in Chinese teaching into practice has not been well investigated. The aim of this study is to fill this gap in the context of Confucius Institutes.

Several key findings emerge from the study. First, although the Confucius Institutes' guides, preservice training, and training lectures mentioned the concept of intercultural communication in Chinese language education, their content focused more on cultural knowledge and cross-cultural comparison. Second, the novice teachers based their original views regarding intercultural teaching aims, content, and methods in Chinese language classes on the Confucius Institute training. Third, in practice, the teachers' intercultural communication teaching was influenced by the teaching environment, the students' situation, and the teaching materials, which made the teachers reconsider and reflect their original views. Finally, the 1-year teaching experience in the UK played an important role in changing the teachers' perspectives. Although they did not build a systematic pedagogy, they have positive dispositions to advance towards intercultural teaching. At the same time, they also recognised and deconstructed some stereotypes of themselves and other cultures.

The findings provide valuable insights into the status quo of teaching culture and intercultural communication in Chinese language teaching and have practical implications for Chinese teachers and teacher educators who hope to apply intercultural communication theory in practice.

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Title page

**How to integrate intercultural communication in  
Chinese language teaching: An interpretive study of  
the perspectives and experiences of teachers in  
Confucius Institutes in the UK**

Yiyi Cao



School of Education

Durham University

August 2021

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## Abbreviations

CI Confucius Institute programme

CIs (count noun) the Confucius institute, such as UCL Confucius institute

CCs (count noun) the Confucius Classroom

IC intercultural communication

ICC intercultural communicative competence

UK the United Kingdom

TCSOL teaching Chinese to speakers of other language

CI teacher teachers in Confucius Institute volunteer teacher programme

ICCLE The International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education

The Standards The Standards for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Language

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## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis, which I submit for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Durham University, is my own work.

Yiyi Cao

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I would like to express my gratitude to my participants and staff in CI and training centre that featured in the study. Their interest, engagement, and time made this research possible. Because my data collection took place over a 1-year period, I am very grateful to them for not giving up halfway. Many of them have forged a friendship with me. I hope this research will also help their future teaching, and hope that their teaching career will become better and better.

Thanks are also due to my supportive parents. Because of the epidemic, I finished my last year's writing at home. She also listened to the troubles in my thesis writing and encouraged me. Without them, this PhD journey would have been lonely and more challenging.

Since the Spring Festival in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has also affected the lives of many people including me. I have also experienced a difficult journey back home and an unexpected period of distance learning. This experience also made me believe firmly that no matter how long winter is, spring will come.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

This qualitative study explores Chinese teachers' perspectives on integrating intercultural communication (IC) into Chinese language classes in Confucius Institutes (CIs) in the United Kingdom. With China's increasing influence on the international stage, the need to learn Chinese has increased in recent decades (Liu, 2018). Teaching Chinese refers not only to Chinese language teaching but it also involves connecting learners to a 'Chinese world' that is culturally different to their worlds. Intercultural communication (IC) is a study that is concerned with interactions among people from different cultural groups (Zhu, 2011). Therefore, integrating IC in Chinese language classes can help Chinese language learners to understand Chinese people, to think deeply about their interactions with Chinese people, and to prepare them to conduct communication properly and effectively.

The reason why I chose the teaching of intercultural communication in Chinese language classes in Confucius Institutes (CI) as a research project is related to the CI's unique position among many initiatives providing a Chinese language curriculum. CIs are Chinese government-established institutions for teaching Chinese language and culture overseas. Many developed countries set up language promotion agencies to spread their languages and cultures very early on. For example, the Alliance Française was established in 1883, the British Council in 1934, and the Goethe-Institut in 1951. In order to keep up with the world trend of cultural diversity and the need to introduce Chinese to the world, the Chinese government established the Confucius Institute programme in 2004. CIs are one of a number of influential platforms for Chinese Mandarin teaching and intercultural communication between China and the rest of the world (Ye, 2017).

Integrating IC in the language classroom can help foreign language learners move beyond an essentialist view of China and Chinese people and develop intercultural understanding (Jin & Dervin, 2017). Its importance also has been recognised by some Chinese teachers and researchers in the field of teaching Chinese to

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speakers of other languages (TCSOL) (Zu, 2016). Therefore, this study aims to explore how IC is presented in Chinese language classes by investigating the perspectives of CI teachers. In addition, as the teachers do their preservice training in China and work in different places in the UK, the study also investigates whether and how their experiences impact their views.

This opening chapter first states the rationale for this study (section 1.1), then presents its aims in section 1.2, and its importance and contribution in section 1.3. Section 1.4 introduces the key terms in the study: Chinese culture, CI teachers and intercultural communication. Finally, section 1.5 provides an overview of the structure of the thesis.

## **1.1 Research Rationale**

The concept of culture, as in the phrase 'Chinese culture', has often been mentioned and emphasised in Chinese language education (Jin & Dervin, 2017). Teaching Chinese culture has for a long time been linked to providing learners with cultural facts about China, such as high culture or behaviour culture, especially in early Chinese language teaching (Kang, 2020). For this reason, 'culture' in Chinese language education was long regarded as a supplement, and the integration of language and culture in teaching was ignored by many teachers (Zu, 2017). Consequently, teaching focused on presenting aspects of Chinese culture such as paper cutting or encyclopedia-style explanations of cultural topics (Kang, 2020). To a large extent, culture is seen as a fixed product in an essentialist view in this approach, and as a result, this view may lead to narrow perceptions of Chinese people and China and provide a superficial and monochrome image of Chinese culture to language learners (Zhu & Li, 2014).

However, like any other culture, Chinese culture is not a fixed entity and is ever-changing (Holliday, 2011; Jin, 2021). China is a big country with 1.3 billion citizens and its regions are vastly different from each other. Hence, Chinese language educators need to take into account the linguistic and cultural diversity of China (Jin & Dervin, 2017) and find a new orientation for teaching language and culture.

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Research in Europe into world language teaching and learning has identified a trend towards an intercultural orientation (Sercu, 2005; Holliday, 2011; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). This trend invites reconsideration of how Mandarin Chinese is taught (Zhang, 1990; Zu, 2003; Jin & Dervin, 2017). IC is defined as “a situation where people from different cultural backgrounds come into contact with each other” (Zhu, 2011, p. 422), and the different cultural backgrounds can be race, ethnicity, nationality, language, class, age or gender (Baker, 2015). Chinese Classrooms provide ideal spaces for intercultural encounters as students and teaching staff bring together their different experiences of life and different understandings of Chinese culture and their own cultures. The study of IC in foreign language education has contributed to a shift from discussion of ‘what culture is’ to ‘what we do with culture’ in language classes (Sarangi, 1994). In this situation, Zu (2003) points out that IC is an important issue and intercultural competence should also be one of the core goals in Chinese language education.

The Confucius Institute programme is located within the global scenario of international Chinese language education and is the most representative and significant programme. According to the Confucius Institute Annual Development Report 2019, there were a total of 541 CIs and 1170 Confucius classrooms (CCs – mostly satellite facilities related to the CIs) in 162 countries and regions with more than two million registered students by December 2019 (Hanban, 2019). The scale of CIs reflects their great influence on the development of Chinese language education. In addition, CIs are young institutes having only been established since 2004. Scholars and teachers are now urgently looking for guidance on how to improve the quality of teaching in CIs, including the involvement of IC in classes, in this rapidly developing period (Zhao, 2014).

Language teachers have played important roles in enhancing learners’ intercultural learning (Byram, 1997; Liddicoat, 2005) because they are not only trainers of Chinese language skills, but also cultural information consultants, guides to exploring cultural connotations and intermediators in intercultural context (Zu, 2016). When teachers have conflicting perspectives regarding their teaching, their actual

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instructions are less clear, affecting the quality of their teaching (Sercu, 2005). In the context of Chinese language education, Tinsley and Board (2014) state that the supply of teachers from China via CIs has been a key factor in teaching Chinese language and culture overseas.

The subjects in this study are novice teachers trained and managed by the CIs. Steffy and Wolfe (2011) identify six stages in teacher development: novice, apprentice, professional, expert, distinguished teacher and emeritus teacher. My subjects had just started their first year of teaching work and so were in the novice stage. Novice teachers were chosen for three reasons. First, novice teachers generally face a process of transformation at the beginning. Some of them may not be able to apply what they have learned on their teacher-training programmes during their first year of teaching (Farell, 2012). The transition can be called a “reality shock” (Veenman 1984: 143). As novice Chinese teachers need to navigate the gap between pre-service teacher training and in-service teacher development, it is necessary to study this transition period to help them adapt to teaching and improve their professional development. Second, experienced teachers may acquire an inertial mode of thinking and make choices automatically (Berliner, 1987). Beijaard and Verloop (1996) argue that novice teachers are likely to be open-minded about innovation and changes in teaching. Therefore, the viewpoints and experiences of novice teachers are important sources of information for research on teacher change, that is, in terms of their understanding of IC and its incorporation into their teaching approach. And third, Chinese teaching has developed relatively late. The TCSOL discipline was only established after the 2000s in China (see Section 2.1) and is, thus, in its initial stage. There is still a shortage of professional teachers in the field (Zhang, 2013). With the continual development of TCSOL over the decades, the number of teachers entering this field has been increasing and most of them have gone through the stage of being novice teachers. However, the breadth and depth of research related to them is not enough (Wang, 2019). As novice Chinese teachers in CIs are faced with complicated situations such as diverse cultures, multiple identities and changeable teaching environments (Liu & Pu, 2019), focusing research on them can, to a certain extent, increase attention to this group

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and provide some recommendations for research on training and educating TCSOL teachers.

Overall, researchers have started to realise the importance of IC in TCSOL in recent years (Ye, 2017; Jin & Dervin, 2017). Nevertheless, as an important teaching organisation, although the CI has attracted academic attention, little research has attempted to explore the presentation of classroom-based language teaching inside CI, not to mention CI teachers' perceptions. Previous research related to CI teachers has paid more attention to the process of teachers' cultural adaptation in new environments (Ye, 2017; Xuan, 2020). However, there is little research on novice teachers' perspectives on particular issues, such as integrating IC in the language curriculum. Therefore, this study focuses on how novice teachers understand the integration of IC into their Chinese language teaching in CIs and seeks to address the lacunae in this field.

Having discussed the rationale for the research, I now turn to its aims.

## **1.2 The Research Aims and Objectives**

The objectives of this study are threefold. First, the study aims to explore the role and significance of IC in Chinese language teaching promoted by the CIs by analysing the preservice teacher training and associated documents. The second aim is to understand Chinese language teachers' perspectives on the integration and teaching of IC in their language classes. Finally, when teachers translate their understanding into practical teaching, various intercultural encounters in the UK may influence their perspectives regarding teaching culture and IC in language teaching. This study aims to see how these understandings are constructed, negotiated, and contested during a year's work in CIs and whether and how teachers' teaching experience in the UK inspires their reconsideration of IC in Chinese language teaching. However, this aim is not to define or constrain IC to a singular static teaching content, but rather to shed light on the multiple ways to understand and practise IC as an ongoing process in Chinese teaching from teachers' perspectives.

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The aim of this study is to explore CI teachers' perspectives on integrating IC in Chinese language teaching with their expatriate counterparts in the context of CIs in the UK. In order to realise this aim, I adopt a social constructionist approach as the epistemology of this study. Social constructionism refers to a philosophy of how people define reality in their everyday lives, reproducing a socially constructed reality through ongoing reciprocal fluid flexible interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). CI teachers' experiences teaching IC in the UK and their understandings related to culture and IC are the main data sources in this study and social constructionism is a philosophical stance that can guide the whole research process, including the design of the data collection method and the analysis. The literature on social constructionism is reviewed in section 3.1.

As for the analytical framework, I take an intercultural approach in foreign language education as basis. In particular, I use Byram's ICC model (1997), interculturality (Dervin & Jin, 2017) and related theories on IC to analyse relevant documents and the participants' constructions of their thinking on how to integrate IC in Chinese language classes before, during and at the end of their teaching in CIs. By working from a social constructionist perspective and taking an intercultural approach to language education, the study can explore both the participants' understanding of integrating IC in their Chinese classes and the processes that inform their constructions.

And this study uses qualitative methods to investigate how Chinese teachers (who are teaching in CIs in the UK and who are the participants of the study) construct meaning within and in response to the setting of CIs. Specifically, three rounds of interviews and supportive materials were collected during the year 2018-2019 from 12 novice CI teachers who were in their first year of teaching in the UK. Three key stages were involved in this research. In the first stage, I gathered data on the preservice training given to CI teachers in China. Three trainers' and 12 trainees' views were recorded and related documents were analysed before the teachers' departure. Second, 3 months after the trainees became teachers in CIs, interviews were held to explore how they were implementing their previous ideas about

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teaching culture and IC. Third, at the end of their year in the UK, the teachers were re-interviewed to compare these views with their initial ones (in stage one) in order to explore potential confirmation or reconstruction of their views on teaching IC in Chinese classes and the factors influencing any changes.

Having presented the aims of this study, I now define its significance and contribution.

### **1.3 The Importance of this Study**

The research may contribute to two distinct but overlapping fields: teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages and Chinese teacher education.

This thesis makes a substantive contribution to the field of TCSOL. Taking Chinese culture to the world is an important task for Chinese language teaching (Liu, 2014). Culture and IC involved in this task are complex and changing concepts in Chinese language education. Reconsideration of them can help Chinese educators and teachers to break the view that culture is a “blanket explanation of everything” and to start to consider “how culture is used in discourse and actions” in Chinese teaching (Wang, 2017). The intention of this study is not simply to present information about teaching culture and IC in CIs but to assist Chinese teachers in CIs and other Chinese teachers in overseas Chinese language education to reconsider their teaching aims and teaching actions in order to turn their ways of teaching to an intercultural direction and to enhance the quality of teaching in Chinese language education.

This study will also make contributions to the field of Chinese teacher education. The study investigates the challenges and puzzles encountered by CI teachers in the teaching process. Reflections on these experiences from the perspective of teachers can help teacher educators and practitioners who produce curricula to reconceptualise their preparation regarding the teaching of culture and IC in order to improve intercultural training quality in the future. To this end, the institutionalised management and systematic criteria of CIs guarantee the professionalism of

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Chinese teachers (Zhang, 2013) and set an example to other organisations. The improvement and development of CI teacher training, especially concerning the integration of IC in Chinese language classes is of great significance in the field of Chinese teacher training and education.

#### **1.4 Key Terms: Chinese Culture, Confucius Institute Teachers, and Intercultural Communication**

In this section I clarify the following key terms used in the study – Chinese culture, CI teachers, and intercultural communication – because their interpretation can vary in different disciplines or contexts. I present and explain the way I use them to avoid any misunderstanding.

##### **1.4.1 Chinese Culture**

The term ‘Chinese’ when translated into English can be complicated. In its general sense, the word ‘Chinese’ can refer to ethnicity, language or the national community. Unspecified use of the term ‘Chinese culture’ may refer to national culture of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) or to culture of all ethnic Chinese including overseas Chinese outside China (without Chinese nationality). To avoid ambiguity and confusion, in this study I use ‘Chinese culture’ to refer to ethnic Chinese culture (中华文化 Zhōnghuá wénhuà). This is also the official term the PRC government uses in the programme to disseminate Chinese culture (Opinions on implementing the project of inheritance and development of Chinese culture, 2017). This term was chosen because it provides Chinese people with a sense of belonging across geographical and political boundaries (Ruan & Shen, 2012). That is, it covers the widest range of ‘Chinese culture’ while preserving its diversity and complexity to the greatest extent.

This study focuses on IC teaching in Chinese language teaching. When talking about IC in Chinese teaching, "Chinese culture" is inevitably involved, as Byram states that countries and nation-states are not “the inevitable entities of linguistic and cultural allegiance, but they are currently dominant and are the basis on which

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education systems are usually organised” (2021, p. 42). Chinese culture here is not an essentialist concept in which everyone shares the same cultural behaviours and ideas. I refer to “Chinese culture” in this study as various different cultural groups and people may have their own interpretation of it. In this study, I seek to explore how the teachers’ subjective understandings of “Chinese culture”, and how their understandings influence their teaching of culture and IC.

#### **1.4.2 Confucius Institute (CI) Teachers**

The reason why this term is specifically mentioned here is that the term “CI teachers” is composed of different teacher groups, such as local teachers, long-term teachers, and volunteer teachers from China. The participants in this study are from the volunteer language teacher project in the Confucius Institute programme. Aspiring volunteers come from graduate and postgraduate students majoring in TCSOL, education and related languages in universities in China, and they are selected to teach Chinese language at overseas educational institutions for 1 year. They are called CI teachers in this study for short.

These CI teachers are novice teachers trained and managed by the CIs. Kwo (1994) describes five stages of skill development in teaching – novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert – according to the number of teaching years. The participants in this study are novice teachers as most of them have little overseas teaching experience. Consequently, most of them need to make decisions based on the knowledge they have acquired from preservice training and education at the beginning of their teaching (Kwo, 1994). However, Beijaard and Verloop (1996) argue that novice teachers are likely to be open-minded about innovation and changes in teaching. Furthermore, after taking the preservice training, they will work in CIs for the predefined duration of a year (Ye, 2017). This institutionalised management and the requirements of the CIs guarantee the professionalism of teachers and ensures they have the intention and capacity to improve (Zhang, 2013).

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### **1.4.3 Intercultural Communication (IC)**

At the beginning of this chapter, I stated that this study seeks to explore how IC can be integrated in Chinese language teaching. The concept of IC I adopted in this study is that IC is “a situation where people from different cultural backgrounds come into contact with each other; or a subject of study that is concerned with interactions among people of different cultural and ethnic groups and comparative studies of communication patterns across cultures” (Zhu, 2011, p. 422).

Foreign language classrooms are sites of intercultural communication and also sites for intercultural learning and teaching to which teachers and students with different cultural backgrounds bring their different ideas. In the context of TCSOL, on the one hand, IC here refers to the interaction between Chinese learners and native and nonnative Chinese speakers (Jin & Dervin, 2017). On the other hand, IC in Chinese teaching also means cultivating students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and helping them interact with people from different cultural groups. In addition, since IC is a study on intercultural interaction (Zhu, 2011), the concepts in this study also involve theories related to IC, such as ICC (Byram, 1997, 2021) and interculturality (Dervin, 2016; Jin, 2017) as these are used to investigate how my participants build their understanding of teaching culture and IC in Chinese language classes (these theories will be discussed in section 3.3). Based on this idea, in this study, integrating IC into Chinese teaching means teaching Chinese towards an intercultural way in which culture is regarded as diverse and dynamic, and learners' intercultural attitudes and critical understanding can be cultivated instead of just accumulating knowledge of Chinese culture.

While this section has briefly clarified the key terms, how they are interpreted, and how they contribute to this study, they will be discussed again in more detail in the literature review. The next section outlines the structure of the thesis.

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## 1.5 Overview of the Thesis

In this chapter, I briefly introduced the study and stated its importance. I then highlighted its aims and contributions and defined the key terms. The remaining chapters of this thesis are organised as follows.

Chapter 2 introduces the research context: the Confucius Institute programme. It presents a brief history of teaching Chinese to speakers of other language (TCSOL) and the CI programme. Then it interprets the origin of the name of CI, CI's aim, role, and structure of the CI. It also provides the discussion and controversy of CIs and the arrangement of courses related to culture and IC.

Chapter 3 reviews four aspects of the literature related to this study. Section 3.1 clarifies the basic concepts underpinning this study, such as culture and language, and explores two different (cultural and intercultural) orientations in language teaching. Section 3.2 reviews the existing research on teaching culture and IC in the context of Chinese language teaching. Section 3.3 examines different ways of conceptualising ICC and discusses the theoretical framework applied in this study—Byram's ICC model and interculturality theory, as well as some intercultural teaching pedagogy related to them. Some critiques and discussion of these are also identified and presented in this section. Through this literature review I identify the limitations of studies on IC teaching in CIs, and then present the emergent research questions that guide this study (see section 3.5).

Chapter 4 explains the research approach adopted in this study. This includes the interpretative approach underpinned by social constructionism. Then, I introduce the methodology and research methods: the data collection procedures, the recruitment of participants, the observations and interviews, and the thematic analytical process that was employed. Other issues such as reflexivity, ethical issues, and trustworthiness are also introduced.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 present the findings of the study and answer the research questions regarding the three stages in the participants' experiences of teaching

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culture and IC in CIs in the UK: preservice, during work, and postservice. Chapter 5 includes an analysis of documents, such as the Standards for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (2014). It also investigates the views of both the trainers and trainees (who will be CI teachers) and the perspectives of both on the goals and teaching plans to integrate IC into Chinese language teaching in CIs.

Chapter 6 presents a picture of the teachers' experiences of teaching culture and IC in CIs in the UK. Specifically, it focuses on the difficulties and support encountered by CI teachers in teaching intercultural communication in terms of the teaching environment, student interactions, and the teaching materials used in their teaching. This chapter shows how their actual experiences of teaching in the UK influence their reconsiderations of integrating IC in Chinese language teaching.

Chapter 7 investigates how the CI teachers review their teaching at the end of their year in the UK. It compares and contrasts the ways in which the teachers understood IC in Chinese language teaching before coming to and after leaving the UK in order to explore how their ideas were confirmed or reconstructed during the year.

Finally, chapter 8 brings the study to a close. First, I answer the research questions posed in chapter 2 by drawing on discussion and conclusions that emerged in chapters 5, 6, and 7. Then, I review the contributions of this study together with its theoretical and methodological implications and implications for intercultural communication pedagogy in TCSOL. Lastly, limitations of the study and directions for future research on the development of IC teaching are suggested.

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## Chapter 2

### The Research Context: Confucius Institutes

This chapter introduces the context of this study: the Confucius Institute programme (CI). Section 2.1 presents a brief history of teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages. Section 2.2 covers the origin of the CI name. Section 2.3 discusses the aim and role of the CIs, and section 2.4 describes how they are structured. Section 2.5 discusses controversies related to CIs, and section 2.6 explains their structure and curriculum.

#### 2.1 The Development of TCSOL and the Spread of Chinese Culture

The broad context of this study is the diffusion of the Chinese language and Chinese culture. In parallel with the opening of China to the world, the phenomenon of Chinese language education, the focus of this study, has emerged and developed over the last 40 years. Due to the long closure of China for political reasons before 1978, the spread of its language and culture, and especially the establishment of large international institutions such as the CI, started relatively late. There are three milestones in the development of Chinese language education (Zhang & Li, 2018): the discipline was formally established at the end of the 1980s; the first Confucius Institute was completed in 2004; and, the field was renamed in 2007. At the Beijing Regional Linguistics Planning Forum in 1978, Lu Bisong proposed for the first time that teaching Chinese to foreigners should be established as a discipline. In 1989, the State Education Commission stated that "the development of teaching Chinese as a foreign language is a national undertaking." This was the official start of "Teaching Chinese as a foreign language" (对外汉语, Duiwài hànyǔ).

Later, in 2002, in order to satisfy the increasing demand for Chinese language teaching brought by the rapid growth in China's economy and international contacts, the Chinese government announced its intention to set up institutions overseas to systematically promote Chinese culture and language (Hanban, 2013). Learning from the UK, France, Germany, and Spain's experiences promoting their national

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languages and cultures, China began this project by establishing nonprofit public institutions. The first CI was set up in South Korea in 2004, and now the institutes are thriving around the globe.

With the continual deepening and specialisation of research in the discipline, the change of its name from 'Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language' (对外汉语, *Duìwài Hànyǔ*) to 'Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages' (汉语国际教育 *Hànyǔ guójì jiàoyù*, literally Chinese International Education)" had a significant influence on the subsequent development of the discipline. The new name TCSOL first appeared in the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council's Master in Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (MTCSOL) established in 2007 and became the official title of the discipline. On the one hand, the new name marked an expansion of the scope of the discipline and an increased degree of specialisation (Liu, 2019); on the other hand, it corresponded to 'Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)' and signified that Chinese teaching was entering a new age of international integration (Zhang, 2013).

The establishment of the CI programme and the development of the TCSOL discipline were in line with the national 'Go Out' strategy (Chen, 2017). The 'Go Out' policy (also referred to as the Going Global Strategy) was an effort initiated in 1999 by the Chinese government to promote Chinese investment abroad. The 18th and 19th national congresses of the Communist Party of China (CPC) emphasised that, like the economy, Chinese language and culture should also 'go out'. For example, with the comprehensive multiregional exchanges and cooperation brought by the Belt and Road programme, CI could also improve the spread of Chinese language and culture along the route (Chen, 2017). By the end of 2020, 541 Confucius Institutes and 1,170 Confucius Classrooms had been established in 162 countries and regions worldwide.

## **2.2 The Origin of the CI Name**

The CIs are a programme that promotes Chinese language and Chinese culture overseas. Their name comes from that of the most prominent representative of

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traditional Chinese culture: Confucius. Confucius was a famous educator, philosopher, and politician in China more than 2,500 years ago. The main core concepts of Confucianism are 仁 (rén) and 礼 (lǐ), 仁 embodies humanity or benevolence and 礼 embodies the rational spirit, i.e., order and system in the modern sense. Confucianism is the orthodoxy and core of Chinese culture embodying its basic spirit, and it has deeply influenced the progress of Chinese history. Confucius is treated like a saint due to his far-reaching influence on Chinese society (Liu, 2007). However, the teaching content in the CI does not need to refer directly to Confucianism, just as the Cervantes College does not necessarily teach Don Quixote. The name 'Confucius' was chosen mainly as a form of branding (Starr, 2009). The name is widely recognised in the traditional zone of Chinese cultural influence – Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia (Hartig, 2011) – and the Western Latinised name Confucius is like a global brand (Starr, 2009) and so may enjoy greater popularity, reputation, and social influence, and be able to generate more support from the public.

On the other hand, some scholars believe that this choice was made to use the harmonious values of Confucianism to weaken the propaganda colour of culture promotion institutions (Robertson & Liu, 2006). The cardinal principles of Confucianism are humanity, reason, and harmony; these are understood as warm human feelings between people and strongly emphasise reciprocity (Starr, 2009). The universal value and ideas of harmony in Confucianism make Confucius a positive image (Hartig, 2011) which is more easily accepted by an overseas audience. Overall, the choice of the name is to better promote Chinese language and culture in the eyes of the world.

### **2.3 The Aim and Role of CIs**

In its Chapter I General Provisions, the Confucius Institute's charter states that the CI is a nonprofit educational institution established to meet the needs of people from all countries and regions of the world to learn Chinese and understand Chinese culture. Its overseas task involves mainly Chinese teaching, information

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consultation and exchange, and cooperation with Chinese education and culture executives. The aims of CI are to “enhance people's understanding of Chinese language and culture, to develop friendly relations between China and the rest of the world, to promote the development of a multicultural world and to contribute to building a harmonious world.” The Confucius Institute Development Plan (2012-2020) issued in 2012 further enriched the positioning and aims of the CIs. The document states that the CIs should meet the needs of China's public diplomacy and people-to-people exchanges, promote Chinese language and culture to the world through improving the quality of Chinese teaching, enhance the international community's understanding and recognition of China, promote friendly relations between China and other countries, and provide support for win-win cooperation between China and foreign countries in various fields.

Based on these statements, in the Chinese literature there are various interpretations of the objectives and role of the CIs. Some scholars hold that the CI should achieve the goal of ‘going out’ through Chinese teaching and cultural communication, build a platform for exchanges between China and foreign countries, promote educational internationalisation and cultural self-confidence, achieve international understanding, and promote the realisation of multiculturalism (Wu, 2013; Chen, 2017; Zhang & Zheng, 2021). In addition to the cultural and educational goals, some scholars consider that the CI should play the role of a bridge for economic development and international trade and contribute to the Belt and Road initiative and the construction of a shared future community for mankind (Ning, 2017), which puts higher expectations on the development of CI.

Furthermore, in political science and diplomacy journals some researchers outside China regard CI as a centrepiece of China's soft power policies (Barr, 2011; Hubbert, 2019), which are often linked with China's rise. Some Chinese literature also uses terms like ‘soft power’ and ‘public diplomacy’ when discussing the positioning of the CIs. For example, Wang (2019) states that the development of CIs help to enhance the soft power of Chinese culture. However, in recent years, the expression ‘soft power’ has been gradually replaced with the terms ‘intercultural understanding’ and

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'cultural bridge', which reflects a development of Chinese scholars' understanding of CI and a transformation in the orientation of the CI in recent years (Zhang & Zheng, 2021). However, some scholars state that the Chinese government's vision of the CIs promoting international understanding and building a harmonious world is a kind of "strategic narrative" which aims to eliminate the sense of crisis in the international community and gain its praise (Hartig, 2015).

However, these expressions of aims are not unique to the CI. When they were established, reference was made to the experiences of other countries developing language and culture promotion institutions, such as the UK's British Council and Spain's Instituto Cervantes. The aims of the relevant institutions in six countries are presented in a table in Appendix K. These aims basically involve providing language courses, promoting their own language and culture, and providing a platform for strengthening exchanges and developing friendly relations between countries. These institutions generally emphasise the importance of "national interests" and highlight the role of culture in international understanding, exchange, and cooperation (Song, 2012). For example, the British Council's aim is "to create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries... [to] enhance the security, prosperity and influence of the UK and, in so doing, [it] helps make the world a better, safer place" (British Council website, 2021).

Although the CIs use similar expressions to other institutions when describing their aim, their specific structure and operations can differ, as will be shown in the next section.

## **2.4 The Structure of the CI**

This section introduces the structure and operation of the CIs. They have three modes of operation. They may be wholly operated by the Beijing headquarters, cooperated with local partners or be wholly locally run under a licence from the Beijing headquarters. However, given the need to balance expenditure and central control (Starr, 2009), most European CIs are in the second category: cooperation between a local university and a Chinese university partner.

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The umbrella organisation, the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation (CLEC, which has replaced the name Hanban since July 2020), is in charge of all CI activities. CLEC is empowered to approve applications for the establishment of new CIs, supervise their operations, and ensure quality management. Foreign universities propose the establishment of new CIs. When an application submitted by a foreign university is approved, the CLEC appoints a Chinese partner institution. The CLEC undertakes to provide start-up funding and teaching materials and to pay the staff salaries. The local institution undertakes to provide accommodation, infrastructure, and administrative support. Each CI has an in-house programme director, some are host institution staff, while others are sent from the Chinese home institution. This cooperative system can help the CI to better integrate in the local area and the local partners can maintain active involvement (Hartig, 2012). It also means the operation and teaching of the CI are under the supervision and guidance of both parties.

Because of the association between the CLEC and the Chinese Ministry of Education, the CI have been defined as 'quasi-governmental' or not nongovernmental by some researchers (Hartig, 2012). This leads to some concerns about academic freedom, an issue which will be discussed in section 2.5. However, this association is not unique to CI but is a shared feature of institutes for language and culture promotion. For example, the Spanish Instituto Cervantes is a nonprofit organisation affiliated with the diplomatic sector with the strong support of the Spanish royal family, and Japan's International Exchange Foundation is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In terms of student recruitment, CI has a society-facing remit (Starr, 2009). The students can be second or third generation foreign Chinese, but non-Chinese students (i.e., local people interested in learning the Chinese language) form the majority of the school population. In addition to the institutes set in universities, Confucius Classrooms have been set up in local junior and high schools since 2013 as junior versions of the CI to serve young students. As a supplement to the CI programme, most of the Classrooms have been set up by the institutes and follow

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the local schools' arrangements (Gil, 2009).

Unlike other institutions (e.g., the British Council and the Instituto Cervantes) that have achieved a relatively complete way of operating after long-term development, CI still has many shortcomings in its operations, funding sources, regional cooperation, and mass communication due to their lack of experience, large scale, and broad scope (Cao, 2014). Some CIs need support from the government to guarantee their development, such as expansion of investment in funds and materials.

With the constant growth of CI, it also faces many challenges. The next section discusses comments and controversy about it.

## **2.5 Discussion and Controversy about CI (in International Contexts)**

Much Chinese literature focuses on internal problems that the CIs need to resolve. Like any organisation in the early stages of its development, imbalance and asynchrony of scale and quality are almost inevitable problems in the CIs, for example, shortages of professional teachers or teaching materials catering to the needs of a wide variety of local contexts and cultures (Xu & Bao, 2019; Han, 2020). These problems and finding solutions to resolve them are a research focus of many Chinese scholars.

Many studies on CI from outside China have mainly focused on the official background and ideology behind them and on their effects on local society (Hartig, 2012, 2015). For example, Starr (2009) mentioned the ideological concerns in some CIs in Europe include the issue of academic interference in local universities or schools. CI is a cooperative programme between Chinese universities and local universities or schools, and the Confucius Institutes and the Confucius Classrooms are directly embedded in host schools, colleges and universities. The reason for embedding these programmes in existing institutions may be for the government to save costs. However, some school officials state that their students' willingness to be critical of China or to explore research topics that might diverge from acceptable

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CI representations might be hampered (Hubbert, 2019). Some critics assume China's language programmes may adopt censorial practices on US campuses and "sacrifice the integrity of the university" (American Association of University Professors, [AAUP], 2014). However, Hubbert (2019) states that the main problem is not about academic freedom or censorship but that the CI is implemented through administrative agreements. In Western countries, there are shared liberal democratic principles that teachers and academic staff, not administrators or politicians, are recognised as the experts in their fields.

These criticisms and viewpoints have attracted the attention of some Chinese researchers. Some scholars have emphasised the significance of the CIs as an important window to understand China and their functions of promoting academic and economic exchanges and expanding students' international perspectives (Zhou, 2017). At the same time, they refute some of the above positions. Jiao and Liu (2019) state that the 'outside world' sometimes has a distorted view of contemporary China due to its misrepresentation in Western media (Jiao & Liu, 2019). Lu (2021) points out that learning a language does not necessarily mean accepting Chinese values and ideology. There are 200-300 million people studying English in China but they do not necessarily support the policies and actions of English-speaking countries.

Another reason why there are many disputes about the CI may be related to the development of China and the change in its international status. Having researched the situation of many CIs in the US, Hubbert (2019) states that, because through the CI China was attempting to pose a symbolic "challenge to US hegemony and the nation's ideals of globalisation and the global order", some obstacles to their development may appear affected by zero-sum game thinking (Hubbert, 2019, p. 9).

Overall, various researchers have explored the challenges CIs face from different perspectives (Zhang & Zheng, 2021). Zhang and Zheng argue that Chinese scholars have a sense of being protagonists guarding CI because to a certain extent CI represents Chinese culture, the national image, and belonging to the "Self". Thus, research in China often publicises or defends and promotes their development. In

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contrast, non-Chinese researchers seem to put themselves in the position of outsiders and spectators, and the focus in their studies is not on the development of CIs themselves but on their influence on their own societies and interests. Because of differences in national positions and ideologies, they pay special attention to the political, economic, and cultural influence of CI (Zhang & Zheng, 2021).

This study does not centre on the question of whether the CI programme is a form of global communication or socialist propaganda. This different attitude to CI can be seen as an embodiment of an intercultural event. As Byram (1997) states, it needs to be analysed critically considering the power and ideology involved. When interpreting understanding of the CI, it is not just a question of a binary 'good' versus 'bad.' It is not necessary for this study to judge which opinion is convincing, but these arguments reflect the complex environment faced by the CIs and their teaching.

## **2.6 The CI Curriculum**

The previous section introduced the situation of CIs and external disputes about them; this section discusses their curriculum. Three categories are involved: language classes, culture classes, and cultural activities. Language classes are the main part of the CI curriculum. A few universities incorporate CI Chinese language classes in their teaching systems (e.g., the CI at De Montfort University). Language classes in CIs are usually divided into three grades – primary, intermediate and advanced – and some CIs subdivide the graded courses depending on their own situations. Meanwhile, as there is no unified teaching plan or syllabus, it is difficult to generalise about the course types and contents in each CI (Liang & Jia, 2021). Besides comprehensive Chinese language classes, some CIs run specialised courses. For example, the Trinity Confucius Institute in Wales offers Mandarin GCSE and A-level courses. In addition, online Chinese components of language courses have appeared with the continual development of internet technology in recent years.

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Besides the comprehensive language classes provided by each CI, a few CIs offer separate ‘culture classes’ (Liang & Jia, 2021). Due to the limitation of the students’ Chinese level, these culture classes are mainly for students majoring in China studies in universities and students with a higher level of language proficiency. They are mainly carried out through special lectures and experiential courses. Sometimes it is difficult to draw a clear line between cultural practice activities and cultural experience classes. The contents of cultural classes include mainly topics such as Chinese costume culture, food culture, history, and Beijing opera. There are also a few classes which have a professional orientation, such as Chinese Legal Studies at the Bangor University CI. Because of the high student language level requirements and the need for professional lecturers, there are not many CIs offering such courses. The participants involved in the present study are not responsible for such courses and analysis of ‘culture classes’ is not included in the study.

Cultural activities are organised and held by many CIs to promote Chinese language and culture for language learners and local communities, for example, Chinese New Year and China Day activities. However, some people think that the cultural diversity of China has been reduced to a “uniform, quaint commodity” characterised by Chinese opera and dance performances (Weston & Jensenm, 2012), and the activities organised in CIs in different countries and regions have serious homogeneity problems (Hartig, 2012).

Judging from the current curriculum arrangements in CIs, the largest proportion of the curriculum is language classes, which was the CI original intention and core curriculum (Liang & Jia, 2021). Independent courses on Chinese culture or intercultural communication have not yet been established in many CIs (Kang, 2020). As the teaching of culture and IC can be involved in language classes, this study pays attention to the language classes in CIs. Culture and IC teaching in CIs is done against the background of Chinese language education. The related research will be reviewed and discussed in the section on research on IC teaching in China in the next chapter.

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## 2.7 Summary

In summary, this chapter has presented the research context of this study: the Confucius Institutes (CI) programme. First, the history of the development of TCSOL was reviewed, and it was found that the CI development is located within the global setting of international Chinese language education. Second, it was shown that the name 'Confucius' has a harmonious significance and also functions as a brand. Third, the purpose of CIs, which is to meet the overseas demand for Chinese language teaching and to promote communication and understanding among countries, was explained. The CIs were modelled on other language and culture exchange institutions such as Germany's Goethe-Institut and Spain's Instituto Cervantes. In fact, in some researchers' eyes such institutes seem to play the multiple roles of educational and public diplomacy organisations. Fourth, the structure of CIs as cooperative projects with local partners, their funding source, and student recruitment were reviewed. Section 2.5 showed that there are many controversial comments about CIs such as academic freedom, with some Chinese researchers responding to them with different views. CI has always been subject to various public opinions in China and other countries. Therefore, CI teachers may find themselves in a complex intercultural environment. Finally, the CI curriculum was discussed. This can vary according to the situations of local partners. Culture and IC can be integrated in Chinese language classes, which is the focus of my study.

As much research on the CI focuses on the grand background, such as politics, it reveals little about what actually happens in the CI classroom (Hubbert, 2019). In this study, I am interested in CI language classes, which are a space where teachers and students with different cultural backgrounds and worldviews can negotiate and communicate. The opinions brought to the UK by CI teachers may receive different feedback in their classrooms. This study aims to answer the question of how teachers' understanding of IC teaching is negotiated and reconstructed in such a complex environment by exploring novice CI teachers' teaching experience in the UK. Considering the particularity of CIs, which have an official background,

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extensive student recruitment and diverse teaching environments, research on the CI classroom can on the one hand help to add context to the existing research regarding IC teaching. On the other hand, it can allow us to rethink CI teaching from an intercultural perspective.

The next chapter will review the literature on culture and IC teaching in foreign language education.

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## Chapter 3

### Literature Review

Before presenting the study's research questions, this chapter discusses the literature related to IC in foreign language education, especially in TCSOL in China. First, I review some basic concepts of culture and language and then present the literature in the areas of intercultural communication in foreign language education (section 3.1). Section 3.2 introduces both Chinese researchers' efforts to integrate culture into foreign language education and the teaching of culture and IC in the context of Chinese education. Finally, I draw on some key concepts and theories which can guide me to analyse the Chinese teachers' perspectives and experience on IC teaching in this study.

#### 3.1 Intercultural Communication in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

In order to understand how intercultural communication (IC) can be integrated into language classes, it is important to first understand basic concepts such as culture and intercultural. This section therefore reviews these key ideas and analyses how these understandings provided the basis for this study.

##### 3.1.1 Understanding Culture

The definition of culture itself is a much-debated issue among scholars. Thus, it is not possible to lay down an 'authorised' definition of culture because of the many contrasting and conflicting views of culture that have been created (Risager, 2006). In the field of foreign language education, the understanding of culture has also shifted from essentialism to constructivism.

In the essentialist view, culture is regarded as a relatively static, fixed, and measurable product (Holliday, 2011). It is usually bounded by geographic borders and labelled in terms of national affiliations and as constituted by the inhabitants within these borders in an undifferentiated way (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). In this

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way, a particular feature, behaviour, communication style or pattern can be applied to all people in that culture. This way of understanding culture may lead to simplification and stereotyping of particular cultural groups and even to an extreme interpretation of cultural difference such as hostility (Dervin, 2012). In addition, the internal diversity of a culture is filtered out of representations of national culture, producing a monolithic, undifferentiated understanding of a culture (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). For this reason, this view has frequently been challenged and contested in recent decades.

By contrast, the social constructionist approach appreciates culture as socially constructed, fluid, and negotiable. Rather than being a product, culture becomes a framework that allows participants to construct meanings (Holliday, 2011; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Kramsch, 2013). This view focuses on how meanings are “created and recreated in ‘the negotiation’ between people in interaction” (Risager, 2006, p. 49).

Baker (2015) used complex systems theory to explain the dynamic and constantly changing nature of culture. Complex systems theory is used to explain complex, dynamic, self-organising, nonlinear systems (Larsen-Freeman, 2011). Miller and Page (2007) sum up the features of complex systems as follows. First, complex systems are holistic, and individual components do not explain and are not synonymous with the whole system. Secondly, relationships between parts of the system are also integral to the system, and the components and the relationships between them are constantly in flux.

Culture emerges through individuals’ participation and interactions in the world (Baker, 2015), and its inherent intersubjectivity ensures “culture” is also not reducible to individuals, as the construction of cultural practices can only take place through interaction (Holliday, 2011). Culture, as a constantly changing and contested whole, is therefore a kind of complex system which is continuously undergoing change and adaptation (Taylor, 2001). Thus, in line with a social constructionist approach, culture is a complex, multidimensional, and dynamic system, which can also be understood as the meaning created by different groups

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(Baker, 2011, 2015). It is this nonessentialist, socially-constructed understanding of culture that I draw upon in this study.

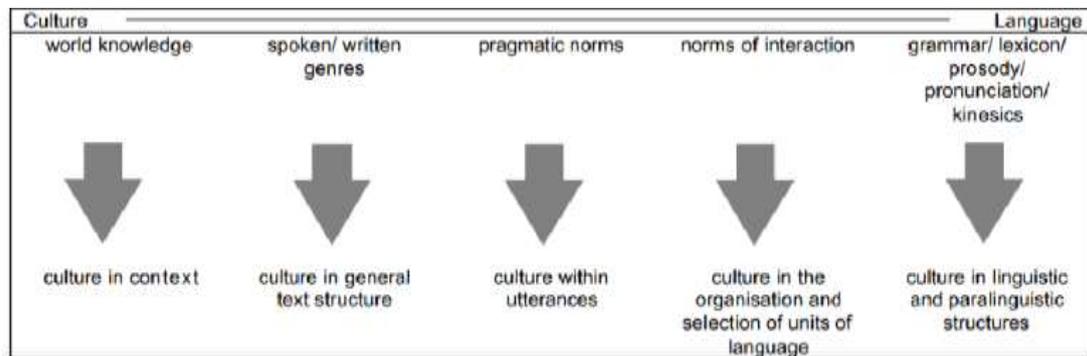
### **3.1.2 Understanding the Relationship between Language and Culture**

Many researchers have been engaged in exploring the relationship between culture and language, especially in the field of foreign language education (Liddicoat et al, 2003; Risager, 2006; Baker, 2009). It is widely accepted that a language is a part of a culture and that a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that the two cannot be separated without losing the significance of either language or culture (Fantini, 1997; Brown, 2007; Sercu, 2005). The complex systems theory (Baker, 2015) mentioned above can also explain this relationship. Similar to culture, language also can be approached as a complex system because it can be understood as a set of resources and practices negotiated in social rhetoric and discursive spaces whose meanings and value are socially constructed through interactions between individual components of the system (Larsen-Freeman, 2011; Mauranen, 2012). Understanding the relationship between language and culture within the theory of complexity helps us to understand the relationship between two complex systems which influence and are influenced by each other (Taylor, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2011; Baker, 2012). Furthermore, the blurring borders and dynamic effect between the systems enable us to treat culture and language as separable, therefore avoiding essentialist accounts that conflate language and culture, while at the same time recognising their interrelatedness (Baker, 2009, 2011).

Specifically, language, as the container and carrier of culture, enables one to participate in a culture, to describe and interpret it, and to communicate with others within that culture (Liu, 2013; Moran, 2001). In this way, language facilitates acknowledgement and construction of culture. Thus, “language cannot be thought without culture. Linguistic practice is always embedded in, and is in interaction with, some cultural, meaningful context” (Risager, 2005, p. 190). Cultural components are hidden in every part of language. As shown in Figure 1, Liddicoat and Scarino

(2013) explain this intersection between language and culture by moving from the macro level of world knowledge to the micro level of language forms.

**Figure 1** *Points of Articulation between Culture and Language in Communication*



As Figure 1 shows, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) categorised the relationship between culture and language into five levels. At the global level, culture is the context of the formation of speakers' knowledge and worldviews, and can be presented in discourse and communication. The second level covers text such as literature or normal paragraphs. Texts are also one form of cultural activity and form of communication in which reading and writing consist of a process of encoding and interpreting culture. In terms of pragmatic norms and norms of interaction, the link to culture is more obvious because these norms encompass knowledge of how particular utterances are evaluated by a culture and which influence the appropriate and polite response in communication. Last but not least, linguistic form is also not simply a structural feature of language; in its very structure every language embodies a certain world view. For example, the word "blue" when used in English to communicate the idea of sorrow cannot be reflected in Chinese 蓝色 (lán sè) without an understanding of the term's cultural background. The difficulty of achieving translation equivalence in two languages is due to the fact that no translation captures the meaning of the original with fidelity. Overall, such category not only demonstrates that language and culture are integrally connected, but also suggests that IC is involved at even the most basic level in communication between cultures (Lo Bianco, 2003; Sercu, 2005; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

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Therefore, when studying a language, learners need to gain knowledge and understanding of the culture in which the language is embedded (Byram, 1989; Risager, 2006). Meanwhile, learning another language is also an intercultural process in which the learners negotiate new cultural and linguistic knowledge with their existing ones (Risager, 2006). Thus, culture and the intercultural are both important issues in foreign language learning.

### **3.1.3 Two Approaches to Teaching in Foreign Language Education**

In foreign language teaching, there are two ways of teaching based on the different understandings of “culture”: a cultural orientation and an intercultural orientation (Liddicoat, 2005, 2013).

#### **3.1.3.1 Cultural Approach**

A cultural orientation in language teaching is a traditional way of teaching about culture. In this approach, culture is a body of facts that people are taught about a particular society in language education (Brooks, 1975). Cultural content as information is the focus in this teaching approach. The learners are expected to know about what people are likely to do in a given cultural group in order to predict and to cope with assumed cultural differences (Holliday, 2011). Under this approach, the task of teachers involves preparing learners with cultural knowledge for particular culture settings, the details of which are predetermined so that they can avoid cultural pitfalls in the target culture (Brooks, 1975). The culture teaching techniques which were developed were culture capsules, culture assimilators, and the culture cluster (Meade & Morain, 1973; Meadows, 2016).

In the field of language education, some scholars have categorised culture into two distinct groups: big “C” culture and little/small “c” culture (Kramsch, 2010; Lee, 2009; Lázár, 2020). Big C culture in teaching refers to high culture or area studies (Liddicoat, 2012). High culture refers to the aesthetic aspects of culture, namely cinema, music, and literature (Adaskou, 1990). Among these arts, literature takes centre stage for a specific national group and is provided to educated elite. Area

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studies refers to historical events, geographical icons, and major institutions in a given society. Since the 1970s, small c culture has developed with the popularity of communicative teaching methods to foster communicative competence in foreign language teaching. Small c culture focuses mainly on everyday life, on social interaction, including behaviour, beliefs, values, eating, dwelling, and talking habits (Kramsch, 2013). Compared with big C culture, little c culture is closer to real life and makes people aware that culture resides in the very fabric of their lives.

There are some shortcomings in cultural orientation in foreign language education. First, this teaching is derived from the essentialist definition of culture. According to Kramsch (2013), “big C culture” is easily linked to the notion of the “one nation,” “one culture,” “one standard language” tradition; and small c may focus on the typical, sometimes stereotypical behaviours and customs of the dominant group in this approach (Kramsch, 2013). Then the range of cultural possibilities within a nation or a society may be ignored, which may lead to stereotyping and misunderstandings. At worst, essentialising culture can lead to racism, hate speech, and denial of religious, ethnic, gender, and other forms of identity (Kramsch, 2013). Secondly, the cultural contents in this approach are considered as finished products (Risager, 2006). The teachers then have to teach a body of knowledge that the native speakers should know (Lo Bianco et al., 1999). However, this is an unrealistic task for teachers and students to manage. Furthermore, this orientation ignores the cultivation of learners’ internal abilities. Knowledge remains external to the learner and is not intended to confront or transform the learner's existing identity, practices, values, attitudes, beliefs, and worldview (Liddicoat, 2005). Thus, the result is that the learners are left primarily within their own cultural paradigm to observe and interpret the words and actions of an interlocutor from another cultural paradigm (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

### **3.1.3.2 Intercultural Approach**

In the 1990s, along with the ongoing process of globalisation and intensified internationalisation, communicating interculturally has become a competence that is deemed essential for many professionals working in an intercultural environment.

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Accordingly, an intercultural approach attracted attention for researchers in foreign language education (Baker, 2015; Byram, 2021). The decades-long popularity of the intercultural approach can be attributed to a shift in the concept of culture away from a concept of culture as products and behaviours to a concept of culture as meaning-making, as discussed in section 3.1.1 (Baker, 2012; Lázár, 2020). As no culture is fixed, “being culturally different’ is a socially constructed phenomenon ... a process rather than an end-product” (Zhu, 2011, p. 259). The significance of “intercultural” is the point of the ‘inter,’ that is, how interlocutors behave in intercultural encounters. The aim of this teaching approach in foreign language education is not only to help learners to acquire the linguistic competence to communicate in the correct and appropriate way, but also to prepare them for interaction with people from different cultural groups, to enable them to understand, and to accept people from other cultures (Byram et al., 2002).

It is possible to identify a distinction between a cultural orientation and an intercultural orientation in the area of foreign language teaching (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). A cultural orientation implies the development of knowledge about a culture which remains external to the learner and is not intended to confront or transform the learner’s perspective, attitudes or practices, while an intercultural orientation implies the transformational engagement of the learner in the act of learning (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Intercultural communication involves interactions among people from different cultures and involves some sort of sensitivity and understanding. It involves internalising the values of the ‘other’ culture and learning from it while trying to adapt oneself to it. It is internally directed and a mind-change issue (Gudykunst, 2005). The interpersonal and interactional nature of the intercultural as it is conceived requires that the language learners are able to decentre from their own cultural and linguistic framework in order to see the world from alternative perspectives. This process has been described as “making the strange familiar and the familiar strange” (Byram et al., 2002, p. 14).

There are three reasons why the intercultural approach is more popular among scholars and teachers in the field of foreign language education. First, it overcomes

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the shortcomings of essentialist definitions of culture whereby culture is seen as static and homogeneous, which reduces the possibility of stereotypes. Secondly, the intercultural approach tasks teachers with developing language learners who are able to mediate between cultural groups in unpredictable situations (Byram, 1997, 2021) rather than with providing endless knowledge. Thirdly, the identity of students has changed. The students are not passive observers but can actively experience and explore the other cultures, and reflect on them (Kovacs, 2017). In this study, the intercultural approach is more important for me to argue for the incorporation of an intercultural dimension in Chinese language teaching.

In the intercultural approach, the term intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is a key concept. The importance of students from any background acquiring ICC is recognised as a vital goal in foreign language education as a way to create mutual understanding between people from different cultures (Scollon & Scollon, 2001; Sercu, 2005; Baker, 2015). Thus, the next section will discuss the situation of ICC in the foreign language education field.

### ***3.1.3.3 Conceptualisation of ICC***

Many language teaching researchers have seen ICC as an extension of communicative competence (Baker, 2015). Hymes (1972) proposed the concept of communicative competence with four elements: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Communicative competence gives attention to contextual appropriateness and communication strategies at various levels and so helps language learners to communicate effectively. However, this idea has been criticised for being developed on the native speaker model, which is an impossible target and because it may create wrong teaching actions such as abandoning one language to blend into another cultural environment (Byram, 1997; Kramersch, 1998).

In an effort to move away from the native speaker model, research into ICC emerged. ICC is a complicated concept and consensus has not yet been reached on a precise definition of it (Deardorff, 2006, 2009). Nevertheless, there seems to

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be wide agreement around Fantini and Tirmizi's (2006) definition of ICC as "a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (2007, p. 9). "Effectively and appropriately" have become the key criteria by which to judge participants' communication. Communicating 'effectively' refers to an individual's own perceptions regarding their performance during an intercultural encounter in terms of an outsider's view of the host culture, and communicating 'appropriately' relates to how an individual's performance is perceived by natives and thus is viewed from an insider's perspective (Fantini, 2009). In my opinion, 'effectively' and 'appropriately' seem to be subjective and general measures for teachers to apply to evaluate learners' abilities and a more detailed criterion or model is needed to interpret the concept of ICC in foreign language education.

Byram (1997) developed a theoretical model of ICC for the context of foreign language teaching. This model includes linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence along with five other dimensions: attitudes, knowledge, critical cultural awareness, interpreting/relating skills, and discovery/interaction skills. As it presents, defines, and clarifies the importance of ICC for students in intercultural encounters, it is of guiding significance not only to foreign language teaching, but is also an important guiding theory for this study, as later discussed in detail in section 3.3.

After the 2000s, some bottom-up studies on ICC model appeared. Scholars began to adjust and integrate the opinions of many different experts and scholars to establish an ICC model. For example, Deardorff (2006) investigated 23 internationally renowned intercultural communication scholars and 24 managers of American higher education institutions. She uncovered 22 components of intercultural communication competence that had achieved more than 80% recognition. She put forward a pyramid model of ICC which divided ICC into three dimensions: the attitude dimension, the knowledge and understanding dimension, and the skill dimension. These studies with empirical examples have verified the validity and applicability of many concepts in previous models such as Byram's

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model.

According to Zu (2003), the models related to ICC in foreign language education present three features. First, they emphasise the inherent competence of people in areas such as cultural awareness and attitude, which are its most important features (Zu, 2003). They no longer emphasise only the concrete understanding of cultural facts and information, but rather the insight and critical understanding of cultural phenomena and the relationship between cultures, which is an inherent ability and quality. Secondly, at the attitude level, the development of concepts such as openness, suspending judgement, and critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997) urge communicators to examine their own beliefs and practices and to look at themselves and other people's cultures through a different lens (Moeller & Nugent, 2014). Thirdly, the formation of ICC is seen as a dynamic process rather than a static result (Fantini, 2009). Its formation has no end. People gradually gain ICC through continuous dialogue, comparison, and negotiation in intercultural communication, and continuous participation in cognition, behaviour, and emotion.

Overall, section 3.1 has presented the basic concepts underpinning this study and clarified not only my standpoint that culture is socially constructed, fluid, and diverse, but also the idea that the relationships between language and culture in foreign language education are inseparable. As learners are not satisfied with being passive accepters of cultural knowledge (Kovacs, 2017), in recent decades the trend in foreign language education has shifted away from the cultural approach and towards the intercultural approach, with ICC's significance being recognised by many researchers and educators. The development of concepts and theories related to culture and IC developed in English literature have also affected Chinese research. The next section therefore considers the situation regarding research into teaching culture and IC in China.

### **3.2 Research on the Teaching of Culture and IC in China**

Teaching Chinese as a foreign language is by definition intercultural since it involves speakers from more than one language and culture. With the introduction of

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intercultural approach-related concepts into China from Western countries, intercultural communication has been a heated topic in the field of TCSOL in recent decades (Zu, 2013; Zhao, 2020). As this study is in the context of Chinese language education, I present the relationship between Chinese language and culture first in section 3.2.1 and then discuss the research on IC teaching in TCSOL.

### **3.2.1 The Relationship between Chinese Language and Culture**

Chinese has considerable diversity in its spoken dialect forms as well as a number of distinct languages used in provinces, districts, and small clusters of villages. According to Cheng's (2010) *Outline of Chinese Culture*, there are seven main groups of dialects in China: Beifanghua, Wu, Xiang, Gan, Kejia, Yue (Cantonese), and Min. Starr (2009) describes Chinese dialects as mutually unintelligible and as much further apart than languages such as Norwegian and Swedish. Mandarin Chinese, called Putonghua in Chinese, which means "common speech", is the official national language of the People's Republic of China (PRC), as identified by the Chinese government in 1949. It is legally mandatory for all public services, mainstream broadcasting, and official activities to be conducted in Putonghua/Mandarin. Some Chinese terms have similar meaning with Mandarin due to different regional and political differences, such as Huayu (华语) in Singapore and Malaysia and Guoyu (国语) in Taiwan.

Chinese language is largely affected by cultural factors in terms of character recognition, word segmentation, semantics, and pragmatics (Huang & Liao, 2017). With respect to Chinese characters, they can be divided into integral characters and compound characters based on their physical structure; strokes serve as basic components. According to Huang & Liao (2017), the Chinese symbology is a typical nonalphabetic script, which is very different from Indo-European languages. Indo-European languages are alphabetic texts, and there is a strong correlation and transparency between pronunciation and writing forms, while the Chinese character system consists of ideographic symbols. Except for some pictophonetic characters, there is almost no correlation and transparency between the written form of Chinese

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characters and their pronunciation. About 90% of Chinese characters are semantic-phonetic compounds in which one radical signifies the meaning of the compound and the other suggests the sound of the compound (Huang & Liao, 2017).

Chinese characters as the basic unit include visual information, semantic elements, and syllables with tones containing a lot of meaning. Pictographs and epistemic characters are all expressions of meaning. As the British scholar Russell (1966) stated, the rich meaning and allusions of Chinese characters have protected Chinese culture. As Chinese lacks sound-to-grapheme correspondence, Chinese learners are expected to master the sounds, shapes, and meanings of high-frequency characters to acquire character recognition and production skills in reading and writing (Zhao, 2004).

Mastering a large number of Chinese characters does not however mean that we can guess the meaning of words or phrases in Chinese. Chinese is also regarded as a logographic writing system because its written symbols (characters) represent lexical morphemes (Lin, 2002). Therefore, the meaning of some characters is not clear, and the words composed of characters may be different from the original meaning of the characters. The formation of a word involves the extension, reduction, and transformation of the meaning of words, and sometimes the different order of words will also affect the meaning of words. For example, 语言 (yǔyán), which means language and 言语 (yányǔ) which means speech. This kind of adjustment of semantics through changes in word order has almost no linguistic rules which can be followed, but can be explained in terms of cultural habits rooted in history. This lack of linguistic rules also explains to a certain extent why introducing the study of culture has always occupied an important position in TCSOL, because the relationship between Chinese (phonogram characters and special word-formation) and culture may be more complicated than in the case of a language with an alphabetic script. Thus, many words in Chinese must be understood with the help of Chinese cultural knowledge. Therefore, these cultural contents and knowledge need to be included in teaching to help students learn the language.

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Another feature of Chinese is its pragmatics. Ji (2002) proposed that the basic thinking patterns in the West are analytical, while those in the East are comprehensive. The comprehensive way of thinking in China has a close relationship with China's patriarchal, cultural system and its agricultural culture. In the *Introduction to Pragmatics*, He (2015) cites the example that Chinese-speaking people sometimes use the titles of relatives to show kindness or respect towards unfamiliar or respected people. The term “auntie” is often used to address strange women, and even “uncle” can be used for a policeman. The idea of an ideal agricultural society in which Chinese people congregate and live with family members lies behind this practice. According to Hall (1976), China is a high-context culture. High-context cultures are those in which the rules of communication are primarily transmitted through the use of contextual elements (i.e., body language, a person's status, and tone of voice). In traditional Chinese culture being too direct is generally seen as an indication of lack of sophistication, of being poorly educated, or simply of being rude and inconsiderate of others. Although there still needs to be more sociological research and discussion into whether there is a possibility of stereotypes in this view, or whether this view is still prevalent in China, this concept reflects the important role of pragmatic culture in Chinese acquisition to some extent.

Overall, the semantics, vocabulary, and pragmatics of Chinese language are closely tied to culture. A Chinese foreign language class is a typical field of contact and collision between Chinese and foreign languages and cultures. Thus, Chinese language learners need to learn Chinese language and culture simultaneously. If the cultural elements are ignored in Chinese teaching, the learners cannot understand the cultural connotations of Chinese language in the learning process, and consequently they may not be able to participate successfully in intercultural communication with Chinese people.

Having discussed the relationship between Chinese language and culture, I present the development of teaching culture and IC in Chinese language education in China in the following sections.

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### 3.2.2 Cultural Introduction 文化导入 (Wénhuà Dǎorù)

Since the 1980s, studies related to culture have appeared in the field of Chinese language education. However, at the beginning of the 1980s, structuralism and the generative grammar approach which came from the United States took a dominant position in language teaching in China, and culture was just a supplement (Zhao, 2013). That is, Chinese teachers upheld language knowledge as the core focus and emphasised teaching the language skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation. With the establishment and development of the discipline of Chinese language education (see chapter 2), researchers in China began to realise the relationship between culture and language and to appreciate the importance of culture in foreign language teaching (Qi, 2003; Zhang, 2013; Zhang & Li, 2010). Chinese teaching not only relies on teaching language knowledge, but also the accumulation of cultural knowledge (Bi, 2009).

Cultural introduction is a popular research issue regarding “culture” in foreign language teaching (Qi, 2003). Zhao (1989) first proposed the concept of “cultural introduction” in his article: *An Introduction to Cultural Differences and Cultural Introduction* and explained that the need for cultural introduction is based on the idea that different national cultures are different and that they influence each other. Furthermore, Zhao believed that language needs to function as an intermedia in the introduction of different cultures. He sees cultural introduction as a significant part of foreign language teaching which should be incorporated into the teaching curriculum of foreign language education (Zhao, 1989).

The focus of early research on cultural introduction concerns the issue of “what culture to teach” (Qi, 2003) and at that time there was a heated discussion about the classification of cultural content (Xu, 2000; Chen, 2001; Zhang, 2009). Besides accepting the well-known category of big C and little c culture mentioned in section 3.1.2, many teachers and scholars supported the category of “knowledge culture” and “communicative culture” (Zhang, 1990; Qi, 2003) and stressed that it is necessary, effective, and practical to teach “communicative culture” in foreign

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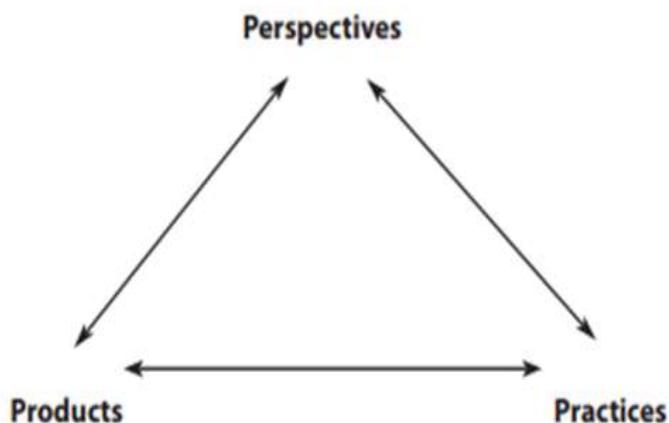
language education (Zhang, 2009). Knowledge culture refers to linguistic and nonlinguistic cultural factors that do not directly affect the accurate transmission of information in intercultural communication. Communicative culture refers to the linguistic and nonlinguistic cultural factors that directly affect the accurate transmission of information in intercultural communication (Zhang, 1990), such as lexicology and semantics, which is urgently needed in communication. Some researchers disagree on this category. For example, Xu (2000) believes that the cultural factors cannot be scientifically separated as “direct” and “indirect” in actual teaching and that their influences on communication are difficult to distinguish and predict. However, this category has been recognised widely and applied by many researchers and Chinese language teachers (Zhang, 2009).

In the teaching process, some teachers and researchers are gradually aware of the problems brought by focusing on cultural knowledge, and one problem is stereotyping (Wang & Guo, 2017). "Cultural stereotypes" refer to people's simplified views of members of another nation or country such as "conservative British," "romantic Italian". Gao (1995) proposed a "cultural paradox" between stereotypes and generalisation in Chinese language education. She pointed out that generalisation is a useful cognitive psychological process for learning because it simplifies and clarifies phenomena that are difficult to determine and helps learners grasp the features of the world. However, when all members of a group are categorised as having the same characteristics, overgeneralisations, namely stereotypes, emerge. Stereotypes tend to be more negative than generalisations because they are typically inflexible and resistant to new information, which may influence intercultural understanding and communicating (Gao, 1995). Thus, she argued that Chinese teacher need pay attention on students' stereotypes formed in the process of language learning.

In the late 1990s, 3P (perspective, products, and practices) pedagogy was introduced in China; it provided a new framework to guide foreign language teaching (Shi, 2011). This method seems to be helpful in avoiding stereotypes (Lange, 1999).

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**Figure 2** *The Culture Triangle in 3P Pedagogy*



This method was put forward in 1996 in the *American Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*. There, perspectives refer to ideas, attitudes, beliefs, and values that people within a group tend to share; they are moulded by society's overarching framework and belief system ("world view"). According to Lange (1999), defining culture in terms of the 3P avoids "the common, overworked conflict between big C and small c by interweaving the formal and informal aspects of daily life, as one normally lives it in any culture" (p. 60). When introducing cultural products or practices, one of the challenges teachers might previously have faced was that the information delivered could appear to be disconnected and possibly lead to stereotypes. However, by using the 3P cultural framework in their planning, teachers can ensure not only that culture is explored in a systematic and contextual way, but can also allow for some flexibility (Lange, 1999). This 3P pedagogy shifted the focus of teaching to relating products and practices to perspectives and to acquiring a deeper understanding of culture overall (Zhao, 2013). When students have a more comprehensive understanding of a cultural event, stereotypes can be avoided to some extent (Dema & Moeller, 2012). However, a drawback may come about when the learners try to interpret Chinese culture from their own local cultural perspectives, because there might be no way to ensure that misleading interpretations can be avoided.

Overall, although this approach of cultural introduction aligns with the cultural

approach (see section 3.1.3), the skills of exploration and interpreting used to explore the perspectives behind cultural products in 3P show that the research on cultural introduction is not only limited to knowledge, but also tries to develop learners' abilities to explore and understand cultures. To date, the cultural introduction approach has had a great influence on Chinese teaching (Zhao & Yang, 2020). Some researchers state that it is still beneficial for students to overcome cultural shock, make cultural comparison, and use language properly in intercultural communication (Wang, 2021).

### 3.2.3 Inter/Cross-cultural Communication and 跨文化交际 (Kuà Wénhuà Jiāoji)

The translation of inter/cross-cultural communication in Chinese is 跨文化交际 (kuà wénhuà jiāoji). This term appeared in foreign language education in China in the 1980s with China's gradual opening up to the outside world (He, 1983). 跨文化交际 (kuà wénhuà jiāoji) is the translation of two English terms: intercultural communication and cross-culture communication; but these two English terms are not the same concept. Scollon and Scollon (2001) make a distinction between the two terms, as shown below.

**Table 1** *Cross-cultural Communication Versus Intercultural Communication*

Cross-cultural communication studies	Intercultural communication studies
The study of the communicative practices of distinct cultural groups independent from interaction	The study of the communicative practices of distinct cultural or other groups in interaction with each other
Cultures are seen as separable entities	Cultures are not bounded entities with national borders, but fluid and dynamic with blurred boundaries.
Cultures are viewed as relatively homogeneous	Cultures are heterogeneous, containing a great deal of variety among its

	members.
Cultures are viewed at a national level	National cultures are one of many discourse communities which can be drawn upon in communication, others include gender, generation, profession, ethnicity etc.

As Table 1 shows, when using cross-cultural communication, supposedly distinct cultures are often treated as synonymous with national groups and the behaviour of each group, for example, the Chinese and Australians, being compared and contrasted. In contrast, the term intercultural communication is used "to signal the study of distinct cultural or other groups in interaction with each other" (Scollon & Scollon, 2001, p. 539). This later concept puts the idea of cultural differences and similarities being changeable and negotiable at the centre of intercultural communication. Thus, the two concepts cannot be treated as the same concept in teaching language and culture.

The term 跨文化交际 (kuà wénhuà jiāoji) with its two meanings created some difficulty in when I reviewed some Chinese literature. This term first appeared in language education in China when He Daokuan used it in 1983. Many studies in the 1980s were about comparing communicative practices of distinct cultural groups (e.g., Huang, 1994). With the shift from the culture-specific to the culture-general perspective in the 1990s, and the developing of research on ICC (Meadows, 2016), some researchers in China started to pay attention to learners' competence to communicate in the intercultural context rather than focusing on cultural comparison for cross cultural communication (Hu, 2005). That is to say, the studies on 跨文化交际 (kuà wénhuà jiāoji) started to contain the intercultural elements which focus on interaction with different cultures to some extent. I next discuss the development of the history of IC in Chinese teaching. As the development of TCSOL is influenced by English teaching, this section considers some research in the field of English education in China.

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### 3.2.4 IC Teaching and Foreign Language Education in China

The research on IC first appeared and developed in the field of foreign language teaching in China, especially in English teaching, in the late 20th century. In the 1990s, various related theories began to enter China (Hu, 2005), and the research related to IC in foreign language education began to develop in China in the late 1990s.

Gao (1998) pointed out that most English classes in China at that time placed emphasis on helping people living and working overseas to cope with practical problems and needs, an approach which offers training for performance instead of focusing on the development of long-term development competence. Thus, on the basis of humanistic philosophy, she proposed the concept of “道 Dao” and “器 Qi” to describe ICC. The concepts of "dao" and "qi" come from the traditional Chinese book Zhuangyi. Dao refers to the abstract and intangible, while qi refers to the concrete and tangible. Gao (1998; 2002) argued that in foreign language education, the development of dao refers to individual growth and competence development, focusing on consciousness and attitude; qi refers to improving communication skills and gaining knowledge. Integrating the two concepts in language education means teachers need to impart knowledge (qi) to students, but at the same time inspire them to treat knowledge critically (dao) and not to be trapped by fixed knowledge. Gao's work indicated a shift from teaching of cultural and communicative knowledge to cultivating language learners' competence in intercultural interactions in foreign language education in China.

Since the 2000s, research on competence in IC in foreign language education in China has rapidly increased (Bi, 2005). A search of the China national knowledge infrastructure (CNKI) online database under the theme of "intercultural communicative competence" shows that there have been more than 1,000 articles related to ICC every year since 2006. Among them, more than 3800 articles are related to foreign language teaching in the last 10 years. Some Chinese scholars have proposed that ICC should be implemented into foreign language education

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(Gao, 2003; Zhang, 2006; Gu, 2017). In the new version of the College English Curriculum Requirements of China (CECR) (College Foreign Language Teaching Steering Committee, 2020), one of the ultimate goals of College English education is "to enhance learners' understanding of different cultures, to foster their awareness of similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign cultures, and to cultivate their intercultural communicative competence (ICC)". This version reflects the importance that English teaching field attach to ICC.

Chinese scholars have various opinions regarding the meaning of ICC (Yang & Zhuang, 2007; Gu, 2017). For example, Yang and Zhuang (2007) consider that ICC consists of global awareness, cultural adjustment ability, knowledge, and communicative competence. They suggest that a hierarchical relationship exists between the four and that global awareness and cultural adjustment form the basic first two layers of ICC. On the basis of global awareness and cultural adjustment, grasping knowledge is the third level, and communicative ability is the highest level. This model comprehensively summarises the four levels of ICC and describes the relationships among them. More and more Chinese scholars focus on the ICC components, and some draw upon insights from other ICC models in English (such as Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). Gu (2017) developed a model with attitude, knowledge, and skills dimensions, and divided these into diverse subcomponents to describe fundamental qualities that an intercultural competent speaker should possess. Based on a needs analysis of intercultural competence development for Chinese students, Zhang and Yao (2020) put forward a "4-3-2-1" theoretical framework including four perspectives (communicative behaviour, interpersonal relationship, cultural conflict, and identity), three dimensions (attitude, knowledge, and behaviour), two contexts (life and work), and one platform (foreign language education). These scholars were trying to combine the situation of foreign language teaching in China with Western scholars' research. However, their applicability to different language classes is yet to be verified in different contexts. Moreover, a few scholars have tried to combine ICC with Chinese philosophy, for example, the anthropocosmic approach to intercultural learning developed by Jia (Jia, 2010; Jia & Liu, 2019).

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These studies are of great significance to the development of foreign language teaching in China. However, in China, the research on IC and ICC started late, and so a number of specific gaps remain. First, as far as research methods are concerned, most of this research is top-down deductive research (e.g., Yang & Zhuang, 2007; Zhang & Yao, 2020), while a few employ bottom-up inductive research (e.g., Zhang & Yang, 2012). Second, from the research perspective, most of these studies are based on Western theories and frameworks, while there is also a lack of a theoretical framework of ICC based on China's reality (Gu, 2017; Nadeem et al., 2020). Jia and Liu's (2019) recent work offers a notable exception; however, its application in foreign English language teaching (for which it was designed) has not yet been fully explored. Third, it is worth noting that the IC research in China is mostly applied in the context of College English and an English major in higher education. For example, the RICH-Ed (Resources for Interculturality in Chinese Higher Education) provides support for intercultural learning in Chinese higher education. Consequently, many studies on ICC models focus on the specific field of English language education in the higher education context. Next, I will discuss the situation of IC teaching in the field of Chinese language teaching.

### **3.2.5 IC Teaching and TCSOL**

Chinese teaching is not a unique form of intercultural communication, and theoretical achievements developed in the teaching of other languages are likely to produce lessons for Chinese education. However, there are differences between foreign language teaching in higher education and overseas Chinese teaching, such as classes in Confucius Institutes, in terms of learners, teaching scale, and teacher level. Therefore, the research situation of the two is also different. Although there has been rapid exploration of IC in foreign language teaching, the research on IC in the field of TCSOL is far less developed.

On the one hand, many scholars agree that Chinese teaching in the 21st century should aim at cultivating Chinese learners' ICC (Bi, 2009; Zu, 2003, 2015; Zhao, 2020). In particular, Jin (2021) also mentioned that interculturality is important for

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Chinese language education from the perspective of the learning of Chinese. Shi (2020) states that the goal of teaching culture and IC in TCSOL is to enable Chinese learners: to master knowledge of language communication, nonverbal communication, cultural connotations, and background culture; to enhance their awareness of respecting different cultures, and to produce cultural resonance so as to avoid ethnocentrism; and, to successfully complete communicative tasks with knowledge and attitudes. In recent years, there has been much research from the perspectives of Chinese language students with different backgrounds, for example, Jin (2018) investigated a group of students studying Chinese at universities in London, and Duan et al. (2021) explored the ICC of 150 students from Southeast Asian countries. These studies emphasise the challenges faced by different students in intercultural encounters and the necessity of ICC cultivation in Chinese teaching.

However, Shi (2020) points out that a complete and effective way to cultivate ICC has yet been found and that the way of integrating IC into Chinese teaching involves mainly the integration of cultural knowledge and extracurricular practical activities with local characteristics. Moreover, Zu (2017) claims that culture and IC teaching in Chinese teaching are still marginalised by many teachers. Much of the research on IC teaching methods relies on statements by researchers and lacks first-hand data collection and analysis, and so these studies are not very convincing (Zu, 2017). Further developments are needed in theoretical research, research on models of IC teaching, and empirical research that investigates teachers' and learners' experiences. Meanwhile, teachers have also reported some practical problems. For example, there are still teaching materials which present stereotypical or superficial cultural information (Wang, 2017).

Most of the current research that focuses on Chinese teachers working overseas, including CI teachers—the subject of this study—deals primarily either with the process of teachers' cultural adaptation (Ye, 2017; Xuan, 2020) or with the teachers' teaching abilities or with their class management (Liu, 2017; Zhao, 2017). Studies related to culture in Chinese language education focus more on the design of

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cultural activities (Zhang, 2013; Yang, 2019). Research on teachers' perspectives on integrating IC into Chinese teaching is rare. Zhu and Li (2014) find that teachers of Chinese may have narrow understandings of what the concept 'culture' entails, while Zhao (2020) believes that some teachers lack awareness of and enthusiasm for teaching IC due to the lack of systematic and scientific training and support from management personnel. Zu (2017) points out that Chinese language teachers are not only cultural knowledge consultants, but also promoters of intercultural attitude change and mediators in intercultural encounters. But these roles are still unfamiliar to many Chinese researchers and teachers. To sum up, there is still insufficient research on IC teaching in Chinese language education, especially empirical studies in different teaching contexts. Thus, this study seeks to fill this gap through an exploration of Chinese teachers' views and their experience of teaching IC in the context of CIs in the UK. As stated in chapter 2, given that the CIs are important institutions for teaching Chinese overseas, research on how culture and IC are taught in that context is valuable for the development of the discipline of TCSOL.

### **3.2.6 Novice Chinese teachers and teacher development**

This study focuses on a group of novice Chinese teachers and investigates developments and changes in their perspectives on intercultural teaching. Changes in teachers' views are part of their professional development. This section therefore reviews studies related to novice Chinese teachers within the theoretical context of teacher development.

In the early 1980s, due to advances in cognitive psychology and ethnographic techniques, there was a general change of research focus from product (behaviour) to process (thinking) in many disciplines, including in research on teachers' planning and decision-making processes (Galderhead, 1996). Some researchers have found that both environmental and personal factors affect teachers' professional development (Grundy & Robinson, 2004; Zhu, 2014) and the main influences in their development are their teaching experiences and self-reflections (Zhu, 2014; Wang, 2019). Experience can help teachers relate their past experiences to current

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problems. It can also help them define problems, test possible solutions and then form their own highly personalised pedagogies (Calderhead, 1996). Moreover, reflecting on experiences can help teachers reflect on themselves critically, question their convictions and evaluate their experiences as a means of improving future ones (Farrell, 2012; Halpern, 1996; Wang, 2019). Teaching experience and reflection of their personal views are important for teachers (including language teachers in this study) and the two need to be combined. That is, teachers need to constantly reflect on their practical experiences, and on this basis, continue to learn so as to ensure the sustainability of their professional development (Wang, 2019).

Even though teacher development is a lifelong process (Liu & Fisher, 2006), the complex first year is a key period for novice teachers (Farrell, 2012). This study also focuses on pre-service training and CI teachers' first year of overseas work experience. Novice teachers generally face a difficult transformation process in this first year. Tarone and Allwright (2005) argue that many novice teachers find it hard to bridge the gap between their language teacher training programmes and the real conditions they face in the language classroom. In recent decades there have been many studies on novice teachers which focus on the difficulties they face in the initial stage. For example, as early as 1984, Veenman pointed out the difficulties they encounter in the initial stage of employment and put forward the concept of "reality shock." Farrell (2012) summarised the initial challenges facing novice language teachers as lesson planning, lesson delivery, classroom management and identity development. Spencer et al. (2018) investigated the professional development needs of new teachers through a questionnaire analysis of 275 new teachers in Britain. Their holistic study of the difficulties faced by novice teachers found that new teachers face difficulties in workload, time and psychological pressure and they mainly seek help and support from schools, colleagues and the internet.

In recent years, some Chinese researchers have also paid attention to novice teachers in foreign language education in China. They have mainly focused on comparative studies between novice teachers and expert teachers (Wu, 2011;

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Wang, 2019). For example, Wu Shufang (2011) investigated differences between novice and proficient college English teachers in three dimensions: their autonomous teaching behaviour, their escape from external control and their career development. In the field of Chinese education, Jiang and Hao (2010) investigated the practical pedagogical knowledge of two experienced Chinese language teachers and two novice ones and concluded that their beliefs, knowledge of their students and past experience were valued more by experienced teachers than by novice ones, although they shared similar views on pedagogical knowledge. Wang and Ren (2015) made a comparative study of novice, proficient and expert Chinese teachers and found that they are different in predictions of classroom situations, the language they used in the classroom, their classroom teaching behaviour and reflections on teaching. Wang (2019) concluded that classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual students' differences and coping with insufficient teaching materials can be challenges for novice Chinese teachers.

However, these studies mostly compare different teachers while the novice teachers' specific teaching approaches and their classroom performance have not been well explored. Wang (2019) suggests that many novice teachers are aware of their shortcomings in the teaching process but they lack the ability to reflect and adjust by applying theories. In this study, some Chinese teachers may face the similar situation that they do not know how to apply IC theories. Therefore, understanding and analysis of novice teachers' socially-constructed experiences and views is necessary for the development and training of Chinese teachers.

Novice teachers in CIs also find themselves in another special situation because their first year's teaching happens overseas. Some studies have been conducted to identify the outcomes of people's overseas experiences. Wilson (1993) divided the benefits of overseas experience into four kinds: substantive knowledge of other cultures and world issues; open-minded and empathetic perceptual understanding of people of other cultures; personal growth such as in self-confidence; and a willingness to make interpersonal connections with people from other cultures. As

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for ICC, studying or working overseas can also broaden their intercultural experience, increase their intercultural sensitivity and obtain different understandings of their host culture (Anderson & Lawton, 2015).

There have also been some studies on teachers working overseas. Teachers can also benefit from this experience both personally and professionally, such as in terms of their global mindedness and improved self-efficacy (Cushner & Mahon, 2002). Zhang Mu (2017) states that overseas teaching experience is beneficial for language teachers because it improves their knowledge and ability to see the foreign culture from the inside and as outsiders and to gain a comparative perspective on other cultures and their own, which is closely related to their ICC. In recent years, a few scholars have begun to pay attention to the influence of overseas teaching on Chinese teacher development. For example, Yu Kehua (2019) noticed that Chinese teachers' professional development is a process of self-adaptation to the external environment and analysed the interaction between teachers and this environment. She divides the environment into a macro-environmental system, a medium environmental system and a micro-environmental system and stresses that the micro-environment system is the most critical element for the professional development of Chinese teachers abroad. Nevertheless, these studies on Chinese teachers' overseas teaching experiences are still focused on experienced teachers.

The purpose of this thesis is not to analyse the influence of overseas experience on the overall development of teachers' professionalism, but to focus on novice Chinese teachers' understanding of IC teaching. The active role of foreign language teachers in enhancing students' intercultural learning has long been appreciated (Sercu, 2005; Liddicoat, 2005; Byram, 1997, 2021). As Byram and Risager (1999, p.58) mention, language teachers have been considered to be "professional mediator[s] between foreign languages and cultures." Holliday (2018) also recognises that the role of language teachers is to help students not only notice and see relationships and interconnections but also to understand their (students') positionality in a wider world by helping students to recover and externalise their intercultural experience

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and teaching them how to use this experience in an unfamiliar language. The teacher is an important element in the development of students' ICC and their experiences can be the basis for a deeper and improved understanding of how to teach the IC in TCSOL.

Overall, novice CI teachers have certain particular features. They may face a discrepancy between their expected and actual teaching realities. Their overseas teaching experience may allow them to develop a critical understanding of, and shape their views on, intercultural teaching. This is the focus of this study and its findings may help other novice TCFL teachers to reconsider and adjust their teaching of culture and IC. The findings may also lead to improved TCFL teacher education programmes.

In summary, section 3.2 first examined the close relationship between Chinese language and culture and then introduced the common way of teaching cultural introduction in TCSOL. Next, tracing the development of research about culture and IC in TCSOL showed a shift from cultural content to competence. The emphasis of research on Chinese teaching was on cultural categories, stereotypes, and cultural perspectives, before moving toward intercultural awareness and competence (Jin, 2020). The research on the connotation and framework of ICC has also contributed to many achievements in foreign language teaching in China, especially in English teaching. However, it appears that framework that is suitable for Chinese language teaching and learning has yet been formed and that the related empirical research from teachers (including novice teachers) is limited. IC teaching in Chinese teaching has so far not created a widely recognised and influential ICC model or pedagogy for Chinese educators and teachers to follow. Therefore, this study refers mainly to existing influential ICC theory and teaching methods. The next section presents the key theories for this study.

### **3.3 Key Theories for this Study**

As mentioned earlier, IC has become an important issue in foreign language studies (including TCSOL) in recent years with ICC being one of the expected learning

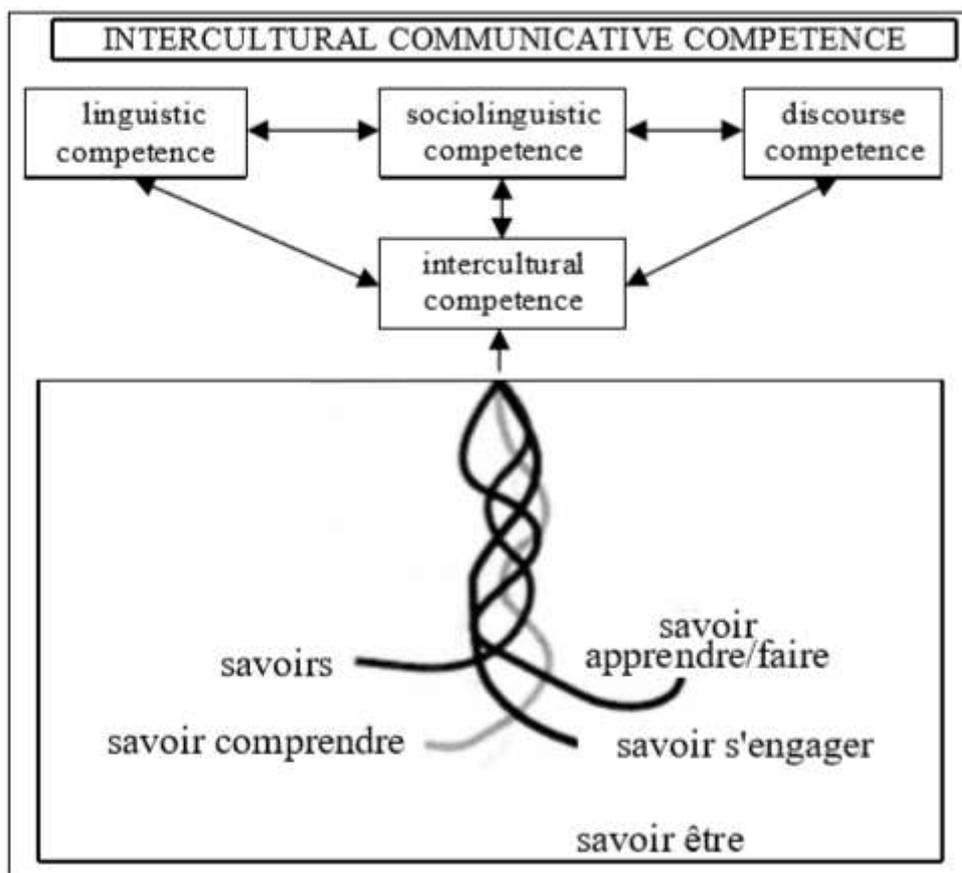
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outcomes of language education (Lázár, 2020). In terms of available intercultural research models, I believe that both Byram's ICC model and interculturality theory (Dervin, 2010; Jin & Dervin, 2017) can provide an overall theoretical perspective in this study that enables me to analyse the perspectives and experiences of the CI teachers. This section therefore presents these two key theories and explains the reasons why I chose them.

### **3.3.1 Byram's ICC Model**

Byram's ICC model has been particularly influential in foreign language education (Matsuo, 2015; Sercu, 2004; Baker 2015). Byram et al. (2002) pointed out that intercultural teaching in foreign language education aims to develop learners as "intercultural speakers" who are able to "engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity" (p. 9). By proposing an "intercultural speaker", the model implies a prescription of what a learner needs to strive toward. To become an intercultural speaker, learners develop their ICC, the basic elements of which is presented in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3** *Byram's ICC model*



As shown in the above figure, Byram’s model emphasises the interwoven nature of communicative competences and ICC by linking the following three competences:

- Linguistic competence: the ability to apply knowledge of the rules of a standard version of the language to produce and interpret spoken and written language;
- Sociolinguistic competence: the ability to give to the language produced by an interlocutor—meanings which are taken for granted by the interlocutor or which are negotiated and made explicit with the interlocutor; and,
- Discourse competence: the ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologue or dialogue texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor or are negotiated as intercultural texts for particular purposes.

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However, Byram recognised that linguistic competence is insufficient to communicate in an intercultural context; he therefore developed the notion of “intercultural competence” by including the following five *savoirs* (1997, pp. 50-54):

- Attitudes (*savoir être*) – relativising the self, valuing others, curiosity and openness, readiness to see other cultures and the speaker’s own without being judgmental;
- Knowledge (*savoirs*) – of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction;
- Skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*) – ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it, and relate it to documents from one’s own;
- Skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*) – ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction;
- Critical cultural awareness (*savoir s’engager*) – an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries.

Byram (1997) argues that, among the five *savoirs*, attitudes form the foundation of intercultural competence, which means that individuals are curious about and open to others’ values and behaviours and have a willingness to relativise their own values, beliefs, and behaviours rather than assuming their own culture is the only correct rule. This is a process of decentring (Byram et al., 2002). Another crucial factor is knowledge, which has two major components: knowledge about one’s own and other cultures, and knowledge of social processes. Byram (1997) maintains that it is important, but not sufficient, to have declarative knowledge about facts, figures, and traditions. This knowledge also needs to be complemented by

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procedural knowledge of appropriate and sensible ways to act in different circumstances. The second kind of knowledge focuses on “processes and methods of analysing social processes,” which is a tool for learners to develop skills to critically analyse their own and other cultures (Byram, 2021, p. 25).

As for skills, according to Byram et al. (2002), as no teachers can have knowledge of all the cultures which their learners might encounter, the teachers’ task is to develop attitudes and skills as much as knowledge. Skills of interpreting and relating can help learners to see how misunderstandings can arise and how they might be able to resolve them. By putting ideas, events, and behaviours from different cultures together, the learners can see how people might look at their own culture from the other perspectives through comparing and relating (Byram et al., 2002). So, the skills of comparison and interpreting and relating are crucial. Meanwhile, as no teacher can satisfy all the knowledge needs of students, it is important for learners to acquire the skills of finding out new knowledge, integrating it with what they already know, and applying it correctly. Thus, the skills of discovery and interaction are necessary skills.

Byram’s (1997, 2021) fifth savoir, critical cultural awareness (CCA), focuses on the “ability” to “evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit, systematic process of reasoning, values present in one’s own and other cultures” (2021, p. 66). CCA implies “interacting vigorously and critically with knowledge and experience” (Byram, 1997, p. 90) and integrates politics and ideology into language education (Byram, 2009). As education is never neutral, language teachers may assume social and political responsibilities in the classroom (Byram & Feng, 2005), and learners also bring their cultural and social identity into the classroom. Byram (1997, p. 35) uses the term CCA to highlight the need for a reflective and analytical stance towards individuals’ own and others’ cultures in language classes, which leads to the relativisation of cultural appraisals that expand their interpretative frameworks. This stance enables both learners and teachers to see their own culture from an outsider’s perspective, to see the world from outside and other perspectives, and to become more thoughtful and critical of what they take for granted. CCA also can be

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interpreted in a more complex way combined with citizenship education, which is called “intercultural citizenship” (Byram, 2008). CCA is not confined to foreign language teaching; rather, it guides cooperation across the curriculum and encourages students to join in with political activity globally (Byram, 2009).

However, one critique of Byram’s model concerns the understanding of ‘culture’. Some scholars argue that the model is still associated with relatively stable nationally and geographically bounded notions of culture (Kramsch, 1998), and the focus on national culture as the basis of ICC may lead to essentialism (Matsuo, 2015). In 2021, Byram explained the reference to ‘other countries.’ He mentioned that he does not hold an essentialist view of culture, using country rather than adding other possible entities such as region or social group as “to specify all the options each time becomes tedious for author and reader alike” (Byram, 2021, p. 80). Risager (2007) calls this arrangement a conscious strategy, rather than an “effect of banal nationalism” (p. 124). Furthermore, Byram (2009) argues that the problem with taking a national culture as the basis for teaching ICC is not the problem of essentialising as long as national culture is not the only culture form and does not exclude other social groups, thereby suggesting that the model allowed for its application to interaction with people identified as belonging to any other social groups. Furthermore, Byram states that successful intercultural communicators will need to mediate between cultures separated by the intercultural line; thus, in this sense there is a level of dynamism and flexibility to the model (Baker, 2009).

Considering the advantages and limitations above, Byram’s ICC model is well suited to this study’s analysis. This model is designed for planning teaching in foreign language education and it prescribes what teachers should attempt to develop in their students with specific objectives (Baker, 2009). The context of my study is teaching Chinese language as a foreign language in CIs, and Byram’s model can be used to explore CI teachers’ perspectives regarding how to integrate IC into Chinese language classes. In addition, Byram (2009) also mentions that while specific theories or models have the advantage of helping teachers to teach,

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they also need to change to meet new societal circumstances and the new demands made on teaching, and so he leaves room for the application of his ICC model in different environments. Unlike some models which address a specific application context, such as higher education in Europe (e.g., as the Intercultural Educational Resources for Students and their Teachers [IEREST, 2015] materials do), Byram's model is also applicable to the environment of Chinese teaching.

### **3.3.2 Interculturality**

Besides Byram's ICC model, I also draw on interculturality theory. This new concept of interculturality has been introduced into the field of foreign language education in recent years (Jin & Dervin, 2017). It is a new and emerging research approach which provides an analytical stance to examine whether and to what extent participants "align with each other, or resist each other" (Zhu, 2014, p. 218) in intercultural interactions.

The reason I chose this theory is because it complements Byram's ICC model. Although Byram (1997) mentions the mediation function of the intercultural speakers, the boundaries between cultures and between self and other in his model may raise the critique of emphasising cultural differences and regarding cultures as bounded entities (Kramsch, 1999; Jin, 2013). The addition of the suffix 'ality' in "interculturality" is designed to avoid the essentialist view of culture (Dervin & Risager, 2015). This notion of interculturality includes a reflexive awareness of self and other in a crossing of boundaries (Holliday, 2018). That is to say, compared to focusing on the dichotomy between "self" and "other", interculturality places a great focus on diversity in intercultural encounters (Dervin & Risager, 2015). For instance, when two people are observed with each other, one from China and another from England, the processual perspective is not to examine this encounter from the position of the people who embody essential cultural differences; instead, their encounter is examined for the social and cultural processes that are taking place when they meet (Baker, 2012; Fandiño, 2014). This process-oriented feature challenges the relation between "cultures" and nations through alternative concepts

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of cultural contexts and settings. Interculturality involves “exceptions, instabilities, and processes” rather than just national or ethnic structures, being reflexive, being wary of “language use,” and trying to “delve into the hidden,” “under the surface of discourses and appearances” (Byram, 2016, pp. 103-106).

This view has some resonance with Holliday's small culture formation. Holliday uses the notion of 'small culture' to describe “small social groupings or activities wherever there is cohesive behaviour” (1999, p. 237). As discussed in section 3.1.2, cultures are complex systems full of interactive engagements in the act of meaning-making. Language learning also includes a transformational engagement on the part of the learners in the act of learning (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Holliday (1999) considers small culture formation as a dynamic, ongoing group process which operates in changing circumstances to enable group members to make sense of and operate meaningfully under those circumstances. Here, small culture is viewed as socially constructed, and it can form, develop, change, and break up, and its nature can be transient (Holliday, 2018). A small culture approach enables exploration of the ways in which people make sense of and operate under particular, changing circumstances. That is, this approach focuses on process of small culture formation, rather than on the nature of the group itself.

Dervin (2010) propounds that the insertion of interculturality into language learning and teaching is important for language learners. Interculturality in foreign language teaching and learning implies a growing sensitivity and understanding towards the experiences, perceptions, and viewpoints presented in class. Compared with the ICC model, interculturality theory's focus has moved away from the emphasis on cultural content and cultural contrast to focus on the process of IC and emphasises the importance of reflection on these processes in teaching and learning (Phipps & Guilherme, 2004; Baker, 2015; Jin, 2021). Thus, teaching based on interculturality stresses the need to observe and interpret the interaction of people in real life, with a focus on their individual experiences rather than on the 'essence' of a culture, such as a national culture. Through reflecting on their encounters and experiences during studying another language, interculturality becomes an aspect of the

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learners' formative sense of self (Zhu, 2014). Overall, the theory of interculturality's focus on the process-oriented feature of IC can serve as a supplement to Byram's ICC model, which has clear teaching objectives and a pedagogical dimension, to guide this study on CI teachers' perspectives and teaching experience in the UK.

The following section presents a number of teaching methods and pedagogies related to the two theories.

### **3.3.3 Intercultural Teaching Pedagogy**

IC research has given rise to extensive considerations of the pedagogic implications of understanding IC. As discussed in section 3.1.3, an intercultural approach in language education means moving away from an information approach toward a more process-based approach grounded in interaction and understanding of intercultural encounters. Section 3.3 therefore presents some teaching pedagogies relating to intercultural teaching. These include experiential learning, comparative approach, task-based models, and the interculturality approach.

Experiential learning theory has been an influential educational approach in intercultural learning (Baker, 2012; Meadows, 2016; Holmes et al., 2016). This theory advocates that learning takes place through direct participation in real life. A well-known model of experiential learning is David Kolb's (1984) learning cycle. In it the following four stages feed into each other in a loop: concrete experience, observations and reflection, forming abstract concepts and generalisations, and testing concepts and generalisations in new situations, which then lead to the next round of the cycle. During this loop, reflection is the key to transfer experience into learning (Kolb, 1984). This learning is powerful in developing an individual's awareness and perceptions of other countries (Byram et al., 2002) and it has often been used as the rationale for creating opportunities for intercultural experience in the form of pragmatic ethnography, study abroad, exploring local culture, face-to-face intercultural talks, and project-based learning (Baker, 2012; Fandiño, 2014; Hall, 2012). However, this approach has some limitations in terms of its use in classroom teaching when the language learners are culturally and geographically

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distant from the communities of the language and culture they are learning.

Second, the comparative approach is an important teaching method which is closely related to Byram's ICC model (Lázár, 2020). Byram (2002) states that while the teacher might provide some factual information related to the lifestyles current in the culture, providing such knowledge is not the end goal. The important thing is to encourage the language learners to do comparative analysis between the learners' own culture and other cultures. The purpose of intercultural teaching is not to try to change learners' values, but to encourage learners to change their perspectives and to see the complexity of a foreign culture from the inside and their own culture from the outside (Byram et al., 2002; Lázár, 2020). In addition, the knowledge and skills acquired in the process can be used later for similar cultural explorations or in intercultural communicative situations for which the learners were not directly prepared (Byram, 1997).

Similarly, Liddicoat et al. (2008) propose a task-based method for English language learners within the comparative approach. This method includes four interrelated processes of noticing, comparing, reflecting, and interacting. First, the learners notice cultural similarities and differences after getting access to the new knowledge through language and culture learning. Then, using a multilayered approach they compare them, looking not only for comparisons between the learners' background culture and the target culture, but also in terms of what the learners already know about the target language and culture and the new input gained from noticing (Kohonen, 2000). Then, the learners need to make sense of their experience by reflecting on what one's intercultural experience means for oneself rather than finding a 'correct' answer. Finally, interacting means that intercultural learners need to create personal meanings about what they have learnt and experienced and then to communicate with those meanings. Through these four stages Liddicoat (2013) provides an integrative unit of analysis that brings together participants, purposes, context, and interaction in communication. The three dimensions (knowledge, attitudes, and skills) of Byram's ICC model are also reflected in the process, such as noting the knowledge, critical attitudes during comparing, and skills applied for

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interpretation and communication.

As for interculturality theories, criticality and reflexivity are essential to intercultural language education (Dervin, 2013; Jin & Dervin, 2017). Some researchers offer suggestions for intercultural language teaching. Baker (2012) provides some useful techniques based on the relationships between culture, language, and communication. First, the teaching materials can be prepared in many different ways: 1. exploring the complexity of local and target cultures; 2. exploring cultural representations in language learning materials; 3. exploring cultural representations in the media and arts both online and in more “traditional” mediums; 4. making use of cultural informants; and, 5. engaging in intercultural communication both face to face and electronically. Then, Baker (2012) states that the “representations of culture” are treated critically in the process of learning. In particular, in investigating images of cultures in textbooks, learners and teachers ask what is represented (and what is not), why this image has been chosen, and to what extent this image reflects their individual experiences of learning and using the language. All accounts and representations of culture are treated as necessarily subjective and partial. This subjectivity and partiality does not undermine the image’s validity, but rather encourages reflection on these representations in textbook and learners’ own experience. The focus of this pedagogy is that there will always be alternative ways of presenting and enacting cultures in communication rather than fixed explanations.

The interculturality approach also focuses on the learners’ own intercultural resources as intercultural beings and how they learn to become in intercultural contexts (Jin & Dervin, 2017). In the small culture approach, Holliday (2016) argued that “intercultural competence is not something that needs to be acquired anew but that needs to be recovered from our past experience of small culture formation developed during the process of socialization from birth” (p. 1). Thus, Holliday (2018) suggested that to guide the learners, teachers can recall their experiences of encountering intercultural strangeness (including in their own society, such as their first day in a new school) because the learners can carry such small culture formation experiences to new intercultural domains. In addition, Holliday

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emphasises the need to deal with essentialist blocks, which can be in the form of some sort of prejudices, preconceptions, and imaginings, that have got in the way of intercultural understanding and communication. Through exploring where the blocks came from, i.e., whether they come from national or other narratives, from school, from the media, from other people, from families and peers, can help students to cross boundaries and talk about things that they share with people from other cultures. The connections between different cultures and application of previous intercultural experience are the focus of Holliday's small culture approach.

In summary, the approaches discussed above show that intercultural language educators have sought to integrate IC into their teaching in different ways. These methods and suggestions highlight three common points. The first is to attach importance to the participation of learners. Learners are encouraged to notice, compare, and reflect on cultures and to develop their own understanding of their own culture as well as the culture of others in the process of intercultural encounters (Lo Bianco et al., 1999; Álvarez, 2014; Baker, 2015). The second is to pay attention to the learners' reflections on their personal experience. Individuals' cultural understanding is the product of their particular experiences and backgrounds and can be informed through reflection on their experiences (Moore, 2018). The third is the connection between different cultures. Intercultural education should move beyond essentialist blocks and draw on connections between diverse events across different periods and places in our lives (Jin, 2020; Holliday, 2018).

These pedagogies however also have their limitations for particular teaching contexts. For example, while the pedagogies may represent a set of idealised pedagogic moves, time, teaching resources, and teaching preparation may not be sufficient to meet the objective conditions of the proposed pedagogy. Moreover, the emergence of the postmethod condition (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) has had a significant impact on language teaching (Baker, 2009). Identifying problems, finding solutions, and trying them out to see what works in each specific context (Kumaravadivelu, 2008) is context-sensitive and it is necessary to be aware of the danger of notions of one-size-fits-all in methods. Although I do not plan to use one

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teaching approach to frame the teaching in CI classes in this study, these pedagogy and methods are important reference points for my research. They can help me to analyse how and to what extent Chinese teachers' teaching plans and behaviours lead towards intercultural orientation.

### **3.4 Summary and Research Questions**

The aim of this study is to investigate how IC is integrated into Chinese language teaching in the CI classroom from Chinese teachers' perspectives. Thus, this chapter has reviewed the literature which plays an important role in this study.

First, I discussed some theoretical concepts that underpin this study: culture, language, the relationship between them, and intercultural communication (IC). Then, I discussed how culture and IC are applied within the fields of foreign language education. I identified two general approaches to IC teaching: the culture orientation and the intercultural orientation in language education in terms of their understanding of culture, along with their shortcomings and achievements. According to Liddicoat and Scarino (2013), a cultural orientation focuses on the accumulation of knowledge about the entity identified as a culture and the culture remains external to the learner. And an intercultural orientation focuses on languages and cultures as sites of interactive engagement in the act of meaning-making and implies a transformational engagement on the part of the learner in the act of learning. In the intercultural approach, ICC is a key concept and so I next reviewed some key models in the development of ICC in foreign language teaching and learning.

Section 3.2 discussed the status quo of IC research in China. I first discussed the relationship of Chinese language (Mandarin) and culture to emphasise their indivisibility in Chinese teaching. In section 3.2.2, I then presented the teaching approach of cultural introduction, which has long occupied an important position in Chinese teaching. As a traditional culture-oriented teaching method, it exerts an important influence on IC teaching in TCSOL. In section 3.2.3, from the perspective of translation, I first analysed the possible confusion of 跨文化交际 (Kuà Wénhuà

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Jiāoji) in Chinese studies. Although the development of ICC in foreign language education in China has improved, TCSOL is a relatively new subject. Consequently, there is not only insufficient relevant theoretical and practical research in this area, but also some problems in the teaching field, such as teachers' superficial views about culture.

Finally, I discussed some key concepts that I planned to draw on to guide my analysis of the views and experiences of the teachers who participated in this study. I aligned my position with scholars such as Byram (1997) and Dervin (2012) who view the goal of foreign language education as fostering the ICC or interculturality of language learners. I then discussed some typical teaching pedagogies and models. However, the aim of this analytical study is not to pin down definitions of IC or IC teaching in TCSOL or to criticise the teachers' interpretation of these concepts. Rather, this study values the uniqueness and richness of CI teachers' views and experiences presented in the three findings chapters.

Three main questions emerge from the literature review:

RQ1. How are CI teachers prepared regarding intercultural communication (IC) in Chinese language teaching before working in their CIs in the UK?

This research question raised some additional questions, which led me to explore the three questions below:

RQ1a. How is IC presented in documents related to Chinese language education in CIs?

RQ1b. How does a CI preservice training in China prepare trainees to integrate IC in their lessons?

RQ1c. How do the trainees understand IC in Chinese teaching before working in CIs in the UK?

RQ2. What challenges do the CI teachers meet when teaching intercultural communication in CIs in the UK? How do teachers reflect on their experiences?

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RQ3. How are their initial perspectives on intercultural communication (as discussed in RQ1c) reinforced and/or challenged through their teaching experience in the UK?

The first research question explores how teachers understand the purpose and focus of integrating IC into Chinese language classes. To answer this question, ideas from guiding documents, teacher trainers, and teachers are investigated to define whether and to what extent they share such understandings. Although previous studies on Chinese language education pointed out the superficial understanding some teachers have of culture, researchers have so far ignored the issues of whether teachers have received relevant training and/or explored the training's specific content. Thus, establishing what the CI teachers' preservice preparation involves is important for understanding how the teachers construct their ideas about the teaching of IC.

Question two focuses on gathering data on the experiences the teachers have during their year working in the CIs in the UK. Working from a social constructionist perspective, when teachers interact with the new context, their ideas, particularly their construction of culture and IC in teaching, may be challenged. Question two aims to identify particular intercultural experiences that made an impression on the teachers and even made them reflect on their previous assumptions.

Question three explores the teachers' perspectives and their reflections on their working experience in the CIs in the UK in order to discover how the teachers confirmed and/or contested their original ideas. Through reviewing their experience and reconsidering their perspectives, the ways teachers understand culture and IC in teaching are discussed, as well as their own ICC development.

Having reviewed the relevant literature, I clarified my understanding of culture, language, IC, and ICC, discussed the current research in China and the background to the study, and presented the research questions, the next chapter sets out my methodological approach and the research design of this study.



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# Chapter 4

## Methodology

This chapter explains the methodology used in the study. Section 4.1 presents the overarching theoretical paradigm underpinning the study and section 4.2 explains why an interpretive qualitative approach was chosen. Section 4.3 covers the data collection procedure and section 4.4 the data analysis. Following this, ethical issues (section 4.5), multilingual research (section 4.6), reflexivity (section 4.7) and trustworthiness (section 4.8) are discussed separately. The chapter finishes with a summary.

### **4.1 Social Constructionism: The Overarching Theoretical Paradigm**

This study aims to explore CI teachers' perspectives and experience of integrating IC in Chinese language classes and how these understandings were negotiated and contested while they taught in CIs in the UK. To realise these aims, social constructionism is used as the study's overarching theoretical framework to guide the research approach.

A social constructionism approach holds that there are multiple 'realities' in the social world, and the realities in an individual's mind emerge from conversations and interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Gergen, 2003). Social constructionism is concerned with human experiences and how people understand them (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Society is an ongoing human product and consists of a sum of habitual human activities, and individuals' daily lives respond to or are in dialogue with society, either implicitly or explicitly and consciously or subconsciously. These dialogue processes in which society and individuals communicate in both directions

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never disappear (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Holiday, 2011). Therefore, in the social constructionism approach individuals' experiences of social interactions are important primary research resources (Lincoln et al., 2011). In this study, the Chinese teachers' experiences are also considered essential in order to understand their decisions and perceptions of IC in teaching Chinese.

On the other hand, the nature of human beings is to engage in ongoing meaning-making processes (Gergen, 2003; Bryman, 2012). Individuals' understandings of particular concepts are historically and culturally bound (Byram et al., 2002) because what people take for granted is constructed through the socialisation processes of their own trajectories and other people's statements of their realities (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Individuals' views also develop and change as they gain more experience from their different interactions in different social situations. In the context of this study, Chinese teachers' perspectives of teaching culture and IC may change under the influence of a variety of intercultural interactions in the UK teaching context. This theoretical perspective is appropriate for a study that focuses on the fluidity and multiplicity of experience in a particular context, and it allows the processes of negotiating and constructing individuals' views to be captured. This is exactly what the study aims to understand: how Chinese teachers construct or reconstruct their perspectives on IC in teaching through interactions with the new context of CIs in the UK.

Overall, social constructionism involves theoretical understanding of the key concepts (culture, language, and IC) in this study, as was explained in the literature review chapter. For example, the standpoint on culture here is that it is a meaning-making process and people make sense of and construct their cultural views through interactions with others, as opposed to an essentialist view which regards culture as a stable unity. Furthermore, as the teachers' perspectives and teaching activities in CI classes are constructed through intercultural interactions with the context, social constructionism has also informed the methodological framework of the study. Thus, social constructionism underpins the whole study.

Next, I discuss the choice of and rationale for a qualitative interpretivist methodology

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in this study.

## **4.2 The Qualitative Dimension of the Study**

Qualitative and quantitative approaches are the two main analytical approaches in social science. The basic difference between them lies in the nature of the data and the modes of data collection and analysis. Qualitative research methods involve the collection and analysis of nonnumerical data such as observations, interviews, focus groups, discussions, and videos (Gay & Airasian, 2003). Researchers seek to understand research problems in natural settings rather than experimental environments (Cohen et al., 2000), while quantitative research methods collect and analyse numerical data, usually obtained from questionnaires, tests, checklists, and other paper-and-pencil instruments (Gay & Airasian, 2003).

### **4.2.1 An Interpretive Qualitative Approach**

A qualitative approach was adopted in this study as it was the most suitable to answer the research questions. First, a qualitative research design responds to the theoretical paradigm: social constructionism. The teachers' understanding of what is not a stable view, and their teaching is not constrained to be static but it is constantly coconstructed in individuals' interactions with social factors (Devin, 2009; Holliday, 2011) and their (intercultural) communication with one another. What this study aims to find out is their various interpretations of teaching culture and IC in Chinese classes resulting from different intercultural encounters. Individuals' subjectivity and the distinctiveness of their experiences are the distinctive features of qualitative research (Blaikie, 2000). Therefore, a qualitative approach enables an exploration of the participants' own worlds by drawing on and constructing meaning from data that is grounded in their particular social context (Creswell, 2007). In the case of the teachers I investigated in this study, taking a qualitative approach also enables a rich investigation of the multiple and subjective intercultural experiences of the novice Chinese language teachers in their first year abroad teaching in CIs in the UK.

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Second, a qualitative research approach can be used as an interpretive, naturalistic approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This means exploring natural settings to make sense of the meanings that people bring to them instead of giving meanings to the world. This study explores teachers' experiences of teaching culture and IC in the context of CIs, which is something happening in a natural setting rather than an experimental setting where a particular teaching approach or model is applied. Instead of testing a hypothesis, this study focuses on the participants' lived and felt experiences in natural settings, so a qualitative research design is the most appropriate approach.

Third, a qualitative approach allows the discovery of unpredictable and personal information in the participants' minds, such as the teachers' descriptions of the 'realities' of their teaching culture and IC in their classes. As the study aims to 'mine' each participant deeply for their opinions and lived experiences related to integrating IC in Chinese language teaching in the context of CIs, the research questions are open-ended, evolving, and nondirectional questions (Creswell, 2007) with "how" questions to elicit experiences and understandings. For example, how do Chinese teachers reflect their experience of teaching IC in CIs in the UK? Therefore, qualitative data-collection methods such as interviews and observations are suitable to explore the perspectives that are inside the participants' minds and open to interpretation and reconstruction (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The study's qualitative approach aims to bring the participants' inner thoughts out.

Having introduced the theoretical underpinnings of the study, I next present the detailed research methods and data collection procedure.

#### **4.2.2 Different Research Methods in Different Stages of the Study**

Three qualitative data-collection methods are used in this study: document analysis, participant observations, and interviews. The table below indicates the different methods employed in the three stages of this study.

**Table 2** *Overview of the Participants and Research Methods in Different Stages of*

*the Study*

<b>STAGE</b>	<b>LOC ATIO N</b>	<b>RESEARCH METHODS</b>		<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>
1. BEFORE WORK  (A 1-MONTH TRAINING PROGRAMME)	China	Intervie ws with trainers  Intervie ws with trainees	Observations of the training courses  Analysis of the training documents	Three trainers and 14 trainees (who later become CI teachers)
2. DURING WORK (3 MONTHS AFTER STARTING WORK)	UK	Intervie ws with CI teachers	Observations of Chinese language classes	12 CI teachers
3. END OF WORK  9-12 MONTHS AFTER STARTING WORK)	UK	Intervie ws with CI teachers	Observations of Chinese language classes	12 CI teachers

The first stage addressed the 1-month training programme located in Beijing, which was undertaken by my participants before they went to the UK to teach in CIs. The

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first stage included two groups of participants from the training programme: three trainers and 14 trainees. I interviewed both groups and observed some of the lectures the trainees attended. Afterwards, when the trainees finished their training and left China, I did follow-up interviews with the CI teachers. From the 14 trainees in the first stage, I was able to continue my research with 12 participants who transitioned to be novice teachers of Chinese language in CIs in the UK and who were still willing to continue to take part in this study. As the trainee participants might experience some cultural conflicts at the beginning of working in the CIs in the UK, I did the second round of data collection after they had spent 3 months in the UK and were about to finish their first term of teaching. The final round of data collection was conducted at the end of their time working in the CIs. In the three rounds of data collection, interviews and observations were the main methods I used.

#### **4.2.2.1 *Interviewing***

Qualitative interviewing, or in-depth interviewing (Taylor et al., 2015), was selected as the main data-gathering method in the three stages of this study. Interviews play important roles by unveiling individuals' or groups' perspectives, feelings, opinions, and values regarding personal experiences and their social world, in addition to factual information about the participants' lives, because they enable researchers to gather data directly from participants and to investigate how they associate things and make meaning from them (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In this study, the research questions, which address individuals' experiences and perspectives on culture, IC, and teaching pedagogies, are difficult and open questions. These questions did not require 'yes or no' answers but deeper consideration and independent thinking in the interviews (Cohen et al., 2000). Interviews were a suitable choice because they allowed the participants to express complicated ideas through descriptions and examples.

Among the various possible types of interviews, one-to-one semistructured interviews were selected. A semistructured interview consists of guiding questions

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and probing questions. Guiding questions help researchers focus on particular topics without constraining them to a particular format (Edwards & Holland, 2014). Probing questions leave space for researchers to rephrase, modify the order, and prompt for clarifications (Patton, 2002), reacting to each participant's personality, appearance, and the context (Hennink, 2008). In this study, as there are no specific hypotheses as premises, the flexibility of semistructured interviews allowed me to ask more probing questions to encourage the participants to think deeply and widely.

There were some differences between the three rounds of interviews in the study. In the first stage, all the participants were staying in the same place: the CI preservice training centre. This made face-to-face interviews feasible. Face-to-face communication and eye contact allowed openness and trust (Gillham, 2005), which enabled me to build a stronger rapport with the participants at the beginning of the study and which was beneficial in helping me to keep in contact with them to continue with the following interviews.

In the second and third rounds of interviews, the participants were assigned to different cities or towns in the UK so I was not able to interview everyone face-to-face because face-to-face interviewing would have been costly, time-consuming, and often difficult to administer as most of the participants were in distant parts of the UK. Consequently, I interviewed five of CI teachers face-to-face and used video chats with the remaining seven. The inability to interview all the novice teachers face-to-face is one of the limitations of this study which I discuss in the conclusion. Nevertheless, interviews were still an effective way to collect a rich amount of data.

#### **4.2.2.2 Observations**

In this study, observations were used together with some interviews. Observations, as an approach to reality, are considered a powerful tool for gaining insights into situations in social science (Lichtman, 2006). They can provide researchers with opportunities to gather 'live' data from 'live' situations rather than merely secondhand data (Patton, 2002). Through the mutual echo and complement of interview and observation results, problems of validity and reliability can be

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mitigated to a certain extent (Cohen et al., 2000).

In this study, there were two kinds of observations: of training courses in the first stage in the training centre in China, and of classes in the UK in the second and third stages of the study. Both helped to support and check the interview data.

In these observations I did not seek to manipulate the situations or subjects, either in the training centre in China or the classes in the UK. My aim was to let the elements of the situation speak for themselves (Cohen et al., 2000). Therefore, semistructured observations were chosen in order to gather data on an agenda of issues in a less predetermined manner (Cohen et al., 2000). That is, I did not know what I might find in advance and what would appear in the situation. I had a rough outline of the research topics in each stage, but I was less clear about what I would discover.

I needed to get permission from the participants' workplaces, and the teachers and the students were asked to consent to be observed. Due to the time and distance limitations mentioned above, I observed five teachers' classes (20 hours in total).

#### **4.4.2.3 Documents**

Collecting and analysing documents related to the research context complements other data-collection methods. Gathering information from documents was also an important step in the first stage of this study. In this stage, when the participants were being trained, I analysed two training guides. The purpose of the analysis of documents was to explore how culture and IC were represented in guiding documents, as these ideas might influence the CI teachers' preservice training and also their perspectives on IC.

The next section presents the design of the data collection procedures.

### **4.3 The Data Collection Procedures**

The data collection in this study lasted for around a year. This section introduces

the whole process, including the interview protocol design, the pilot study, access to the field, information on the participants, and the formal procedure.

### 4.3.1 The Interview Protocol

Clearly, the interviews were the most important data collection tool in this research. Following Kvale and Brinkmann (2008) and Taylor et al. (2015), an interview protocol (or interview guide) – a list of ideas or guidelines – was used to ensure I explored the key topics with all the participants.

After reviewing the literature related to this study, presented in chapter 3, I summarised some relevant related topics: the concepts of culture and IC; and the objectives, contents, and methods of integrating IC in Chinese language teaching. Therefore, I produced interview protocols referring to these key aspects. As the second and third rounds of interviews took place after the participants had started working in the UK, two other topics were added to the protocol: their descriptions of their teaching in practice and their reflections on the experience.

**Table 3** *The Interview Arrangement in the Three Stages*

STAGE	LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS	DURATION	FOCI OF INTERVIEWS
STAGE ONE (AFTER THE TRAINING COURSE)	Training centre in China	3 Trainers	30-40 mins	(Planned) teaching aims; Teaching content; Teaching methods
		14 Trainees	40-60 mins	
STAGE TWO (3 MONTHS AFTER STARTING	UK	12 Teachers	40-60 mins	Teaching aims; Teaching contents; Teaching methods;

<b>WORK)</b>				Impressions of the experience and reflections
<b>STAGE THREE (LAST MONTH IN THE UK)</b>	UK	12 Teacher s	40-60 mins	Teaching aims; Teaching contents; Teaching methods; Impressions of the experience and reflections

As Table 3 shows, four interview protocols were needed in the three stages of data collection. In the first stage (predeparture stage in China), there were separate interviews with the trainers and trainees, and the remaining interview protocols were for the CI teachers (who were the trainees in the first stage) (see Appendices E, F, G, and H). The protocols contained some guiding questions to help me conduct the interviews. As the interviews were semistructured, these questions represented an outline rather than lists of questions, with the order and content being changeable. I followed these protocols in the interviews but gave the participants a great deal of flexibility. In order to ensure the smooth progress of the data collection, I piloted the protocols.

#### **4.3.2 The Pilot Study**

A pilot study is undertaken in preparation for the main study. There were two reasons for piloting. First, I lacked interview experience in qualitative research so conducting a pilot study was a good chance to practise. Second, the pilot enabled me to check my protocol before the formal fieldwork. I could obtain replies to my interview questions and revise them if that turned out to be necessary.

I piloted the interviews with five CI teachers. The five participants were recruited

from the CIs I knew previously. I sent teachers messages to invite them to join the pilot study and five replied. The interview procedure for the pilot study was basically consistent with that planned for the main study. However, as my main research was a year-long, follow-up study and many questions in the second and third rounds of interviews were repeated from the first round, the pilot could not be exactly the same. Therefore, I piloted the interview protocols for the first two rounds. Table 4 provides profiles of the five pilot teachers.

**Table 4** *Profiles of the Participants in the Pilot Study*

<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN CI</b>	<b>WORKING EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND</b>
<b>T1</b>	F	3 years	Spain/ UK	TCSOL
<b>T2</b>	F	2 years	Spain	TCSOL
<b>T3</b>	F	8 months	UK	TCSOL
<b>T4</b>	F	8 months	UK	TCSOL
<b>T5</b>	F	8 months	UK	TCSOL

As Table 4 shows, T1 and T2 were experienced teachers and the three others were new teachers. They had not attended the training group in Beijing, but they had all undergone preservice training and worked for CIs, so they were the closest to my participants. Another reason for inviting them was that they were all postgraduates who had majored in Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Language (TCSOL) and might have done their own research connected to intercultural studies so their comments and critiques would help me to revise the guiding questions for the interviews. The interviews were conducted through Wechat (the most popular messaging app in China) as the teachers lived in different cities and countries.

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As the main aim of the pilot was to check the effectiveness of the questions, I analysed the pilot data using thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) (see section 4.4). Many themes emerged, such as their views on China, daily life, and cultural comparisons. I did not analyse these topics in depth because the purpose of the pilot was mainly to help me familiarise myself with developing semistructured interview protocols, establishing and undertaking a method of analysis, and preparing probing questions for the main study. After completing the interviews, I continued to discuss the questions I had asked the teachers with them so I could improve my probing questions and ensure that I had really understood what the teachers wanted to communicate.

After the pilot, I made some modifications and reconstructed some questions. The next section presents the changes I made and the reasons for them.

Some revisions were needed to improve the interviews and realise my research purposes. Table 5 presents the issues arising from the pilot study and the resulting changes.

**Table 5** *Changes Resulting from the Pilot Study*

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<b>Issues</b>	<b>Changes implemented</b>
<b>Interview questions</b>	<p>Word changes</p> <p>More reformulations of the questions with similar meaning prepared</p>
<b>Interview skills</b>	<p>Build a close relationship and trust</p> <p>Avoid influencing the respondents with my own opinions</p> <p>Use examples or visual aids to stimulate the interviewees</p>

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The first change was to the wording of the interview questions. First, as discussed in the literature review (chapter 3), many of the concepts in this study, such as IC

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and ICC, are complicated. 跨文化交际 (intercultural communication) in Chinese can easily be confused with 交际能力 (communicative competence) and 跨文化比较 (cross-cultural comparison), and these terms can easily confuse the participants and cause problems. For example, when I asked: “Do you think IC is important in Chinese language learning?” two participants talked about how to improve their communicative skills with Chinese people, and one participant got stuck trying to recall information about IC in her textbook and this difficulty limited her thinking. The interview questions needed to collect perceptions rather than to be a knowledge-based test. Consequently, besides IC, I added ‘culture and communication’ (文化和交际), which is used in the official documents and the preservice training (this idea is discussed later in chapter 5), to broaden the participants’ thinking and keep them engaged in the interviews.

Second, the participants pointed out that, although open-ended questions leave space, it is not very easy to find a starting point. For example, three participants considered the question “How do you define culture?” to be “big” and abstract and asked me which aspect of culture I wanted them to talk about. The interview questions should be simple and straightforward and not so complicated to answer that the interviewees cannot find a starting point. I changed the way of asking, for example, asking them to use three words to describe ‘Chinese culture’ first and then let them explain how their ideas about culture were formed.

I also needed to make some adjustments to my interview skills. One of my flaws was that when the participant expressed opinions which contrasted with my thinking, I tended to interrupt them or guide them to my thinking. As Taylor et al. (2015) state, interviewing should be an equal conversation, not trying to get the answer the researcher wants. Therefore, I needed to remind myself to be more neutral and limit the sharing of my thoughts with the participants during the interviews, and instead, listen to their ideas. I could provide clear, sufficient information about the research and briefly tell them about my own past experiences of being a CI teacher in the introduction to the interview but not talk a lot about myself, as my aim was to probe

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the participants' opinions.

Third, I also learned how to deal with 'I can't remember.' During the interviews, I encouraged the participants to provide examples to support their arguments, but sometimes they could not think of specific examples. One participant said "I cannot clearly remember the details" three or four times during the interview. To solve this problem, I realised I could provide the participants with examples. For example, I could ask if they had had to deal with the Taiwan issue or students' stereotypes to stimulate their memories rather than restraining them by asking them for examples. In addition, visual aids can trigger the interviewees' memories. Once, when I asked a participant about her experience of teaching IC, she took out the textbook she was using. This reminded me that the title of each lesson might help recall the memory of classroom teaching.

Last, as Gillham (2005) stated, the flow of narrative response questions needs to be facilitated to ensure a connection between questions. This meant I should pay attention to the sequence of probing questions. When I asked about experiences that had made an impression, if the answer recounted a positive experience, I could continue by asking: "Which aspects do you think you did well at that time", instead of skipping to another question in a rigid manner, such as about the difficulty in teaching.

Another interesting thing I found happened during the interviews is that one participant's answers, when asked for instance about her role in the CI programme, were rather 'formal,' quite like a paragraph from *China Daily* or government documents, such as "My duty is to devote myself to China's great strategy of peaceful development." This type of response may be caused by inadequate trust between the researcher and the participants, and they might worry about the confidentiality of the study and try not to give 'wrong' answers. As this point is related to the relationship between the interviewee and the researcher, it will be discussed later in section 4.7.

To sum up, by piloting the interview protocols, a great deal of useful information was

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obtained to improve them and my interview skills. After the pilot study, I began to prepare for the formal interviews. The next section will explain how I started my observations of CI training.

### **4.3.3 Access to the Field**

In its three phases this study involved two settings: the training centre in China and CIs in the UK. Gaining access to the participants was fundamental for the study but, as Flick (2002) points out, gaining access to fields, institutions, and people can be a long difficult process. Although I had been a CI teacher in Spain in 2014, this did not mean I was an insider in the 'volunteer language teacher programme.' My access was not smooth because the CI training centres are not open to the public. It took two weeks to negotiate on the phone with a member of the CI staff and explain my research topic and aims to him. He promised that, if I got permission from the training centre, he would not interfere with my study. With the help of a professor from my previous university, I contacted the head of the training centre I wanted to observe. We discussed my research, and then I went back home to wait for the reply. Fortunately, I finally got access to the training classes after 2 weeks, although the long negotiation made me miss part of the training courses (mostly the introduction and warm-up activities).

The first-stage observations were conducted in the training centre in August 2018. A member of the staff (I have given her the pseudonym of Li) at the training centre was assigned to take care of me. According to the management regulations, I needed to contact Li if there was a class I wanted to observe. Then she would ask the trainers for permission and then arrange a seat for me. Otherwise, I was not able to go into the classroom. With Li's help, I observed nine lectures from week 2 to week 4. Each lecture lasted around 2 hours (two-lesson period). One problem with the observation arrangement was that ahead of the observations only the trainers themselves knew the content of the lessons and I was not provided with a lesson plan. Therefore, some lectures were irrelevant to teaching culture and IC. For example, 'teaching techniques' only showed the participants how to use

PowerPoint. All I could do was try to observe as many courses as possible.

#### 4.3.4 Participants Recruitment and the Sample

My attendance at the training centre was not only for observations but also to find participants for my study. In the first stage, two groups of participants were recruited: three trainers and 14 trainees from the CI predeparture training programme at the training centre in July 2018. Identification of the research participants used snowball sampling and was based on their interest and willingness to take part in the study.

My requirement for the trainers was that they had to have taught courses related to culture and IC. I approached the trainers to check the possibility of involving them in my study and three of them agreed to be interviewed. The three trainers each gave 2-hour lectures in the training centre which I observed.

**Table 6** *Profiles of the Trainer Participants*

<b>NUM BER</b>	<b>NAME OF CLASS</b>	<b>DURATION OF CLASS</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>CULTURE TEACHING CONTENT</b>
<b>1</b>	Methods of teaching culture (文化教学的方法)	2 hours	Experienced teacher	Teaching methods related to culture and examples
<b>2</b>	Chinese character teaching (汉字教学)	2 hours	Professor	Chinese characters and culture

3	Cultural and intercultural factors in teaching language elements (语言要素教学中的文化因素)	2 hours	Professor	The concepts of culture, communication, and IC in teaching; content and methods of Chinese culture teaching
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The recruitment of trainee participants was mainly done through snowballing (or chain sampling) based on the existing participants' recommendations of potential participants (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015) because the trainees lived and studied together and they could introduce me to potential participants because they knew a wealth of information about each other. Although there were more than a hundred trainees in this training centre, I did not know any of them. I decided to ask Li for help as she knew the trainers and trainees better than I did. After I had explained the study and discussed some of its potential outcomes, she was willing to help and introduced me to three trainees who could be interested in my study. Among these trainees, one girl was very helpful and engaged in snowballing, for example, posting information on my study in her WeChat group with the trainees. She even motivated her friends to volunteer as participants. With her help, some trainees contact me to express their willingness to join this study.

The first criteria for selecting participants were that they would teach in CIs in the UK and that they had no experience of teaching in other countries, that is, that they were "novice" teachers. At the beginning, 17 trainees contacted me and showed interest in my study but two who had experience teaching in other countries were excluded. The next criterion was to find 'information-rich cases' (Patton, 2002). My sample size was small as the aim of the study was to obtain deep and thick

descriptions of the lived experiences of the CI teachers and to make sense of these teachers' thinking about culture and IC in their teaching. I hoped the participants could share various information and so I tried to recruit participants with diverse characteristics, such as different majors, genders, and home towns. Last, the participants needed to be willing to take part in the three stages of the study and to keep in contact with me for a year. Recruiting participants who had acquaintances taking part might encourage them to continue participating in the study. After contacting all the trainees who knew me through snowballing and had an interest in my study, the 14 participants were decided on.

When they arrived in the UK, one more criterion was added regarding their jobs in the CIs in the UK. I only needed participants doing teaching work rather than administration. As a result, two of them were excluded and one did not want to continue for personal reasons. Thus, 12 participants continued in the two rounds of interviews during the year. Profiles of the final participants are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7 Profiles of the Trainee Participants (CI Teachers in the Next Two Stages)**

NUMBER	DEGREE	MAJOR	TEACHING EXPERIENCE (INTERNSHIP)	GENDER	WORKPLACE	CLASS OBSERVATION
1	Postgraduate	TCSOL	Yes	F	CI	Yes
2	Postgraduate	TCSOL	Yes	F	CI	Yes
3	Postgraduate	TCSOL	Yes	F	CI	Yes
4	Graduate	TCSOL	No	F	CI	Yes
5	Graduate	English literature	No	F	CI and CC	No

6	Postgraduate	TCSOL	Yes	F	CI and CC	No
7	Postgraduate	Chinese culture and literature	No	M	CI and CC	Yes
8	Postgraduate	TCSOL	Yes	F	CC	No
9	Graduate	Chinese culture and literature	No	M	CC	No
10	Postgraduate	TCSOL	Yes	F	CC	No
11	Postgraduate	TCSOL	Yes	F	CC	No
12	Postgraduate	TCSOL	Yes	F	CC	No

As the table shows, most of the participants were postgraduate students majoring in TCSOL and most had some internship teaching experience in their universities. Two had studied Chinese culture and literature and one English literature. These majors were classified as 'other related majors' in the volunteer language teacher programme. Although they had no experience of teaching a foreign language, their experiences of studying languages might help them in their teaching. Something that could not be avoided was that the participants were female with only two exceptions. In fact, the majority of new teachers in CIs worldwide are female (Li, 2013). From my observations in the training centre, there were around a hundred trainees but just around 15 were male. However, male teachers' opinions should not be ignored so I managed to recruit two male trainees.

After the participants were recruited, I started the formal interviews. The details are presented in the next section.

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### **4.3.5 The Formal Interview Procedure**

In the first stage, the interviews took place in Beijing and lasted for over a week. The face-to-face interviews were held in an empty classroom on the campus. They each lasted around 50 minutes. The interviews were digitally recorded and then the digital data was uploaded to my computer. The process consisted of three steps.

Step 1: Preparation before the interviews. The day before the interviews, I sent the participants an information sheet and an informed consent form (Seidman, 2006). This process allowed them to find out about their role, the task, and the research in advance. The information sheet also told them how to contact me if there were any problems.

Step 2: Conducting the interviews. When the participant arrived, I first introduced myself and my research and then answered any questions they had. After that, the participant signed the consent form. In the interviews I basically followed the protocol and asked the questions as indicated in section 4.1.1. The probing questions varied according to the participants' replies and were used to elicit more descriptive accounts.

Step 3: Data treatment. I transcribed all the interviews to familiarise myself with the data. I also marked pauses, fillers, laughter, and voice volume to capture nuances in the narratives. This paralinguage helped me understand the participants' feelings and helped my interpretation in the analysis phase (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

I used the data collection methods discussed in section 4.3 and followed the steps above, to obtain the data: texts of the documents and transcribed texts from three rounds of interviews of the participant. Then I moved to the data analysis.

## **4.4 Data Analysis**

In this section I explain how I analysed the qualitative data using documentary analysis and thematic analysis.

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In the first stage, I used an interpretive approach to analyse the documents, since I wanted to analyse not only the contents of documents but also intercultural dimensions embedded in them. Drawing on Byram's ICC model and interculturality theory, I analysed how IC was presented in the two main guideline documents in TCSOL: the International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education (ICCLE, 国际汉语教学通用课程大纲) and The Standards for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Language (TCSOL Standards, 国际汉语教师标准). I compared the objectives in the documents with the notion of ICC and identified similarities and differences between them. This comparison led to the analysis of the development of and problems with the intercultural dimension in Chinese language education at the policy level.

This study adopts semi-structured observation. Semi-structured observations can gather data on issues in a less pre-determined manner (Cohen, 2000). That is, the researcher does not necessarily know what may be found in advance. In my study, I had a rough framework of research issues which may be addressed in each stage, but it was less clear which items in this framework would emerge. For my observations of the pre-service training classes, the framework for the observations was to find out what the trainers said in their lectures in terms of teaching content and what the teaching aims and methods of teaching culture and IC were. In the second and third stages, the observations focused on the Chinese teachers' performances in CI classrooms. While I could also discover the participants' understandings of teaching IC and their impressions of their experiences from the interviews with them, I could also draw on the observation data to check or challenge their statements and supplement them with more details. During the observations of CI classes, I mainly paid attention to the lesson content related to IC teaching and noted the teachers' related teaching activity, such as their use of teaching materials, the arrangement of teaching activities and the interaction between teachers and students. The data from the two rounds of observations, backed up with the interview data, allowed me to answer the research question of how the Chinese teachers transformed their understanding into practice. In the

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event, as the observations were not carried out as expected and their quality was limited (see section 4.3.3), the observation data were mainly used as auxiliary data. If a teacher's statements were inconsistent with the observations, I refer to the observations; if the two are basically the same, I mainly use the interview as the original data.

Thematic analysis (TA) was used to analyse the transcribed texts from the interviews – the main data in this study. TA is an effective approach to investigate people's views, opinions, knowledge, experiences, and values in a set of qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method was chosen for two reasons. First, the analytical method should be driven by the research questions and research focus. TA can be used to address “a wide range of research questions, from those about people's experiences or understandings to those about the representation and construction of particular phenomena in particular contexts” (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p. 120); thus, TA was deemed suitable to answer the research questions about Chinese teachers' experiences and understanding of teaching culture and IC in CI classes. Second, according to Braun and Clarke (2012), TA can use a combination of both inductive and deductive approaches to generate initial codes because it is “impossible [for the approach] to be purely inductive as we always bring something to the data when we analyse it” (p. 58). TA allowed me to approach a large data set more easily by summarising the key features of the data by chunking them into meaningful patterns and constructed themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The next section describes the thematic analysis process following Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines.

The first step was familiarising myself with the data. After transcribing the interviews, I read the transcripts repeatedly until I was fully familiar with them. The second step was to generate the initial codes. A code is “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). I first coded the data using an inductive approach and then with a deductive approach. The inductive (data driven/bottom-up) approach helped me familiarise myself with the data and find as many relevant

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codes as possible. The codes emerged from the words repeated in several places, the statements the participants explicitly said were important, and statements similar to ones in previous literature reviews. The codes from the first round of coding were based on meanings contained within the raw data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). After several rounds of inductive coding, a deductive approach (theory-driven/top-down) was used. A deductive approach involves coming to the data with a preconceived and expected framework based on theory or existing knowledge (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The deductive approach helped me code the data with my research questions and key theories in mind. The codes from the inductive approach were reviewed and the codes related to my research questions were kept in a code list. Using the two approaches together allowed me to exploit the advantages of both approaches. The scope of the inductive (data-driven) approach is broader and the deductive (theory-driven) approach is more focused on the research questions.

As an example of my coding process, some participants mentioned the image of China they wanted to convey to their students. Then I asked: "What kind of image?" they talked about different aspects of China such as diversity, rapid development, history, and friendship. I categorised these answers under different codes and put other similar descriptions under the same code. For example, data about the invention of Alipay was categorised under the rapid development code.

The initial coding process produced a long code list. Using NVivo 11, I highlighted the relevant segments so they could be tracked back from the codes quickly. I then selected and sorted the various codes into groups and made some candidate themes. The themes encompassed groups of codes that shared and described a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data. For example, I organised codes related to Chinese culture that showed openness and inclusiveness under the 'openness' theme. The process of identifying themes involved reviewing, modifying, and developing candidate themes to ascertain whether the coded data supported them and reflected the meaning in the data accurately (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Afterwards, I started to consider how the themes were interrelated and organised

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them to form a thematic network or mind map (Seidman, 2006). This network or map needed to be formulated and organised, so that it could later be presented in my findings chapters. In most cases, either some themes and codes were merged with other themes and codes or I had to delete them to make the arguments more focused on answering the research questions. During my writing, I worked back and forth on my data and themes to connect them and create a logical and coherent story. The data in the Findings chapter were presented bilingually in Chinese and English so that Chinese-speaking readers can understand the exact meaning of the quotations and their contexts (Gonzalez & Lincoln, 2006). I will further address language matters in the section on researching multilingually.

To sum up, the data analysis process turned out to be demanding and complex. However, eventually the answers to the research questions gradually became clear.

#### **4.5 Ethical Considerations**

In this study, I treated ethical considerations very seriously because I maintained a 1-year relationship with the participants and I had promised to ensure them autonomy and benefits with minimal risks. This section presents the code of ethics I followed and the actions I took before, during, and after the data collection to protect my participants' rights.

First of all, approval from the ethics advisory committee in the School of Education, Durham University had to be obtained before conducting the research. I then designed information sheets and consent forms for the participants (see Appendices C and D). The information sheets included the ethics code. First, the participants were assured of their anonymity and that their answers would not harm them but would contribute to the research findings. Second, the participants had to be able to answer the questions voluntarily without any power relationship making them consent to do so. Therefore, they had the right to refuse to answer any questions or engage in any part of the research if they felt uncomfortable about it.

The information sheets and consent forms were given to all the participating

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organisations (such as the training centre and CIs) and all the participants (the directors of the training centre, the headmasters of the CIs, the trainers, and the trainees who would later become CI teachers) before the data collection. The two sheets also explained the nature of the research, the time involved, the methods to be used, and the use of the findings. Thus, the participants were fully informed about the research and their expected roles. At the end of the consent form, I expressed my sincere thanks to all the participants and also my wish to establish a rapport with them so we could discuss any problems, and I provided my email so they could contact me. The information sheets for the participants were emailed to them in advance so they had enough time to read them carefully.

On the day of the interviews, each participant was given two hard copies of the information sheet and consent form (in English and Chinese), one to be signed and returned to the researcher and the other for them to keep. I used language that was easy to understand to explain the ethics code again. A clear explanation of the research purpose was provided and the participants were informed that the research would be carried out by a doctoral student in an education department of a UK university as an individual and not in any official capacity. They were advised that they should not feel threatened or challenged by the researcher. As for the content of the interview questions, when designing them, I paid attention to avoiding asking for private or intrusive information which might make the respondents feel uneasy about responding.

All the stored data was password protected in my private computer and on a storage device. All the stored data was accessible by me and my supervisors and the different versions (in Chinese and English) were kept on my password protected computer during the study. All personal data was concealed during and after the research. The data will be destroyed 3 years after the study is completed, and the findings only made public behind a shield of anonymity to offer the participants protection of their confidentiality (Flick, 2002).

In presenting the data in the final thesis, I used pseudonyms for the participants to ensure that they were anonymous and untraceable by future readers. Ensuring

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anonymity is an important task (Bryman, 2012; Flick, 2002).

#### **4.6 Researching Multilingually**

As I am a Chinese native speaker conducting research in China and the UK, more than one language was involved in this study. The working language in the interviews was Chinese while the language used to write up the study was English. All the data was gathered and coded in Chinese and then translated into English when writing up the findings chapters.

Chinese was adopted as the interview language to make the participants feel comfortable about articulating their perceptions in a detailed manner. Given the complex and rich nature of their perspectives on culture and teaching, the participants' mother tongue (Mandarin Chinese) was the desirable interviewing language. This approach is supported by Twinn's (1997) statement that using the participants' own language is vital to gain insight and understanding of lived experiences. Moreover, even though they could speak English very fluently, a fear of being evaluated and judged on their language proficiency (Hennink, 2008) might have influenced my participants' preference to speak their mother tongue. The participants' responses to my question "Which language are you going to use in the interviews?" match this idea. All the participants chose to use Mandarin Chinese.

When the data collection was completed, all the data was transcribed and analysed in Chinese. As different language systems carry different cultural meanings, translating data into another language can distort the original perspectives underpinning the data (Chen, 2009). Researchers who share the participants' language may avoid many translation problems around getting access to primary data sources (Irvine, et al., 2013). Chinese was chosen because it was easier for me to use my mother tongue to think and question the meanings and links among the data. I could use it to write analytic memos and create a theoretical map of the codes. Using Mandarin minimised the risk of misinterpretation, loss of meaning, and limiting the quality of the analysis (Van Nes et al., 2010)

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Taking into account the authenticity of the participants' accounts and transparency of translation (Holmes et al., 2013), I decided to present their accounts in Chinese and English. I presented the participants' quotations in Chinese first, and then translated them into English. I translated the selected quotations from Chinese into English using 'literal' translation. Literal translation may involve some conversational fillers (such as 'em'), incomplete sentences, and repetitions, but this does not mean that the text is inconvenient for readers to read. Instead, it reflects the natural impression of the interviewees. Due to the untranslatability of some Chinese expressions, translation from Chinese to English will inevitably involve a certain degree of meaning loss (Cui, 2012). Further editing may cause damage to the credibility of the data. Therefore, the data was literally translated and needed no further editing unless sometimes long and irrelevant narratives could be omitted. I also had to be careful to choose the vocabulary during the translating and examine the relevant language contexts in which words associated with culture or emotion were embedded.

My research also involved reviewing a lot of Chinese literature on intercultural concepts and research. There were two main reasons for referring to Chinese literature. The first was that, as a culturally diverse international student, I can access literature in both Chinese and English and so I was able to draw upon my diverse linguistic and cultural knowledge for theorising my study (Singh, 2009). Consequently, I can approach research problems from new, multiple perspectives (Qi et al., 2021). Second, referring to studies in China helped me to understand the situatedness of my research in my own cultural or national contexts (Choy et al., 2017). As my participants received education and training in China, the studies of Chinese scholars on teaching culture and IC in foreign language education (including Chinese language education) may have influenced their views. The knowledge of such studies in China could therefore help me to understand and analyse the participants' perspectives.

In summary, multilingual research practice required strong awareness and purposefulness concerning the roles of languages in the whole process of the study

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including data collection, analysis and presentation, and literature reviewing.

## **4.7 Reflexivity**

Byrd Clark and Dervin (2014) discusses how the notion of reflexivity can come to mean different things to different people. For researchers, reflexivity accounts for the values, beliefs, and knowledge that researchers bring to the context they study (Ganassin, 2017). Interpretation of a situation is not objective, as the way a researcher represents data is also influenced by subjectivity, complex values, ideologies, and experience (Holliday, 2011). I needed to be aware of these influences at every stage of the research and to maintain constant questioning and scepticism.

### **4.7.1 The Researcher's Position**

As a researcher, I needed to examine the relationship between my research subjects and myself, and the power I had at the research site. I had worked as a CI teacher (the same job the participants in my study do) in Spain for 1 year and had worked for a university in Denmark for a year. I majored in TCSOL for 7 years in China. I acknowledged my background when researching in this field. These personal experiences empowered me as an insider when asserting my authority to produce an exploration of the participants' experience in this study. However, I also needed to be aware of research bias rooted in my position when I collected and made sense of the data and wrote up the thesis. The following paragraphs discuss my reflexive experiences in the data collection and interpretation processes.

Two factors in my positioning might influence the participants in the process of data collection: the researcher's power and position as an insider. The result of researcher bias can take the form of searching for, finding, and confirming only what the researcher expects to find. In this research, I noticed that I might affect the participants' views because of 'power' in this field. I am older than the participants, and my doctoral student and 'researcher' position in a UK university might have made some participants perceive me as superior to them at the beginning. All the

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interview questions came from me and were driven by my research. It might seem that the researcher directed and controlled the topics of conversation (Holmes, 2014). However, the aim of this study was to listen to and collect perspectives from the participants to find their own 'realities' on the topic of integrating IC in Chinese teaching. I always noticed my power in this relationship with the participants. I tried to avoid a controlling approach during the interviews and opted for a conversational interview climate. And I needed to encourage the participant to express their ideas as much as possible. As for the second factor, previous studies show that sharing a linguistic and ethnic background with participants can play a significant role in gaining access and trust, as researchers can be instantly viewed as 'insiders' (see e.g., Mau et al., 2009), but it was still difficult for me to claim to be a complete 'insider' in the context of this study, because the context I have experienced is different to the participants' and I did not belong to their inner circle of friends and classmates. I needed to build a rapport to get closer to them to get access to in-depth discussions in the interviews.

In the data analysis phase, reflexivity is also critical. When coding and theming the data, I needed to remain sensitive to my position (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Holmes, 2014). In the data collection process, the 'insider' position and close relationship with the participants helped me to understand their circumstances. However, the analysis process highlighted the researcher's position as an 'outsider' needing to overcome personal lens so as to understand the area researched from the participants' perspective. A researcher's understanding cannot replace the participants' thinking, and I needed to remain careful not to lead the research towards 'what I want to see' but towards how the participants' insights enriched and complemented the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Overall, I needed to address the issue of relationship between researcher and participants during the process of the whole study because the research findings were produced by the participants and the researcher together (Holmes, 2014). In the process of this qualitative study, building rapport with the participant was a crucial dimension of the reflexivity issues in my study. I therefore discuss how I built

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rapport with my participants next.

#### **4.7.2 Rapport and Trust Building**

As the results of a study are not only created by the researcher but also the researched, a close relationship between the participants and researcher is crucial. On the one hand, a close relationship can help lessen the influence of power. As Holmes (2014) points out, a warm interpersonal relationship between researchers and researched may be beneficial to building a friendly atmosphere of trust to shorten the power distance and improve participants' engagement in the study. On the other hand, whether the researcher can hear the 'true voice' of the participants largely depends on a collaborative relationship between the participants and the researcher. Therefore, it is crucial to build trust in qualitative research like this study to encourage the participants to share candid thinking (Holmes, 2014).

I made many efforts to build trust with the participants both outside and inside the study. First, I built interpersonal relationships alongside the research. I kept a close relationship with the participants because of many shared commonalities at the first meeting, for example, our educational backgrounds. Three of the participants even came from my previous university. Afterwards, considering that my research was not short-term and the data collection could last a year, I kept in contact with all the participants after the first interviews and enabled them to contact me with any problems either about research or life in the UK.

Second, I used various techniques to build rapport and trust between us in the interview process. First, I shared my experience in the CI with the participants before the interviews. According to Seidman (2006, p. 89), sharing experience in a frank and personal way may encourage participants to continue reconstructing their own experience in terms of a more inner voice than before. Next, as was mentioned in the interviews section, while maintaining a mainly formal approach, face-to-face interviews were selected to offer friendly visual cues such as smiling and maintaining good eye contact, which are frequently associated with gaining and maintaining rapport (Bryman, 2012). In addition, selecting an appropriate field site

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can be related to the quality of the interview. It was helpful to conduct the interviews in a less intrusive and threatening environment. Finally, I let the participants know that their rights were priorities during the overall study. As I wrote in the research ethics section, the participants were told their privacy was protected and all answers were welcome during the interviews.

Overall, reflexivity on the researcher's part and reciprocity between the researcher and the participants were important in this period (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In my study, the rapport with the participants helped me explore and find out about the participants' inner thinking. As a result, most of the participants seemed open and relaxed as we talked. I remember one participant mentioned a political problem in the first interview, and followed with laughter and then: "Can I say that?" The second time, in a similar situation, she only checked "Did I say too much?" To some extent, this shows that the trust between us had increased, and her sense of dependency on me had weakened. The next section presents the criteria for judging the research.

#### **4.8 Criteria for Judging this Research: Trustworthiness**

I used a qualitative approach in the interviews and observations in this study. Trustworthiness is an essential criterion to ensure the study's findings are credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This section explains how the study sought to ensure trustworthiness.

The first criterion is credibility (internal validity), which means that the descriptions or interpretations of experiences in the research are recognisable and accurate from the perspective of the participants who shared their experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, the participants' narratives can truly reflect their inner thoughts through the use of their mother tongue and confirmation. As I did the interviews in Chinese the participants were able to describe their intercultural experience in detail. In addition, I did not translate my data into English when I analysed them. Rather, I used literal translation when presenting the excerpts from the participants in this thesis because any other form of translation from Chinese to English would inevitably involve a certain degree of meaning loss, and further editing may cause

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damage to the credibility of the data (Cui, 2012).

Second, transferability (external validity) refers to how applicable the findings are when they are transferred to a different context. Detailed description should be provided so that other researchers can make decisions about the degree to which the findings are relevant to their settings (Hays & Singh, 2011). A similar situation, similar population, and similar phenomena can provide more chance of it being possible to transfer the findings of this study to other contexts. I used thick description to present the process of how I accessed the research field, the features of organisations, and purposive and snowball sampling to enhance the transferability of this research (Patton, 2002). For example, the participants in this study have similar educational backgrounds – they are postgraduates (see the sample section). This information could be referred to when researching the educational level of Chinese teachers.

Dependability is concerned with demonstrating that research findings are consistent and replicable in the context, using the same methods and participants who have the similar backgrounds (Shenton, 2004). Dependability is analogous to reliability, which means how much other researchers agree with the decisions made in the research. However, as this study is a qualitative study of human experiences and perspectives, the ‘realities’ built by the participants are subjective. Therefore, obtaining the same results in other research is not easy. I have provided detailed explanations of each choice I made, such as the choice of research methods, the sample, and the analytical methods, to address the concern around dependability (Shenton, 2004). These explanations should show that the findings are grounded in the data and attributable to the participants’ experiences.

Confirmability equates to objectivity in quantitative research (Shenton, 2004). The researcher needs to ensure that the work’s findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that detailed description of research methods can help readers decide how far the data and findings emerged from it can be accepted. In order to ensure confirmability, I

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introduced my theory paradigm – social constructionism – and the qualitative approach I adopted at the beginning of this chapter. I then gave a step-by-step methodological description along with the reasoning and decision-making processes related to my choice of particular methods in different stages of my study. Finally, I used participants' checking during the interviews to make sure I understood their meaning correctly as a way to reduce the effect of researcher bias.

Overall, I tried to constantly reflect on my position and give accurate and considered descriptions of the methodology to address issues of trustworthiness in this study.

#### **4.9 Summary**

This methodology chapter started with a discussion of social constructionism and the interpretive qualitative approach in order to present the overarching theoretical perspectives of the study. These underpinning theories allowed me to investigate and understand the shifting and negotiable nature of the participants' perspectives on teaching culture and IC in Chinese classes. Semistructured interviews and observations were adopted in different stages of the study to address the research purposes. Section 4.3 described the data collection procedure which consisted of the preparation of interview protocols, the pilot study, sampling, and the formal process of data collection. The use of thematic analysis (section 4.4) was explained before discussing ethical considerations (section 4.5). The multilingual dimension of the study and how language choices were informed were discussed in section 4.6 and was followed by consideration of the importance of reflexivity (section 4.7) and the trustworthiness of this study (section 4.8).

Education research is a serious process as it aims to provide trustworthy information about educational problems, issues, and topics (Gay & Airasian, 2003). Here, I have endeavoured to explain my research approach and processes to evidence rigorous data collection and a careful process of analysis that reflects Chinese teachers' perspectives on integrating IC in Chinese language teaching. The next three chapters focus on the findings that emerged from the data and on how they answer the study's research question.

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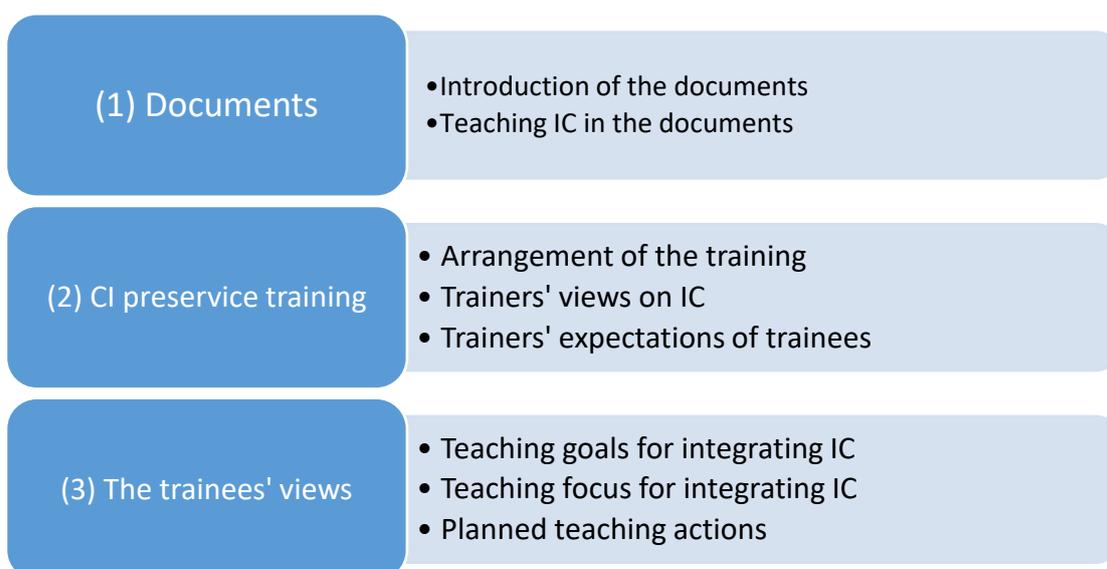
## Chapter 5

### The Participants' Perceptions of Intercultural Communication (IC) in Chinese Teaching in the Preparation Stage

This thesis has three findings chapters which address the study's three guiding research questions. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 respectively follow the timeline of this study and so they are arranged in line with (1) the participants' understanding of culture and IC in Chinese language teaching before coming to the UK; (2) their experience in the CIs; and, (3) their reflection before leaving the UK.

Chapter 5 set out to address the research questions related to the preparation stage of CI teachers. These ask: (1) How is IC presented in documents related to Chinese language education in CIs? (2) How does a CI preservice training in China prepare trainees to integrate IC in their lessons? (3) How do the trainees understand IC in Chinese teaching before working in CIs in the UK? The teachers' answers to these questions were used to explore both their perspectives on teaching IC and how these perspectives are constructed in the preparation stage in China. The structure of this chapter is as follows:

**Figure 4** *The Structure of Chapter 5*



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Section 5.1 presents and analyses the publicly available documents for Chinese language teaching, which are identified as the guide documents on the CIs' websites. Section 5.2 deals with the accounts of the three trainers who took charge of the courses related to culture and IC, while section 5.3 provides the accounts of 12 trainees who were to become CI teachers after this training. The purpose of examining the documents was to ascertain the ways in which culture and IC are envisaged in the official discourses of CIs at the aspirational level. As there may be a gap between the aspirations set out in the documents and the implementation agencies (which here means the CI), section 5.2 explores to what extent these elements are implemented in training courses through observing training courses and conducting interviews with the trainers. The views from trainees are analysed in section 5.3 to understand their plan for integration of IC in future teaching in CIs. The final section of the chapter summarises the findings on the preparation stage.

Having outlined the content of this chapter, I next discuss the findings from the documents.

## **5.1 IC in Guiding Documents of Chinese Language Education**

Drawing on Byram's ICC model and interculturality theory discussed in the literature review, this section identified what and analysed how IC was presented in the two main guideline documents that relate to teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages (TCSOL) and which refer to CI Chinese teachers' training. Those documents are the International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education (ICCLE, 国际汉语教学通用课程大纲) and the Standards for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Language (TCSOL Standards, 国际汉语教师标准).

### **5.1.1 The International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education (ICCLE)**

In 2008, the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) created the ICCLE. This guideline document's purpose is to organise and describe the objectives and contents for a standardised worldwide Chinese language curriculum. The ICCLE aims to provide a reference curriculum for planning, a framework for

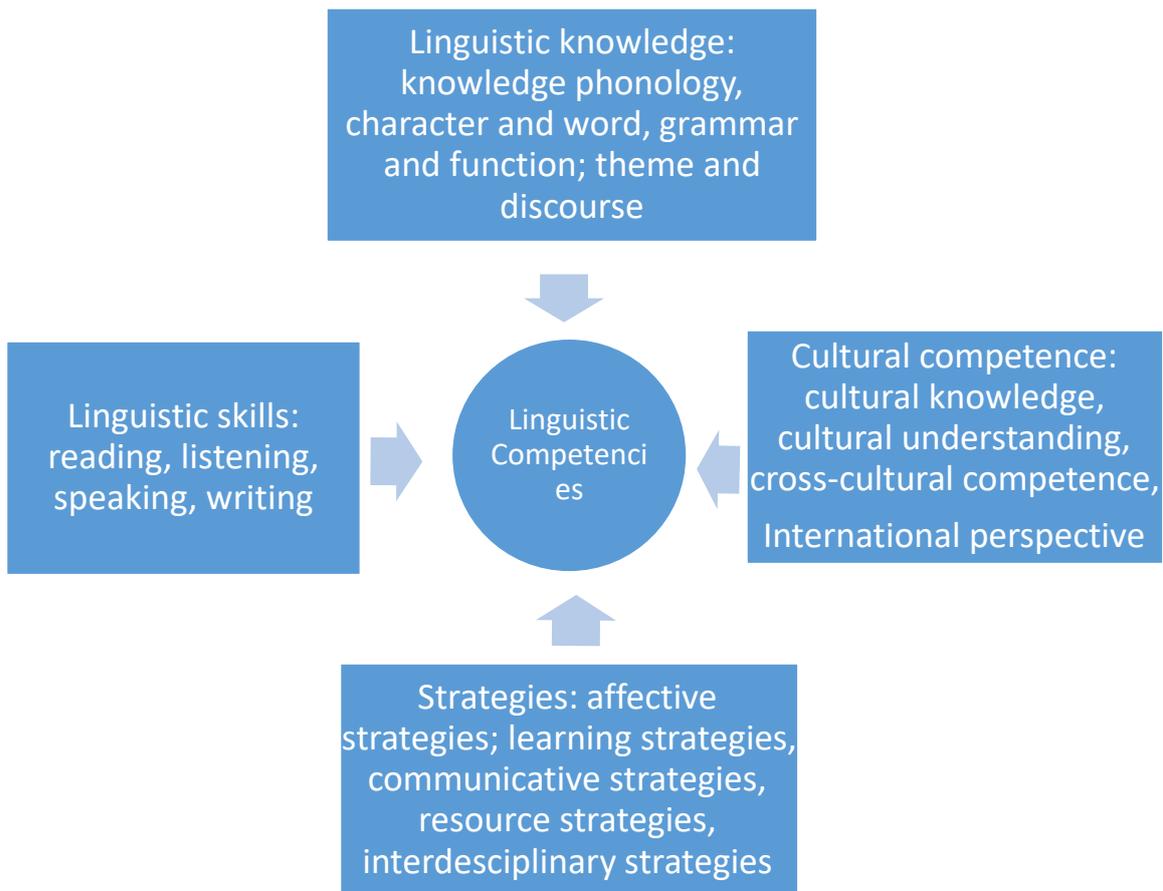
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assessing language competence, and a basis for resource development to cater to a variety of Chinese language learners. It acts as a comprehensive reference for all Chinese language teachers and institutes, including CIs.

In ICCLE, the aims of Chinese language education is to help learners to improve “their Chinese language knowledge and skills, while reinforce their learning objectives, fostering their self-learning and cooperation abilities, develop effective learning strategies, and achieving the ultimate goal of comprehensive mastery of linguistic competencies” (ICCLE, 2014, p. 5). "Linguistic competence" is composed of four components in the ICCLE: "linguistic knowledge", "linguistic skills", "strategies" and, "cultural competence." The first two components, "linguistic knowledge" and "linguistic skills" function as basis for using a language; the "strategies" are important conditions through which learners increase their efficiency and learn independently; and, the final part "cultural competence" is about the learners' appropriate use of a language in a multicultural society. This aspect is closely linked to IC and I will discuss it in in next section. This framework aims not only at and emphasises linguistic skills, but also guides Chinese teaching to gradually attach importance to developing learners' comprehensive competence.

The four components of linguistic competencies are exemplified in the following figure.

**Figure 5** *The Structure of the ICCLE*



In addition, the ICCLE document breaks down the content and objectives of the Chinese course into six levels in order to be consistent with the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK, the Chinese proficiency test, 汉语水平考试). This test is the standardised test of Mandarin Chinese language proficiency for nonnative speakers such as foreign students and overseas Chinese. The HSK therefore approximates to the English TOEFL. The test is also administered by the Hanban, and different levels require different vocabulary, Chinese characters, grammar, culture, and other types of knowledge. The minimum requirement for international students in Chinese universities is generally HSK 4, so level 4 and above are certificated as the advanced level.

### 5.1.2 IC in the ICCLE

The IC elements in the ICCLE are mainly reflected in the “cultural competence” component. In this component, Chinese language teachers are expected to

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“expand both the content and scope of cultural knowledge as well as the horizons of the learner, help them realize the position and functions of Chinese culture in world culture and its contributions to world culture” (ICCLE, p. 6). In particular, the “cultural competence” incorporates four components in the ICCLE: cultural knowledge, cultural understandings, cross-cultural competence, and international perspective.

In order to clarify how teaching of culture and IC is required and presented in the “cultural competence” part of the ICCLE, I have taken the content of “cultural competence” in level 6 as example for analysis, because level 6 is the ultimate goal of Chinese language teaching, and the content regarding culture and IC is the most comprehensive there. There are four aspects in this section: knowledge, intercultural attitude and awareness, intercultural skills, international perspectives, and these compare with Byram’s theory of ICC.

There is an official English version of the ICCLE, and so I have included the content for the “cultural competence” at level 6 in Appendix A.

#### **5.1.2.1 Knowledge**

The first competent of “cultural competence” in the ICCLE is “cultural knowledge.” It involves big C culture and small c culture. Big C culture means “a set of facts and statistics relating to the arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs of a target speech society” (Lee, 2009, p. 78). The ICCLE expects learners to understand the “economy, culture, science and education locally and in China” and to learn the “literature, arts, ideology in China.” These elements are similar to “national memories” and “the principal markers in one’s own country and in the interlocutors” in Byram’s model (1997). As for small c culture which involves learned and shared patterns of values, beliefs, and behaviours (Bennett, 1997), the ICCLE also describes many cultural behaviours and customs that the learners need to know about, such as “interpersonal relationships” and “social etiquette” in Chinese culture, which is in line with the “processes of social interaction in the interlocutor’s country” in Byram’s model (1997). It is worth noting that there are detailed

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categories of cultural knowledge in the ICCLE. The reason for this may be due to the long-term development of the idea of “cultural introduction” in TCSOL which focuses on the category of culture and selection of proper content for Chinese teaching (see section 3.3.3).

The ICCLE also shows its own features in combination with the development of Chinese language teaching and Chinese background. The first feature is its wording. The ICCLE uses “achievement and contribution” instead of “national memory” as found in Byram’s model. For example: “learners will learn the history of Chinese language and culture and their contributions to cultures around the world.” The emphasis on the “contributions” of Chinese language and culture accords with the aim of “helping learners realize the position and functions of Chinese culture in world culture and its contributions to world culture” found in the introductory page of the document. The use of “contributions” implies the message that Chinese culture, as does any other culture, enriches world culture. Its starting point is based on cultural pluralism in that every culture contributes to world culture. However, this expression may lead to the risk of ethnocentrism through emphasis on the “contribution” of China.

Secondly, as regards globalisation and Chinese immigrants, the ICCLE also specifically mentions overseas Chinese communities so that “learners can know about the Chinese people’s business founding history and their contributions to the local society.” On the one hand, the situation of Chinese overseas reflects the diversity of Chinese communities and culture; and on the other hand, can bring students closer to Chinese culture. Although some students may not have the opportunity to come to China physically, there is a very high possibility of communication with local Chinese businesses such as Chinese supermarkets and Chinese restaurants. This type of communication provides opportunities for learners to experience and understand intercultural communication in the local context.

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Overall, whereas the knowledge content in the ICCLE places more focus on specific cultural knowledge of Chinese culture and local culture, Byram (1997) asserts that it is important, but not sufficient, to have declarative knowledge about facts, figures, and traditions. Thus, the knowledge element in Byram's model has three major components: knowledge of specific culture the students are learning; knowledge about how other people are likely to perceive different cultures; and, knowledge of social processes. The latter two aspects of knowledge are not mentioned under "cultural knowledge" in the ICCLE.

However, the focus on specific cultural knowledge does not mean that the ICCLE advocates an essentialist view of culture. Some expressions in the ICCLE, such as "compare Chinese culture and cultures of other countries," may also carry a potential danger of taking a nationalist and essentialist stance in that it equates the concept of 'culture' with that of 'nation' (Kramersch, 2013). However, the diversity and dynamic characteristics of "Chinese culture" are emphasised in the "cultural understanding" component. For example, the ICCLE mentions that "learners can see and handle cultural phenomena in light of their development and changes," and that "they will understand cultural multiplicity, dynamics and permeability." As cultures are dynamic and constantly change over time as a result of interactions with and influences from other cultures (Holliday, 2011). The "multiplicity and permeability" within Chinese culture highlighted in the ICCLE reflects a similar meaning, which represents a social constructionist view of culture.

### **5.1.2.2 Intercultural Attitude and Awareness**

There is no single component named "intercultural attitude" in the ICCLE. Zu (2017) once stated that the ICCLE ignored the attitude dimension in ICC. However, the content of intercultural attitude and awareness can be found in the notions of "cultural understanding" and "cross-cultural competence" in the ICCLE.

Byram (1997) refers to intercultural attitude as "curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and about their own". In this sense, some of the content in the ICCLE corresponds to Byram's ICC model. First, the "cultural

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understanding” component includes statements such as “learners will gradually develop an interest in Chinese culture.” This statement indicates the expectation for learners to have curiosity about and openness to Chinese culture and a willingness to seek out and take up opportunities to engage with Chinese culture. Second, the “cultural understanding” component states that Chinese language learners are expected to “tolerate, understand and learn from other cultures” in. Here “tolerate” does not mean “accept or endure (someone or something unpleasant or disliked)” but rather to “allow the existence, occurrence, or practice of without interference” in Oxford Dictionary. Considering its context within the ICCLE document, the purpose of tolerate is to understand and learn, not to compromise blindly.

When learners are open towards, cautious about, and tolerant of other people’s value and behaviours, the original values and behaviours embedded in their mind can create reactions (Byram et al., 2002), thus learners need to evaluate critically their own and others’ views and behaviours from different perspectives and to question some “taken-for-granted reality.” In Byram’s model this ability to evaluate is termed critical cultural awareness (CCA). One item in the “cultural understanding” component in the ICCLE states that the “learner will use the models of critical thinking in the learning and understanding of Chinese culture and local culture”. However, “critical thinking” here, without explanation, does not explicitly encourage learners to question their own culture and Chinese culture. It is therefore hard to identify its relationship with CCA.

Besides, the ICCLE’s “cross-cultural competence” expects learners to “view the custom and ideology of their own and Chinese culture more objectively by making comparisons between Chinese culture and the local culture.” The use of “objective” represents a readiness to interrogate the value systems and assumptions behind one’s own cultural value and practices (Baker, 2012). Learners are expected to rethink their original ideas from more objective perspectives after comparing different cultures (Byram, 1997; Baker, 2012). This expectation has something in common with the description of CCA which suggests that “intercultural speakers” should “take up the other’s perspective in order to contrast and compare with the

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dominant evaluation in their own society, and be aware of their own ideological perspectives and values” (Byram, 1997, p. 53).

Overall, although the ICCLE document involves intercultural attitude and CCA to some extent, these are not separated into independent components and the discussion of these contents is insufficient.

### **5.1.2.3 Intercultural Skills**

In the ICCLE’s “cross-cultural competence” component the skills of comparing are presented first. For example, “learners should be able to recognise “the commonalities and differences between Chinese culture and the culture of the countries where they live.” Taking into consideration the extent of difference between one’s own culture and the other culture is regarded as an important premise for interpreting and relating to different cultures (Byram, 1997). However, when I compared intercultural communication and cross-cultural communication in the literature review (see section 3.2.1) I indicated that such cultural contrasting between different national cultures may carry the risk of falling into nationalist and essentialist positions. An IC teaching also cares interactions between cultures.

The “learners’ role in bridging Chinese culture and the local culture.” was also noticed. According to the ICCLE, Chinese language learners are expected to “make [a] positive contribution to the mutual understanding, mutual learning, mutual promotion, mutual appreciation and mutual improvement between local culture and Chinese culture”. This skill accords with the skill of interaction proposed by Byram (1997). The foreign language learner can become an intercultural speaker who has the skills to “understand and present the values, beliefs, and behaviors of their own and other groups;” learners can “negotiate agreement on places of conflict and acceptance of differences”, and even “establish common criteria of evaluation of beliefs and events” (ICCLE). Both the ICCLE and Byram’s model stressed the importance of foreign language learners developing the skill of mediating between cultures. In this way, learners can help others who may lack intercultural competence to achieve mutual understanding and mutual satisfaction in

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intercultural communication. However, Byram (1997) also points out that the learners can identify and estimate misunderstandings and dysfunctions in an intercultural situation and so are able to decide on and carry out proper solutions so as to achieve mediation between values and behaviours from different cultures. While the ICCLE only emphasises the ultimate goal of achieving mutual understanding, how to deal with misunderstandings and dysfunctions, and how to play the role of a bridge between cultures is not addressed in the ICCLE.

In the ICCLE, some content related to intercultural skills appears in the component of "international perspectives". In Byram's model, the skill of interpreting is defined as the "ability to interpret a document or event from another culture". Similarly in the section on "international perspectives" in the ICCLE, Chinese language learners are expected to "develop their ability to interpret the pluralistic phenomena in the world from different perspectives through learning Chinese language and culture." Hence, understanding and interpreting new ideas during Chinese learning can make contribution to expanding the learners' interpretative frameworks beyond mono-cultural ethnocentric views, and the knowledge and skills acquired in the process can be used later for similar cultural explorations that learners were not directly prepared for (Byram, 1997, p. 20).

Overall, intercultural skills are mainly mentioned in terms of "cross-cultural competence" in the ICCLE. While the importance of intercultural skills such as comparing, relating, and interaction, are emphasised in the ICCLE, the document does not clearly point out how learners achieve or apply them, nor does it mention how to deal with possible cultural conflicts and misunderstandings in intercultural encounters.

#### **5.1.2.4 Global Citizenship**

The ICCLE's final "cultural competence" component is "international perspective." In addition to the intercultural skills mentioned in the sections above, this component involves "global citizenship." As Lázár (2020) noted, more recent documents often emphasise the intercultural dimension of teaching within or together with global

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competence development. For example, UNESCO (2014) states that global citizenship education aims to help “learners to engage and assume active roles, both locally and globally, to face and resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world” (p.15). The ICCLE also incorporates the ideals of global citizenship in Chinese language education. For example, it states that “learners will develop a sense of global citizenship” and that they “will develop their social service abilities and get very clear about the responsibilities they should shoulder in the world today.” The “global citizenship” element in the ICCLE is in line with China’s national proposal for “world harmony” and viewing the world as “a community with a shared future” (Chen,2017). It also has something in common with the concept of “intercultural citizenship” proposed by Byram in 2008. Byram’s concept of “intercultural citizenship” was based on the ICC model, and so can be seen as a parallel to the term “global citizenship” (Wagner & Byram, 2017). Byram states that in order to compensate for the lack of attention to intercultural aspects in civic education foreign language teachers need to make efforts to promote the formation of communities beyond the boundaries of the state. They should cultivate learners’ abilities to become intercultural citizens who can engage a multicultural and international communities that include more than one set of cultural values, beliefs, and practices rather than focus only on ‘community’ as local, regional, national (Byram, 2014; Wagner & Byram, 2017). Similarly, the ICCLE also involves an aim to encourage Chinese language learners to engage with activities of world society. However, the realisation of these concepts needs to include an educational dimension across the whole curriculum. Although language education can make a contribution to it, problems remain around its practical implementation. It is uncertain whether Chinese language learners can have the sense of “global citizenship” required in the ICCLE through Chinese learning. Nevertheless, such a statement in the ICCLE may represent an attitude that Chinese language education can make a contribution to global citizenship education.

In summary, the ICCLE document reflects an intercultural orientation in Chinese teaching because it mentions the importance of knowledge, intercultural attitude,

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critical awareness, and some intercultural skills. However, the ICCLE has its own shortcomings in terms of guiding intercultural teaching in Chinese classes. First, although it shows the emphasis on cultural dynamism and diversity, there are still some statements on comparison of national cultures, such as “differences between Chinese culture and the culture of other countries”. Secondly, the content related to intercultural attitude and awareness is limited, and the specific content and implementation methods are not fully described. Third, compared with Byram’s model, the ICCLE involves the skills of comparing and relating and partially involves the skills of interpreting and interaction. There is however no systematic description of these skills, nor does the document address how to develop such skills. Meanwhile, the ICCLE makes little mention of the “skills of exploration.” Learners’ spontaneous exploration and recognition is therefore not really noted in the ICCLE document. Fourth, the English version of the ICCLE does not use the word “intercultural,” but uses “cross-cultural competence” and “cultural competence”. With the emergence of new theories such as communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) and intercultural competence (Byram, 1997), the frequency of using “cultural competence” (Seelye, 1977) has greatly reduced in English studies in recent decades. As discussed in literature review (section 3.2.3), although this situation may be due to the late development of IC in Chinese teaching, using such terms may lead readers of the documents to ignore the intercultural elements contained in the ICCLE. Overall, although the ICCLE does show an intercultural orientation in Chinese language teaching to a certain extent, the ICCLE’s emphasis is on knowledge of culture means that the descriptions of intercultural attitude and skills are not as clear there as in Byram’s ICC model.

### **5.1.3 The Standards for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Language (the TCSOL Standards)**

In order to train a mass of qualified Chinese language teachers to satisfy the ever-growing demand for Chinese language learning in other countries, the TCSOL Standards was designed to provide an overall framework for the knowledge, abilities, and skills required of teachers of Chinese language education. The TCSOL

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Standards (Standards) serves as the basis for the education, assessment, and accreditation of teachers. The document covers five main areas: the basics in Chinese language teaching; Chinese teaching methodology; instructional design and classroom management; Chinese culture and intercultural communication; and, professional ethics and disciplinary development. This document provides the necessary references and criteria for TCSOL teachers' training.

#### **5.1.4 IC in the TCSOL Standards**

Among the five areas, the fourth “culture and communication” (see Appendix B) is closely related to teaching IC in this study. This part deals with the ability that teachers should have to carry out IC teaching in Chinese classes. There are four specific standards in this aspect: teachers are required to be familiar with Chinese culture and contemporary China; to demonstrate the ability to explain and introduce Chinese culture to their students; to demonstrate intercultural awareness and communicative competence; and, to be able to solve problems in intercultural communication.

In this document, the requirements for Chinese teachers can be divided into three aspects: knowledge, attitude, and abilities.

In terms of knowledge, there are two main requirements for teachers: “teachers should be familiar with the basic knowledge of Chinese culture;” “teachers should be familiar with basic knowledge about contemporary China;” and “teachers should demonstrate their understanding of major cultures in the world.” These statements reflect that the Standards pays high attention to teachers' knowledge of Chinese culture and other cultures. This emphasis on knowledge accords with the requirements for learners in the ICCLC document. It reflects a link between teacher knowledge and student knowledge acquisition because teachers need to have sufficient knowledge of culture to successfully carry out that teaching (Zhao, 2017). However, words like “major cultures” and “basic knowledge” without explanation here may cause confusion for readers.

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A special issue in the Standards' knowledge component is that it separates "artistic performance" out as an independent substandard; that is, "teachers should be familiar with Chinese artistic performances and be able to apply them in their teaching." Teaching Chinese artistic performances covers introducing some Chinese arts and guiding the learner to experience the basic element of it, such as paper-cutting. There may be two reasons for such attention: first, compared with knowledge collection, artistic performances are easy to train in an intensive and unified way on a large scale and they can be put to practical use quickly (Zhao, 2017). The other reason relates to the benefits of experiential learning. Chen (2016) believes that experiential activities are easy to organise and implement in language classes because it is also easy to mobilise students' engagement. However, these performances are typical markers of Chinese culture belonging to big C culture, which means teaching about them carries a risk of creating or deepening stereotypes about China in learners' minds.

As for awareness in intercultural communication, "teachers should respect different cultures and have multicultural awareness." Multicultural awareness here can be understood as employing "respect" and "suspending disbelief" in Byram's model (1997) to avoid arbitrary judgement on other cultures in classes.

This document also mentioned the skills in intercultural communication, but the content within it is not similar to the intercultural skills in Byram's ICC model. On the one hand the Standards emphasis the linguistic competence of "using English or the native language of the target country for communication." On the other hand, it states that intercultural communication involves an ability to "solve problems in intercultural communication." This statement encompasses a relatively broad concept. It can be interpreted as a teacher's own adaptability to the local cultures or to carry out suitable teaching to help students overcome various difficulties caused by cultural differences in Chinese classes. As there is no more explanation in the Standards, it is hard to link them with the intercultural skills in Byram's ICC.

The Standards simply outline the competence teachers need for intercultural

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communication, and still put emphasis on mastering knowledge of Chinese culture and local culture without giving systematic and detailed description of each component of ICC as is found in Byram's ICC model.

The analysis of the two documents reveals that most of the content on culture and IC in the documents can be described as "intercultural", which indicates an increasing awareness of the importance of IC in Chinese language teaching. This conclusion echoes several previous studies concerning the importance of introducing IC into Chinese language education that were examined in chapter 3 (e.g., Bi, 2009; Zu, 2003, 2015; Shi, 2020). However, there are some problems in them when it comes to integrating IC into Chinese teaching. First, the two documents focus more on knowledge, and the explanations of awareness and skills are not as exhaustive as in Byram's model. This kind of brevity may be due to the fact that these two documents are schematisation documents, covering all aspects of Chinese teaching, rather than focusing on IC teaching. Therefore, they do not explain or specify the contents of culture and IC in detail. Secondly, both documents are relatively old. The Standards' most recent revision was done in 2015 and the ICCLE's in 2014. Thus, they do not refer to many of the new achievements of research, such as the concept of interculturality. Finally, the documents do not recommend teaching methods to help achieve the expected learning outcomes they set. There is little information and guidance on how to design curricula that are conducive to the development of learners' ICC.

Above, I have discussed how IC is presented in the ICCLE and the Standards and the problems that exist. Next, section 5.2 analyses, from the perspective of the trainers, whether and to what extent the intercultural component in these two documents is applied to the training of CI teachers.

## **5.2 The IC in Chinese Teaching in the Training Programme**

As I explained the setting of the study, the participants in my research are novice teachers who underwent intensive preservice training before going to the UK. This section's main purpose is to explore the training these novice teachers received in

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terms of culture and IC in Chinese teaching under the frame of the documents analysed in section 5.1.

### 5.2.1 The Arrangement of the Training Programme

The main goal of the preservice training is to foster a team of CI teachers capable of realising the teaching goals in the ICCLE and to fulfil the requirements in the TCSOL Standards (2015). Based on the five components in the TCSOL Standards, this 5-week training for CI teachers (trainees) covers the following five areas: knowledge of the linguistics of Chinese; teaching methods; Chinese culture and communication; teaching observation and practice; and, foreign-related education. Below, the contents of the courses are presented according to the teacher training outline and my field observations:

Table 8 *The Preservice Training Courses and their Main Content*

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<b>Training modules</b>	<b>Main content</b>
<b>Knowledge of linguistics of modern Chinese language</b>	Phonetics, Chinese characters, vocabulary, grammar
<b>Chinese Culture and communication</b>	Contemporary Chinese national conditions and Chinese culture; intercultural communication; traditional skills
<b>Teaching methods</b>	Course design; Introduction of teaching materials; modern technology in teaching; language elements and Chinese teaching; classroom management; teaching activity design...
<b>Class observation and mock teaching</b>	Mock teaching; presentation of cultural topics

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**Foreign-related education**

English; Volunteer responsibility and the CI programme; foreign policy; Counter-terrorism exercises; First aid

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As Shulman (1987) pointed out, a holistic teacher education curriculum is constructed of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge, which means how to use theoretical teaching pedagogies to teach. The content of the training for CI teachers showed that it followed these three categories. The first two aspects about linguistics and culture represent the content knowledge in TCSOL. The third aspect was about the pedagogy that teachers can use in classes. The fourth aspect is the pedagogical content knowledge needed to transfer the theories into practices. The final aspect is unique to the course in the context of the CI and involves three concerns: first, as a foreign staff member, it is necessary to have basic knowledge of terrorist defence and first aid. Secondly, although Chinese students have been learning English since junior high school, English language training courses is to practice English and learn local custom to help the teachers to overcome the barrier in life. Thirdly, the introduction of professional ethics as volunteer teachers was part of an effort to cultivate the teachers' dedication and sense of responsibility when working in a CI.

Among the five modules of preservice training, the "Culture and Communication" module is closely related to the focus of my research. The trainee teachers spend more than 20 hours on this module, which follows a specific arrangement as set out in table below:

**Table 9** *The Courses Related to culture and IC*

Name of Courses	Content and Length
<b>Chinese Culture (6 hours)</b>	A Brief History of China (2 hours); Chinese Literature (3 hours); Chinese Human Geography (1 hour)
<b>Chinese and Foreign Cultural Exchanges (3 hours)</b>	History of Chinese and Foreign Cultural Exchanges (2 hours); Impact of Chinese Culture on the World (1 hour)
<b>National Conditions in Contemporary China (3 hours)</b>	Territory and Resources, Ethnicity and Religion (1 hour); Political System, Economy (1 hour); Chinese Language Education, Education (1 hour)
<b>Intercultural Communication (6 hours)</b>	Culture in Chinese Language Teaching (2 hours); Cultural Adaptation (2 hours); Intercultural Communication (2 hours)
<b>Culture in Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (6 hours)</b>	PPT Production and Mock Presentation of Cultural Topics (2 hours); Culture Teaching Introduction (2 hours); Teaching Methods (2 hours)

As Table 9 shows, the arrangement of training courses related to IC in Chinese teaching shares some similar characteristics with the contents in the Standards (see section 5.1.4). First, more time is assigned to Chinese cultural knowledge; history-based knowledge especially also accounts for a large proportion of the course. For example, the Chinese and foreign cultural exchange course includes the history of international connections such as Zheng He's voyages to the West and missionaries in the late Qing Dynasty rather than introducing achievements in the modern age. Secondly, the proportion of theoretical knowledge is relatively large. For instance, the course on intercultural communication in the training consists of theory review and case analysis, with the former taking more than half of the time, as noted in my observation. Thirdly, besides the content in this table, 24 to 30 hours

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are assigned to traditional skills such as calligraphy, Chinese painting or tai chi, as required in the Standards. That is to say, in terms of timeshare, these cultural skills account for a larger proportion than for all of the courses in the table put together. Overall, the course arrangement in the training basically complies with the requirements of the Standards documents.

However, in the actual training process, the training work is undertaken by different training centres in China. Each training centre employs its own trainers, and each trainer has autonomy to expand the teaching content using their knowledge and experience. How trainers manage their teaching in the training is explored in the next section.

## **5.2.2 Trainers' Views Regarding Integrating IC in Chinese Teaching**

I chose a training centre in Beijing and interviewed three trainers here. Based on interviews with three trainers, this section explores the trainers' views on integrating IC into Chinese classes. The three interviewees teach three different courses: culture in Chinese language teaching (trainer 1, T1), vocabulary teaching and culture (trainer 2, T2), and culture teaching methods (trainer 3, T3). Three main themes are discussed in this section.

### **5.2.2.1 *The Trainers' View on Teaching Chinese Artistic Performances***

Chinese artistic performance is especially mentioned in the Standards and the course, as noted in section 5.2.1, and takes up a lot of teaching time in the training. The interviewed trainers admitted the propaganda function of the artistic performance and cultural activities, but they also proposed their worries about the effect they brought in teaching:

我们的文化活动现在是五花八门的，目的是什么？你想达到的效果是什么？为什么要教这个教那个，这些没有人研究。好像觉得什么热闹就教什么，这是有问题的，这要和你的教学目标相联系。T1

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Our cultural activities are also varied now, what is the purpose? Or the effect you want to achieve? Why do you teach this or teach that? No one has studied these questions. It seems to feel like just teaching something bustling and lively, but it is problematic. It should be about your teaching goals. T1

T1 believes that many cultural activities or teaching related to Chinese artistic performance lack teaching objectives. With China's growing influence, the world can see China-related cultural activities such as representative folk activities in Chinatowns more often now. However, the Chinese artistic performances in Chinese language education are different from those activities. Teaching needs to be carried out for particular teaching objectives rather than only for an atmosphere of excitement. Some teachers may combine these performance with experiential learning and regard experiential learning as a kind of hands-on approach. Yet, experiential learning needs to be combined with reflection (Kolb, 1984). Reflection is key to turning experience into learning (Liddicoat et al, 2013; Berwick & Whalley, 2000). In the absence of teaching objectives, reflection in teaching is difficult to achieve. T1 points out that Chinese language and cultural teaching are designed to develop students' ICC, but the connection between Chinese artistic performance and ICC is clearly not well built as yet.

T3 commented on these Chinese artistic performances in current Chinese education and teacher training from the learners' perspective saying:

现在很多中文课都是教他们书法，各种中国剪纸和中国绘画。这种东西是很传统的，在英国也是广为人知的，很有名。当想到中国，英国人就会想到这些东西。我个人觉得培训中也不用一直教老师这些东西，因为他们都知道这些东西了。在你的课堂上有很多机会你可以把各种有趣的文化带给他们。即使你觉得你只是在教数字或者什么别的。 T3

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Now many teachers in Chinese classes teach students calligraphy, paper-cut or Chinese painting. This kind of thing is very traditional, and is also well known in the UK. When you think of China, the British think of these things. Personally, I don't think they have to teach teachers these things all the time in training, because they all know them. There are many opportunities in a language class where you can bring different and interesting cultures to students, even if you think you're just teaching counting numbers or something. T3

From the students' point of view, T3 states some typical Chinese artistic performances have already been seen as symbols of Chinese culture and the language teachers' thinking should be expanded. A Chinese teacher should provide more less-known knowledge to students. The language teaching should not be treated as an exhibition of typical Chinese crafts but should cover more interesting topics about life in China, especially some contents that learners can hardly observe for themselves, for example, the hand gestures Chinese people use for counting numbers.

Overall, though cultural artistic performances occupied a large part of time in the training, some trainers believe that the roles these artistic performances play in language classes from an intercultural perspective are limited.

#### **5.2.2.2 The Trainers' view on Big C and Little C Culture in Classes**

Regarding the big C culture and little c culture mentioned in the ICCLE document analysed in section 5.1, the interviewed trainers focused more on the little c culture in Chinese teaching. T1 pointed out:

文化不是你一定要拿出一个高大上的主题来讲，才叫文化。比如，你教语言课，如何请假？英国的假条和中文的肯定是不一样的，还有包括学校请假的理由也是不一样，在讲这个请假的时候，马上会

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带出中英两国在学校管理的相关文化。 T1

Culture is not something you have to come up with a snobbish theme. For example, if you teach a language lesson on how to ask for leave? The British leave slip is definitely not the same as the Chinese, and the reasons for school leave are also different. Then it can immediately bring out the relevant culture of school management in China and Britain. T1

T1 points out that what she calls snobbish topics have been regarded as worth introducing as content into Chinese classroom teaching for a long time. However, with the development of Chinese teaching research and the summary of experience of previous Chinese teachers, it has been found that culture can penetrate into small daily behaviours and that these can be used as important teaching materials. Teachers now also need to change their old thinking and add more content about little c culture.

T3 also stated the importance of communicative knowledge and cultural norms in real interactions in little c culture:

关于如何相处，如何交际，或者别人对你行为有什么样的期待，学生们应该学这些和生活有关东西。 T3

Students should learn about how to get along, how to communicate, or what other people expect of your behaviour. T3

Similarly, starting with vocabulary teaching, T2 also pointed out that cultural differences and intercultural obstacles appear at a very small language level. As section 3.3 on the relationship of Chinese language and culture noted, the close relationship between these two makes intercultural elements penetrate into the semantics and pragmatics of Chinese. Knowing about these little c cultural elements will therefore help more than knowing about big C culture in daily

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communication.

The trainers also mentioned that an important premise of such teaching is that teachers have a certain understanding of Chinese and British cultural knowledge, which is consistent with the Standards and the ICCLE. T1 mentioned a sentence in her course that said: "You must have a bucket of water first if you want to give someone a glass of water." In other words, teachers should have a solid cultural foundation to ensure that their teaching content is well-founded and to be able to deal with students' questions properly (Zhao, 2017). Thus, an ongoing process whereby "cultural knowledge depends on daily accumulation" is encouraged (T2).

Overall, from the training arrangement, the teaching contents related to big C culture, such as history, literature, and cultural performances, take up a lot of time. But Bennett (1997) pointed out that understanding of values, beliefs, and behaviours (little c culture) of people who are interacting contribute to IC. The interviewed trainers also agreed that more attention should be paid in Chinese language classes to the little c knowledge related to daily life and communication.

### **5.2.2.3 The Goals of Teaching Culture and IC**

The provision of knowledge is no longer the only goal of Chinese teaching, and the trainers spoke of the role of awareness and skills in intercultural communication also. In the course, T1 pointed out that ICC should be involved as one goal of Chinese teaching to help Chinese learners communicate smoothly in an intercultural environment. In addition, T1 mentioned three levels of learning a culture: knowing, understanding, and identification:

就像我们讲语言的时候先讲它的形式结构和表层意义，知道以后就是要深入到后面的原因和文化。作为文化也有三个层面的，第一个你要了解它是什么，（这）是最表层的，之后能够达到理解的程度，升高了一层。然后如果对你这个文化产生喜欢或者认同，这是最高

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一级。 T1

When we learn a language, we first talk about its structure and meaning at the surface level; then we move deeper into the reasons and culture. There are also three levels for learning a culture: the first one is to know what it is. This is the most superficial. Then you can reach the (second) level of understanding. Finally, if you like or identify the value in that culture, this is the highest level.

T1

T1 describes a process with three levels that a language learner may experience when learning a new language and culture. The first level is “knowing”, which means acquiring new cultural information in other cultures. The second level is “understanding”, which means the learners start to understand and interpret explicit and implicit perspectives and values behind cultural phenomenon. The third level is an emotional inclination; they may identify the values in other cultures and a willingness to engage with otherness by following their customs.

However, T1 pointed out that, although some foreign language learners may reach the third level or behaviour like a native speaker, this step is not a must- do for teaching.

但是我们教学不是要把学生培养成有中国文化特质的人。除了华裔的家庭，很多留学生和中国文化没有内在的关系。他们的目的是和中国人打交道...所以我们要重点讲思维方式的差异，你的教学想让学生理解中国的交际规约，思维方式，价值观念，文化心理，行为方式等等这些和跨文化交际障碍有关的东西。 T1

However, our aim is not to train students to equip [themselves] with Chinese cultural characteristics. Except for families of Chinese descent, many international students have no intrinsic relationship

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with Chinese culture. Their purpose is to communicate with the Chinese people ... so the teaching aims letting the students understand Chinese people's communicative conventions, ways of thinking, values, etc., which may interrupt their intercultural communication. T1

Here, T1's comment, which is based on the three levels, reflects two key issues. The first is that culture and IC learning is a process from "knowing" to "understanding." Interpreting and relating skills result from the acknowledgement of knowledge. That is to say, knowledge learning is an indispensable step for learning IC. Second, although some students may produce interests in and love of the culture when they are learning, this is not a necessary goal for Chinese language teachers to set. As Byram (2018) states, an intercultural speaker is a mediator who can deal effectively with intercultural conflicts rather than his or her identification with any social groups. Chinese language teaching in CIs does not need to pursue emotional resonance from the learners. Rather, it should offer a reasonable and panoramic view toward different cultures such as Chinese culture, and the learners' thoughts or conclusions are left to the students themselves rather than given by teachers.

Overall, the views of these trainers indicated that although cultural knowledge is still important, the learners are expected to have the ability to explore and interpret values behind cultural phenomena rather than stop at knowing the cultural information or identifying whatever the teachers provide.

In summary, the trainers I interviewed expressed their own opinions on teaching culture and IC according to their own knowledge and experience. Some of their opinions differed from the arrangement of CI training to some extent. First, as for the Chinese artistic performances which take up a large amount of time in the training, the interviewed trainers thought these performances should be conducted for intercultural goals rather than just creating an exciting environment. On the premise of lacking goals, it is difficult for teachers to reflect their teaching, and it is easy for them to fall into a fixed teaching pattern. Secondly, the trainers suggest

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that Chinese teachers should focus more on little c culture in Chinese classes as this is more beneficial to daily communication. Thirdly, take cultural knowledge as the starting point, the teachers thought they should encourage learners to explore and understand values behind cultural phenomena.

### **5.2.3 Trainers' Views on Pedagogical Ways of Integrating IC**

The pedagogical practices around particular content such as IC are stipulated in the documents, and most of the practices related to IC in Chinese teaching are taught by the trainers. This section will discuss the trainers' suggestions on teaching actions regarding integrating IC into Chinese teaching.

#### **5.2.3.1 To Avoid Over-generalisation**

The trainers mentioned that when the students first come into contact with Chinese and Chinese culture, teachers can introduce them to some unique cultural phenomena in China to attract them, for example, bargaining, which is rare in the UK. However, merely emphasising difference may lead to the formation of stereotypes; thus, T3 also mentioned the need to prevent this type of misunderstanding by providing comprehensive knowledge:

…讲讨价还价，有的老师没提到的是，不是每个地方都能讨价还价的，这种知识不充分。这样的教学就不是那么合适。我们说孔子的理论，尊重老人或者谦让，可是你到北京地铁去看看，上车的时候大家都是挤来挤去。所以老师应该告诉学生在不同的情况下，会有什么不一样，只告诉一个大的信息是没什么实际用处的。应该讲清楚一些，不是所有人(都一样)。学生也很聪明，他们也会懂。 T3

... as for bargaining, some teachers did not mention that not every place can bargain, the knowledge is inadequate. Such teaching is not so appropriate. We talk about Confucius's theory, respect for the elderly or modesty, but you go to the Beijing metro to see, everyone is crowded

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when getting on the train. Therefore, the teacher should tell the students what will be different in different situations. It is not useful to just tell a big message. It should be made clear, not everyone is the same. The students are also very clever, and they can understand. T3

Taking bargaining as an example, T3 pointed out that teachers may fall into over-generalisation in the process of teaching, which is unfavorable to students' ICC training, because the students' acquired knowledge is not comprehensive, and any inappropriate description is fraught with the danger of generalisation. T3 stated that teachers should emphasise the diversity of individuals and various contexts in which the cultural behaviours happen after the students have acquired basic cognition and so raise the students' awareness of this diversity.

T3 also pointed out the problem of some teachers preferring to choose exotic examples to attract their students' attention:

我见过有的老师很喜欢讲特别奇特的东西，比如说皮蛋这种食物，学生就会以为我去中国就会给我吃奇怪的东西，我很担心这种情况。但是你在中国有很多一样的食材呀，特殊的食物也不是哪都有。T3

I've seen some teachers like to mention very special things such as preserved eggs. Students will think that when they go to China, they will eat strange things. I am very worried about this situation. You have many of the normal ingredients in China, and the not special taste is not everywhere. T3

Students may have little knowledge of China. As one of the sources of information about China, CI teachers should consciously control and adjust their speech and behaviour, not just use cultural differences as gimmicks or as a way to solidify the learners' cultural assumptions. The learners may transfer these extreme cases into generalisation. In addition, there is a risk of putting Chinese culture in a position of truly different culture, which may result in students' focusing on the distance

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between essentialised cultures (Jin & Dervin, 2017).

Overall, the trainers suggest that care should be taken to avoid general and extreme statements in teaching and that teachers should refrain from creating negative results through the use of unsuitable descriptions.

### **5.2.3.2 To Modify the Teacher-Student Relationship**

The second suggestion was about teaching style. The teaching style favoured by many schools across China is the teacher-led approach in which the teacher is an authoritative figure who uses a systematic approach to planning and delivering information-packed lessons to students (Chan & Elliott, 2004). Focusing almost entirely on the teacher, this approach requires few classroom resources and allows for little to no student engagement.

In the field of foreign language teaching, through the introduction of various teaching methods, student-centred communicative teaching methods and task-based teaching methods are applied to a certain extent (Wang, 2017). The trainers in this study did not support teacher-led education in CI classes. As the CI students are no longer Chinese students who are used to the traditional way, the trainers emphasised the change of teaching style to adapt to the local teaching environment:

老师一直一直讲，学生一直听，这样不是很好的一节课，这样，大概十分钟，学生就很无聊。老师要调动他们，协助他们，让课堂变得有意思。让学生感觉到他们是自主地在学习这些语言。 T3

The teachers have been talking and the students have been listening. This is not a good class. In this way, the students are bored in 10 minutes. You have to ask them to investigate and mobilise them to learn autonomously. T3

Another trainer, T1, also pointed to the issue of mobilising students' enthusiasm in classes; but she pointed out that teachers should adjust the teaching style

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according to their own situation rather than simply reversing the traditional teaching approach:

因为在中国和英国合作的几个项目当中，他们最直接的一个反馈信息都是，学生怎么可以坐那么长时间，老师可以在那一直对着黑板讲。其实这种教学模式是我们从小都是习以为常的。可是事实上教育真的这样是不太好的。但是啊，我想我也很难做到变成一个相声不可能的。但我们就可以利用自己的方法让这个课堂有意思。我们要让学生自己发现和学习。 T1

Because in the several projects where China and the UK cooperated, the most direct feedback from the UK side was how [Chinese] students can sit for so long, and the teacher can talk to the blackboard all the time. In fact, this teaching model is what we have been accustomed to since childhood. But in fact, it is really not so good. But it is impossible to turn my class to a talk show. But we can use our own way to make this class interesting and to encourage the students to discover and learn by themselves. T1

This trainer admitted the influence on teachers from their previous educational environment; thus, her suggestion did not completely support adopting another teaching style. Rather, she supported the idea that the teachers should make appropriate adjustments according to their own habits to create a relaxed and pleasant learning environment for students and advocate more participation in a positive atmosphere.

Overall, the trainers mentioned that many Chinese teachers adopt a teacher-led way of teaching currently and noted the problems it brings. This teaching style may be related to the legacy of Confucianism, which emphasises discipline and teacher authority (Chan & Elliott, 2004). In a cultural environment without the influence of

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Confucianism, this kind of teaching may not achieve the expected teaching effect. Therefore, trainers suggest that the teachers adopt a student-led teaching method to some extent in Chinese classes.

### **5.2.3.3 To Consider Students' Situations and Feedback**

The trainers did not want the trainees to use the set teaching pack with all CI classes; rather, they wanted the trainee teachers to adjust their teaching based on the students' situation and the local situation, for example, the learners' age or language level. For instance, T1 took the example of the origin of the Dragon Boat Festival involving the story of the patriotic poet Qu Yuan who jumped into the Milu River after the demise of his nation. She pointed out that one CI teacher received complaints from parents for involving suicide in classes; thus, it was better that the source of the festival was not introduced in children's classes. Whether this suggestion is reasonable is not discussed here, but it implies the trainer's requirement for trainees to respect the local environment and culture and not to blindly start from their own perspective. Similarly, T2 emphasised the language level of students. He used "name" teaching as an example. Chinese surnames are mostly single word names and such simple knowledge can be provided at the beginning. Then a simple intercultural discussion on whether women change their surname can be conducted. However, the cultural implications behind each surname can be introduced to learners with a higher level of understanding.

Both trainers believed that the teaching of IC can enter Chinese teaching at the initial stage, but the decision-making on the extent to which it should be introduced and how it should be taught relied on the professionalism and experience of the teacher to a large extent (Liu, 2012). This lack of professionalism and experience is one of the shortcomings of novice teachers. In this case, T3 makes a suggestion for these inexperienced trainees:

你上几次课就会有一个体会，学生会对什么感兴趣。或者你直接就去问学生的反馈，你喜欢吗？你觉得怎么样？或者另一个方法，你

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告诉他们你要讲什么，问他们的看法。每个老师应该找到他们自己的教学方法。 T3

You will have some experience after several classes, what students will be interested in. Or do you just ask the students for feedback, do you like it? What do you think? Or another way, you tell them what you want to say and ask them what they think. Teachers should find their own teaching methods. T3

In relation to the previous theme of modifying the teacher-student relationship, T3's suggestion was about using students' feedback as a complement to experience. In addition, the seminars on communication with experienced teachers and examples given by every trainer were also designed to help novice teachers to survive in the new and complicated teaching environment and to improve their ability to respond to different teaching situations.

#### **5.2.3.4 *The Use of Private Experience for Dealing with cultural conflicts***

As a CI is a place for intercultural exchanges, teachers also need to know how to deal with cultural conflicts including sensitive issues that appear in their classes. T3 advises novice teachers to express their personal views in addition to other views. For example:

英国的一个班的学生可能来自不同的文化背景，这些学生可能在这个过程中已经学习了怎么处理文化差异，我的经历里，这些敏感问题很少被问到。老师可以从自己的经历来讲，说明那是他们自己的观点，他们也可以说官方的观点，但是要结合自己的想法。 T3

Students in a class in the UK may come from different cultural backgrounds, and they may have learned how to deal with cultural differences in this process, and some sensitive questions are rarely

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asked in my experience. If the teachers meet, they can say their own view, or the official views, but they have to combine your own ideas. T3

The shaping of individual views is influenced by social structure and personal trajectory; thus, everyone's views are not completely the same (Holiday, 2011). As T3 said, teachers can express their own views which come from their own experiences to explain different ideas in classes, as doing so can provide learners with some new perspectives from which to see the same cultural events. As for the sensitive issues related to politics, providing the UK government's official attitude on certain issues was one option, but more trainers supported the idea that teachers can express their feelings from their own experience, instead of giving a unified voice. This solution could however weaken the ideological colour of the teachers' role in CIs to a certain extent, with teacher's personal identity rather than the collective identity being emphasised. Teachers' descriptions of their views and experiences can be used as a reasonable problem-solving method, according to the trainers.

Overall, in order to supplement the lack of pedagogical suggestions in the guidance document, the trainers put forward some suggestions on teaching culture and IC in the training. First, they reminded teachers to avoid expressing over-generalisations, emphasising instead the diversity of individuals and contexts. Secondly, they suggested changing the traditional teaching style to meet the local teaching requirements. The third suggestion is that teachers pay attention to students' feedback and use it to adjust their teaching. Fourth, in the face of sensitive issues, teachers can use personal experience and viewpoints to explain and discuss them. These suggestions show that trainers do not want CI teachers to teach fixed cultural knowledge or adopt fixed teaching modes but to be flexible in new teaching environment.

In summary, section 5.2 investigated how the preservice training prepared CI teachers (trainees) in terms of teaching culture and IC in Chinese classes. Three findings emerged. At first the preservice training for CI teachers is an intensive and

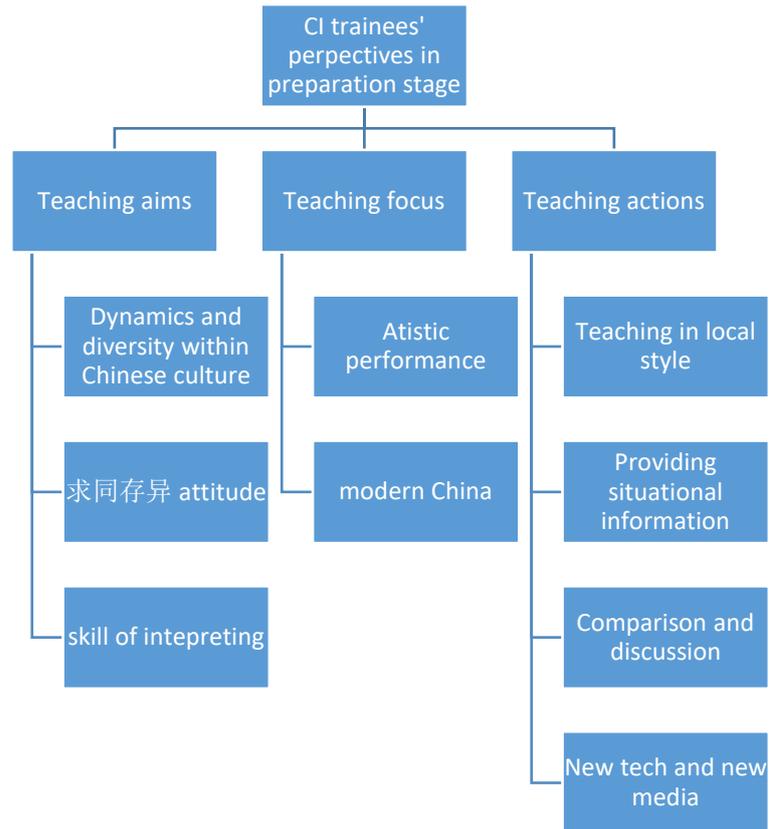
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comprehensive training with a theory-focused, teacher-centred approach due to the limited time and resources available to practise the skills being taught. Judging from the overall course arrangement, a large amount of cultural knowledge and numbers of artistic performances were involved in the training. This training is consistent with the contents of the TCSOL Standards (2015). Second, when the trainers talk about culture and IC in teaching, they pay more attention to small c culture as information about daily life and routines rather than to traditional big C culture. They also mentioned the importance of cultivating learners' intercultural attitude and the ability to interpret cultural meanings in their courses. Third, in terms of specific teaching methods, the trainers also put forward some suggestions on teaching style, teachers' expression, and students' engagement to enrich the content in the documents. They hope that teachers can flexibly carry out teaching according to local conditions instead of adopting a unifying knowledge-transmission approach. These findings indicated an intercultural bent in Chinese language teaching to some extent.

### **5.3 CI Trainees' Understandings Regarding IC in Chinese Teaching**

The trainees are sent to the UK after the preservice training and so the first round of interviews was conducted before they left. I was interested in the perspectives of the trainees about the extent to which they accepted the opinions they had received from the training, and what their opinions on IC in Chinese teaching were at the preparation stage. Section 5.3 investigates these opinions by drawing on the findings on the 12 trainees' perspectives; these have been organised under the following three areas: teaching aims (section 5.3.1), focus (section 5.3.2), and actions (section 5.3.3).

**Figure 6** The structure of trainees' perspectives in section 5.3



### 5.3.1 Trainees' Perspectives on Teaching Aims

The trainees talked about the expectations they had for their students in relation to Chinese culture and IC in their teaching in the UK. Here, three major themes emerged from the data. Their aims were: to build a new image of Chinese culture; to foster “求同存异” (seek common ground while reserving differences) attitudes, and to develop skills to explain cultural products and phenomena that happened in China.

#### 5.3.1.1 Construction of New Images of Chinese Culture: Diversity and Dynamics

Bringing IC into Chinese teaching means admitting the diverse and dynamic characteristics of Chinese culture and realising that the fixed way of thinking of

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China as having a solid image is problematic (Jin & Dervin, 2017). Although the phrase “Chinese culture” has always been linked to a “cultural taxidermy” of the Chinese within narrow perceptions of culture in current Chinese language education (Jin & Dervin, 2017), the findings from the trainees’ opinions in this study refuted this conclusion. Many of the trainees interviewed in this study were aware of this problem and so interpreted Chinese culture from more diverse and dynamic perspectives rather than taking an essentialist approach to culture. From the trainees’ perspectives, introducing a more diverse image of China was seen as an important aim when integrating IC into Chinese teaching.

### ***Diversity in Chinese Culture: Ethnic and Regional Variations***

When talking about the image of China, almost every trainee mentioned introducing “inner diversity” as a way to break the image of China as a monoculture. For example, P11 stated that the impression of China as a multiethnic country should be integrated in teaching.

我觉得就像美国有不同肤色的人，我们国家有不同民族的人，我们讲到中华文化，其实有一个很大的误区，就是我们在宣传中国文化都会说过年包饺子，贴春联什么，其实这都是汉族的，但是少数民族的(也有自己的风俗)，外国人他们并不是很了解。我希望以后在世界上大家想到中国文化，不光是穿着汉服，吃着饺子，穿着红色的，就是有各种各样的，他能说出蒙古族或者藏族，这都是中国文化。就是我更希望这样被认可，而不是一个单一的形象被认可。P11

I think, just like the United States has different races, our country has people of different ethnic groups. When we talk about Chinese culture, there are always misunderstandings, like, we eat dumplings at Chinese New Year. In fact, this is main (customs) for the Han ethnic group, but ethnic minorities (also have their own customs). Foreigners they do not know about this well. I hope that after taking my Chinese classes, when

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they think of Chinese culture, they not only mention eating dumplings, wearing red but a variety. They can know about Mongolian or Tibetan ethnic groups; this is also Chinese culture. I hope China can be recognised in this way rather than a single image. P11

P11 discusses the diversity of Chinese culture from the perspective of multiethnicity. She realised that most of the information the foreign students are given was related to the typical customs and habits of the Han. This approach would lead to the simplification of China's image as being solely of Han ethnicity and ignoring the multiethnic groups. The Chinese government officially recognises 56 ethnicities. However, the Han make up about 92 per cent of the total population and so have become the main image of China around the world (Liu, 2020). It is difficult to maximise the influence of the ethnic minority cultures because of their wide range and scattered information dissemination (Liu, 2020). Nevertheless, P11 believed that this situation can be improved through providing more information about different ethnic groups in Chinese classes, even simple introductions, to make a contribution to enriching the image of Chinese culture in the learners' mind. Another perspective on presenting the diversity of Chinese culture related to China's regions. The following excerpt illustrates the perspective of P5 who was from the very south of China.

我觉得中国很大，然后包括比如说他不同地区有不同的地域文化特点，而这种地域文化特点我觉得是有时候是各具特色，比如说西北的新疆，还有我们有独特的闽南文化。就拿我们闽南文化来说，就重视开拓进取，还有一些航海的文化。P5

I think China is very big, and then different regions have different regional cultural characteristics, and these regional cultural characteristics sometimes have their own uniqueness, such as Xinjiang in Northwest China, and us, we have unique Minnan culture in Southeast. Take Minnan culture as an example, we

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attach importance to pioneering and enterprising, and some maritime culture. P5

In her explanation, P5 stressed that the size of China meant that people living in different parts of China have a variety of cultures. Using her hometown as an example, P5 mentioned terms such as pioneering and maritime culture that were not commonly linked to the image of Chinese culture because China was seen as an agricultural civilisation for a long time (Holliday, 1999). Recent studies have also pointed out that these different regional cultures can be incorporated into Chinese language education to endow teaching with more social and humanistic characteristics (Bai, 2020). When more cultural information is brought into the classroom, it becomes easier to break the stereotype of Chinese culture as a fixed entity.

Overall, beside ethnicities and religions, there is much diversity within Chinese culture in terms of language, culture, religious beliefs and practices, history, rural/urban ways of living, etc. P11 and P5 wanted to break the solid image of “Chinese culture” as a monoculture and to provide the Chinese language learners with more perspectives so that they could see “Chinese culture” differently.

### ***Dynamics in Chinese Culture***

In addition to wanting to show their students the diversity inside China, the other important image of Chinese culture the trainees wanted to show was the development and dynamics in China. The nature of culture is dynamic. Thus, guiding their students to recognise the fact that China did not stop thinking in ancient times was another of the trainees’ important aims for teaching culture and IC. P3’s statement below referred to the relationship of fixed knowledge and the changing nature of China:

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让他们知道中国是在不在不断变化的，这个问题就好了，就没有必要非得说你就要记住这个词，不是非得记住这个知识，而是让他们知道中国在改变，以怎样的速度在改变。 P3

I need to let the students know that China is changing constantly. It's not necessary to say that you have to remember many words or particular knowledge, but we need to let them know that China is changing and how fast the change is. P3

P3 pointed that, compared to encouraging students to memorise concrete information (Nostrand, 1974), making them realise the changing nature of Chinese society is more critical. New developments and new changes in contemporary society have been an important topic in the promotion of Chinese and have led to a call in Chinese teaching that the modernity of content must be fully considered when selecting the content to teach in Chinese classes and that the selected content must have modern significance and value (Shi, 2019).

To sum up, the trainees wanted to let their learners realise that Chinese culture, like all cultures, is diverse and constantly evolving rather than a fixed and stable entity (Jin & Dervin, 2017). The trainees shared the belief that teaching culture meant presenting a comprehensive image of Chinese culture to students and letting them be aware of the diversity and dynamics within “Chinese culture.”

#### **5.3.1.2 Attitude to Other Cultures: 求同存异 (Qiútóng cún yì) Seek Common Ground while Reserving Differences**

The second theme in the trainees’ teaching goals is the Chinese learners’ attitudes toward difference and commonness between cultures. The phrase “求同存异” (Qiútóngcún yì, seeking common ground while reserving differences) was mentioned frequently in the trainees’ statements.

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First, it should be noted that this term was not originally a professional word in language education in China. Rather, this term was part of the national policy proposed by the Chinese government in 1965 to deal with bilateral diplomatic relations. The original text states: "The common ground is basic, the differences are local, and we can seek common ground while reserving differences." The policy explained that only emphasising the commonality will make the relationship between nations casual; only focusing on the differences will make the relationship alienated; thus, the balance between the two should be maintained. This stance was described as an ideological method and as a behavioural model that would enable China to handle complex relations and resolve complex contradictions. As foreign language education developed, many teachers and educators began to borrow this concept from diplomacy as a way to deal with complex relationships in intercultural communication.

As there is no official explanation of this phrase in foreign language education, to clarify the trainees' meaning of this phrase, this section presents their interpretations in two parts: reserving difference, and seeking commonness.

### ***存异 Cúnyì: Reserving Differences***

As regards students' attitudes toward cultural differences, the trainees advocated respecting and valuing as a priority. P2 explained her interpretation of “存异” i.e., reserving difference in the following excerpt:

首先他们是了解有这样子一个情况存在，其次他们就会不会觉得就哪个是对的，什么是错的。就是没有绝对的对和错，就是有这样子的情况存在，然后它存在肯定是有它的合理性。然后每个国家不一样的情况，跟每个国家它自己长久以来的地理历史政治经济都有关系。所以他们就能够更加理解为什么这个国家是这样子，然后他们自己国家可能是那样子的。 P2

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First of all, they need to know the existence of a (different) cultural phenomenon, they don't decide it is right or wrong. That is, there is no absolute right and wrong. The existence must have its rationality because each country has its own long history, geography, politics, and economy. So, they can understand why some are in this way, and then their own country is in another way. P2

An important idea reflected in P2's statement of "reserving difference" is suspended disbelief (Byram, 1997). Coming into contact with a range of different social and cultural situations will inevitably produce different emotional attitudes in people, for example, rejection or acceptance (Bennett, 1997; Gao, 2008). P2 thought that the students should avoid coming to a quick and definitive conclusion about new people and new situations. As P2 said, the purpose of language and culture teaching is not to let students judge what is right using their own culture as a yardstick, as one's own values, beliefs, and behaviours are not the only possible and correct ones (Byram et al., 2002). Culture is a constructive concept and a complex system (Baker, 2012), and each culture has its own unique formation track. Instead of using one's own culture to judge other cultures, it is more important to explore the origins of this difference.

"Reserving differences" was appreciated by many other trainees. The trainees used the word "respect" or "value" when describing the attitude toward Chinese culture that they want the learners to have. That is to say that, even though the CI students may not share these values, customs, and practices with the Chinese, or may feel strong antipathy to them at the beginning, the trainees still hoped that they would not lose respect on account of their initial reactions or criticise the customs of others by simply applying the standards of their own familiar cultural patterns directly.

### ***求同 Qiútóng: Seeking Common Ground***

Although interpreting the trainees' discussion of "reserving differences" was relatively straightforward, explaining their interpretation of "seeking common

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ground" seemed more complicated after analysing the different views from the trainees.

One of the important reasons for this complexity is that the character "同 Tong" has different meanings in Chinese, and the trainees actually paid attention to its different emphases when using the word. On the one hand, 同 Tong means the same, similar, alike; that is, it can refer to the common part of the two cultures. On the other hand, 同 Tong refers to the identification of another's culture and the recognition of the good parts in it.

In terms of the first meaning i.e., "same," trainees admitted the necessity of seeking common opinions of different cultures through cultural comparison. This echoes the skill of relating in Byram's ICC model and Holliday's (2018) view that the intercultural interlocutors should search for connection with each other. In the area of Chinese language teaching, as "Today's Chinese culture has also experienced the inclusion and conflict of different foreign views" (P11), Chinese culture is not individual and isolated from the rest of the world; common ground can be found between Chinese culture and learners' own culture. In addition, many cultures share universal phenomena such as the protection of their cultural heritage. These common problems and the efforts made by different countries can also be discussed in Chinese language classes as a way to promote mutual intercultural understanding.

However, as for the other meaning of 同 Tong, some trainees thought learners "can also have an understanding and identification of the other's culture" through learning (P3), while some trainees stated that it was not necessary for Chinese language learners to agree with values in Chinese cultures. The following interview excerpt exemplifies this point:

我觉得我没有办法要求他们做到(认同)这一点,知道这个世界上还有一个叫中国的地方的中国人是这样想的,我觉得这就够了。因为我不能成为一

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个价值观输出的人。我不能强行的把对方的价值观掰到中国的价值观。

P3

I don't think I can ask them to do (identification). Just let them know Chinese think in this way is enough. Because I can't be a person who exports values. I can't force the other people to follow mine. P3

P3 explained that she did not pursue consensus from students because she did not want to be a value exporter. Other trainees who held similar ideas showed a very strong fear of linking Chinese teaching with "cultural invasion." According to P10, the teachers need to be "very careful not to impose their own culture on others." The trainees set knowledge transfer and preliminary understanding as their final goal for teaching IC and left the decision to explore issues in depth to their students. This goal echoes the view given by the trainers in section 5.2.2.3. These views are consistent with Byram and Guilherme's discussion on the role of teachers, which is that the teacher's role is not to push a personal viewpoint on the learners. Rather, the teacher should create an open environment of inquiry (Byram & Guilherme, 2000).

However, to some extent, this view reflects a misunderstanding on the part of the trainees about constructing a view of culture; that is, some trainees may think that they should stop at introducing cultural practices, objects, and forms, and stop affecting students' cultural views. Based on a fluid and dynamic view of culture and social constructionism, individuals' cultural views are also constantly negotiated in social interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Holiday, 2013). In the language classroom, there are many interactions between teachers and students, or among students; thus, the students' beliefs will undoubtedly change and evolve, resulting in a more profound understanding of a foreign culture (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). It seemed that some of the trainees assumed that there would never be a time when a teacher might influence students' ideas. However, interlocutors can impose values, behaviours, attitudes, expectations through intercultural communication (Dervin, 2020). This opinion that teacher impose no influence on

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students reflects teachers' incorrect cognition of their roles, as it ignores the role of teachers in guiding students to explore and evaluate new ideas from intercultural interaction and treats teachers as simple information providers (Zu, 2016).

In summary, this section discussed the phrase “求同存异” (Seek common ground while reserving differences) that emerged in the trainees' interviews. Although the trainees held very similar ideas on treating cultural differences and commonness overall, some were discreet about cultural identification and cultural invasion in teaching.

### **5.3.1.3 Skill of Interpretation: Understanding the Reasons Behind Behaviours**

The final theme mentioned by many trainees related to the skills of understanding and interpretation as their teaching aim.

P5 explained this ability as an ability to “understand the deeper reasons” as shown below:

很多中国的社会现象得从内外几个层面追根到底来解释。比如说中国人可能安土重迁，它和北边的游牧文化有明显的不一样。因为中国文化过去的特点是以农耕文化为主，要靠近自己的土地，所以即使到现在我们进入了工业文明或者是科技文明，农耕社会所留下的影子还是在我们社会中。P5

Many social phenomena in China have to be explained with deeper reasons. For example, the Chinese may move back to their native land, which is obviously different from the nomadic culture in the north, because the Chinese culture was characterised by a farming culture in ancient times, and they stayed close to their own land. So even now when we have entered the industrial civilisation, the shadow of the farming society is still in our society. P5

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P5 realised that the presentation of culture in some Chinese classes has stopped at a shallow level and that the deeper reasons have been ignored. Using the example of the relationship between resettlement and an older, agricultural civilisation, she showed that, although many cultural superficialities are difficult to understand and can appear disorderly from the perspective of fragmentary understanding, a more systematic understanding of a culture can be formed after understanding the reasons and threads behind certain aspects of it. Byram (1997) states that intercultural speakers can identify and interpret explicit and implicit values in cultural events and documents of another culture. To some extent, P5' view of looking for the origin of cultural phenomena has something in common with this ability that Byram mentioned.

P5 went on to explain in depth that the benefit of this approach is to reduce cultural conflicts:

我觉得很多跨交际给你带来冲突，或者给大家认知上的冲突，或者是观念上的冲突，可能就是因为你不理解，所以你按照你的模式，你的思维模式去思考，就会得出一个可能相悖的结论。所以需要去了解另一种文化的基础上，你就可以去广泛的去理解。 P5

I think that a lot of conflicts in intercultural communication are caused by conflicts of cognition or concepts. Maybe it is because you don't understand; thus, you think according to your thinking mode and come to a conclusion that may be contrary to the other culture. Therefore, on the basis of learning, you can understand widely. P5

P5 stated that some cultural conflicts and misunderstandings arise from ethnocentric perspectives which are presupposed. The idea of “understand widely” can be interpreted as a way of challenging these ethnocentric views from different perspectives and encouraging thoughtful and rational evaluation of perspectives,

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products, and practices in the target culture. This approach is in line with Byram (1997)'s skill of interpreting, which is "an ability to identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins." The process of understanding the reason behind a phenomenon also involves using critical cultural awareness (CCA) to critically evaluate values that could possibly lead to intercultural conflicts. When students understand the origins of cultural products or cultural phenomena, they can establish a systematic explanation of misunderstandings to deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflicts (Byram, 1997).

The three key concerns regarding the trainees' teaching aims dealt with so far emerged from the trainees' accounts. First, consistent with the interpretation of the complexity of "culture" discussed in chapter 3, trainees shared an awareness of paying attention to the diverse and dynamic nature of Chinese culture and problematising the monocultural image of Chinese culture. Second, trainees admitted the importance of fostering attitudes of openness and respect towards cultural differences, while some had reservations about the aim of seeking for common consent. Thirdly, trainees had a shared belief that understanding Chinese culture more deeply was important, namely developing the ability of interpreting and CCA in the frame of ICC to challenge learners' ethnocentric views. Overall, the key findings showed a tendency to change from teaching about culture to intercultural teaching.

### **5.3.2 Trainees' Perspectives on Teaching Focus**

The previous section discussed the goals the trainee teachers set regarding IC in Chinese teaching. In order to achieve these goals, the trainees had their own ways of thinking about how to focus their teaching.

#### **5.3.2.1 Chinese Traditional Activities: Just Attractions**

As previously shown, in their interviews the trainers questioned the inclusion of so many artistic performances of Chinese culture in the training programme (see section 5.2.1). The trainees also thought about the function of Chinese artistic

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performance in Chinese teaching by themselves.

Some trainees agreed that artistic aspects of culture were meaningful as attractions for students. For example, P9 explained:

像我们汉办经常说汉办的宗旨就是像我们前几天那个老师刚刚说的是要让越来越多的人来学习中文。那让越来越多人学习中文，并不是说给他们一个学习上的压力，你一定要学会我的文化什么的。其实广泛的去了解一些，各个方面都涉及一些，也是挺好的。这些传统技艺也是丰富他们的一种学习生活。 P9

Like one lecturer mentioned one day, Hanban's purpose is to let more and more people learn Chinese. Well, let more and more people learn Chinese, not to say to give them a pressure that you must learn my culture well. In fact, it is a good thing to learn about it extensively. The traditional performances or activities are a good way to enrich their learning. P9

From the point of view of P9, these traditional performances and activities were treated as a fancy way of expanding the influence of Chinese culture. Their main purpose was to attract students to start learning Chinese because they were visible, touchable, and beginner-friendly. P8 also echoed this view saying that such “superficial culture is to attract foreign students to tell them that our Chinese culture is very rich, which cannot let learners have in-depth ideas.” Thus, Chinese artistic performance is treated as an attractive tool at the beginning of teaching rather than a long-term component of language classes in many trainees' view.

Conversely, artistic cultural elements can be used as the way to expand a discussion from a specific cultural point to encompass a wider range of discussions. For example, P3 puts forward the example of paper cutting in the extract below:

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很多文化技能，比如中国剪纸的这个手艺面临着什么问题。我觉得这个其实在很多国家都是共同面对的一个（问题），很多国家也是他的那个传统技艺，可能最后也可能在消失。那这就不是一个单纯的中国的，也是这个世界的问题。 P3

Many cultural skills such as the Chinese paper-cutting technology are facing problems. I think this is actually a common problem in many countries. Many countries are also worried about their traditional skills, which may disappear in the end. Then this is not a simple China's problem, but also a problem of the world. P3

In this excerpt P3 indicates that students can take part in the discussion rather than just being audiences observing an exotic and strange culture, and students' thinking and exploring skills can be brought into play in the language classroom. In this case, the inheritance and protection of traditional culture become the topics in classes rather than the artistic performance itself.

Overall, most trainees treated these cultural performances as a way of attracting students at the very beginning, as a window through which to get access to a new topic, rather than as a key focus in language classes.

### **5.3.2.2 Modern Life in China**

In line with the goal of presenting a developing China discussed in section 5.3.1, the trainees' views focused on the idea of concentrating their teaching on modern, contemporary life in their Chinese classes. The concept of modern life among the interviewed trainees mainly involved two areas: one is new changes to old customs; the other is the inventions of the new age.

Regarding new changes to traditional customs, P2 took the example of Chinese New Year:

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很多时候我们讲说中国人过节要干嘛干嘛干嘛，但是很多习俗我们其实现在已经不那么做了，就是我不希望他们到中国来之后发现，以前老师跟我讲，说中国人或许要放鞭炮，怎么说在上海怎么都没有人放鞭炮，就是我不希望是这样子的，就是我会跟他们讲清楚，我说以前就是中国人会放鞭炮，但是现在有些城市因为空气质量比较差，污染比较严重，所以说他们现在不放鞭炮了，所以我会跟他们讲清楚，就是我觉得文化不只是以前的东西，而是以前和现在东西结合起来的一个。 P2

Most of the time, we talk about what Chinese people do during Spring festivals/Chinese New Year, but we don't do that in fact. I don't want them to find out after they come to China that the teacher told me that Chinese people might want to set off firecrackers. How to say, no one in Shanghai set off firecrackers. That is, I don't want to be like this, that is, I will tell them clearly, I said that in the past, it was the Chinese who would set off firecrackers, but now some cities don't set off firecrackers because of the poor air quality and serious pollution. So, I will make it clear to them that culture is not just a thing of the past, but a combination of the past and the present. P2

P2 explained her idea of using a combination of traditional and modern practices together to introduce Chinese New Year. She stated that when explaining the Spring Festival, teachers focused too much on ancient forms, but many old customs have changed from their original forms for environmental reasons or due to the development of science and technology. For example, firecrackers have been banned in urban areas in China due to air pollution. Thus, it is more important for teachers to clarify the changes to traditional forms in modern life and the reasons for these changes in their teaching, which is consistent with the teaching goal of showing a diverse and developing image of China, as well as the desire to explore deep reasons.

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On the other hand, in addition to the new changes to the old culture, some new inventions and achievements are increasingly becoming a teaching focus. Presenting the modern changes in China was an important way to break down prejudice or the fixed image of Chinese culture. As P11 said:

中国文化他现在，尤其中国发展越来越快，它现在不仅是一些传统的，就是外国人都知道中华文化的标志，它其次也体现在中国新的四大发明就是这种支付宝这种。这种其实都算一种文化。而且中国在科技或者其他方面的在起到一些引领作用。 P11

Chinese culture, as China is now growing faster and faster, is not only a traditional symbol, but also a sign of Chinese culture, and it is also reflected in one of China's four great inventions, Alipay. This is actually called culture also. And China plays a leading role in science and technology and other aspects. P11

P11 drew on the content of the "Four New Inventions" in her mock teaching during the training. The four new inventions mentioned here are scan to pay, bike sharing, high-speed rail, and online shopping; all of these emerged after the 2000s. Unlike traditional ways of teaching about culture which narrow "culture" referring to typical customs, P11 emphasises China's achievements in modern science and technology, which all involve using the present continuous tense. Acknowledging and understanding scientific and technological development in China has become an important need among Chinese learners (Shi, 2019). Many researchers see these new inventions as conducive to the display of China's development and innovation and positive and friendly national image (Huang, 2017).

In addition to the aim of achieving the goals of teaching IC mentioned in the last section, there is another reason for introducing modern life in China and that is that it can give full play of the advantage of native teachers from China. Compared with the local teachers, P2 pointed out:

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我们更了解现在。因为以前的样子，说实话，所有中国人可能知道的是  
一样，因为永远都是那些东西，但是我现在知道肯定像新四大发明，可  
能就是四五年前才开始有（的）东西。我更了解，因为我就生活在这，  
我每天都在使用这些东西。 P2

We know more about the present. Because of the way it used to be, to  
be honest, all Chinese people may know the same thing, because it will  
always be those things, but now I know it must be like the new four great  
inventions, which may have started only 4 or 5 years ago. I know better  
because I live here and I use these things every day. P2

P2 believed that most trainees are in their 20s and so are witnesses to China's rapid development. This contemporaneousness allows them to bring more practical experience, sharing, and up-to-date information to their students. This is the missing element for teachers who have lived outside China. Traditional cultural customs and typical cultural products have been the teaching content of Chinese language education for a long time. P2 believes that the modern life she planned to introduce to her students would be more attractive, especially for young students, thus giving rise to new thinking instead of "always those things."

Overall, the trainees thought the focus of teaching culture or IC should be modern life in China. This finding echoed the view of Jin (2014) that Chinese teachers' task is to open the door to understandings about the richness and diversity of life and culture across modern-day China. Such teaching may help to update China's old image and realise the dynamic nature of Chinese culture. At the same time, the trainees also mentioned that, as they did not know the specific situation of the students and schools they were going to teach in, they also needed to adjust the teaching focus in the future.

### **5.3.3 Trainees' Perspectives on Teaching Practices**

In this section, I explore the trainees' ideas concerning the specific teaching

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activities related to teaching IC that they would employ in the future.

### **5.3.3.1 Teaching Style: Moving from “尊师重道” (Zūn shī zhòng dào, Respect for Teachers) to a More Equal Relationship with Students**

As revealed in section 5.2.3, the trainers emphasised the difference between Chinese teaching style and British teaching style in their interviews. As the trainees have never been to the UK, the trainers' views about the UK exercised a great influence on trainees. P11 described how he envisioned the teaching style in the UK below:

在中国，老师在上课学生就要听，可能在英国，老师要用平等的态度感情去对待他，你觉得老师讲的不对，你就举手，不是说像我们国家，他是老师，就是在我们国家，我举手（质疑老师）是不是很不太好。我觉得他们（英国的学生）如果要这样的话，我要鼓励他们，我不能按照中国的模式来要求他们。 P11

In China, students must listen carefully when teachers are speaking, while perhaps in the UK, teachers need to treat students with equal attitude. In the UK, if you think the teacher is wrong, you can raise your hand. Not like our country, (question teachers) seems not very good. I think if my students in the UK want to do this (question me) in my class, I will encourage them, I won't follow the Chinese model to request them. P11

P11 stressed the equal relationship between teachers and students rather than teachers' authority. This difference in teaching styles can be reflected in particular teaching actions such as raising one's hand to question the teacher. P11 said: "I won't follow the Chinese model" and some other trainees expressed an attitude of: “入乡随俗” (Do in Rome as Romans do). This is a disposition, a universal rule, and

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a common adaptation strategy and is deeply embedded as a Chinese cultural norm to which newcomers must conform in the target culture. In their residence in the UK, some trainees like P11 planned to follow the local norms in teaching to adopt a student-centred teaching orientation.

### **5.3.3.2 *Providing Situational Information***

The second theme on teaching actions is about the way information is provided. P7 proposed that providing more situational knowledge can lessen the risk of stereotypes. He gave an example of teaching “greeting” with different situations rather than teaching “hello” merely:

你给他是一个场景跟他说，比如你刚认识我几天和认识后又在街上碰到都不一样。因为比较熟的人之间，你是不会说你好，你就可以直接说有什么事，要给学生讲一些这种比较细节的问题。P7

You need to give students a scene, for example, you just knew me or you met for a while. Because Chinese people will not say 你好 hello to familiar friends, we may start chatting without greeting. Teachers should tell the students more detailed issues. P7

P7 proposed that one way to prevent over-generalisation was to specify the situational context of dialogue. He stated that doing so would not take a lot of time, but that it could help the students form a sense that Chinese people's communication does not all follow the same paradigm, but shares rich and various forms according to the context. His words can be seen as a sign that the attention paid to context and diversity had increased in some trainees' minds.

### **5.3.3.3 *Comparison and Discussion***

The third theme – cultural comparison and discussion – relates to teaching IC in a traditional way. This idea was mentioned by most of the participants. P1 gave

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examples of two settings in which she may use this method:

比如说我们说到春节过年要包饺子啊，这个情景可以是一个比较中国化的情景，也可以问问英国相关的节日。还比如说要学选举这个词的时候，那英国的学生可能会介绍一下他们选举的一个流程是怎么样，那当然也可以介绍中国的政治制度。P1

For example, we talk about Chinese New Year, we make dumplings during the Spring Festival, it can be seen as a typical Chinese scene, and then I can ask about the relevant British festivals. For example, when learning the word election, British students may introduce how their election process is. Of course, they can also introduce China's political system. P1

P1 cited two scenarios that could involve using cultural comparison: one was a specific time such as festivals or related cultural activities, and the second was the introduction of culture-loaded new words such as "election." The learners can compare the same topic in their own culture and in Chinese culture. This process is in line with Byram's (2002) statement that it is more important to "encourage comparative analysis with learner's own culture after providing factual information."(p.7) Such comparison can lay a foundation for realising the intercultural attitude of seeking common ground while reserving differences.

Cultural conflicts may occur in the process of cultural comparison. The trainees' views varied when it came to situations where teachers and students have different views in class. Some participants attached importance to the students' expression of their ideas, for example:

学生自由讨论，每个人都可以发表自己意见，好的也好坏的也好，老师是不过多的评论（针对有争议的问题）。P9

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Students are free to discuss, everyone can express their own opinions, no matter good or bad. Teachers do not need to give a lot of comments (for controversial topics). P9

This idea is consistent with the viewpoint of ‘求同 seeking for common ground’ discussed in section 5.3.1 in that some trainees did not want to influence students' opinions with their own viewpoints and become value exporters. Thus, they resisted expressing too many personal opinions in class.

By contrast, some participants stated that comparison was an important opportunity for teachers to express their views and change misunderstandings and prejudices in students' views. For example, P3 pointed out:

有的时候误解是因为你觉得你的观点能代表这个国家的大部分人的观点。如果他认为我代表了一个国家的想法，一个民族的想法的话，我就不能够（认同）。我会说我说的就是我个人的想法。P3

Sometimes misunderstandings arise because you think your views can represent the views of most people in this country. If a student thinks that I represent the idea of a country, I can't (agree with him). I'll say that what I'm talking about is my own opinion. P3

P3 first pointed out the difference between personal views and national views. Due to the official status of Confucius Institutes, people may think that CI teachers' views are also official expressions and P3 wanted to express personal views to show that the teachers are not just copying the official statements. Meanwhile, expressing their views on an event in class was helpful for students, as it was a way to access the diversity inherent in Chinese and critically evaluate different perspectives (Wang, 2017).

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#### 5.3.3.4 *New Teaching Materials: We-media and Vlog*

With the development of technology, the ways in which people express their personal lives have also become more diverse. In the training, trainers also encouraged trainees to show their lives. Some trainees began to mention new media such as vlogs.

我平时会拍一些跟同学一起出去吃饭的视频什么的，而且我会在网上 post 视频，我可以给他们看一个我自己拍的就是我日常的生活。 P2

I usually shoot some videos about going out to eat with my classmates, and I will post a video on the internet. I can show them a picture of my daily life that I shot myself. P2

P2 talked about the videos she shot herself, that is, what she would publish on TikTok and other websites every day. She thought that this was a new way to share life in China and to guide students to become familiar with China. In her statement, she always stressed the importance of showing the personalities of teachers, which fulfilled the same purpose as teachers using their personal views, as mentioned above. At the same time, the development of science and technology has brought benefits to teaching. For example, the successful use of social media platforms has brought language students together across geographical boundaries for meaningful intercultural exchange (Álvarez, 2014). The emergence of these new techniques provides more possibilities for learners to participate in IC.

Overall, the trainees assumed that the teaching style in a CI in the UK would be more local; they would provide detailed cultural introductions rather than sweeping statements and organise discussion with students; also new technical forms and new media would be applied. These methods remove the authority of teachers as transmitters of static cultural knowledge to a certain extent, and the pedagogical techniques have been influenced by the student-centred approach.

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Furthermore, the perspectives of the trainees were influenced by the training content to a certain extent. This idea is discussed in the next section.

#### **5.3.4 The Influence of Trainers on Trainees' Views**

The analysis of the two groups of participants showed that the degree of coincidence between the viewpoints of trainers and the trainees was very high. It can be said that the trainees accepted and referred to the viewpoints of trainers to a large extent when they made plans for teaching IC in Chinese culture before going to the UK.

First of all, in terms of teaching content, although the trainees participated in many artistic performance training courses, they still regarded daily life as the important content of their teaching. Secondly, on the basis of paying attention to cultural knowledge, the trainees also began to emphasise the attitude towards different cultures and the ability to interpret cultural phenomena. This orientation is consistent with the intercultural orientation in Chinese teaching emphasised by trainers (see section 5.2.2) and with the requirement in the ICCLE on cross-cultural competence (see section 5.1.2). For example, some trainees mentioned “求同” following the idea of “not pursue students' identification” by the trainer in section 5.2.2.3. Finally, in terms of teaching methods, because novice teachers lack teaching experience, their pedagogical choices basically followed the guidance given by the trainers and as found in the training courses. For example, some trainees also paid attention on overgeneralisation problem mention by the trainer in 5.2.3.1.

In addition, the preservice training also provided an opportunity for trainees to reflect on their own views. For example, P8 pointed out:

因为我之前会比较激烈，但是上完培训课程之后，可能总体上他会教会我更平和一些。我之前可能就是比较会坚持自己的想法，然后不允许别人有不同的想法存在，会从我自己的想法出发去告诉别人我的想法是什

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么。但是现在我觉得，因为我自己本身扮演的是教师的角色，不是日常的交流，我觉得灌输对于学生来说就是不公平的，所以我觉得这个课可能让我意识到自己的角色不一样了，然后需要更加平和的去处理这些问题。 P8

I was more aggressive before, but after the training course, it made me gentler. It's not aggressive, just, I might have stuck to my own ideas before, then I wouldn't allow others to have different ideas, and I kept telling others what my ideas were. But now I think, as I play the role of a teacher, not for daily communication with friends, indoctrination is unfair to students. My role is different, and then I need to deal with these problems more gently. P8

As P8 pointed out, although the trainees have learned IC-related knowledge before, they have not applied what they have learned in the field of Chinese teaching or put themselves in the role of a teacher. In the training course, they were aware of the process of becoming a teacher and they began to think critically about the behaviours that were taken for granted in the past and to begin to see themselves as a guide rather than a simple interlocutor.

In summary, 5.3 section has presented the trainees' perspectives on integrating culture and IC into Chinese classes in their future teaching. First of all, the trainees attached importance to the dynamics and diversity within Chinese culture, hoping to show such an image of Chinese culture in the CI classroom; this approach may help students understand Chinese culture from the perspective of social constructivism and avoid falling into over-generalisation. Their emphasis on the attitude of "seeking common ground while reserving differences" and the skill of interpreting also showed a change from cultural knowledge transmission to intercultural teaching to some extent. As for teaching content, they believed that introducing content related to modern life in China is an important way to achieve their teaching aims. In terms of teaching actions, the trainees expressed their willingness to adjust their teaching styles according to different teaching

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environments, and they wanted to use information provision and cultural comparison to reduce cultural conflicts and stereotypes. It can be said that the trainees' views showed a tendency towards intercultural language teaching, but they did not fully interpret the connotations of ICC, and the intercultural skills involved as they mainly focused on comparison and interpretation. The trainees did not mention how to guide students to critically reflect on their own experiences and views.

Have investigated the trainees' views on teaching culture and IC after taking the preservice training, then I next provide a summary of this chapter.

#### **5.4 Summary**

This chapter has investigated the preparation stage of the CI teachers from three viewpoints: the guiding documents; the training course and the trainers; and the CI trainees/CI teachers. Together these separate materials were used to answer the first research question: How are the trainees prepared in China in terms of integrating IC into Chinese teaching? and its subquestions: (1) How is IC presented in documents related to Chinese language education in CIs? (2) How does a CI preservice training in China prepare trainees to integrate IC in their lessons? and (3) How do the trainees understand IC in Chinese teaching before working in CIs in the UK? A number of conclusions drawn from the discussions in this chapter can be used to answer these questions.

The first conclusion reveals that intercultural elements are laid out in the two guideline documents: the ICCLE (2014) and the Standards (2015). As the aim of language education involves giving learners intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence (Byram et al., 2002), the deliberate inclusion of "cultural competence" in the ICCLE and "culture and communication" in the Standards shows that Chinese teaching language is not simply about linguistic competence. It also compasses developing the learners' intercultural awareness in terms of respect for different cultures and learning to use intercultural skills to mediate cultural conflicts to create mutual understandings. However, the findings showed

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that the content in the two documents regarding IC teaching has limitations. First, the two documents focus more on knowledge, and the explanations of awareness and skills are not as exhaustive as found in Byram's model. Secondly, both documents were issued 5 to 6 years ago. For this reason, they do not refer to more recent achievements in research and employ old terms such as "cross-cultural competence" in their English version. Finally, the documents do not recommend particular teaching methods and techniques for teachers to help learners develop their intercultural awareness and skills.

As for the training arrangements and the opinions from trainers, the second conclusion was that the arrangement of training is consistent with the documents in that it focuses more on theoretical knowledge and cultural artistic performances. By contrast, the trainers emphasised the importance of intercultural awareness and the skill of interpretation, and so they advised the trainees to pay attention to small c culture rather than big c in Chinese teaching. In addition, the trainers gave specific suggestions for teaching culture and IC in terms of teaching style, teachers' expression, and students' engagement and they offered solution for dealing with sensitive issues. They encouraged the trainee to find their own way of teaching rather following a static pattern. The trainers' views supplemented the training arrangement and the documents, and enriched the details about teaching culture and IC in the documents.

The third conclusion is that the trainees expressed their willingness to integrate culture and IC into their future Chinese classroom, and they also formed some views on teaching culture and IC in CI classes. as embodied in the following four aspects. First of all, they paid attention to the diversity and dynamics within "Chinese culture," rather than regarded "Chinese culture" as a fixed cultural product. Secondly, while learning to acquire cultural knowledge, trainees hoped to cultivate an attitude in their students of "seeking common ground while reserving differences." They also hoped to encourage the ability to interpret cultural connotations in their future teaching, skills which are related to the concepts of suspending disbelief and the skills of relating and interpreting in Byram's (1997) ICC

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model. Thirdly, the trainees expected to show the development of Chinese culture through the new changes in modern China, instead of being bounded by typical cultural products and stereotypical icons. Fourth, the trainees planned to adapt to student-led teaching and to use cultural comparison and information provision in their future classes to realise their intercultural teaching goals. Some trainees said that they would be flexible and sensitive within the local context rather than conforming to a uniform pattern.

As I am also interested in how the trainees verify their preservice perspectives when teaching in the UK, the next chapter investigates their experiences in the UK.

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## Chapter 6

# CI Teachers' Experiences of Integrating IC in Chinese Classes

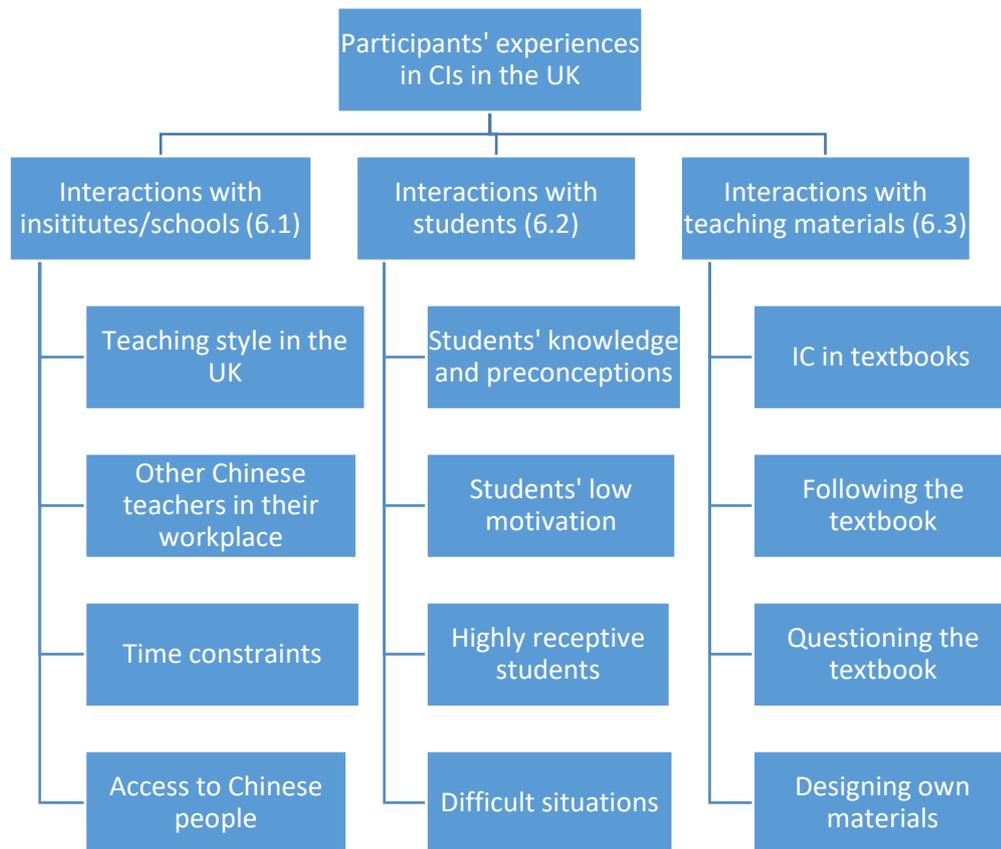
This chapter addresses the study's second research question:

**What challenges are CI teachers confronted with in the UK when they teach intercultural communication in CIs? How do teachers reflect on their experiences?**

The participants in this study started their teaching lives in CIs in the UK after undergoing preservice training. As they were born and educated in China and the work in the UK was their first experience of working overseas, they endeavoured to adapt to the new context both culturally and professionally and to overcome challenges posed by intercultural differences. This chapter examines how the teachers approached the implementation of their assumptions on integrating IC into their Chinese teaching (as discussed in chapter 5), the challenges they faced in teaching culture and IC in CI classes, and the intercultural experience they accumulated from teaching in the new cultural context.

The conceptual map below shows the structure of this chapter and the themes related to the second research question.

**Figure 7** *The Structure of the Chapter 6*



As indicated in the chart, this chapter presents the participants' experiences in interacting with institutions, with students, and with teaching materials. The first section (6.1) focuses on the workplace (CI institutes and classrooms) under four themes: the local teaching style; interactions with other staff such as teachers of other languages and other Chinese teachers; time constraints; and, the outside environment for learning Chinese. Section 6.2 focuses on interactions with students and reveals how the teachers responded to and reconsidered their assumptions regarding students' assumptions, motivation, receptivity, and feedback in the classes. Finally, the third section (6.3) explores the teachers' experiences in dealing with teaching materials: following the textbook, problematising the textbook, and using their own materials.

Following this outline of the structure of the chapter, I next discuss the participants' experiences with the institutes.

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## 6.1 The Teachers' Interaction with the Institutions and Schools

As explained in chapter 2, there are two types of classes in the CI programme: those in the Institutes and the Confucius Classrooms in local schools. The Institutes are organised and operated directly by CIs; however, teachers also teach students in local secondary or high schools and enjoy less direct support in terms of equipment and teaching materials compared with that offered in the Institutes.

This section will present the four themes separately in line with the participants' interactions with the intercultural environments where they worked. The teaching style, other Chinese staff, time constraints, and opportunities for students to use Chinese outside classes are discussed.

### 6.1.1 Reconsiderations of the British Teaching Style

When working in the UK, the participants in this study found some consistencies and some inconsistencies with their previous assumptions about teaching style in the UK.

First, I discuss the participants' assumptions that were confirmed. For example, some participants confirmed that the student-centred teaching model was commonly applied in local schools in the UK. P11 observed a Spanish lesson in the school where she taught and reflected as follows:

他们当时在讲犹太人的一个节日，我记得，他们当时就是放个视频，然后让学生自己总结出来，在视频里大家做什么，然后让学生猜为什么大家要这么做，然后最后引出来这是一个什么节日。就是让学生主导，然后接下来老师再给一个结论。我感觉他们在引导学生自己思考更多，而不是像我们做个 PPT 所有信息陈列在上面。P11

They were talking about a Jewish festival. The teacher put a video on and asked the students to summarise what the people in the video were

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doing. Then she asked the students to guess why they have such behaviours, and then the teacher stated what the festival was. The class was led by the students, and the teacher gave a conclusion at the end. It is not like my classes, in which I made PowerPoint slides with all the information on them. P11

P11's observation clarified the process of student-centred foreign language teaching used by local teachers. She used to present a lot of cultural information on PowerPoint slides and regarded it an effective way to transmit knowledge in a short time in the classroom. However, the students' engagement in this process was not high. Language teachers need to create space for students to explore and evaluate ideas rather than presenting 'objective reality' (Ültanır, 2012, p. 199). After observing the student-led classes given by local teachers, P11 said that she realised the positive role that students can play in the classroom and she learned some techniques for encouraging students to explore new cultural information by themselves.

In contrast, some participants' previous assumptions about British teaching were proven incorrect. At the beginning, many of the CI teachers assumed that teaching was a serious undertaking as in China and that the teacher's authority should be emphasised, while teachers in the UK were more casual and gentle, aiming to create "happy teaching" (P7). However, P7 found that the British teachers could also be severe with students and he described the situation he found:

他们当地老师对自己对学生说话还是挺严厉的，我们原来以为他们都是挺温柔的。稍微不太听话，就 talk，这种 talk 都是要记录下来的，像记过一样。很多也不是我们想象的都是快乐教学，反而我的课堂倒是快乐教学，人家都是特别严厉的。P7

The local teachers are very strict with their students. We thought that they would be very gentle. But if students show a little disobedience, they will be given a 'talk.' This kind of 'talk' is registered, just like registering a

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demerit. Many of them are not doing 'happy teaching' as we imagined. On the contrary, my class is real 'happy teaching' but other local teachers are very strict. P7

As P7 said, he tried to keep the lesson alive and happy through using various methods such as singing, learning lyrics, and watching movies. However, the local teachers did not aim to create such a happy atmosphere in their classes. In addition, talking about another of his classes in CI, he stated that "the average age of the students in this class is higher, and they are all traditional characters. They are used to listening." These students were used to the traditional teacher-centred model and disliked such high-frequency participation in classes. Therefore, P7 felt that Chinese people's previous impressions of British teaching may be stereotypes.

On the contrary, some teachers continued to follow their familiar Chinese teaching style to some extent in CI classes, although the teachers had been told to adjust to a teacher-student relationship when teaching in the UK in their preservice training (see section 5.2.3.2). For example, P10 believed that the authority of teachers which was valued in China should be maintained in CI classes:

“你们的课堂还要听我的话，因为在中国的课堂上大家是这么做的” ...  
我觉得不用刻意因为他们是其他国家的孩子比较特殊对待，有时候学生是可以差不多可以（和中国的学生）一样对待的，虽然不能完全一样，但是大部分情况下是可以的。 P10

'You should listen to me in your class, this is the way Chinese students do in China' ... I said that because I think there is no need to treat them in a special way because they are children from other countries. Sometimes these students can be treated almost the same as Chinese students although they are not exactly the same. P10

As this excerpt revealed, P10 thought that some Chinese teaching habits could be used in CIs in the UK, for example, listen carefully to teachers' explanations. Previous studies found that this teaching style appears to Western observers to be

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highly authoritarian and also that teaching methods that are mostly expository would result in conflicts in teaching and class management in Western countries (Biggs, 1996). P10's experience also proves that students may understand and accept the different teaching habits from another culture as an intercultural experience after P10 had explained the Chinese teaching style to them at the beginning. On the other hand, although P10's emphasised teachers' authority, she also adopted some interactive forms such as games and role play, which are not common in foreign language classes in China, and she did not simply duplicate Chinese classrooms.

P11, P7, and P10's experiences indicated that overseas teaching may have a different influence on teachers' views of the British and Chinese teaching style and contrasted with some of their stereotypes. They realised that there is no single teaching style suitable for all classes. A more flexible way of teaching was necessary in the intercultural context of Chinese classes, which echoes the postmethod condition in language education (Kumaravadivelu, 2001).

### **6.1.2 The Influence from Other Chinese Teachers in the Workplace**

Some participants in my study met other experienced Chinese teachers in new contexts. If they worked in the Institute, the participants rarely put forward opinions opposing those of the experienced teachers there. Comments like "I will ask for and listen to suggestions from experienced teachers working in the Institutes" (P8) were made many times by the participants. The reason may be that other CI teachers shared a similar cultural background and they were also trained by the CI, so the participants found it easy to understand and follow their guidelines. However, if they worked in a Confucius Classroom in local schools, some participants met teachers recruited by the schools without CI training. Analysis of the data showed that these participants seemed to be more likely to encounter challenging situations.

P8 mentioned one Chinese teacher who had worked in her school before, and she thought that this teacher's knowledge of Chinese culture was not professional enough and left a negative effect on the students:

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学生就经常提到他们之前的老师说过的话，但是都是很刻板印象的东西。然后那位老师的背景应该是一个中国人，但是在美国读的中学，所以我觉得他可能对中国本身也不是非常的了解。 P8

Students often refer to what their previous teachers said, but all their views were stereotyped. That teacher's background should be Chinese but he has lived in the United States since high school, so I think he may not know China very well. P8

P8 never met that teacher face-to-face, but she felt his effect on the students. Although that teacher is a Chinese native speaker and had taught a long time before P8's arrival, P8 doubted his qualification to teach Chinese. P8 speculated that that teacher did not understand Chinese history and modern society well because he had studied and lived in the USA and did not learn about Chinese culture.

The experience of P8 indicated the fact that native speakers are not naturally suitable Chinese language teachers. The concept of the native speaker is often linked with linguistic competence and the belief that a native speaker knows the language of a country intuitively and thus has authority as regards the language (Kramsch, 1998). However, Byram (2002) stated that native speakers sometimes do not have the same authority on culture. He argued that unlike language, which is largely acquired at young age, cultural learning goes on throughout life. Individuals pass from one section of a society to another or from one social group to another along as they are growing up (Byram et al., 2002). That is, their vision can be broader and their knowledge and understanding of their own culture develop. Thus, some Chinese native speakers who live far away from China may not have the chance to be in contact with the current cultural life-style in China. Although such factual knowledge and cultural information can also be found in reference books, or found on the internet (Byram et al., 2002), P8 thought that the previous Chinese teachers did not seem to have made enough efforts to collect information, but simply provided some typical cultural icons. Therefore, the main problem with the teacher mentioned in P8's excerpt may not be that he had not lived in a

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contemporary Chinese culture, but rather that he had not properly prepared and sorted out his teaching contents. Such behaviour may leave behind hidden dangers, such as students' accepting stereotypes, for successive teachers and subsequent teaching.

In addition, some of the Chinese teachers in the local schools came from Taiwan. The school where P9 worked had long employed a Taiwanese teacher. In the process of working with the teacher, P9 found cooperating with her was sometimes not very "comfortable."

First, P9 considered that this teacher was not professionally proficient because sometimes she gave her students predetermined views about China. For example:

她讲到皮蛋，她说皮蛋这么恶心，只有中国人是吃皮蛋什么的，就是这样的态度。我当时没有给他面子，我当时才刚到不久，但我根本没有给他面子，我立马就跟学生当场解释，我说其实也不是很恶心的食物，我说对于我们中国人来说，这是很传统的一种食物，在各种酒席婚宴酒席我们都会吃，其实是很好吃的，我说只有你试过，你才知道它到底是一种怎样的事物，我就这么说。P9

When she (Taiwanese teacher) talked about preserved eggs, she said preserved eggs were so disgusting that only Chinese people eat them. She just said it like this. I didn't give her respect at that time although I had just arrived. I immediately explained to the students on the spot that it was not really disgusting food. I said that it was a very traditional food for Chinese people. We eat it at many kinds of banquets. In fact, it is delicious. I said you would know what kind of thing it is when you try it.P9

P9 said that there was a tradition of giving respect to the elderly in Chinese culture, so she (P9) should not have contradicted the Taiwanese teacher on the spot. However, she expressed her disagreement in class at that time. The reason she

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gave was:

她这种观点的话对学生影响很不好，学生就会相信是这样的。我就很气，因为对我们来说，我们从来不会向学生说这种话。 P9

Her (the Taiwan teacher's) opinion had a bad influence on students and they will believe it. I was angry because for us (CI teachers), we never say things like that to our students. P9

P9 explained that when students have not tried something, a negative evaluation given by teachers, especially the description "disgusting," was inappropriate. As Byram et al. (2002) said, teachers sometimes are not conscious of their expression, but a brief remark in class may influence the students for many years afterwards. P9 was worried that the students may remember the word "disgusting" for a long time and that it might transfer into stereotypes such as "Chinese people eat disgusting food."

P9 made an assumption here that CI teachers will not make such mistakes. While that assumption may be too absolute, it does reflect that CI teachers position themselves as professionals who have received relevant education and training. They may be more sensitive to the words and deeds they choose than teachers who have not received the same level of training are and thus more aware of the need to reduce the possibility of students forming stereotypes. As TCSOL is a relatively new discipline, the classes outside China have a limited supply of professional teachers (Xu & Bao, 2019). Some teachers were employed just because they were native speakers. As Byram et al. (2002) said, native speakers are not equal to qualified foreign language teachers; teachers' professional ability, such as being able to explore and analyse teaching material, is more important for intercultural language teachers. "Specific training is an important aid in becoming a foreign language teacher" rather than teachers' mother tongue (Byram et al., 2002, p. 12).

Second, P9 thought this Taiwanese teacher deliberately distinguished between

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Taiwan and mainland China in her class. P9 said:

课本中有一个单元就是讲台湾，她不让我讲，因为他给学生传授的观念都是中国（好的东西）什么都是台湾的，珍珠奶茶是他台湾的，他们台湾人会欢迎光临什么，mainland China可能不会说。让人感觉莫名其妙。P9

There is a unit in the textbook about Taiwan. She won't let me get involved, because what she taught the students is that all (good) Chinese things belong to Taiwan. Pearl milk tea is from Taiwan. Taiwanese people say “welcome” to clients, but mainland China people might not. It's puzzling. P9

P9 was “uncomfortable” about the fact that the Taiwanese teacher separated Chinese culture into Mainland Chinese culture and Taiwanese Chinese culture, and attributed the excellent part to the latter. There are some differences between mainland China and Taiwan; for example, Taiwanese use traditional characters (繁体字 *fántǐzì*) while simplified characters (简体字 *jiǎntǐzì*) are used in mainland China. However, the examples such as “welcome” mentioned by the Taiwanese teacher does not seem to be a widely accepted difference. While the reason she said that may be due to the fact the Taiwanese teacher did not know the situation in mainland China, it could also arise out of a political consideration. Mau et al. (2009) stated that some different expressions of cultural details go beyond mere cultural and social practicalities and become embroiled in issues such as political affiliation with mainland China and Taiwan. The Taiwanese teacher may have wanted to separate “Chinese culture from Taiwan” out of the pan-concept of “Chinese culture” with a political intention rather than a cultural one. Although the two teachers may share the cultural identity of being “Chinese”, they may have inconsistent identifications of their political/national identities (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). So, when the Taiwanese teacher commented on some behaviour of “Chinese (in mainland China)”, she put herself in the ‘other’ position, and this separation may have created

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P9's dissatisfaction.

Overall, the working environment of CI teachers is complicated as they may meet other groups of Chinese teachers. They may share similar perspectives in teaching or have controversial views due to different cultural or educational backgrounds. Nevertheless, the experience P9 had with the Taiwanese teacher mixing professional and political issues was rare in CIs. When they did occur, these experiences made my participants pay attention to their own expressions in classes and be aware of the importance of professional training for teachers in terms of teaching culture and IC.

### **6.1.3 The Influence of Time Constraints on Chinese Classes**

Many participants in this study saw time constraints as hindering the teaching of IC. They gave two examples:

我的教学目标就是在离任之前把第一本书给上完了，这么实际，最后还是上不完，因为他们的学校活动太多了，然后放假太多了。P9

My teaching goal is to finish the first book before leaving. It is that practical. And I can't finish it in the end because they [the pupils] have too many school activities and have too many holidays.P9

我一个学校一个星期去两次，其他学校只会一星期去一次，而且每次也就是 45 分钟，所以我觉得就算换做我是他们,也不能学会多少。P11

I go to one school twice a week, while other schools have only once a week, and each time is 45 minutes, so I don't think I could learn much if I were them.P11

P9 said that in 1 year she should complete teaching a book which included a lot of content on areas such as grammar, culture, and communicative practice. However,

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at the same time, the students' Chinese class time was limited and so she could give priority to grammar and exam-related content only. P11 complained about the frequency of classes. She gave a 45-minute class as an example. Students needed to practise grammar and pronunciation, which left no time for discussion of IC. This unfortunate disconnect between what scholars say and what teachers are (not) doing has been identified by many scholars (Kramsch, 2015; Meadows, 2016). The quotations from P9 and P11 indicate that time constraints were the biggest obstacle to teaching what they wanted to teach in local schools.

Byram (2021) said that in foreign language classes, there are established views on priorities in linguistic competence. Similarly, CI teachers commonly deal with language knowledge first when the time is insufficient. In this study, some novice teachers were struggling to cope with the set curriculum. Although they talked about the goal of cultivating students' intercultural attitudes and skills in their first round of interviews, it seems very difficult for them to take developing linguistic knowledge, cultural knowledge, and intercultural attitude into consideration simultaneously.

#### **6.1.4 The Influence of Lack of Interactions with Chinese Native Speakers**

In addition to time limitations, CI students seldom had interactions with Chinese people outside the classroom. Some participants stated that this limited their teaching:

因为没有机会接触到中国人的群体，不可能让他通过自己的观察去总结出就是中国人的一些比较不这么直白能体现出来的文化。 P6

Because they [students] did not have the opportunity to contact Chinese people, it was impossible for them to observe and collect information on Chinese culture, which was not so straightforward.

Apart from a few students from families of Chinese origin, most CI students had no exposure to Chinese language and culture in their families and communities. When learning is located solely in the classroom, some intercultural objectives are much

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harder to attain (Byram, 2021). The lack of opportunity for real-time interaction with interlocutors from China means that the competences which include skills of interaction or negotiation are unlikely to be developed. Much knowledge that can be easily acquired by observation and exploration in China can only be obtained from teachers' descriptions.

In the contemporary world, through the continuous development of modern communication technology, the matter of geographical distance can be overcome to some extent (Byram, 2021). However, Hubbert (2019)'s research into CIs in the USA found that one administrator at a rural school district said the teacher from the CI provided their students with the only access to another culture. In this study, teachers like P6 and P8 came into contact with students in a similar situation. The CI teachers from China were their main way of accessing Chinese culture and Chinese people for their students, and the CI classroom was the main or only place where the students could be supported by others to engage with Chinese culture.

Therefore, to create a Chinese cultural atmosphere for the students became an aim of some of the participants, especially in some local schools. When P5 related her experience in one high school, she mentioned that she was the first Chinese teacher in this school and the school was very enthusiastic about her coming:

我觉得学校会有一个期望，就是让中国文化加入到他们学校的文化的一部分，就让学校想得更多元更国际化。所以在这里很重要一个教学目标就是能给他们学校带去很多异域的色彩。这些当地的老师在介绍我的时候，他们都会说我是从上海来的，我是直接从国内过来的，所以我觉得言外之意就是我能提供一些具体的真实的信息，而不是空洞的（书本）.P5

I think the school had an expectation that I would integrate Chinese culture into their school culture so that the school could become more diversified and international. Therefore, a very important teaching goal

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was to bring a lot of exotic colour to their school. When the local teachers introduce me, they say that I am from Shanghai and I am directly from China. I think the implication is that I can provide some more specific information about Chinese culture. P5

P5 said the school's support for her teaching and activities might be because she was the first teacher from China. Hubbert (2019) pointed out that some schools believe that having a CI at their school can connect students with a "cultural reality beyond their immediate reality of experience" and broaden their horizons (p. 18). P5 felt that she played the role of a representative of Chinese culture in the school and could therefore connect the students to the Chinese world. Obviously, the view that a person represents a culture is problematic because people who live in a particular country do not know intuitively the whole of the culture of that country because there are many cultures within a country and these cultures are ever-changing (Byram et al., 2002). However, some teachers sometimes have to respond to such expectations in CIs. Although not as explicitly as P5, other participants like P7 and P10 also mentioned that they noticed this type of pressure on them to connect two cultures due to many students' having limited access to Chinese people.

In summary, the four key factors which influenced the teachers' plans to teach IC were: a teaching style different to what they had assumed; improper behaviour by other teachers; time constraints; and, the rarity of interactions with Chinese people. In addition, the analysis of the findings has shown that teachers in the Confucius Classrooms in local schools seemed to encounter more complicated teaching environments than those in the Institutes experienced.

Next, I will discuss the teachers' experiences of interaction with students and what the teachers learned from these experiences.

## **6.2 CI Teachers Experiences of Interaction with Students**

This section discusses four aspects of how interactions with students influenced the teachers' perspectives.

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### 6.2.1 The Influence of Students' Existing Knowledge of Chinese Culture

Due to the diversity of the students in CIs, their acquired knowledge of Chinese culture differed. One problem the CI teachers faced was that the students' existing knowledge was sometimes inconsistent with their assumptions, as is reflected in the following quotations.

First, P6 stated that “some students were confused about Chinese, Japanese, and Korean culture.” Some could not distinguish Chinese culture from a mixed image of Asian culture. For example, the students in P6’s classes associated Chinese *shòutáo* (寿桃) (longevity of the elderly) with Japanese Momotaro (a legendary Japanese character) because of their similar pronunciation and characters. From the perspective of cultural communication, there are several possible reasons for this phenomenon. First, Chinese culture has radiated out to neighbouring countries since ancient times so there are many similarities among the cultures of several East Asian countries (Jin & Dervin, 2017). In addition, as the spread of Japanese and Korean cultures developed in the UK earlier than that of China and had greater influence (Li & Niu, 2019), when the students studied Chinese culture in the CI, similar cultural symbols and contents which they had encountered before could either consciously or unconsciously lead to confusion in class. Some participants mentioned that, if possible, they clarified these things in class so as to give correct information and reduce cultural confusion.

The second problem the participants mentioned was the existence of stereotypes among students. Stereotypical perceptions of China and Chinese people have been a stumbling block in intercultural communication (Gao, 1998; Zhang, 2009). In their lessons, the participants found that some students believed the stereotypes that they had been told about in their training. For example,

我课上有一些人的年龄已经比较大了，可能他们不会那么接触网络社会，所以他们对于中国的印象可能还处于比较陈旧的方面。P6

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There are some people in my class who are older. Maybe they are not so exposed to the internet society so their impressions of China may still be relatively old-fashioned. P6

我觉得一开始他们对中国的了解度少到让我吃惊，他们觉得中国人都爱吃包子，中国人都爱穿红色，比如这种非常刻板的一些很老套的思想。

P11

At the beginning, the students in my school's knowledge of China was so little that I was shocked. For example, they thought that Chinese people all like to eat steamed stuffed buns and like to wear red. These are very rigid old-fashioned ideas. P11

These quotations from P6 and P11 show that despite the development of globalisation and people being able to have more access to information about the world, there were still students in the CI who had outdated stereotypes of China and lacked understanding of modern China. P6 thought that these students have limited access to Chinese information. This lack of knowledge may indicate that these students were not previously interested in China, so they did not pay attention to relevant cultural information; It is also possible that teachers' improper interpretation of some cultural phenomena created students' stereotype. At the beginning, P6 and P11 did not expect the students to have such obvious stereotypes so they had to adjust their later teaching to expand the knowledge of the students in their classes.

On the contrary, unlike some beginners who have insufficient knowledge of China, some intermediate or advanced students in the CI had more knowledge than the participants imagined. For example, P7 mentioned:

这种水平高点的班，我这个也是巧了，这一般基本上全都是去过中国，基础的人家都知道。可能是我的知识量还是没有达到，讲到某些地方的时候还是比较捉襟见肘，没有办法再持续下去了。比如说，婚礼，我真的是除了传统的流程之外，我好像说不出来，跟他们知道的好像大概差不多，

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有点捉襟见肘.P7

It is interesting that all the classes I teach are high-level classes. Everyone knows the basic information and many of them have even been to China. When it comes to some topics, my knowledge is sketchy. For example, about weddings I really can't say much clearly except about the traditional process, which seems to be the same as what they know.P7

P7's students had already acquired basic knowledge of Chinese culture, and the lessons prepared by P7, such as on Chinese New Year and weddings, were repetitive for them. To deal with such situations, on the one hand, P7 proposed that he should accumulate more cultural knowledge. However, as Byram et al. (2002) said, while cultural information is important, its importance may be "temporary and transitory" (p. 12). If teachers simply regarded themselves as information providers, then teaching culture would become teaching endless cultural norms (Risager, 2006). This approach would be going back to an essentialist understanding of 'culture' (Holliday, 2011). On the other hand, P7 also considered the use of methods like discussion to encourage students to share their views and knowledge as a way to supplement his insufficient knowledge. This change was a shift towards intercultural orientation in his Chinese language teaching.

The final problem some participants mentioned is that they found some students held some preconceptions related to China that the teachers had not thought of. For example, P6 said that a few of her students had a "strange image" of China.

我觉得他们还是对中国有刻板印象。也不是说那种长年累月的历史上对中国形象的固定的认知，而是最近的一些比如说媒体对中国的一些可能有一些歪曲的报道，对他们还是会有影响。我记得，就有一个小男孩他说他上网看的，说中国要接管这个世界。P6

I think they still have a stereotype of China. It is not standard knowledge

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of China's long history, but some recent reports, such as some distorted reports on China in the media, still have an impact on them. I remember, there was a little boy who said he read online that China would take over the world.P6

P6 gave the little boy's words as an extreme example to show that the image of China seems different with her assumption. For instance, the “take over the world” image is quite aggressive, which is different with the ‘harmonious’ culture that the CI teachers were familiar with. P6 attributed this view of China to a negative influence of the “biased or distorted” news on the internet. In the era of information explosion, there is a possibility that eye-catching titles and articles are used to attract the attention of readers. On the other hand, although the development of modern communication allows people to access more information, there is still a question of dominance in the media and politics (Byram, 2021). The information that people are exposed to about their own or other countries may not be comprehensive and there may be different interpretations for one event. P6 also mentioned that it was important for Chinese teachers should pay attention to the impact of this information on students. If students have many negative thoughts and feelings about a language and culture they are learning, it will greatly affect their enthusiasm for learning the language and culture and participating in IC (Sias et al., 2008).

Overall, due to the different experiences and backgrounds of CI students, their existing knowledge of Chinese culture and understanding of IC are also different. Although the teachers in this study learned the same things in their preservice training, there was no one-size-fits-all teaching mode. Instead, there was a need to provide different learners with different knowledge regarding culture and IC.

### **6.2.2 The Influence of Different Student Learning Motivations**

In this study, the students' motivations for engaging in intercultural communication and learning Chinese culture in the classes emerged in different ways. According to the accounts of the participants, most students were enthusiastic about learning

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because their motivation to study in CIs was to go to China for further study or to accumulate working capital. This motivation can be defined as instrumental motivation: “a desire to gain social recognition or economic advantage through knowledge of a foreign language” (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 14), which to a large extent can improve students' enthusiasm for learning foreign languages and participating in IC.

However, there are also some students whose motivation to study is not strong. P2 described a situation which shocked her:

学生他的学习需求也不太一样，有些学生他可能年纪比较大，他就真的只是想来玩一玩，所以他们有时候回答不上问题，他就说，这个问题我跳过。我当时就惊呆了。我刚开始就觉得这个学生怎么这样，后来觉得每个人学习需求不一样，老师还是应该去迎合，因为这毕竟不是应试，还是要针对他想学他不想学。他想跳过就让他跳过了。P2

The students' learning needs are too different here. Some students may be older, and they really just want to come and play, so sometimes when they can't answer the question, they say, “I want to skip this part of learning.” I was shocked. Later, I told myself that everyone's learning needs are different and the teacher should cater to them, because after all it was not an exam-oriented class. It matters what they want to learn and what they don't want to learn. If they want to skip, let them. P2

P2 described some students in her class who have different motivation to learn Chinese language and culture from what she expected. P2 had experience of an internship teaching Chinese in China. Her students in China belonged to the learners who had strong instrumental motivation to learn for investing for their future career (Ganassin, 2017; Xia, 2020). Therefore, teachers like P2 may have such assumptions about the situation in the UK. However, some CI teachers found some students in the CI may not have such strong motivation, for example, older students who just wanted to fill their retirement time and had no desire to gain social

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recognition or economic advance through learning Chinese. This situation confirmed Byram's (2021) statement that the needs of learners living in "a situation where they have no foreseeable face-to-face interaction with speakers of a language, native or non-native ... will be different from those who are in constant contact" (p. 107) with the language and culture. CI teachers should keep an open attitude towards students' different learning motives and adjust their teaching according to students' needs.

Similarly, the teachers working in a Confucius Classroom were also faced with the issue of student motivations. Analysis of the findings sheds light on the issues that emerged regarding students' willingness and engagement and how they affected teachers' teaching efforts. For example, P7 and P8 are graduate students from the same university, but the students they taught in their respective local schools were completely different:

因为我在是一个很好的中学，然后印象深刻，他们我们对文化的了解非常多，超乎我的想象，就他们对世界文化中国文化的知识面非常广，对学习也很有热情。可能是因为他们是很好的学生。P7

Because I am in a very good middle school, I am impressed. They know a lot about Chinese culture, beyond my imagination. They have a very wide range of knowledge and they are enthusiastic about further learning, probably because they are very good students.P7

学习态度不是非常好，我了解了一下，虽然不是很全面，是那种家里比较穷的就会送来我们这儿。他们毕业后可能就会去做油漆工木工，中文对他们来说没有用，除了以后能在街上说个你好。所以他们对中文没有兴趣，知识的程度让我很吃惊，比如说我问他中国的首都是哪里，他都不知道，他说 Hong Kong，他不会听你说的话，就是沉浸在自己世界里

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是这样的状态。 P8

Learning attitudes are not very good in my school. Someone told me that, although not all, most of the students here are from poor families and may go to work as painters and carpenters after finishing school. Maybe the biggest opportunity for them to use Chinese is to say 你好 (hello) when they see a Chinese in the street. Therefore, they have no interest in Chinese. And I am shocked about their knowledge. For example, I asked what the capital of China is. Some did not know, they said Hong Kong. And they did not listen to what I said but were immersed in their own worlds.P8

These quotations show that different learning motivations may be influenced by family or educational backgrounds. These different backgrounds led to different performances in Chinese classes. During the year in the UK, P7 described her teaching as “smooth,” while P8 faced many difficulties. As P8 said, learning Chinese was not an investment related to the future careers of most of the students in her class so they were not very interested in learning. Some students even had to learn Chinese because they could not choose other courses, and they showed their dissatisfaction at the beginning. Therefore, the status of some students in her class was ‘just being there’ rather than participation, and the resulting nonresponses also affected the teachers' teaching enthusiasm. P8 lamented a lack of support from the school and students in this situation. She said, “that sense of responsibility as a volunteer pushed me to invest more and insist in the teaching because I felt few students had the willingness to learn.” In her last interview, P8 said that she was pleased that some students had “learned something, became interested in Chinese and improved their ability to communicate with Chinese people” after a year’s learning, but there were still some students who did not seem to have changed.

The excerpts from these two participants showed that the students in secondary and high school may have considerable variation in knowledge and attitudes because much of what they know has been influenced by their experience and background, such as schooling (Holliday, 2011). CI teachers may face the situation

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of teaching low motivation students. Although teachers should teach courses rather than motivate learners, without motivation, learning cannot happen (Dörnyei, 2001). However, it is rare to reshape the students' thinking and motivate them to learn in a short time. What teachers can do is to adjust their teaching goals according to students' needs and motivations and attempt different teaching techniques to create a better classroom atmosphere.

Overall, compared with international students in China or students majoring in Chinese studies in universities (Xia, 2020), the CI students' learning motivation was more diversified. When the CI teachers encountered some difficulties which they had not previously envisaged, the implementation of their IC teaching plans was influenced.

### **6.2.3 The Influence of Highly Receptive Students**

Although the two situations noted above mainly involved obstacles that the teachers encountered that reduced their confidence in integrating IC into their Chinese teaching, some teachers also encountered positive feedback from some students, which increased their confidence. For example, some teachers met students who were highly receptive to the new culture and new ideas.

因为这些学生他们没有刻板印象，交流就是比较顺。比如说有一节课在教行政区划...这些和制度有关的内容，因为你跟有的人，完全不了解的人说，他会跟你说比较政治上的一些东西，你没有办法好好说，就是这些学生不会这样。比如我讲什么行政区划的时候，你讲完之后，他们就特别明白。那天还聊起他们的首相，然后他们会给我讲，他们自己也吐槽，会批评自己国家，所以他就不会特别单一的去批评另一个国家，知道事情可能都有好有坏。P7

Because these students have no stereotypes, communication is quite smooth. For example, there is a lesson mentioning administrative

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divisions ... if you talk to some people who don't know anything about the system, they will say some 'political' things. But you can say that to these students. For example, when I talked about administrative divisions, they understood. That day they also talked about their prime minister, and they made complaints about their own country. Therefore, they do not criticise another country in particular, and they know that things have both good and bad sides. P7

As P7 had no previous teaching experience, in his first interview he was worried that the students might get confused about the Chinese culture he introduced and that he might cause misunderstandings for them. However, he was surprised that the students he met were highly receptive to new knowledge and new ideas. His students were adults and had studied Chinese for a long time and some had even been to China. These students could mediate between cultures and negotiate different ideas by drawing on their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Their open attitudes and the active interactions between teachers and students promoted their intercultural learning in Chinese classes.

In addition to these intermediate and advanced learners, some beginners also showed an open and inclusive attitude to new ideas in Chinese classes. P11's description of his students, who were beginners, demonstrated this:

我记得刚开始不久，大概是教学开始一两个月以后，我们当时提到了独生子女什么的，然后就有一些学生会比较不理解，他们觉得这个政策非常不好，然后我就会给他们讲，当时中国为什么要采取这样的政策什么的。我发现其实这边小孩比我当时预想的要友善很多，他们最后都表示理解了，也没有人说会固守自己的想法之类的。而且你当时觉得他们可能汉语水平不高，但是可能都有一定的理解能力，然后你的主要工作就是引导一下他们去学习。 P11

I remember, about a month after the beginning of them learning

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Chinese, we mentioned the one-child policy. Some students said they did not understand it and they thought the policy was very bad. Then I explained why China adopted the policy at the time. I found that the children here were much more friendly than I expected. They all expressed their understanding in the end, and no one said they would stick to their own ideas. At that time, I thought that these children may not have a high level of Chinese but they have a certain ability to understand. Therefore, your main job is to guide them to study. P11

In the example given by P11, the students understood the one-child policy quickly in class. P11 believes that an important reason for this situation is that the students maintained an open attitude and a willingness to explore new ideas. P11 thought that since the students were beginner students' language level did not determine their cognitive and logical abilities so that an intercultural attitude and awareness should be integrated in Chinese classes.

P11 taught in a Confucius Classroom in a secondary school. Although the specific teaching methods of intercultural teaching should consider the age and cognitive level of the learners, that does not mean that young students are incapable of reflecting on their own ideas. Calliero and Castoldi's (2013) stated that young students can identify similarities and differences between different cultures and reach shared understandings after taking ICC-related lessons. There appears to be an assumption that "young learners can be assessed in the same way as older ones" (Byram, 2021. p. 68). The example given by P11 confirms this view to some extent.

Overall, students with high receptivity and open attitudes were more easily found among those who had studied for a long time and had had experience in China in the past. However, with good guidance from teachers, beginners can also develop an open attitude and critical evaluation skills. These experiences made the teachers see the positive results of introducing IC in their teaching.

#### **6.2.4 The Influence of Students' Interest in Cultural Topics**

As stated in chapter 5, the participants mentioned some topics that they thought

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worth teaching the students about, such as Chinese festivals. However, in local schools, the teachers found that sometimes what they prepared did not arouse the students' interest and did not produce the expected results. For example, P4 and P2 described their experiences as follows:

那一节课是介绍节日的，但是其实他们根本不 care，这个反应也不是很热烈。这是我希望他们了解的东西，但是他们就是明显觉得‘对我生活没什么帮助，我就不学’。P4

The lesson was about festivals, but in fact they didn't care at all and the reaction was not very enthusiastic. That's what I wanted them to know, but they obviously thought 'it is not helping my life, so I don't learn.' P4

首先他们在这边不过中国的节日，然后其实他们就算是中国旅游，他们也不一定会挨到中国节日。对比春节和圣诞节，我觉得挺有趣的，但是那节课就是没有我意想当中那么（反映好）。因为我觉得这边人圣诞节其实挺无聊的，因为真正的英国人他们圣诞节可真的只是在家里，只有那些不是英国的人才会在街上走，所以当时我问他们圣诞节有什么活动什么，他们说在家，然后结束了，就没有什么。P2

First of all, they do not celebrate Chinese festivals here. Even if they travel to China, they may not encounter Chinese festivals. Spring Festival and Christmas, I think it's very interesting, but I think that class is not as good as I thought. Because I think Christmas is boring for the people here, because real British people are only at home at Christmas. Only those who are not in England will walk in the street. So, I asked them what activities they had at Christmas. They said they were at home and ended the topic. P2

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These two participants both found that the students were not interested in the topic their teachers chose for class. This lack of interest corresponded with the lack of opportunities for the students to have contact with Chinese people and Chinese culture, as mentioned in section 6.1. Therefore, the students were sceptical about the practicality of some of the content. As for P2, she planned to compare Christmas with Chinese New Year. Although comparison is a common method used by Chinese teachers, the students might have thought it was irrelevant and repetitive. As a result, due to the students' low engagement this intercultural comparison did not reach the teacher's expected goal. How to teach traditional topics innovatively and attract the students' interest challenged these novice teachers.

In contrast, some cultural topics that the participants did not expect the students to be interested in aroused heated discussions. For example, P2 introduced 'environment protection.'

有一次我们谈到环境保护，我以为他们对这个话题不敢兴趣，就准备得不多。但是课堂上，他们谈得特别有兴致，还谈了各个国家在环境保护中遇到的问题。比我想象中讨论更热烈，涉及的内容也更多。挺意外的。P2

Once we talked about environment protection. I thought they would not be interested in this topic so I didn't prepare much. But in class they talked with great interest, and talked about the problems encountered by various countries in environment protection. The discussion was more heated and involved more content than I expected. It was quite unexpected. P2

P2 said that she had assigned only 10 minutes for the topic of 'environment protection' and she had prepared little material. However, this inadvertently provided an opportunity for the students to express themselves. Environment protection is a worldwide problem and the students all had something to say about the situations of countries. In this situation, P2 gave up her role of information

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provider and carried on with the teaching following the students' discussion. This made P2 realise that student attention was an important condition for conducting intercultural discussion.

In addition, the excerpt from P2 reflected that some teachers focus on teaching Chinese culture rather than matters concerning engagement with others and with topics of universal interest. This can be seen as one limitation of some Chinese teachers. Although choosing topics related to Chinese culture can help students gain more cultural information on Chinese culture, it also inadvertently creates a barrier between Chinese culture and world culture to a certain extent. As Byram (2021) said, serious worldwide problems such as climate change, poverty, and sexism require collaboration across borders and across languages, and language subjects have a special role to play in the education of the global citizen's ICC. Teachers can broaden their horizons to encourage students to participate in discussions on these issues and cultivate the skill of critical cultural awareness. This view is included in the ICCE document (see chapter 5.1), but some teachers may not have realised its importance in teaching.

In summary, through their interactions with students, the participants acknowledged that students' different knowledge levels, different learning motivations, different attitudes to new ideas, and their feedback on different cultural topics influenced CI teachers' expectations of teaching IC in Chinese classes. For some participants there was a shift from rational and relatively inflexible teaching at the beginning to situational teaching in accordance with the students' aptitude and feedback. They would take more students' preferences into consideration in terms of designing activities and choosing teaching topics in their future teaching. Teachers developed an awareness that students' situations and engagement play important roles in intercultural teaching.

In the next section I will discuss the teachers' experiences of using and selecting teaching materials.

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## 6.3 The Experience of Using Teaching Materials

This section focuses on interactions between the teachers and teaching materials (including the textbooks provided by the teaching institutions and other materials supplied by the teachers). Rather than commenting on the teaching materials, I am interested in the ways teachers used them.

### 6.3.1 The Experience of Using Textbooks

Those teaching in the CIs involved in this study, mentioned two sets of textbooks: the New Practical Chinese Reader (Chinese name: 新实用汉语课本, 2015 edition) edited by Liu Xun, and the HSK standard course (HSK 标准教程, 2015 edition) edited by Jiang. These two books were structured around texts and vocabulary and grammar exercises. The cultural contents of the two books were mainly interspersed in the texts and explanations of new words, or in culturally themed lessons presenting literary stories, fables, natural scientific papers, traditional idioms, and modern Chinese society. In addition, there was a special part in the New Practical Reader called 'cultural note,' which introduced knowledge about culture and communication. For the teachers working in local schools, the teaching materials were either provided by the schools or selected by the teachers themselves.

According to the interview results, most participants gave priority to their textbooks when planning their teaching. The culture and intercultural communication content they introduced in class was largely based on the textbook. P2 and P12 explained the reasons why:

使用下来，觉得它的设置比较合理，由易到难。 P12

After using it, I think its setting is reasonable, from easy to difficult. P12

我主要是因为他每课有一个 cultural note，然后比如说第一课讲的是中国人姓名，然后之后又讲中国人的家庭关系，就是有一个契机就去切

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入，不会特别生硬地切入，不然我也不知道我从哪开始讲起。教材的编辑者都是经过考虑的，自然有它的道理。P2

I follow the textbook mainly because it has a 'cultural note' in each lesson. For example, the first lesson was about the names of Chinese people, and then it introduced family relations. It provided an opportunity to introduce culture. It didn't do this inappropriately. Otherwise, I wouldn't know where I should start. P2

There were two reasons the two participants gave for following the textbooks: logical structuring from easy to difficult and the provision of cultural topics. Like P12, some other participants also expressed their trust in the editors of the textbooks and felt that they had structured the materials in a rational and logical way. Some teachers used the topics in the textbooks as starting points for expansion. For example, P2 talked about Chinese family relations starting from the names of Chinese people. P6 talked about Chinese religion starting from a novel mentioned in the textbook:

比如说我们之前课本里讲到西游记，然后我就可以顺带提一点宗教方面的内容，然后说中国其实也不止不仅仅是佛教的国家，我们有道教什么的，然后也会有一些基督徒。然后就说英国这边的宗教其实也不是就是单一的，也是就像我们班里有穆斯林的同学，那也有基督徒，我说大家都是多元的。比如，我并不是一个佛教徒，但是我可以接受说中国有这样佛教文化的存在.P6

Our textbook talked about 'Journey to the West' and I mentioned that there was a little religious content in it, and said that China actually does not only have Buddhism but we have Taoism and other religions, and then there are also some Christians. Then I said that in Britain there is not a single religion, just like there are Muslim and Christian students in our classes, we are pluralistic. I am not a Buddhist but I can accept that

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there is a Buddhist culture in China.P6

As P6 explained, his explanation about religion was inspired by a section in the textbook on the novel *Journey to the West*. *Journey to the West* is a mythological novel which tells the story of Tangseng, who went to the West to find Buddhist scripture. The textbook's introduction of this story allowed the teacher to introduce the topic of religions in China in a natural way. In P6's teaching, her focus was on cultivating multicultural attitudes when meeting different cultures in intercultural exchanges. From the same point in textbook, different teachers also can elaborate on material in textbooks differently to integrate IC in their classes.

Overall, many teachers used the textbooks as the core of the process of planning the curriculum and classroom teaching. As for teaching culture and IC, its centrality was mainly reflected in the selection of cultural topics. Some participants attempted to cultivate students' intercultural awareness using the topics in the textbooks.

### **6.3.2 The Problems with the Textbooks**

Regarding the cultural content in the textbooks, the participants found some problems which influenced their IC teaching. This section will discuss three problems: dated information, superficial information, and a lack of localisation.

The first problem with the textbooks that the participants mentioned was that some content was out of date. For example, P11 mentioned:

它里面的文化点，比如说抓周什么的，说什么他是个花心萝卜，因为他在抓周的时候抓了一只口红，可能就讲中国的这些比较老一点的这种文化，但是我觉得现在可能很多家庭都没有。 P11

... cultural points in the textbook, such as the grasping test (for babies to predict their future on their first birthday). It said he would be a philanderer because he caught a lipstick in his grasping test. This may be about a relatively old part of China's culture. I think many families may not do it now. P11

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Two aspects of datedness were involved in P11's statement: vocabulary and custom. '抓周' (zhuā zhōu, giving a baby a grabbing test on its first birthday to predict the child's future) mentioned by P11 is a custom that is no longer thought to be common in China now and there was no need to present it in class. Shi (2019) criticises that some Chinese teachers did not pay enough attention to learners' understanding of contemporary China and communication with native speakers. P11's view confirmed this point and also echoed the concerns previously expressed by some participants in section 5.3.2 that teachers should pay more attention to the cultural content of modern life and pay less attention to these 'unusual' cultural customs. In terms of vocabulary, language is a complex system that is constantly changing (Baker, 2012). To some extent the textbook's vocabulary choice was not time-sensitive. The frequency of using some words has changed over time. In this case, the word '花心萝卜' (huā xīn luó bo, "philanderer") is used less frequently now.

In the face of these outdated contents, some teachers admitted the deficiencies in the textbooks. For example, P2 said:

我的学生就会问我，他说中国人会这么问吗？我说其实中国人不太这么问。然后他说那为什么我们要学这个东西？因为我说课本他写的比较老旧了，所以说可能符合当时的人的一些用语习惯。P2

My students asked me whether Chinese people use the word now. I said that Chinese people don't really use it. Then they said, "why do we have to learn this thing?" I explained that the textbook was old so it might conform with some language habits of people at that time.P2

When dealing with old vocabulary, most of the participants in my study said "we should tell the students we do not use these words often now" (P2). As for the social relations and collective memories revealed by these cultural words (Kramersch, 2011), the participants stated that they would consider the time and the topics of the classes at that time to decide whether or not to explain the collective memories these words evoked. Sometimes they thought it was not necessary to explain the

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evolution of a particular word, especially for beginner learners.

The second problem with the textbooks that the participants pointed out was that some explanations of typical traditions were too brief and general. For instance, P7 said:

有这个课在课本的第二册，有一个地方叫旗袍，他没有说，但他基本上在默认北方的旗袍。我知道是因为后来我们提到旗袍这事，然后我跟他们说上海做旗袍也好，他们就不知道。课本只说特别的典型的，没有发散的讲，只是讲基本东西。 P7

There is an explanation about cheongsams in the second volume of the textbook. It basically says that cheongsams are worn in the north of China. Later, I mentioned cheongsams in class and told the students that it was better to get a cheongsam in Shanghai. They didn't know. The textbook only gave typical general information. It just gave the basics. P7

P7 complained that some information in the textbook about typical cultural items was too general. P7's comment was in line with the problem mentioned by Wang (2017) that some textbooks seemed to provide stereotypical or superficial cultural information.

However, the reason why textbooks emphasise the universality of certain Chinese cultural items and categorise cultural artefacts is to simplify and systematise information for students. This simplified information is “attractive but deceptive” because a “differentiated and accurate kind of knowledge depend[s] on recognising the variation in people” (Byram et al., 2002, p. 29). Teachers may be expected to play an important role by exploiting the advantages of generalisation while avoiding the formation of stereotypes by giving good explanations. However, due to the time constraints mentioned in section 6.1.3, some teachers were caught in a dilemma because ignoring this universality and categorisation in textbooks became a pitfall in intercultural communication for the learners.

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The third problem with textbooks involved localisation. Some of the teachers pointed out that there was little connection between the textbooks and the local students' lives. P9 used the textbooks provided by the CI and local schools during the year. After comparing them, she suggested some improvements for CI teaching materials:

因为从小就是你无论是中外的教育体制也好，还是中外的学习心理也好，还是我们的文化背景也好，很多东西有很多不同，英国人在想英国孩子要怎么学汉语的时候，他才能方方面面都考虑到，知道怎么样设计最适合那些孩子的教材。我觉得他们就是更了解自己国家人的那种思考习惯。P9

From childhood, Chinese and British people are different in many things, ranging from education systems to learning psychology to cultural background. When British people think about how English children should learn Chinese, they can consider all aspects and know how to design teaching materials that are most suitable for those children. I think they know the thinking habits of their own people better.P9

Localisation has long been a focus of research on Chinese textbooks (Han, 2020). Localisation means that Chinese textbooks should be designed and compiled based on the characteristics and needs of learners in a particular country or region. However, many studies on localised textbooks remain at the theoretical level and general textbooks place more emphasis on Chinese cultural achievements rather than connections with local culture (Han, 2020). P9's view supports this point that the textbooks provided in the the CI also had this problem. She admitted that although there were some cultural errors in the local textbooks she used, they were friendlier for nonlocal novice teachers because they contained "the contents and activities that students like to arouse their enthusiasm." She thought the ideal would be a combination of the two sets of books.

Overall, the participants were aware of the problems of outdatedness,

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oversimplification, and lack of localisation in current CI textbooks. These problems may create stereotypes and affect students' intercultural communication in the future. Given their criticisms of the content in the textbooks, many participants chose to supplement them with their own teaching materials. Therefore, the next section discusses the materials that the teachers added to supplement the textbooks.

### **6.3.3 The Teaching Materials Added by the Teachers**

Considering the problems above, the teachers made efforts to go beyond the textbooks as a way to realise their goals of helping students communicate properly with Chinese people and develop intercultural competence by bringing Chinese culture to their classes. Two themes appeared in this regard: daily life and cultural phenomena as topics; and videos from the internet as a medium.

#### **Daily life and social phenomena in China as topics**

Some participants bypassed the contents in textbooks about customs and history and added topics related to daily life for students. For example,

我会选比较贴近生活的东西，比如中国的送礼的禁忌什么的。P2

I choose something closer to life. For example, gift giving taboos in China.P2

我觉得这些有必要教给学生一些可以日常使用的沟通的那些句子，比较简单，但书上没有的。P10

I think it's necessary to teach students some sentences that can be used in daily communication which are simple but not in the book.P10

P2 and P10 tried to provide more communicative norms in their teaching. The content in the textbook may provide fixed response patterns or more formal norms, for example, “你好吗？我很好” (How are you? I am fine), but people do not follow

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these patterns when they answer in real life. The efforts the participants made here were to make Chinese language and cultural norms practical so that the students could participate in real communication quickly in the future.

When students were interested in particular aspects of life in China, some participants stated that they prepared relevant lessons for them. P11 taught Chinese in a high school and her students had no Chinese exam pressure. Therefore, her teaching content could be flexible to some extent. She described an incident that happened in her class:

有一天上课，他们说想看一下中国高中生，所以我就下载了一个视频给他们看一下。我本来是想看完视频之后直接教一个跟高中毫无关系的一些语言知识。但是我发现学生一直在问，而且我很想打断他们说我们下节课再讲，我们先继续上课，但我发现他们真的很想了解，我觉得。我觉得好不容易他们有这个兴趣在那边，我就可以讨论一下。 P11

One day in class they said they wanted to see Chinese high school students so I downloaded a video to play for them. I originally wanted to teach grammar after watching the video. But I found that the students kept asking questions. I wanted to interrupt them and say that we will talk about it next lesson but we will continue our class first, but I found that they really wanted to know. I think it's hard for them to have this interest so I can discuss it.

The subject of Chinese high schools was completely absent from the textbooks. As P11's students were high school students they were curious about their Chinese peers. P11 gave priority to the students' wishes and changed her original teaching plan to encourage the students to relate to and compare the kinds of high school life in China and in the UK. She appreciated the students' desire for knowledge and took advantage of the chance to teach IC.

Another thing that the participants added to their IC teaching in their Chinese

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classes was cultural and social phenomena in China, especially in advanced classes. As discussed in the previous section, the textbooks had problems of outdatedness. Some participants discussed some important events or news about China with the students in the classes. For example, P2 mentioned the events in Hong Kong that were taking place at the time:

我们就说到关于香港独立的事情，我当时说我觉得香港如果独立，我觉得对他们的发展其实是没有什么帮助的。有的学生就说，如果是他们想独立，他们应该都是有权利可以独立出去，然后就算他们以后就是发展的特别差，他们应该也有这个权利去独立出去。就是他们跟我的那种想法是不太一样，我觉得如果你要选择独立的话，你肯定是要为长久的发展做考虑，确实观念上有不同。但我的学生还蛮好，他不会说就一定他觉得你这样不好，然后她讲这样是对的，大家也就是交流自己的看法，但是我也不会说特别庇护就是中国政府什么的决策，我就是也说说自己的看法。

We discussed the issue of Hong Kong at that time. I said that I felt that if Hong Kong became independent it would impact its development. I think if you want to choose independence, you must consider long-term development. One student said that if they want to be independent, they should have the right to leave even if their development is particularly poor in the future. The students had different ideas to mine. But my students are good because they did not conclude that I am wrong and they are correct. We just exchanged views, and I did not just defend the Chinese government but talked about my own views.

In P2's example, she and her students had a discussion on the Hong Kong issue as part of a lesson. One reason why the students could take part in the discussion and express their ideas was that there were only four students in P2's advanced class and the use of class time and choice of topics were more flexible. Furthermore,

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her students in the CI had different cultural and educational backgrounds, and they could provide different viewpoints in the intercultural discussion in class. This discussion was in line with P2's aim in teaching IC that she mentioned in her first interview: i.e., that the value of the Chinese classroom was that it encouraged negotiating and valuing different views rather than trying to reach a consensus among the students and the teacher. Such discussion also echoes Byram's (1997) call for a reflective and analytical stance towards individuals' own and others' perspectives in language teaching and learning to develop their skill of interpreting and critical cultural awareness.

### **The Medium of Internet Videos**

Given the monotony of presenting culture using the textbook, many participants mentioned video as a medium for teaching IC. Obtaining information from textbooks was relatively simple, but the stimulation of the brain lacked a three-dimensional sense (Li, 2020). The teachers thought that using video could make up for the weakness of textbooks. However, the process of selecting videos was not easy due to problems of duration, quality, and language, so some participants found it difficult to find suitable videos for classroom teaching. For example, P11 said:

我看过之前看过一个讲中国的服装的发展演变，我觉得特别好，但是它是中文，然后我也没有找到英文字幕，所以我觉得很可惜。P11

I saw a video about the making of a Chinese garment and I think it is very good, but it is in Chinese and I couldn't find English subtitles so I felt it was a pity that I couldn't use it in class.P11

For beginners, videos that are completely in Chinese are difficult to understand and translations by the teachers might be inaccurate. For example, the Tang Dynasty (in the sixth century AD) was mentioned in a video. P12 tried to explain it in Chinese first, but the result was:

我就问他们，然后他们就没有回应我，然后用蹩脚的英语解释一下，不

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知道他们有没有懂，反正就发现很难。 P12

I asked them (whether they understood or not), and they didn't reply.  
Then I explained in my poor English. I don't know if they understood it,  
but I found it difficult anyway. P12

P12 said that due to her English problem she was not sure if her meaning was clearly translated or not, resulting in poor teaching. Therefore, some participants expressed a strong hope that the CIs would organise or make some videos with English subtitles for teaching. However, some other participants worried that official videos might not be interesting enough. Although many CI teachers thought that they lacked suitable video material, the specific requirements needed in-depth consideration and research.

According to the participants' feedback, the videos that were more popular with the students and suitable for teaching IC were ones taken by foreigners in China. As P2 said:

网上有一些跨文化的(经验)那种视频，比如说在中国待了很多年外国人，他们会讲中文，然后他会分享那种他们的看法和观点。这样子的一群人他比我们更能了解两个国家文化之间差异。比如说有一些文化对比现象很有趣，比如说刚刚来中国他就觉得(中国人)不喜欢晒太阳，老外喜欢晒太阳，然后到现在十年以后他就一看(太阳)，他就要撑伞，是有很多这种文化的差异现象。 P2

There are some videos about intercultural (experiences), for example, videos by foreigners who have been in China for many years who can speak Chinese and they share their views and experience. This group of people can better understand the cultural differences between the two countries than we can. There are some interesting cultural contrast phenomena. For example, when he had just arrived China, he felt that (the Chinese) didn't like the sun, while foreigners liked the sun. Then,

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after 10 years living in China, when he saw (the sun) he took an umbrella immediately. P2

All these video makers have lived in China, and using their materials could make up for the Chinese learners' lack of intercultural encounters mentioned in section 6.1.4. Their popularity can be explained by the following three factors. First, these short videos were time-sensitive and interesting (Li, 2020). Li (2020) argued that short videos shot by foreigners in China always chose topics which attracted public concern, which can give students access to attractive and fresh information on China. Second, in his interview P7 stated that "foreigners' videos are more open-minded and seemed more objective than the Chinese themselves" because they interpret from different angles some aspects of culture that are taken for granted in China. Finally, the creators of the videos show their experiences in China and their intercultural problems and solutions (Li, 2020), for example, "They can better understand the cultural differences between the two countries" (P2) and their opinions were easy for the Chinese learners to sympathise with. These types of videos helped the students and teachers in CIs to understand each other's cultural psychology. Overall, the participants regarded these videos as an important medium for teaching IC.

As far as the use of textbooks and other teaching resources was concerned, three main points were uncovered: textbooks play a foundational role in providing topics for teaching IC, the teachers realised there were problems with the textbooks and so some CI teachers used their initiatives to supplement the textbook with new topics and media.

#### **6.4 Summary**

This chapter investigated the participants' experiences of integrating IC in their Chinese teaching. Its aim was to learn how their intentions were implemented and modified in new situations. Some conclusions can be drawn regarding the challenges they encountered in teaching in CIs.

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The first conclusion is that the new teaching environment changed some teachers' original views on Chinese teaching in the UK. First, some stereotypes about the English teaching style were broken, for example, not all British teachers implement "happy learning" in their classes. Instead of adopting an "ideal" local teaching style, the teachers realised that they needed to look for suitable teaching approach that could match particular class situations. Second, some teachers found some Chinese native speaker teachers used inappropriate expressions in classes, which created or may create stereotypes in the learners' minds. This finding echoed the views of other researchers that native speakers are not naturally language teachers (Byram et al., 2002). The CI teachers also realised that teachers may have different perspectives on particular issues due to their cultural and political background (Holliday, 1999). Third, the limited course time and the distance far away from China constrained the learners' learning. On the other hand, some teachers found that the geographic distance sometimes made them take on an even greater responsibility for connecting their students with the Chinese world.

The second conclusion is that the situation of students in CIs is complicated and the feedback from some students in the UK differed from the teachers' expectations. The learners studying in CIs and the Confucius Classrooms have different backgrounds. Some students lacked a basic understanding of Chinese culture, and some students had low motivation, while some had rich information about Chinese culture and a high acceptance of different perspectives and behaviour of Chinese people. Although the teachers did not make explicit connections between language proficiency and IC, a number of them found that students with better Chinese proficiency may be more receptive of different viewpoints and mediate better in intercultural exchanges. Drawing on the new information on the students they collected in lessons, the teachers adjusted their aims or the focus of their teaching. For example, when the students' learning enthusiasm was not high, cultivating their curiosity and interest became the teachers' primary aim.

The third conclusion that can be drawn is that textbooks played different roles in IC teaching in the eyes of different teachers. A number of the participants regarded the

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textbooks as a reference for selecting cultural topics for teaching IC. Some teachers were not satisfied with the topics in the textbooks. For example, some content was outdated or too brief. Under such situations, most teachers I interviewed skipped the content in the textbooks and added more material to achieve their aim of teaching IC by selecting new cultural topics and a new medium.

I have expounded the challenges that CI teachers encountered on three fronts: campus environment, student feedback, and textbook use. Some of these challenges are not unique for integrating IC into Chinese teaching, but are faced by Chinese language education more generally, such as time limitation and different teaching styles (Zhao, 2013; Ye, 2017). However, some of the challenges faced by CI teachers have not previously received much attention. The first is the complexity of CI students and the teaching context. In this study, the participants mentioned that CI students included retired people, middle school students, and college students. The teaching environment is also diverse and includes excellent private schools, remote public schools, or universities. The situation that CI teachers may face different types of students and classes made their teaching more complicated. For example, a learner-centred approach which is suitable in middle schools may not necessarily be appropriate in the Institutes. Second, these challenges are not separated from each other. For example, improper expressions from some Chinese teachers may cause students to form stereotypes, which then affect the interaction between students and new CI teachers; Time constraints may also lead teachers to give up on the cultural content in textbooks and choose more effective content and methods to achieve their goals quickly. The learning context of being far away from China has an impact on students' different learning needs and motivation. The interconnection of all these factors indicated the complexity of teaching culture and IC in Chinese classes in CIs. The findings from CI teachers' experiences in this study can provide reference to other language teachers in terms of teaching culture and IC in similar situations.

Having explored the challenges the participants met during their year in the UK, the next chapter focuses on the participants' reflections on their understanding of

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teaching IC in Chinese language education by comparing their perceptions of the aims and focus of integrating IC in Chinese teaching before, during, and after their year in the UK.

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## Chapter 7

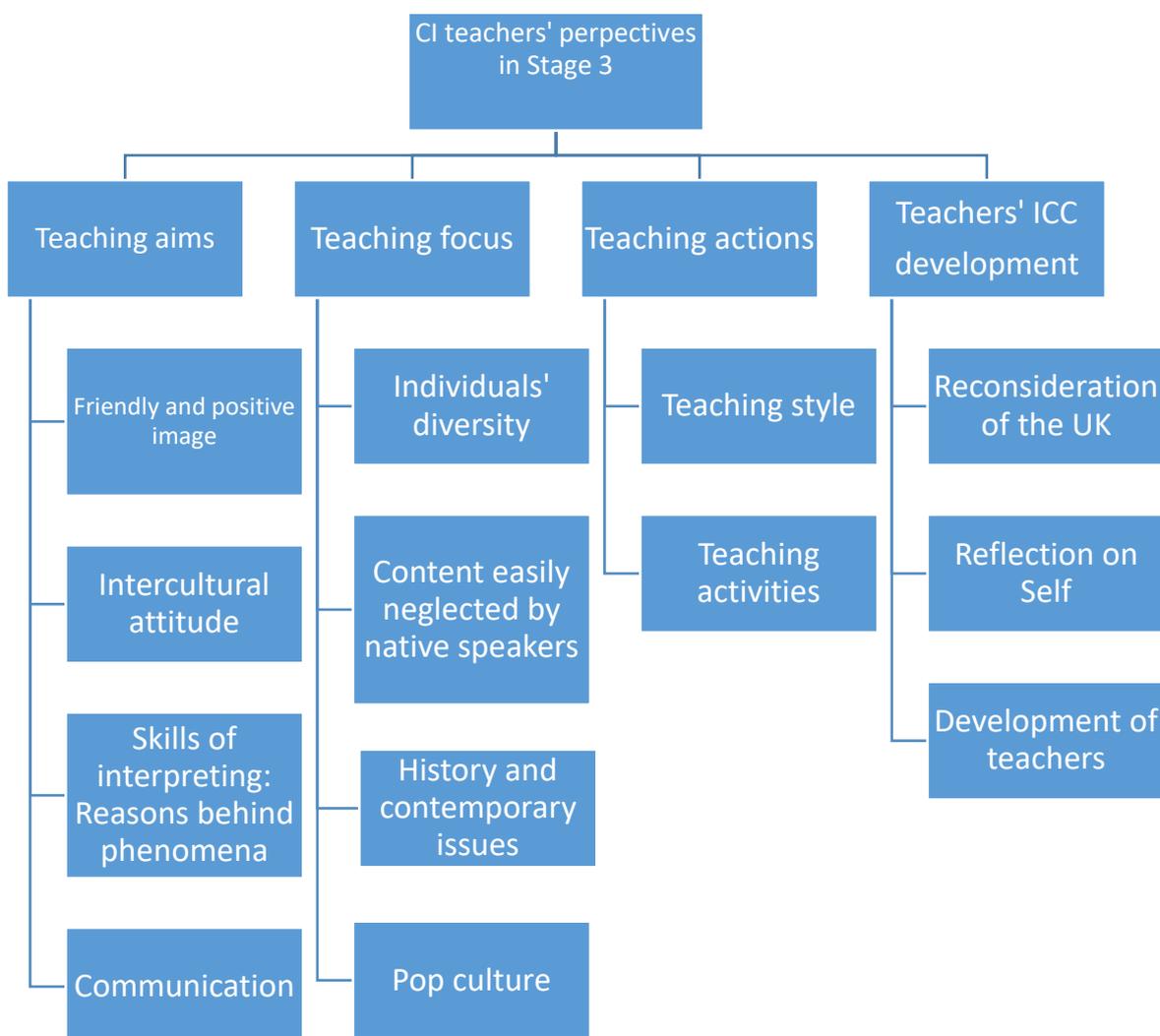
# CI Teachers' Perspectives and Reflections after Working in the UK

Having introduced the trainees' (CI teachers') perspectives before going to the UK in section 5.3 of chapter 5 and presented their experiences related to integrating IC in Chinese classes in CIs in chapter 6, I next explore their understandings of and reflections on their pedagogical aims, the focus, and methods of teaching IC in Chinese classes at the end of their journey in the UK in order to answer my third research question:

**How are their initial perspectives on culture and intercultural communication (as discussed in RQ1c) reinforced and/or challenged through their teaching experience (in RQ2)?**

The figure below conceptualises the teachers' perspectives at this stage.

Figure 8 *The structure of Chapter 7*



As indicated above, the findings on the CI teachers' perspectives are presented in four sections: teaching aims (section 7.1), teaching focus (section 7.2), teaching actions (section 7.3), and the teachers' own development of intercultural competence (section 7.4). In order to compare the CI teachers' perspectives before and after 1 year of working in the UK, this chapter is similarly structured to section 5.3. As the findings in this chapter show, some of the themes mentioned in section 5.3 recurred, with the teachers' views being confirmed; some themes recurred, but with adjusted contents; and, some new themes appeared. In the first three sections of this chapter (sections 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3), I present and analyse these changes. In addition, I also found that the experience of living and teaching in the UK affected

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the teachers' understanding of IC and their intercultural competence; these experiences are discussed in section 7.4. The final section of this chapter (section 7.5) summarises the earlier sections and presents the conclusions drawn from them.

Section 7.1 examines the teachers' perspectives regarding their teaching aims.

## **7.1 Teachers' Perspectives on Teaching Aims**

Four main themes were captured here: 1. understanding authentic Chinese culture; 2. forming intercultural attitudes; 3. understanding the reasons behind cultural phenomena; and, 4 communicating in real life.

### **7.1.1 Construction of an “Authentic” Image of Chinese Culture**

As shown in chapter 6, some participants were aware that there were some misunderstandings and stereotypes of Chinese culture among their students. Thus, after teaching in the UK, many participants stressed their aim of presenting an “authentic China” to their students.

The first theme relating to “authenticity” concerned the diversity and dynamics within Chinese culture. In section 5.3.1, the participants discussed this theme in terms of ethnic and regional diversity and the rapid development in China. The participants basically maintained and continued to value the “diversity and dynamics” previously noted, and the teachers still often mentioned this aim in the later two rounds of interviews.

In addition to diversity and dynamics, some new themes appeared regarding the image of Chinese culture after the participants had worked in the UK.

#### **7.1.1.1 “China is not a Distant and Mysterious Country”**

Although China and Britain are geographically far apart, and there are also many cultural differences, P11 hoped that the Chinese classroom could narrow the psychological distance between students and Chinese culture. She said that her aim was:

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[...] 让他们觉得其实中国没有他们想象的那么遥远那么神秘，他们跟我们一样的。就是我希望拉近中国和英国这边的距离。 P11

[...] to make them feel that China is not as far away and mysterious as they think. 'They are the same as us. I hope to reduce the sense of psychological distance. P11

P11 stated that some learners had an idea that China is a distant country with an exotic culture. This perception may be because some teachers wanted to make learning Chinese look “cool” by emphasising both Chinese as a “truly foreign language” (Jordan & Walton, 1987) and Asian exoticism to attract people to learn the language (Hubbert, 2019, p. 15). However, from the perspective of interculturality, P11 emphasised the points of connection between people (Baker, 2012; Jin, 2021). Thinking of Chinese as immeasurably different indicated a “self and other” position between Chinese and British culture, which may lead to exaggerating the challenges of learning and understanding Chinese culture, and even lead to hierarchising the self and one’s group on a higher level (Grimshaw, 2010). This hierarchising was contrary to the purpose of interculturality approach. In this case, P11 hoped to narrow the psychological distance between students and Chinese culture by emphasising connections between cultures and people rather than defining people as being apart, separate or at a distance from each other (Jin, 2021), which was consistent with the characteristics of interconnection in the theory of interculturality to some extent.

#### **7.1.1.2 Friendly and Positive Image of Chinese Culture**

After having contact with some local people in the UK, some participants stressed the importance of delivering a friendly and positive image of Chinese culture. P12 mentioned that:

因为我觉得出一趟我感觉外界对咱们很迅速崛起的国家来说，其实有点畏惧，有一点...他们其实有些人还是觉得中国人不诚信什么的这些。我

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正因为如此，我才更想让学生接触到一些咱们文化底蕴中好的一部分的内容，中华民族文化骨子里这种仁义礼智信的这些东西。 P12

Because I feel that, when I go out, towards the rapidly rising country like China, there is actually a kind of fear, a little bit. Emm .... some of them (local people) think that the Chinese are dishonest. That's exactly why I want to expose students to some good parts of our culture such as benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom, and faith that are embedded in the Chinese culture. P12

As this excerpt shows, P12 felt that, although the image of China was associated with rapid development, China's development was not viewed in a "positive" way. For example, terms such as "dishonest" made him worried about the image of Chinese people and Chinese culture in the local people's eyes. Sias et al. (2008) argued that negative impressions may hinder learners in establishing friendships with host-national counterparts and impact their learning interests. The result of P12's contact with locals strengthened P12's belief that teaching Chinese was an essential opportunity to provide a "positive" aspect about Chinese culture to students to lessen their negative impression (if they had any).

P10 supported this point and she explained the necessity of setting this goal considering the media information the students may come into contact with. She said:

中国是一个正在发展的国家，我们有可能受到的新闻媒体的（负面报道），主要集中于中国不好的方面。但是我们也应该让学生看到中国好的方面。 P10

China is a developing country, we may be subjected to the media's (negative reports), mainly focused on China's bad aspects, but we should also let students see China's good aspects. P10

As Byram (2021) stated, how people perceive another country is based upon the

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interactions with other people. Rather than evaluating individuals' statements about culture was true or not, what lay behind these statements was important (Holiday, 2016). As shown in her excerpt, P10 thought that "negative reports" in the media which portray China as a "powerful other" for the Western world (Zhu, 2010) influenced the view of local people (including the learners) to some extent. Thus, P10 stated that her emphasis on the achievement and hospitality of Chinese people was necessary to guide students to construct a more balanced or a multiperspective understanding of Chinese culture. Like P12, P10 believed that Chinese teachers, through their interactions with the students, may also influence the students' perception of Chinese culture by offering them a different perspective from which to reconsider their original views.

The excerpts from P10 and P12 indicated that recognition of China's rapid development may not translate into a comprehensive or positive evaluation of Chinese culture. As Jack Ma, the founder of Alibaba, said at the 2020 China Green Companies annual meeting, "We are not going to show a strong country, but a friendly and beautiful country." Similar to this statement, the two participants here also wanted not only to present the rapid development of China's economy and society, but also Chinese people's willingness to create friendship through the teaching of IC in Chinese classes.

Overall, compared to the teachers' statements in chapter 5, some teachers hoped they could help students not only to establish a diversified, modern image of Chinese culture, but also an accessible and friendly image of Chinese culture to close the gap between the learners and Chinese culture in order to motivate their learning.

### **7.1.2 Intercultural Attitudes**

As noted in chapter 5, in their first interviews many participants used the phrase 求同存异 meaning "to seek common ground while reserving existing differences" to discuss their attitude towards the different cultures. Having worked in CIs, more detailed interpretations of their views on intercultural attitudes responding to the

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students' situations were found.

### **7.1.2.1 Curiosity and Interest in Chinese Culture**

First of all, as discussed in section 6.2.2, some teachers noticed the low motivation of some students to learn and engage in intercultural exchanges in CI classes, while others noticed the positive role of students' curiosity and interests. P5 said:

我觉得我们的汉语课，给他们一个动力和契机，让你们让他们去做调查做研究。之前他们可能不会去想知道这些，但是因为上了课他们就会有想知道去搜索的动力。[...] 上次他们就在他们学校大会上做了一个展示，就是关于中国新年的，完全我没有插手，是他们自己做的。 P5

I think my Chinese class can provide them with a motivation and opportunity to explore. They might not have interests in Chinese culture before, but become interested after my class. [...] last time, they made an exhibition about Chinese New Year at their school meeting. I did not arrange anything, and they made it all by themselves. P5

P5's students were beginners and she thought that the reason why her students wanted to explore and participate in Chinese culture spontaneously arose from the curiosity and interest in Chinese culture cultivated in previous Chinese classes. These students' performance proves that curiosity and interest can play an important role in improving students' learning motivation and engagement. Therefore, some participants began to list "curiosity" as the primary goal in beginners' classes.

### **7.1.2.2 Openness to Different Voices**

This idea was a continuation of the theme of "reserving differences" mentioned in section 5.3.2. The difference here is that some participants regard this goal as the goal of their 1-year term of teaching IC. In other words, they think that, compared with other goals, it is possible to cultivate students' open attitude through short-term

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Chinese learning. P6 set an “open and inclusive attitude” as her priority and gave the following reason:

我觉得很难通过我十周的课就去扭转他们的观念，但是可以让他们就是了解有不同的渠道手段去听不同的声音，去听听中国人的想法，或者说其他国家人对于同一个问题的想法，他们可以耳听八方，多听一些不同人的想法，不是只听他原先接触到的很狭窄的口，然后他更有自己的逻辑思维能力，能够辨别不同人的观点，哪些是客观的，哪些是片面的，他可能多听了以后就自己慢慢的会形成自己的观念.P6

I think it's very difficult to change the students' perceptions through my 10-week courses, but I can let them know that there are different channels to listen to different voices, to listen to Chinese people's voices, or people from other countries on the same issue. They (the students) can listen more, not just use the narrow channel they have before. Then the students can improve their own logical thinking ability and can distinguish different people's opinions, which ones are objective and which ones are biased. P6

P6's statement came after teaching one semester in a middle school. She stated that it was very difficult to change the students' perceptions quickly. Individuals' perceptions of other countries and cultures are “acquired in socialization” (Byram, 2021, p. 64). They may be constructed and influenced by the learners' family, education, and social media. Compared with changing their perception, P6 believed that what a Chinese teacher can do first is to provide students with more opportunities to listen to different ideas and ways of collecting information. What P6 expected was in line with the attitude dimension in Byram's ICC model (2021, p. 62) that the students need to have “attitudes of openness, of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgement with respect to others' meanings, beliefs, values and behaviors”. Then P6 pointed out that the cultivation of such intercultural attitudes can lay a good foundation for the cultivation of other abilities in the future (Byram et

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al., 2002). For example, with willingness to discover other perspectives, the learners can develop a skill of interpreting and relating (according to Byram's (1997) attitudes savoir) that helps them interpret events from another culture.

### 7.1.2.3 International Perspectives

Although the words "international perspective" appeared in the ICCLE document (see section 5.3.1), in the first round of interviews no participants stressed this idea. After contact with students from different cultural backgrounds, P11 thought that the role of the Chinese classroom should not be limited to exploring Chinese culture. She said:

我觉得这样说起来有点官方，但是我觉得也确实是让他们更有全球化视野.或者说让他们能知道自己处在一个多元化文化的世界。他们能更加接受每个人，每个文化的独特性，更有平常心去看待这个世界。P11

I think it is a bit official to say this, but I think it the students need to have an international perspective. That is to say, let them know that they are in a world full of diversified cultures. In a multicultural world, they need to accept the uniqueness of others, and have an *píng cháng xīn* (unbiased mind) to see the world. P11

P11 defined an "international perspective" as a psychological state in individuals that allows them to use a 平常心 (*píng cháng xīn*, unbiased and calm mind) to treat the world. The 平常心 (*píng cháng xīn*) mentioned by P11 is not only aimed at the attitude towards Chinese culture, but can be transferred to any other intercultural contexts. In section 5.1.2.4 it was noted that the ICCLE, which is the guiding document for TCSOL, mentioned the term "international perspective" which can be linked with the concept of "intercultural citizenship", postulated by Byram in 2008, that is, an ability to engage a multicultural and international community that includes more than one set of cultural values, beliefs and, practices rather than only focus on 'community' as local, regional, national (Byram, 2014). Here, P11 only mentions

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the way of looking at the world, but does not refer to either developing the learners' social service capabilities in the world" (ICCLE, 2014) or to making efforts to promote the formation of communities (Byram, 2008). Therefore, for some teachers like P11, their understanding of the international perspective stayed at the way of seeing world, and had not been combined with citizenship education (Byram, 2008).

Overall, this section has highlighted the importance of forming an intercultural attitude through Chinese language teaching. Curiosity, openness to different ideas, valuing cultural diversity were given a central place by the teachers in my study.

### **7.1.3 Skill of Interpreting and Understanding**

The third aim of teaching IC mentioned by the participants was leading students to explore and understand the context or values behind cultural products and phenomena. While this aspect of IC was also mentioned in their first round of interviews (see section 5.3), their teaching experience in CIs made some participants reconsider its necessity and feasibility.

P2 stated that explaining the reasons behind cultural phenomena was important and she gave the example of explaining "loudness norms" in her Chinese classes.

他们一开始觉得中国人说话都很大声，然后他们就觉得这样是特别没有素质。我希望他们能有一种想法说，为什么中国人要这么做？然后我就会跟他们说，因为我说现在我这一代人可能会还好，但是你们可能会注意到我们以前的那些人，比如说我们爷爷奶奶辈的会说话特别大声，因为他们以前都是在工厂里面工作，然后工厂那边机器特别吵，所以他们要跟对方说话会很大声，然后就养成了这种习惯。所以他们就会理解，然后他们就会懂说原来是这个样子他们就会懂。 P2

At the beginning, some students thought that Chinese people speak very loudly, and evaluated it as "bad manners". I want them to think why

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Chinese speak loudly. Then I told them such situation is different in my generation. The old generation, like my grandpa's generation, would speak very loudly because they used to work in the factories where the machines were very noisy, so they had to speak very loud and they formed this habit. In result, my students can understand. P2

Starting with this cultural behaviour of speaking loudly, P2 takes the students through a reasoning process to explore the reasons behind it. P2 did not define Chinese as a whole, but detailed certain groups of people, and she related the phenomenon to the economic situation of China and people's working conditions at that time. Although P2's explanation may not be accurate, she led her students to reconsider the judgement of "bad manners", and evaluate the phenomenon critically based on a process of reasoning which was beneficial for cultivating students' critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2021). P2's position here aligns with Byram's (2021) view of the role of the language teacher in encouraging the students to create the process of their reasoning, and thus, better develop their ability to evaluate cultural phenomena critically.

By contrast, some participants mentioned that this goal was not suitable for beginners. P6 stated her goal was initially too high for beginner students in a Confucius Classroom.

我可能当初想表达给他们的东西太多了，然后我觉得他们可能接受不了。我当时想的是不是简单的展示一下我们这些文化，或者说我们有什么习俗，我们会做一一些什么东西，我可能更多的想跟他们讲中国人在后面想表达一种什么样的情感。P6

I wanted to express too much to them at the beginning, and then I thought they may not be able to accept it. What I was thinking at that time was not simply showing our festivals or customs. I wanted to tell them what kind of feelings Chinese people attach to. P6

She made this statement after reviewing a lesson she gave to her classes on a

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traditional Chinese festival, the Dragon Boat Festival. The Dragon Boat Festival is related to Qu Yuan, a patriotic poet who lived during the Warring States period of ancient China (about 270 BC). She said that she had planned to “let them understand Qu Yuan's country feud, and then understand his grief in [a] poem” but concluded “I feel that the time is too short, there is no way to give students a complete explanation of historical background and people’s beliefs at that time.” P6 thought that the lack of time and students' ability to understand made it difficult to achieve this teaching goal during her lesson and she hoped other Chinese teachers could make up for this omission in the future.

P6’s view reflected a need for a threshold in developing student’s ICC. A threshold is a need that is “attainable in a relatively short period of time” (Van Ek, 1980, p. 96). Byram (2021) stated that setting a threshold in language classes is a pragmatic way to balance what is necessary with what is motivating. For example, considering the students’ situation, in P6’s case, understanding the diversity of traditional Chinese festival celebrations can be set as a threshold because what these beginners need for their first term of learning Chinese may be attitudes of interest in otherness and a substantial knowledge of the (dominant national) culture of China (Byram, 2021). Having threshold can help the teachers design their teaching goals and plan in advance rather than providing too much in classes.

Overall, P2 and P6’s different decisions in terms of the goal of developing the skill of interpreting and understanding indicated that they shared Byram’s view that the language teacher can decide “which components are emphasised and which objectives are prioritised in, or even excluded from” (Byram, 2021, p. 106) developing ICC in language classes. Considering students' feedback and specific needs, teachers can set different thresholds for their classes in different periods on the premise of developing ICC.

#### **7.1.4 Adaption to Future Study or Life in China**

As many CI students had a plan to travel to or study in China in the future, some teachers in this study set helping them to adapt to life in China in the future as their

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teaching goal. As P1 said:

这些学生，你要教他们中国人有什么特点，他们有什么习惯，我觉得是更有用的，他们能够来到中国之后是更好地适应一下中国社会，如果他们要来这边工作或怎么样旅游什么的，知道怎么样跟中国人打交道。 P1

For these students, you should teach them the characteristics of the Chinese people and their habits, which is more useful. After they come to China, they can better adapt to Chinese society. If they want to work or travel in China, they need to know how to deal with the Chinese. P1

P1 thought that providing such communicative knowledge was necessary for students with urgent communication needs, as it would help them to act meaningfully and properly in intercultural situations. There is a strong element of practicality in such teaching which aims to help the students to avoid cultural pitfalls in unfamiliar settings and to communicate after short-term Chinese learning. P1's point of view is consistent with the threshold discussed in section 7.1.3. Given students' foreseeable needs, much classroom work will be focused on sociolinguistic knowledge and the skill of interaction (Byram, 1997).

In summary, the four aims explored in this section were similar to those reported in the first stage of this study in chapter 5, including: construction of an image of Chinese culture: i.e., diversity and dynamics; attitude to other cultures: i.e., 求同存异 (seek common ground while reserving existing differences); and developing the skill of interpreting: understand reasons behind phenomena. However, some contents within the themes were adjusted to some degree after the participants' intercultural experience in the UK. Specifically, the image of Chinese culture in the first stage was more focused on presenting Chinese culture itself, while the added content was more concerned with the learners' feelings. According to interculturality theory (Dervin, 2010; Jin, 2014), creating a nonmysterious image of Chinese culture can avoid the dichotomy between self and other and close the emotional distance between the learners and Chinese culture. Secondly, the teachers continued to

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draw on the intercultural attitudes noted in Byram's ICC model (1997, 2021), including curiosity, openness, and respect for diversity. These factors were not limited to Chinese culture, as the learners were expected to broaden their horizons and deal with different views in world culture. Thirdly, the goal of helping students understand values behind behaviours and phenomena through the use of a reasoning process echoes the objective of developing CCA in Byram's model (2021). Finally, some teachers particularly mentioned preparation for intercultural adaptation for those students who will study and work in China in the future. Overall, after having taught in the CIs, some teachers proposed that CI teachers also need to take the teaching environment and students' situation (which were discussed in sections 6.1 and 6.2) into consideration when designing their teaching goals.

Having explored how the participants' goals were set as regards integrating IC into their teaching, in the next section I centre on the teaching focus the participants adopted to realise those goals.

## **7.2 Teachers' Perspectives on the Focus of Teaching IC**

On the whole, while the focus of IC teaching in the CIs was still on contemporary Chinese culture, after a year of teaching in the UK the interpretation of modern Chinese culture as regards teaching content had been enriched.

### **7.2.1 Individuals' Diversity**

Chapter 5 discussed the ways in which the participants presented the diversity and development of Chinese culture in, for example, changes to past customs in the new era, the application of new inventions, and the diversity of regions and nationalities. However, through their CI teaching experience some participants saw the limitations of such content. First, it was hard for some participants to embed so much information into Chinese classes due to the limited time. They could introduce only an overview and encourage the students to learn by themselves after classes. Furthermore, some participants were aware that some of the static configurations of culture in the textbooks were not connected with students' life and so it was hard

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to raise their interest in exploring them further. Thus, the teachers were trying to look for more useful content to catch their students' attention and achieve their intercultural goals.

Some participants proposed that presenting the uniqueness of individuals' lives in China was an effective way to present diversity. P2 said:

我要告诉他们中国很大的文化，这种多元性其实是人的这种多元性，希望让他们了解原来有这样这么多形形色色的人.P2

I want to tell them that China has "various" cultures. This diversity is actually the diversity of people. I hope to let them know that there are so many people of all kinds. P2

P2 reduced the emphasis on specific cultural groups and shifted to leading the students to recognise that individual difference. P2 also wanted to counter the impression of a monolithic China by breaking the fixed way of teaching. For example, P2 said

有的老师只教一些通用的，比如说你好，早上好，然后晚安。但是我会跟他们说中国人可能打招呼会说 hi，然后说问问别人吃了吗？然后问问别人去哪，我不会跟他们说中国人每个人都是一样打招呼的，是没有一个那么固定的。我觉得对于西方来说也是一样，没有一个那么固定的方式。P2

Some teachers only teach some general greetings, such as hello, good morning, and good night. But I will tell them that Chinese people may say hi, or ask others if they have eaten, or ask others where they are going instead as other form of greeting. I won't tell them that Chinese people do it all in the same way. I think it is the same for people in the West, there is no such fixed way. P2

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Intercultural communication occurs between individuals who have experienced different ways of life and have their own “cultural capital” (Byram, 1997, p. 40). Taking "greeting" as an example, P2 emphasised the importance of paying attention to individual differences in communication with Chinese people. P2's view is in line with Byram et al.'s (2002) view that communication takes place between complex human beings with multiple identities rather than between a group of people with the same characteristics. Thus, the teachers need to be aware of the risk of oversimplification, such as teaching unified cultural rules and to allow the presence of people's individualised and changing views (Jin, 2014) in Chinese classes.

### **7.2.2 Easily-neglected Communicative Culture**

In the process of the teaching of IC, some participants realised that some cultural content is easily overlooked by native speakers. P3 stated that when choosing teaching content, teachers should think from both sides.

如果对外汉语的话，更多的是从对比的角度来看，不仅要站在自己的角度，还要看别人的文化。本来有一些并不是被重视的内容，可能反而会被引起重视。比如说中国的这种待人接物的礼仪，或者是餐饮的礼仪，这些东西，已经融入到我们的日常生活中，我们平常不会有这种想法（去重视它）。但教学中，这些就会凸显出来。P3

Teaching Chinese as a foreign language is more from the perspective of comparison. We should not only stand in our own perspective, but also look from students' side. For example, there are some things that are not taken seriously by us like the etiquette of treating people or dining in China, they were integrated into our daily life and we did not notice. But in teaching, these will be highlighted. P3

P3 pointed out here that some novice teachers may possess low sensitivity and so may find it hard to identify cultural differences when they first start teaching. Because they were teaching overseas for the first time, they initially prepared their

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teaching from their own point of view. However, overseas students who rarely come into contact with Chinese culture and people physically can experience many misunderstandings which come from insufficient knowledge of trivial, small culture behaviours which are heavily culture-laden (Liddicoat et al., 2003). Byram et al. (2002) pointed out that “they cannot see the wood for the trees”, and so the insiders of a culture sometimes can not to conceptualise what is too familiar because what they may learn or know may have been acquired unconsciously. For example, P5 found in one oral practice that her students did not know the place of 主食 (i.e., farm staples such as rice and noodles) in Chinese meals, and so mixed them with the main course. Chinese practice is different and contrasts with the cultural practices the students have learnt and their assumptions. With the accumulation of experience gained from interacting with local students, more participants were aware of this problem.

### **7.2.3 Combination of History and Modernity**

Some participants pointed out that in order to guide students to understand the reasons behind modern social and cultural phenomena, it was also important to include in their teaching some components of traditional cultures and values that have been handed down. The traditional culture in the Chinese classroom is no longer limited to the superficial content of traditional skills, but now includes a historical perspective to guide students to explore and build a system for analysis. P2 and P11 described the common process they followed when they taught cultural phenomena in Chinese classes:

两个小时的课，我可能前一个小时我会先从当代的入手，然后一个小时我可能会慢慢的转到以前。比如，我先讲现在的剩女问题，然后慢慢讲到以前古代妇女的地位是什么样子的，帮助他们理解为什么会有现在这个现象，有一个长期的时间线来帮助他们理解. P2

For a 2-hour class, I may start with the contemporary issue for one

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hour, and then I slowly turn to the past for 1 hour. For example, I talked about the problem of leftover women first, and the status of ancient women, then helped them understand why there is this phenomenon. I want to build a long timeline to help them understand. P2

我讲中国教育，我一开始会从孔子引入，然后讲到现在的教育，比如高考，然后再讲中国现在和国际化接轨教育的一些情况。P11

I will talk about Chinese education. I will introduce it from Confucius at first, then talk about current education, such as the college entrance examination, and then talk about some situations of China's current education in line with internationalisation. P11

The experiences of P2 and P11 show that contemporary issues are closely connected with China's deep cultural history, and teaching about the past is key to tracing back to the source of cultural phenomena and thus ensuring better understanding and interpreting of Chinese people now. Many participants mentioned that such a connection between history and the present cannot be absent in Chinese classes and that it can enable students to form the ability to explore and interpret.

#### **7.2.4 Pop Culture as Attraction**

The low motivation of students was discussed in chapter 6 where it was noted that some participants realised that “many of them [the students] have no exam pressure; they really just want to relax and learn something interesting” (P2). As Hubbert (2019) stated that feeling “cool” is one important motivation for some young students to learn another culture, some participants in this study tried to use pop culture and the present lifestyle of young Chinese people to attract the interest of these students. P11 said:

高中生的话,我就会给他们看我手机里的一些 app。比如说给他们看小红书,给他们看 b 站这种,让他们了解到这种比较真实的一些变化,比较

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真实的一些流行文化之类的，他们非常感兴趣。 P11

For high school students, I will show them some app on my mobile phone. For example, I showed them the Red Book and Bilibili apps, so that they can understand some fashion and pop culture in China, and they are very interested in it. P11

P11 and some other participants mentioned that using Chinese traditional artistic performance was a traditional way to attract students' attention, but their experience of teaching in the UK reflects that those traditional customs are far removed from students' lives, which makes teaching about them and holding students' attention for a long time, especially with young students, difficult. The influence of pop culture has become increasingly prominent.

Overall, after working in the CIs in the UK, some Chinese teachers tried to teach culture and IC in Chinese classes by focusing on individuals' diversity, easily-neglected communicative knowledge, the history behind cultural phenomena and sometimes pop culture in China. Compared with only mentioning the theme of "modern China" noted in chapter 5, focusing on these elements enabled the teachers to enrich the content of their lessons and to embody IC to a great extent here. Taking this approach helped them to guide students to be aware of the diversity in Chinese culture, to reduce communication barriers, to develop the skill of explaining cultural phenomena, and to stimulate enthusiasm for participating in learning and communication.

After discussing the teaching goals and focus of IC in Chinese classes, I show in the next section how teachers tried to implement pedagogical alternatives in their classrooms to realise their goals of teaching IC.

### **7.3 Teachers' Perspectives on Teaching Practices**

In terms of teaching actions, the participants talked about some teaching actions that they had identified as effective after teaching in the UK for a year.

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### 7.3.1 Supply of Adequate Information to Break Down Students' Stereotypes

The teaching experience with students made some teachers realise that overcoming stereotypes is an important task for Chinese language teachers (see section 6.2.1). Some participants used the providing of information as a common way to deal with the problem of stereotypes. For example, P7 stated:

学生有没有刻板印象，你也没有办法控制，但是讲到某一个可能有刻板印象的东西的时候，怎么把它讲得没有刻板印象就是我的责任吧，就怕我不是说特别详细，方方面面他要跟他说到，尽可能地全面。P7

In fact, you are not able to control students in terms of stereotypes. But when it comes to something that may lead to stereotype (in Chinese classes), it is my responsibility to avoid it. Although I cannot know each aspect of one particular cultural event, but I need to give them information as comprehensively as possible. P7

P7 gave an example of *zongzi* (a traditional rice dish associated with the Dragon Boat Festival in China). He mentioned a heated discussion about *zongzi* in China in his class when they discussed the question: "salt or sweet taste, which is better". He pointed out that people in northern China eat sweet *zongzi*, while southern Chinese like salty *zongzi*. In explaining this detail, P7 wanted to express the idea that "people in the north and south of China sometimes can't understand each other sometimes"(P7). His intention was to make the students aware of the richness and diversity inside Chinese culture.

This method of providing information can also be supported by other authentic materials, including television shows, news broadcasts, films, and printed materials (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). As mentioned in section 6.3.3, a number of videos were used to assist in providing information in Chinese classes, especially for beginners who can watch videos with the help of translation. Having the opportunity to observe the first-hand images of behaviours and interactions of people from other cultures through videos (Li, 2020), could make students realise that cultures vary

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from region to region, people to people, and thus reduce stereotypes.

Many teachers in my study considered that providing information was an effective and persuasive way of dealing with the problem of students' previous stereotypes. For example, P7 said that providing a lot of information was however seen as time-consuming when their courses are limited in duration. However, simply providing information also is not enough. As Byram (2021) stated, language learners should understand how different perceptions and stereotypes are created, rather than "having to acquire knowledge of all specific instances and example" (p. 64). Only providing knowledge has a limited effect on the cultivation of students' skills of analysing and interpreting. In addition, similar to the case of P7, teachers using this teaching action is mostly linked to the teacher-centred approach. Their students' participation and the development of their abilities to explore are not fully emphasised when the teacher takes the role of a knowledge provider rather than a guide to knowledge construction.

### **7.3.2 Intercultural Comparison: Similarities and Connection**

Employing cultural contrast and connection has always been a common teaching method in foreign language classes. Most participants in this study encouraged their students to make comparisons ranging from cultural facts to differing perspectives. However, at the same time, I could also feel some changes were occurring in the classroom.

P2 described the specific process of using cultural contrast in her lesson on "Education in China" as follows:

我们有一门课讲到中国教育制度，有的学生去中国做过交换生。我先让他们回忆以前在中国学习的时候，他们有一些什么样子的感受。然后我会跟他们介绍中国的一个整个教育体系，就是从幼儿园开始一直到研究生博士生，需要通过哪些考试。然后接下来让他们对比他们自己国家的。因为我的学生他们几个人都是不同的国家，有意大利的，然后波兰

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的还有英国人，他们分享一下他们国家的整个教育制度，然后接下来让他们对自己现在教育制度提出一些建议。 P2

We have a lesson about the education system in China. Some students went to China as exchange students. First, I let them recall what they felt when they studied in China before. Then I let them compare the differences between Chinese and Western universities with their experience. Then I will introduce to them the whole education system in China, from kindergarten to postgraduate doctoral students. Then I let them compare their own countries because my students are all from different countries, including Italy, Poland, and Britain. What they think is not so good and what is good about China or their own countries is discussed. P2

As noted by Guest (2002), a traditional contrastive approach may serve to oversimplify the richness and variety within cultures. It tends to undermine the fact that cultural attributes exist along a continuum, preferring instead to foster a general image of “us” and “others” . Although, P2 was still inviting the students to seek similarities and differences based on a “large culture” (Holliday, 2009) by saying “compare the whole education system” at the beginning, in this process, the students were given opportunities to share their own experience and make a personal response to each other’s opinions, and they also could see how others might look at their own ideas from another perspective. The approach taken by P2 went beyond simply creating a general image of “us” and “others” in the traditional sense by providing the learners with chances to reconsider their own ideas from more than one perspective and to develop the skills of comparing and interpreting advocated in Byram’s ICC model (Byram et al., 2002).

In addition, after one year teaching in the UK, some participants placed more stress than was reported in section 5.3’s findings on the importance of the similarities and commonness of cultures. For example,

我会试图去联系他们的（文化）。他们的文化当中有类似的表达，或者说

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是有类似的这种情形的东西。我更重视这些文化间相似的内容。 P6

I tried to contact them (culture). There are similar expressions in their cultures, or things with similar situations. I paid more attention on the connections between cultures. P6

As Holliday (2018) noted, people do culture in similar ways, but with different content and appearances. In this case, P6 hoped that students could find similarities between their own culture and Chinese culture to help them understand events in Chinese culture, so as to achieve mutual understanding rather than pushing two cultures away. P6's teaching echoed the teaching goal of "close psychological distance" in 7.1.1.1 and Holliday's (2018) intercultural teaching principle of using cultural threads to replace blocks, and was also helpful in developing the skill of relating and interpreting in Byram's ICC model (1997, 2021).

### **7.3.3 Discussion: Students' Own Experience**

The participants commonly mentioned group discussion and pair activities as ways to let each student speak positively and express his/her ideas clearly.

This method is mostly used in higher-level Chinese classes, where the students have a basic understanding of China and have experience of communicating with Chinese people. As reported in chapter 5, the participants stated that they would like to share their personal experience and opinions in Chinese classes. However, after working in a CI, the participants said they paid greater attention to the students' viewpoints because they realised that students' opinions based on their experiences can add more new perspectives to the discussion. P2 gave an example of discussing the "norm of loudness" (this example was mentioned in 7.1.3) in her classes where her students added an experience.

因为他说以前他有去问她身边一些朋友，为什么中国人说话很大声，然后有些人会说因为以前的人没有接受那么好的教育。但是学生们都想不

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通这跟受教育程度低有什么关系，一个学生说他的爷爷他以前也没有受过什么很好的教育，但是他爷爷就不会说很大声。然后我跟他们说以前在工厂工作这个原因，他们就会理解.P2

One student said he had asked some Chinese friends before, and they said the reason was previous people did not have good education. But the students can't understand the relationship between 'speaker loud' and low education level. One student said that her grandfather did not accept good education before, but her grandfather didn't speak loudly. They thought my reason of working in factories was more reasonable.  
P2

As shown in this extract, one student introduced an explanation he had heard from friends in the class and P2 gave another explanation. The students then considered, discussed, and reached a certain degree of approval regarding P2's explanation. In this process, P2 conducted the discussion, but she was not the only source of information. The teaching became a cooperative process in which students and teacher shared ideas.

At times, discussions happened suddenly without planning. P2 talked about a small conversation when she mentioned the Great Wall in class.

有些学生会觉得他去中国去长城那边，他觉得中国人特别没有素质，然后乱吐痰什么的，但其实我也是承认的，因为确实有这种现象...讨论后，他们最后都同意，在中国不同的城市差异也挺大，因为中国很大，他们也见过特别遵守秩序的，但是他们也见过比较没有素质的。P2

Some students went to the Great Wall before and one thought that Chinese people don't have good manners, such as spitting indiscriminately. But, in fact, I also admit it, because there is such a phenomenon ... after discussion, they all agreed that there are quite big differences in different cities in China, because China is very big, and

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some students have seen people who are especially disciplined, while they have also seen people who are rude. P2

From the above excerpts, we can see that P2 thought that even negative comments on Chinese behaviour can help students start an intercultural exchange and improve their cultural understanding and so address stereotyping. Holliday (2018) argued that intercultural education is a process of self-analysis and of externalising existing experience. Students may not however be aware that they have these resources, and the role of the teacher can be to help them to use their experience in an intercultural way. In P2's case, the discussion in her class involved the students' personal experience and she encouraged the students to reflect on their opinions and behaviours. However, one of the shortcomings of discussion in language classes that there are higher requirements from students, such as their ability, past experiences, motivations, and the degree of participation and engagement (Baker, 2012); thus, the teachers need to consider their students' situation before adopting intercultural discussions in their classes.

#### **7.3.4 Role Play**

In addition to the three teaching actions mentioned above, a few participants also mentioned role play where teachers purposefully introduced or created a vivid and specific scene in the teaching process.

This teaching action aims to create an authentic classroom environment in CI classrooms which are far away from the host culture geographically and psychologically. In her teaching, P5 asked students to play the part of Chinese businessmen meeting British businessmen, and she guided them to use more appropriate words and behaviours. For example, if role players needed to be polite, she would suggest making more use of "请 please" in conversations. Although the learners' language levels were not very high, P5 thought that this kind of activity could help them in finding out more about the everyday life and routines characteristic of Chinese language and culture and could make students think from different angles and cultivate a sense of multiangle thinking.

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Overall, the participants implemented and continued the teaching actions mentioned in their first interview, but they made some adjustments to their actual teaching in light of the feedback from students. At the same time, these teaching behaviours often appeared in the form of a combination of approaches in Chinese classes. For example, after watching or listening to a video provided by teachers, discussions of cultural norms, characteristics, and values of the Chinese community may follow. Reflective class discussions together with textbook materials to extend textbook dialogues and inspire learners' critical thinking (Gómez, 2015) were used. These activities, to a certain extent, reflected the characteristics of reflection and dynamics in intercultural teaching. However, the teaching model or activities were basically unchanged, with some participants saying that they had not acquired new teaching methods and skills as a result of their year's teaching in a CI, and few attempts were made to include new teaching methods.

### **7.3.5 Teachers' Expectations: 'Students can Experience China in the Future'**

Many participants pointed out that overseas Chinese teaching, where teachers are the main source of information, has limitations. As P5 said:

我觉得我虽然是一个中国人，我也不能特别系统的说当代中国怎么样，因为每个人视角也不一样，有的情况我就不太了解，比如你说你要介绍中国大学生的生活，我就知道像我跟我比较像的大学生，别的大学生什么样生活我也不太了解，因为大家喜欢做事情不一样，比如说有些人喜欢就打游戏有的喜欢别的。我不想给他们一种以偏概全的印象。还是希望他们能自己去中国去体验和感受。 P5

I think that although I am a Chinese, I can't systematically explain how modern China is like, because everyone has different perspectives, and there are some situations I do not know well. For example, if you say you want to introduce the life of a Chinese graduate, I know people like me, but there are also other students who live different lives, like

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playing games. I don't know all kinds of campus life. I do not want to mistake a part for the whole or mislead them. I still hope that they can explore and experience in China by themselves later. P5

On the one hand, P5's words echoed the concept of 'authenticity' as dynamic processes which involve reinvention (Blommaert & Varis, 2011). P5, like some other native speaker teachers, questioned her own legitimacy as an "authentic representation" of culture and expressed discomfort in being perceived as a cultural expert (Fichtner & Chapman, 2011). On the other hand, P5 mentioned the value of learning in China for the students. An immediate personal experience is a focal point for learning, giving "life, texture, and subjective personal meaning to abstract concepts" (Kolb, 1984, p. 21). Some studies have also confirmed that after studying in China, the language learners' ICC has been improved (Zhu, 2017; Duan et al., 2021). Some teacher in my study, like P5, also supported students' efforts to make contact with different Chinese people and Chinese culture on their own.

In summary, the teachers have used the teaching actions that they were familiar with, such as supply of information and discussion, for teaching culture and IC in their Chinese classes. But some teaching actions were adjusted toward intercultural way according to their accumulated teaching experience. For example, some teachers started to encourage students to share their intercultural experiences and views into discussion. However, as the findings in this section indicate, there is as yet not systemic change in specific teaching methods to achieve their intercultural goals in Chinese classes.

#### **7.4 Teachers' Awareness of their Own Intercultural Communication**

In the process of teaching in the UK, the teachers appeared to become more aware of the influence of this experience on their own understanding of IC. Their views toward the culture in the UK and their own culture had changed after a year of living in the UK. Three main themes emerged from their review of their year abroad. These related to: 1. gaining knowledge of the UK; 2. reconsideration of 'self;' and, 3. becoming a teacher.

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### 7.4.1 Knowledge of and Attitudes towards the UK

Living in the UK was an eye-opening experience for the participants because they had not been to the UK before. Although they had gained a certain amount of cultural knowledge about the UK through books or the media in China, a significant expansion of cultural knowledge about the UK and a coconstruction of understanding of different cultures was found in their statements.

First of all, many teachers mentioned the improvement in their level of English. For example, P11 stated that she had learned a lot of things that she could not have learnt from English classes in China:

这边有很多那种 slang, 就是跟他们当地的年轻人出去玩的时候, 他们就一直在跟我解释。因为我都没有学过, 完全不懂。跟他们学。P11

There are many kinds of slang here, that is, when they go out to play with their local young people, they always explain to me. Because I haven't studied it, I don't understand it at all. I learn from them. P11

Second, the teachers had broken down some inherent impressions about the people and culture in the UK. As reported in chapter 6, the participants talked many times about students' stereotypes, but stereotypes also existed in the teachers' minds sometimes. P6 found that the real London was different from the city of her imagination.

可能我想象中的伦敦是中心区这一块的伦敦的样子, 但是因为我现在生活在东区, 我就发现旁边很多印巴人, 然后就发现原来伦敦是一个就是这么多民族这么多多元的地方。你即使看到一个白人面孔的人, 他也可能是来自欧洲不同的国家, 不一定是英国当地人。然后你听他们的英语都是有不同国家的口音的, 就不会像我原先想象的那样大家都是操着一口精英范儿的伦敦腔说话, 现在我反而觉得伦敦是一个很某些方面来说很

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接地气的地方。P6

I imagine London is probably all like the central area, but since I live in the East District, I find many Indo-Pakistani people nearby, and then I realised that London is a place with so many nationalities and diversities. Even if you see a white man, he may come from different countries in Europe rather than being a native of Britain. Then, when you listen to their English, they all have accents from different countries, which is totally different with my original assumption that everyone is speaking with an elite London accent. Now I think London has a style of “approachable” in some aspects. P6

P6 fully realised that London is also a city composed of diverse cultures and people after working there. Although the teachers mentioned the concept of the diversity and dynamics of “culture” many times before coming to the UK, there was still a gap between their theoretical cognition and field contact. When the teachers contacted with local people in the UK including their students, they were fully aware of the inner diversity (Byram et al, 2002). P2, for example, stated: “At first, I thought that most British people were similar, but now I think people have quite different ideas, even in a city.”

In addition, some participants found that the British and Chinese share more similarities than they had anticipated. For example, P1 pointed out a connection that she did not know about before.

我觉得英国有很多文化跟中国是比较相似，我觉得英国也比较传统一些，尤其是在可能在过个四五十年前是非常传统，可能跟中国也差不多。他们说他们可能就是这三四十年突然变得开放。老派的英国人，其实跟很多中国人是很相似的。P1

I think there are many cultures in Britain that are similar to China, and I think many British people were also quite traditional, especially 40 or 50

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years ago, and it may be as traditional as Chinese people. They (local people) said that they may have suddenly become open in the past 30 or 40 years. But old-school British people are actually very similar to Chinese people. P1

With P1's contact with different British people, she began to acquire some information that she had never known before, for example, the changes in British society. Like Chinese culture, British culture has undergone changes and development, and so is not static. The stereotype of "British people are open" in the minds of some teachers were changed through their actual contact with British society and culture, which also enabled the participants to reflect on their own ways of thinking of and evaluating other cultures. So, the participants' reflections demonstrated how they were developing the ability of critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997).

Finally, some participants mentioned that their views had been expanded and their acceptance of different cultures had increased. P1 said, for example:

这边的同性恋文化其实是觉得无所谓，这就是一个很正常(的事)。但在中国可能就会是一个比较敏感的话题，或者说大家都不会承认或怎么样。我在这里就和他们一样感觉也无所谓，班里有这样的学生也不会说什么。 P1

The 'gay culture' here is just "not a big deal", which is quite normal here. But it may be a sensitive topic in China, or some people will not admit it. When I got here, I start to feel like them 'feel normal', and there are such students in my class. P1

Among these new ideas, some teachers also encountered cultural conflicts that they could not understand or agree with; however, they tried to mediate them more critically by using their intercultural knowledge and attitudes. P2, for example, in the discussion with students about the status of teachers, pointed out:

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我的三个学生，虽然他们三个不同的国家，但是他们都觉得他们国家老师地位很低。有个学生说在英国没有人想当老师，就只有那些找不到工作人才会当老师。我觉得特别奇怪，我说老师他从小就是教育一个孩子，他对孩子产生很大的影响，他应该有很高的社会地位才对，这是中国人的想法。但是他们这边人完全不是这样想，他说老师他只是在教自己以前学过的东西，所以这是没有任何技术含量的，没有创新。然后我觉得我也能理解他们为什么这样想，但是确实（和我的认知）有很大差别，我会觉得这对我冲击很大。 P2

My three students, although they are from three different countries, all feel that their country's teacher status is very low. One student said that no one wants to be a teacher in Britain, only those who can't find a job will. I feel very strange. I said that teachers educate and have a great influence on children, and they should have a high social status. This is the Chinese idea. But people here don't think so. They said teachers were just teaching what they had learned before, so there was no technique and no innovation. I think I can understand why they think so, but it is really quite different (from my cognition). P2

P2 pointed out that teachers' status in China has always been respected under the influence of Confucian culture, whether in middle schools or extracurricular schools. Thus, she felt shocked when she first heard an opposite idea from students. Nevertheless, P2 indicated that she could understand the reason for this difference to a certain extent, and that that helped her reinterpret her previous experience in a local high school where she did not feel respected by the students. Similar to P2, other participants also explained that, whether they accept it or not, being exposed to these new viewpoints helped them broaden their horizons, expand their ways of thinking (P12), and show tolerance (P11). Such findings reflected that consistent with their expectations for their students in section 7.1, the teachers also developed intercultural attitudes such as openness in themselves, and suspended disbelief in

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in line with Byram's ICC model (1997) in the period of teaching in the CIs.

#### 7.4.2 Reconsideration of "Self"

In addition to their changing impressions of the UK, some participants began to reconsider themselves and their own culture.

##### 'I'm more patriotic'

In the final round of interviews, some participants mentioned that the overseas working experience had made them more proud of their own culture. P6 explained where this feeling came from:

我更爱国了，因为之前会觉得中国还是一个发展中国家，然后可能经济实力或者说国力上面可能不如西方国家，然后总觉得我们还有特别多需要进步的空间。但是我感觉来这边生活以后，觉得国内还是有很多做得非常好的地方的，我们生活中有很多便利之处，这边反而没有，比如说像手机支付。以前可能没有特别直观的感受，然后出来了以后发现我们也是蛮先进的，民族自豪感还是反而比在国内的时候更强了一些。 P6

I'm more patriotic, because I thought that China was still a developing country before, and then maybe its economic strength or national strength might be inferior to that of Western countries, and then I always felt that we still have much room for improvement. However, I feel that after living here, there are still many places in China that have done very well. There are many conveniences in our life, but there is no such thing here such as paying by mobile phone. There may not be any special feeling about this before, but after coming out, I find that we are also quite advanced, and my national pride is stronger than when I was in China. P6

As P6 said, the experience of living in another country serves as a propeller to reflect on one's own normal life. In the past, P6 had assumed that life in developed

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countries would be more convenient, but she found that China's development in many aspects has reached an advanced level when she reevaluate her life in China. The sojourn experience made some participants develop a heightened awareness and appreciation of their own culture.

### **Chinese culture: “one of world culture”**

After teaching in the UK, some teachers began to look at Chinese culture from the perspective of students. Below, P10 describes the changes in his thoughts before and after coming to Britain:

刚开始我们自己都认为好像中国是一个比较大的国家，然后中文是一门比较重要的语言，但是你来了之后，你就会觉得中文其实是在众多语言中很普通的一种语言，学生选择这门语言只是觉得很好奇，只是想过来学一学而已，并没有说是觉得喜欢你们国家才来学还是怎么样。P10

At first, we all thought that China was a big country, and then Chinese was an important language, but after you came, you will feel that Chinese is actually a common language among many languages. Students only feel curious when they chose this language, they just want to have a look, it does not mean they like your country or what. P10

This point is related to the students' motivation mentioned in section 6.2, and P10 stated that teachers and students had different orientations in Chinese learning. Teachers focused on the importance of the particular subject of Chinese, while Chinese was one of the students' foreign language choices. P10 pointed out that emotional attachment may increase with further learning, but the original intention of learning was curiosity. Teachers needed to adjust their mentality in this process:

我觉得要放平自己的心态，就是因为在国内我们一直受的教育观念就是说中国是世界上唯一才流传至今的文明古国，一直显得自己很骄傲的样

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子, 但其实它就是众多文化中的一种。 P10

I think it is because we have always been educated in China, that is to say, China is the only ancient civilisation in the world that has only spread to this day, and it has always looked proud of itself, but in fact it is one of many cultures. P10

P10 admitted that, as the education in China focuses mainly on the history and achievements of China, it was inevitable for them to have the idea of "pride" or showing off. This idea echoes the view that the individuals' perspectives on their own culture were largely shaped by their primary socialisation in the family and secondary socialisation in formal education (Doyé, 2003; Byram, 2021). However, as they come into contact with more and more cultures, the concept of multiculturalism becomes visualised and clear. An idea of P5's also confirms this point.

之前认为中国文化很伟大, 在这里我发现其实人家也不差。我觉得各有各的美, 然后没有比较的感觉, 我觉得你更会欣赏他们就是各自不同的(美)。 P5

I thought Chinese culture was great before, but here I found that people are not bad. I think each has its own beauty, and then there is no feeling of comparison. I think you will appreciate that they are different. P5

P5 thought that living and working in Britain gave her the opportunity to have close contact with local art and culture. These experiences made her not only realise the wonderfulness of different cultures and to rid her of the idea that some cultures are superior or inferior to others, but also to form a more inclusive and exploratory intercultural attitude. By exchanging ideas with students, she felt that if people "know more possibilities, you may think in more ways" rather than following the dominant evaluations in their own society.

Overall, these teachers' statements indicate that they were aware of the problem of

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cultural superiority in their minds before and some teachers showed more open and inclusive attitudes to different viewpoints and cultures and appreciated diversity in local cultures (see 7.4.1). As emphasised by Byram (2021) in the intercultural attitude dimension, language teachers also need to master the ability “to decentre” (p.45) in order to analyse their own and others' cultures from the view point of the others. If Chinese teachers show signs of cultural superiority or ethnocentrism when teaching, the IC between them and Chinese learners cannot be pleasant and effective (Zu, 2016). Only when Chinese teachers stand on an equal footing with learners and discuss intercultural issues with them with curiosity and respect can both teachers and students acquire knowledge of other cultures and form a multilingual and multicultural attitude which can be displayed in the classroom and beyond (Byram, 2021).

### 7.4.3 Process of Becoming Teachers

As novice teachers, going to the UK was the first time most of my participants had been abroad. Teaching in a CI was their first teaching experience for some teachers. These experiences were also a process full of changes for some teachers in my study. For example, P2 compared her teaching at different stages.

我就觉得刚开始我上课我特别担心我准备一些内容不够多，但我觉得我现在完全不会有这种担心了，我就是可以保证，我准备这些东西，我是可以在这节课讲完的，然后如果时间多出来的，我有时候分享一下我的故事。以前我写教案，每个部分几分钟都写下来。我现在发现就不是这样子的，就是因为你这个课堂节奏是要根据情况去调整的。 P2

I feel that at the beginning, I was particularly worried that I didn't prepare enough content, but I don't worry that much. I can guarantee I have enough to teach. If there is more time, I can share my stories to fill in. I used to write everything in lesson plans. But now I know I should adjust according to the situation. P2.

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The excerpt from P2 shows her initial uneasiness as a novice teacher, some other participants expressed similar feelings. Their teaching at the beginning was inflexible and required purposeful concentration (Kwo, 1994). After teaching for a while, they developed strategic knowledge and an understanding of when to break rules. During the culture and IC teaching term, some teachers at first used PowerPoint slides to present cultural facts; then they started to adjust their teaching content and actions according to students' feedback (see section 6.1.1). With the increase of teaching experience, some teachers began to teach more flexibly, for example, sharing more of their own intercultural experiences in class (e.g., P2) or trying some teaching activities which they had not commonly used such as role play (e.g., P5). Overall, these teachers became more flexible and confident in teaching, including teaching culture and IC.

Overall, the experience in the UK played a positive role in improving the teachers' awareness of their own intercultural communication. Some teachers reconsidered their own and other cultures and changed some taken-for-granted ideas. The experiences of teaching in the UK made some teachers fully realise the multiculturalism in other cultures. This realisation reduced their own ethnocentrism (Byram et al., 2002) and influenced the way they taught culture and IC.

## **7.5 Summary and Conclusions**

This chapter aimed to answer the final research question: How are their initial perspectives on culture and intercultural communication (as discussed in RQ1c) reinforced and/or challenged through their teaching experience (in RQ2)? Through a comparison with the findings in chapter 5, I found that after a year of teaching in the CIs the participants had a deeper understanding of teaching culture and IC in Chinese classes and produced some new ideas about it. A number of conclusions can be drawn about changes of their perspectives on teaching culture and IC.

It was seen that the participants' goal of bringing IC into Chinese classes was first to build a diverse, dynamic, and friendly image of Chinese culture. Because of the stereotypes the participants met and of the distance between some learners and

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Chinese culture which they felt in CI classes, some teachers emphasised “friendliness” and “positivity” within Chinese culture to avoid cultural blocks (Holliday, 2018), to reduce stereotypes, and to increase their students’ enthusiasm for learning. Second, the teachers continued to draw on the intercultural attitudes set out in Byram’s ICC model (1997, 2021), including curiosity, openness, and respect for diversity. Third, the teachers expected their students to understand the values and meanings behind cultural products and phenomena, which is line with the reasoning process for developing CCA and skills of relating and interpreting in Byram’s model (2021). In contrast with the themes reported in chapter 5, intercultural attitude became a priory aim for many participants. Meanwhile, given students’ different language levels and the environment of different classes, some teachers realised the need to take into consideration the issue of setting a threshold when teaching culture and IC.

Secondly, to achieve the goal of presenting comprehensive Chinese culture and improving learners’ intercultural competence, the teachers adjusted the teaching contents according to their students’ situations and the teaching context, although the focus was still on contemporary Chinese culture. First, teachers stressed the importance of individual differences and individuated views on cultural issues (Jin, 2014). Second, they noticed the content the students needed, but which native speakers easily neglected. Third, they still stressed the importance of the connection between history and contemporary in Chinese culture to help students build a system to understand and interpret cultural events relating to Chinese culture. Rather than centring on textbooks, other sources of cultural teaching materials like popular culture were more frequently used by teachers. They were trying to broaden the boundaries of their teaching content and motivate their students to take part in intercultural exchanges with Chinese culture.

Thirdly, the findings from the teachers’ teaching actions showed that some teachers were attempting to move their teaching in an intercultural direction. In particular, the teachers provided diverse and rich materials including videos to show the diversity and dynamics of Chinese culture to challenge any stereotypes students may have

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held. Second, the teachers encouraged the students to find cultural similarities and differences after getting access to new knowledge through learning Chinese language and culture. Such comparisons can provide opportunities for students to see a foreign culture from the inside and their own culture from the outside (Byram et al., 2002). Third, discussion was an important way of teaching IC in the language classroom. Some teachers gave students opportunities to discuss intercultural matters in their classrooms, an approach which may have helped in (re)shaping learners' attitudes towards Chinese culture and Chinese people, and to develop their critical cultural awareness to evaluate different perspectives and event from different cultures (Byram, 1997). In this way, they were trying to get rid of traditional teaching pedagogies about culture and began to make sense of students' intercultural experiences they encountered in and outside classes (Holliday, 2018).

However, there are still some problems in the participants' teaching. First, some teachers' goals focused on understanding and interpreting Chinese culture and they rarely mentioned notions such as global citizenship and international perspectives in their teaching objectives, although these are stressed in the ICCLE (2014) which expects the learners to contribute to the world (see chapter 5.1). Second, some teachers still relied on delivering cultural information and providing information. However, the success of this strategy depends largely on the teachers' personal ability to accumulate teaching resources; it can also mean that the teachers play the dominant role in classes rather than cooperation of teachers and students. My analysis of the interview data and observations revealed that few teachers asked their students to collect new cultural information by themselves. Thirdly, there were no systematic intercultural approaches or methods in the teachers' statements. When following some traditional teaching methods such as comparison, some teachers did not guide the student to reflect their thinking towards their own culture, which is a key step for intercultural teaching and learning (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Moore, 2018). Furthermore, some teachers did not make full use of the intercultural content in the textbooks (Wang, 2017) and students' intercultural experience as teaching material (Holliday, 2018) for intercultural teaching. These findings indicate that some Chinese teachers still need more systematic and pedagogical guidance

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on teaching culture and IC in Chinese language classes.

The final conclusion concerns the teachers' awareness of their own understanding of IC. Their experience in the UK played a positive role in improving the teachers' awareness of their own intercultural communication. On the one hand, teachers had a deeper understanding of life and people in the UK and this understanding challenged some of their previous stereotypes. At the same time, the experience provided them with chances to reconsider their own culture and to think more critically and diversely about their original views of "Chinese culture." In addition, as novice teachers, they had experienced the process of "becoming teachers" and gained more confidence in teaching Chinese language, culture, and IC.

Having finished my analysis of the findings on the teachers' experience and reflection on teaching IC, I now turn to the conclusions of the study.

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# Chapter 8

## Conclusions

This qualitative study of Chinese teachers' perspectives on integrating IC into Chinese language teaching is located in the theoretical paradigm of social constructionism. Drawing on Byram's ICC model (1997, 2021) and interculturality theory (Dervin, 2016; Jin & Dervin, 2017), it takes novice Chinese teachers who teach in CIs in the UK as its research object. The study aims to explore how CI teachers perceive integrating IC into Chinese teaching, and how the ways in which those perceptions were constructed and negotiated were influenced by their 1-year teaching experience in the UK through document analysis, observation, and interviews. Some valuable first-hand data was obtained and analysed in this study. This data is significant as it will help to improve the quality of intercultural Chinese teaching.

In this conclusions chapter, I first summarise the main findings from chapters 5, 6, and 7 in line with the study's research questions (section 8.1). Then, I highlight the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions and implications of the study (section 8.2). The limitations of the study and directions for further research are discussed in sections 8.3 and 8.4 respectively, while I offer final remarks for the whole study in section 8.5.

In order to address the research questions, this chapter begins by summarising the study's findings.

### 8.1 Summary of Main Research Findings

This study investigated Chinese teachers' understandings of teaching culture and IC in Chinese classes at different stages: before working in a CI; while working in a

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CI; and, at end of their 1-year work placement and concluded that those perspectives were not immutable. Below, I provide a review of the major findings and show how they contribute to answering each research question.

### **8.1.1 Answers to the research questions**

#### **RQ1: How are CI Teachers Prepared in China Before Going to the UK?**

To understand the preparation of CI teachers, I formulated three subquestions: a) How is IC presented in documents related to Chinese language education? b) How does CI preservice training in China prepare trainees to teach IC? and c) How do the trainees in this training course understand teaching IC before working in their CIs in the UK?

To address the questions above, I analysed two related documents: the ICCLE (2014) and the Standards (2015), observed the preservice training courses (a 1-month CI preservice training programme for Chinese teachers), and interviewed three trainers and 12 trainees involved in this CI training.

First, the content of the two documents involved the intercultural communication dimension to some extent, as reflected in Byram's ICC model (see section 3.3.1). The "cultural competence" component in the ICCLE presents the cultural knowledge, intercultural attitudes, skills of comparing, interpreting, and interaction, as well as international perspectives that should be involved in Chinese teaching objectives to help the learners to engage successfully in intercultural interactions with Chinese people and view the world culture from a muticultural perspective. The Standards contain the corresponding requirements for teachers, who should have multicultural awareness and cultural knowledge, in its "culture and communication" section.

However, there are some shortcomings in the two documents. First, the two Chinese documents focus more on cultural knowledge, especially specific culture of Chinese culture. Secondly, the explanations of intercultural awareness and skills in them are not as exhaustive as in Byram's model. For example, the ICCLE

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document states: “learners will use the modes of critical thinking in learning and understanding Chinese culture (ICCLE, 2014, p. 45)” without expanding upon the interpretation of critical modes as Byram does in his critical cultural awareness savoir. Third, neither document recommends particular teaching methods and techniques that could enable teachers to help learners develop their intercultural awareness and skills.

As for RQ1(b) concerning the content of IC teaching in preservice training, I observed the training courses on the “culture and communication” module and interviewed three trainers. From my observations, I found that, in the arrangement of the training course for CI teachers, a lot of time was allocated to cultural performance skills and cultural knowledge in the module on “culture and communication.” In addition, the key findings from the interviews with the trainers are as follows. First, improving ICC is one of the goals of Chinese teaching in their courses. These findings are reflected in other studies that highlight the importance of integrating IC into Chinese teaching (Zu, 2015; Jin & Dervin, 2017; Shi, 2020). Secondly, the trainers gave some suggestions on specific teaching issues, such as not having to pursue the Chinese language learners’ cultural identification, avoiding over-generalisations, and using personal experience to explain some sensitive issues. Although such content was scattered in different teachers’ statements, they still supplement the documents of the ICCLE (2014) and the Standards (2014) to a certain extent in terms of pedagogical techniques.

Interviews with 12 trainees (RQ1(c)) showed their assumptions about the teaching of Chinese culture and IC in terms of teaching objectives, content, and teaching actions. Emergent findings suggest that their teaching of culture and IC centred around three goals: to help students build a new image of Chinese culture; to cultivate an attitude of 求同存异 (seek common ground while reserving existing differences); and, to explore and interpret values behind cultural phenomena. These goals involved content similar to that on intercultural attitudes and skills of interpreting and relating in Byram’s ICC model (1997). Accordingly, the trainees also considered teaching content and teaching methods to integrate IC in classes. Some

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trainees planned to emphasise the content related to small c culture (Holliday, 1999) and modern life of Chinese people and to use teaching actions such as information provision, cultural comparison, and discussion, which are traditional classroom tasks for teaching culture and IC (Meadows, 2016). These findings echoed a view found in previous studies (e.g., Zu, 2013; Jin & Dervin, 2017) that many Chinese teachers, including CI teachers, are trying to depart from traditional ways of teaching and build on an intercultural approach, although their teaching plans are not mature and lack the support of systematic pedagogy.

Overall, previous studies have not made a detailed analysis of the guiding documents and training from the intercultural perspective. For example, the article by Zu (2016) mentioned that the ICCLE (2014) did not involve intercultural attitude. However, my study found that intercultural attitudes, although scattered, were included in that document and that elements such as openness and tolerance were mentioned there. In addition, some scholars such as Liu (2010, 2018) have studied the problem of preservice training using trainees' feedback, in terms of the lack of knowledge of classroom management and IC. This study has confirmed and supplemented these studies from the perspective of trainers. For example, one trainer in my study said that she provided some intercultural cases to make trainees familiar with specific teaching overseas.

Next, I discuss the novice teachers' experience of working in the UK and answer the second research question.

**RQ2: What challenges do the CI teachers meet when teaching IC in CIs? How do teachers reflect on their experience? How do they reflect their experiences?**

Through interviewing the participants after they had worked in the CIs for 3 months and at end of their work, I explored how the teachers' experience and their reflections on it could address RQ2.

As for the challenges the teachers met when they were teaching culture and IC in the CIs, four key findings emerged: inappropriate teaching actions of other Chinese

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teachers; unfamiliar overseas teaching environment; students' different existing knowledge and motivation; and, defects in teaching materials.

First, the CI teachers realised that they were not the only Chinese teachers the students might meet during their Chinese learning process. Some participants mentioned some other Chinese native speaker teachers they met during teaching in the UK. As a brief remark in class may influence the students for many years afterwards (Byram et al., 2002), some teachers in this study stated that the formation of some stereotypes such as students' over-generalisations may be attributed to the unprofessional performance of other Chinese teachers. This situation also indicated that native speakers are not equal to qualified language teachers (Kramsch, 1998; Byram et al., 2002), and specific training for foreign language teachers is more important than teachers' mother tongue (Byram et al., 2002, p. 12). Furthermore, some teachers noticed that learners may also hear some different ideas about particular phenomena in Chinese culture from different teachers with different cultural, regional, religious or political positionalities. Such direct and indirect contact with other teachers of Chinese made CI teachers realise their teaching environment is complex.

Second, CI teachers may face complicated situations with language learners in terms of their existing knowledge of Chinese culture and motivation. For example, some teachers mentioned that some of their students had a very old stereotype of China because of their lack of Chinese cultural knowledge. Such stereotypes were inflexible and may be resistant to new information (Gao, 1995), which affects students' intercultural attitude and enthusiasm for learning. Meanwhile, some students, some teachers felt, had low motivation to take part in intercultural communication, even Chinese learning. These situations conflicted with some teachers' assumption that Chinese learners would have some knowledge of and interest in Chinese culture before coming to a CI. While teachers can adjust their teaching behaviour to motivate students to a certain extent, improving this situation requires the efforts of teachers, students, and schools (Dörnyei, 2001). This complicated situation made the teachers realise that the goals and content of

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teaching culture and IC needed to be adjusted to adapt to the learners' different situations and needs.

Thirdly, the problem of textbooks sometimes made it hard for the teachers to find suitable materials to teach culture and IC. The findings showed that some teachers argued that textbooks are the crucial guiding teaching tool in Chinese language teaching because of their characteristics of being authoritative, academic, and informative. Nevertheless, some teachers mentioned that the textbooks had insufficient cultural contents or that the contents were outdated or too brief in this study. This study's finding on the shortcomings with textbooks corresponded to some previous studies (Zhang, 2006; Shi, 2020) which also found research textbooks for Chinese teaching do not pay attention to cultural and intercultural content. Thus, some teachers in this study chose to give up on the content in the textbooks and looked for their own teaching materials such as videos from the internet.

Fourth, the CI teachers were also faced with various difficulties such as time and geographical distance which have been long discussed by researchers (e.g., Ye, 2017). These problems also negatively affected the teaching of culture and IC. For example, the teaching context in which the learners are far away from China was seen by teachers as a hindrance because the learners have few chances to engage in communication with Chinese people in a Chinese linguistic and cultural environment. Thus, it is not easy for the learners to develop the skill of discovery and interaction when their interactions are limited to the classroom only (Byram, 2021).

In addition to these challenges, some of the teachers talked about experiences which had made them more confident or had provided support for them in teaching culture and IC. First, some teachers met students who showed strong willingness towards Chinese culture learning and interactions with Chinese people, as well as openness and inclusiveness to different cultural views and events. Secondly, some schools supported Chinese teachers to carry out cultural activities as part of building a multicultural campus, and some teachers got suggestions and inspiration from

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other Chinese teachers. Thirdly, with the development of the internet, teachers can use videos about Chinese everyday life and videos about foreigners in China. Using these resources seemed to play an active role in attracting students and provided chances for them to cross geographical boundaries and so get access to other cultures and intercultural experiences.

Overall, although the teachers had earlier voiced their desire to include intercultural elements in their classroom teaching, in practice their effectiveness was constrained or influenced by the teaching environment, students' situations, and teaching materials. After reconsideration of and reflection on their experience, the teachers made some changes to their original perspectives. This topic is discussed next.

**RQ3: How are their initial perspectives on intercultural communication (as discussed under RQ1c) reinforced and/or challenged through their teaching experience (as discussed in relation to RQ2)?**

Comparing the findings in chapter 5 on teachers' perspectives before coming to the UK with those of chapter 7 allowed me to identify some confirmation of these perspectives along with some changes. Findings that address this RQ are presented below.

As for teaching goals, the novice teachers' teaching goals that were reported in chapter 5 initially focused mainly on building a new image of Chinese culture, fostering intercultural attitudes, and exploring meaning and values behind cultural phenomena. After having taught in a CI for a year, some of their ideas about the objectives of their as regards teaching culture and IC have been modified.

First, the image of China mentioned in chapter 5 focused on diversity and dynamics. However, as shown in chapter 7, some teacher added projecting the positive aspect of Chinese culture as one of their objectives. Consistent with interculturality theory (Dervin, 2016; Jin & Dervin, 2017), some teachers hoped to close the psychological distance between learners and Chinese culture rather than build cultural blocks

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(Holliday, 2018). Moreover, a few teachers mentioned taking an international perspective as a way to transfer intercultural experience in Chinese learning to other intercultural contexts (Byram et al., 2002; Holliday, 2018). The second modification relates to objectives and thresholds (Byram, 2021). Considering the students' performance in classes, some teachers began to think about adjusting their teaching goals. For example, some teachers stated that compared with exploring the values behind cultural phenomena, cultivating students' interests in contacting Chinese culture was their goal for one-term teaching. Third, students were expected to understand the values and meanings behind cultural products and phenomena, which is line with the reasoning process for developing CCA and skills of relating and interpreting in Byram's model (2021). They wanted to help the students to critically mediate cultural conflicts and achieve mutual understanding among different perspectives.

In terms of teaching content and teaching actions, teachers made some adjustments and some new attempts that reflected their students' situation.

First, in order to present the diversity within China and lessen students' stereotypes about Chinese culture, some teachers underlined individual differences among Chinese people, such as introducing the teachers' own hobby or expressing their own ideas on some cultural issues. Making such changes indicated that their teaching was responding to theories of interculturality that claim people have multiple identities (Zhu, 2014) and have individualised and changing views on their own culture (Jin, 2014). Secondly, as native speakers some teachers may be unable to notice what is very familiar in this own culture (Byram et al., 2002). To mitigate this possibility, some teachers improved their sensitivity to cultural differences and paid more attention to small c culture, by paying attention to things that were especially needed by students but which other native speakers easily missed. Third, as for developing students' skills of relating and interpreting, some teachers stressed the necessity of linking a current cultural event to its historical origin to help students build a system for understanding the phenomena and views in Chinese culture.

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The novice teachers also made adjustments to their teaching actions and techniques. First of all, the teachers provided diverse and rich materials including videos to show the diversity and dynamics of Chinese culture to change students' stereotypes. Second, the teachers encouraged students to find the cultural similarities and connections after getting access to the new knowledge through learning Chinese language and culture. Third, some teachers began to encourage and guide students to share their own feelings or intercultural experiences (if they had any), which is in line with Holliday's (2018) suggestion of applying the existing intercultural experience to the new environment. Fourthly, some teachers began to try new methods, such as role-playing, to make students think from the perspective of interlocutors. Finally, many participants in my study stated that they hoped their students would have opportunities for experimental learning (Kolb, 1985), such as studying in China.

However, based on literature on IC theories and intercultural teaching pedagogy in chapter 3.3.3, this study found that there were some shortcomings in terms of teaching culture and IC. First, although some teachers focused on improving the learners' knowledge and intercultural attitudes to successfully communicate with Chinese people, few were aware that Chinese language education can make a contribution to global issues by helping the learner to become an "intercultural citizen" (Byram, 2008). Second, although some teachers attached importance to students' classroom engagement, they did not pay attention to developing students' skill of discovery in terms of seeking out new information. Thirdly, only some teachers reflected on the intercultural experience and feelings of students. Reflection as a key step in intercultural teaching and learning (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013) was not fully combined with classroom activities such as comparison and discussion. Such a lack may lead to superficial comparisons of large culture (Holliday, 2011).

Chapter 7 also presented some findings related to teachers' awareness of their own IC. Their year's teaching in the UK gave them the opportunity to rethink their own culture, to move away from their original preconceptions and ethnocentrism, and to

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think more critically. First of all, teachers who teach overseas have a better understanding of their own country's development and international status, and at the same time realise the necessity of reducing ethnocentrism in their teaching. Secondly, some teachers have been challenged for their stereotypes about British culture and are fully aware of the diversity of British culture and British people. Thirdly, most of the teachers in my study seemed to have more confidence and to have become more flexible about their teaching as a result of their year-long sojourn in the UK.

In conclusion, the findings discussed in chapter 7 addressed RQ3 “How are their initial perspectives on IC reinforced and/or challenged through their teaching experience?” in terms of its discussion of teaching goals, content, and actions, as well as the teachers’ own awareness of IC. As a result of their 1-year placement in the UK the novice CI teachers had improved their understanding of culture and IC and their awareness of the importance of cultivating ICC in Chinese classes, and they had adjusted their teaching ideas on teaching culture and IC to a certain extent. They had also modified their teaching actions to accord to particular teaching environments. Next, I discuss how these findings can support research and the teaching of culture and IC in the context of TCSOL.

### **8.1.2 Conclusions and contributions**

The answers to the research questions in section 8.1.1 reflect the Chinese teachers’ perspectives on integrating IC in their Chinese teaching. This study has analysed the CI guide documents, the pre-service training arrangements, several problems the CI teachers met in reality and their attempts at teaching culture and IC in CIs in the UK. It has identified a need in TCSOL to inform and guide Chinese teachers not just to teach hard facts about culture associated with Holliday’s notion of “large cultures” (Holliday, 1999) but also to cultivate students’ ICC. Based on the review of IC teaching in language education in Chapter 3 and the data presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, this section presents some themes emerging from the analysis of the findings that policymakers and Chinese teachers can take into consideration

when designing IC teaching in Chinese language education and that may contribute to complementing and extending existing knowledge in IC teaching in TCSOL.

### **Implementing policy**

My analysis of TCSOL documents (the ICCLE and the TCSOL Standards, see section 5.1) shows that there is a need to improve policy implementation regarding IC teaching in Chinese language classes. In the guide documents, the teaching aims involving intercultural attitudes and skills are presented dispersedly, and some terms are ambiguous and without explanation, such as ‘critically think’ and ‘objectively think.’ It can be difficult to take teaching action when the aims are not well-defined and ambiguity may prevent the teachers having a deeper appreciation of IC teaching. Some teachers in my study had the problems of ignoring students’ engagement and reflection, and limiting on information provision in practice. Therefore, there is a need to present the aims of teaching IC and make the meaning of ICC more systematic and clearer in the documents to help teachers know what knowledge, skills and attitudes are involved and what their roles and tasks are when teaching culture and IC in Chinese language classes.

Based on Byram’s ICC model (5 *savoirs*) and the findings in this study deriving from CI teachers’ lived experiences, I present the meaning of ICC in a table which policymakers and Chinese teachers can refer to when designing and planning teaching regarding culture and IC.

**Table 10** *The connotation of ICC in TCSOL*

<i>ICC</i>	<i>Components</i>
<i>Attitude</i>	Curiosity, openness, suspended judgement and 求同存异– seeking common ground while reserving differences. An international perspective.
<i>Knowledge</i>	Knowledge of one’s own culture and the target culture. Knowledge of general processes of societal and

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	individual interaction.
<i>Skills</i>	Comparison and interpretation skills. Discovery and interaction skills.
<i>Critical cultural awareness</i>	Critical evaluation of ideas and events skills

As in Byram's model (1997), 'attitudes' here refers to curiosity, openness and suspended judgement. A language teacher needs to help students master the ability "to decentre" (Byram, 2021, p.45) rather than assuming that their attitudes are the only possible correct ones. In addition to the attitudes in Byram's model, 求同存异 (seek common ground while reserving difference) was frequently quoted by the participants in this study, which demonstrates the importance of encouraging learners to foster an inclusive attitude to and respect for different cultures, and to be willing to mediate and negotiate in intercultural interactions. Moreover, an international perspective is involved here because some teachers in my study wanted to help their students to use intercultural attitudes to see world cultures through learning Chinese language and culture, rather than limit themselves to just Chinese culture. IC in language classes is also a chance to share perspectives on world issues and improve students' awareness of global affairs.

As for knowledge, the findings show that the Chinese teachers in this study stressed that their learners are expected to be familiar with both historical and contemporary aspects of Chinese culture, and understand the basic characteristics of different cultures and their similarities and differences. This is because some teachers found their students unfamiliar with cultural practices and potential misinterpretation may result in stereotypes or misunderstanding. However, as it is not possible for teachers to anticipate the knowledge that language learners need, the teachers also should notice the need to encourage their learners to keep an open mind regarding other cultures and keep learning and exploring.

As for intercultural skills, the comparison, interpreting and relating, and discovery and interaction skills in Byram's (1997) model (which is explained in section 3.1.1) should be involved in IC teaching in Chinese classes. The findings of this study

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show that the Chinese teachers emphasised the importance of comparing and interpreting values behind phenomena, while they did not pay attention to students' participation and discovery skills. Discovery skills are important to develop learners' ICC and need to be added in the guide documents and paid attention to by teachers. Furthermore, "think critically" in the document may be ambiguous in describing CCA in language teaching and learning, which refers to fostering a reflective and analytical stance toward one's own and other cultures (Byram et al., 2002). Involving it in IC teaching is important to help learners to be thoughtful and critical of what they take for granted and conscious in their evaluative responses to others (Byram et al., 2002). Overall, TCSOL documents need further clear explicit items regarding IC teaching to help Chinese teachers plan their intercultural teaching.

### **Complexity and flexibility in teaching**

The findings reveal the complexity and dynamics of the Chinese teachers' understanding and experiences of IC teaching. As was discussed in Chapter 6, different teachers responded to different teaching situations and challenges, and made sense of their IC experience. Their views on teaching culture and IC were influenced by their interactions with their teaching environments and students. The complexity of their IC teaching experiences will remind the Chinese teachers to keep an open and calm mind and be ready to adjust their teaching in terms of setting thresholds, choosing teaching actions and cultural topics. Regarding teaching aims, cultivating ICC does not have to follow the traditional concept of cumulative linear progress (Byram, 2021). By considering students' feedback and specific needs, teachers can set different thresholds for their classes in different periods with the aim of developing ICC. For example, cultivating curiosity can be regarded as a priority aim for beginner learners.

Methodological flexibility requires teachers to teach students in accordance with their aptitudes and to choose appropriate methods according to their actual situations. Although there is no one-size-fits-all pattern for teaching culture and IC in Chinese classes, below I summarise some issues arising from the teachers' perspectives regarding teaching culture and IC in Chinese classes, which may help

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them make sense of how IC teaching is realised in practice.

(1) Individual diversity. To challenge the learners' stereotypes teachers can emphasise individual diversity and that people can have individual and changing views on the same issue.

(2) Connection. Teachers can help their learners to connect knowledge (of history and modernity, or of their own and other cultures) together to form a knowledge system and cultivate their learners' ability to relate and reason, instead of just collecting cultural facts.

(3) Engagement. Most of the participants used the technique of providing information (including situational and personal information) in classes, but from the perspective of student participation, discovery and exploration activities can also be encouraged in classes.

(4) Reflection. Only letting students share their stories of intercultural experience in class is not enough. They should be required to question stereotyped ideas in their stories and critically evaluate their original ideas.

### **A gap between theories and practice**

The findings of this study show that there is a gap between research on IC teaching and practice in Chinese teaching. On the one hand, there are many studies on IC and ICC models in foreign language education written in English and in Chinese (such as Byram, 1997; Dervin, 2011; Gu, 2017, Zhang & Yao, 2020), which were reviewed in Chapter 3. However, the findings in my study show that some teachers did not have a clear interpretation of some concepts in IC teaching. That is, these theories and models were not reflected in the teachers' statements in this study. The reason may be that researchers or teachers may not pay sufficient attention to IC concepts and research in Chinese teaching and apply theories to the Chinese teaching context. However, this does not mean that ICC is a new concept for Chinese teachers. Some teachers already recognised that some ICC content is important. For example, although teachers did not mention the 'skill of interpreting' in the interviews, they emphasised the importance of understanding the value and historical background behind cultural events. Chinese teacher training should guide

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teachers to link theories and practices together, which may help them form a systematic understanding of IC teaching. On the other hand, findings from some teachers in this study indicate a need to know how to transfer theoretical IC concepts into specific teaching methods which they can then adapt to different teaching contexts. As was discussed in Chapter 5.3, many teachers in my study wanted to involve intercultural elements in classroom teaching, but some factors such as situation of students (see Chapter 6) made them confused with how to apply IC teaching in practice effectively. And current CI training pays more attention to theories and cultural knowledge. However, there is also a need for training programmes to equip teachers with the ability to design and organise a variety of appropriate activities in which intercultural perspectives are effectively integrated in classroom teaching, such as how to organise a discussion on international topics. Therefore, IC teaching related training of Chinese teachers also needs to put its teaching focus on methodological and pedagogical support.

### **The teachers' development**

Finally, this study has focused on the first year of novice teachers' work, which is a transition period from being students to professional teachers (Tarone & Allwright, 2005; Wang, 2017). The findings reveal that a year's CI teaching challenged some teachers' original ideas of IC teaching. For example, some teachers now have a deeper understanding of student-centred teaching. The teachers' development was informed and influenced by their interactions with institutions, students and teaching materials (see Chapter 6). Furthermore, some of the interpretations of the teachers' experiences in the findings chapters are instructive for other novice teachers' IC teaching.

First of all, novice teachers should realise that even though they are native speakers they do not have to know everything about Chinese culture (Byram et al., 2002) but they should try to design a series of activities to enable learners to discuss and draw conclusion from their own experiences, and use skills to analyse different ideas and respond to those of others. Second, regarding teachers' own attitudes to IC, they need to constantly reflect on and critically evaluate their original cultural views and

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overcome their cultural prejudices or ethnocentrism in a process of negotiating with people from other cultures. Third, a novice teacher may have problems with the language they use in the classroom and their teaching behaviour (Wang & Ren, 2015). The findings in this study also include some cases in which the students formed stereotypes due to the teachers' improper remarks. Therefore, Chinese teachers should be sensitive to their own expressions in classes to avoid stereotypical attributions.

Overall, this section has presented the key conclusions emerging from the findings regarding implementing policy, flexible pedagogical actions, the gap between theories and practices, and teacher development. These conclusions offer a contribution by providing a reference for policymakers, teacher trainers and Chinese teachers to define and appreciate the elements of IC in teaching, and make teaching culture and IC more accessible for those teachers who are struggling with similar issues to those of my participants so as to help them plan and orient their classroom teaching in an intercultural direction.

## **8.2 Implications of the Study**

To contribute to existing knowledge on integrating IC into Chinese language, I explored the perspectives and experience of a group of novice CI teachers in the UK. The findings of this study may provide some insights for IC researchers and teachers. In this section, I discuss the study's theoretical, methodological, and practical implications respectively.

### **8.2.1 Theoretical Implications**

The theoretical basis of this study has been the intercultural approach in foreign language education. This section describes how some theories in this domain have been drawn upon in the study.

First, a social constructionism approach (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, 1979, 1991) was adopted as the overarching theoretical paradigm. As the study focused on the participants' experiences and perspectives, this approach was useful to capture the

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process through which they constructed and negotiated their perspectives on teaching culture and IC in Chinese classes. In addition, as social constructionism advocates that there is no single fixed way of doing things and all behaviours are culturally malleable and variable (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), it also enabled me to understand and interpret the complexity of the Chinese teachers' perspectives. The findings indicated that the participants faced different challenges in terms of teaching environments, students, and teaching materials, and so their perceptions of integrating IC in Chinese teaching were influenced by their different experiences. This conclusion aligns with the study's social constructionism approach.

Second, the study employed a nonessentialist socially constructed understanding of culture (Holliday, 2013; Baker, 2015) and the intercultural approach in foreign language education (Liddicoat, 2013; Baker, 2015). This approach was used to investigate the participants' views on what culture to teach in Chinese language classes and to explore whether there was a shift from cultural orientation to intercultural orientation (Liddicoat, 2013) in the Chinese teachers' minds. The findings have shown that the image of 'Chinese culture' that the teachers wanted to present in their classes was not limited to a unified image but represented a diverse and dynamic system with appreciation of individuality among the Chinese people (Jin, 2014). The teaching objectives described by the participants showed that they aimed to not only help their learners to acquire the linguistic competence to communicate, but also to develop their intercultural competence to understand and explain the perspectives and behaviours of people from different cultures and to reconsider their own culture. These objectives were to some extent in line with an intercultural orientation in foreign language education (Byram, 1997; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Baker, 2015).

Moreover, Byram's ICC model (1997, 2021) and interculturality theories (Dervin, 2012; Jin & Dervin, 2017; Holliday, 2018) were adopted to analyse the documents and the participants' perspectives on teaching objectives and teaching activities. Byram's ICC model and interculturality are the hallmarks of contemporary approaches to foreign language education. In this study, I drew on these theories

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to investigate the teachers' understanding of teaching culture and IC. The findings indicated that some teachers paid attention to the cultivation of students' intercultural attitudes and skills. For example, they encouraged students to suspend their judgments of behaviours and views that were different from their own and to explore the reasons behind these differences. Some teachers noticed the importance of individual diversity in Chinese culture and individuals' intercultural experiences as teaching resources. In some teachers' accounts, IC in Chinese language education was not only a question of comparing two national cultures but a process of interactions (among teachers and students, students and students, and in or outside classrooms), which is consistent with the theory of interculturality, which focuses on the diversity of intercultural encounters (Dervin & Risager, 2015). Overall, the study has demonstrated the broader applicability of Byram's model and concepts linked to interculturality in educational contexts as a framework for studying teachers' perspectives on teaching culture and IC.

In chapter 3, the existing literature on cultural and intercultural approaches in foreign language education and TCSOL was reviewed. Only limited research has been conducted with a specific focus on Chinese teachers' perspectives on teaching culture and IC. This study has contributed to filling this knowledge gap. Its findings confirm and supplement the existing research on IC in Chinese language education.

First, some previous studies have demonstrated the necessity of ICC being part of Chinese teaching (Jin, 2018; Shi, 2020; Zhang, 2009). The accounts of the participants in this study also confirmed this need. Some teachers indicated that teaching culture and IC in Chinese classes can help learners to communicate with and understand people from China (including the teachers themselves), and also to become competent to deal with other intercultural encounters with people from different cultures. However, some previous studies on Chinese teaching point out that some Chinese teachers lack a deep understanding of the concept of culture and IC and so marginalise IC in their Chinese teaching (Zhang, 2009; Zhu & Li, 2014; Zu, 2003, 2016). This study's findings suggest that some of the Chinese teachers were willing to attempt to integrate IC in their Chinese teaching. They are

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trying to depart from traditional ways of teaching culture and to build on an intercultural approach in their Chinese language teaching, as requested in the documents of the Ministry of Education (e.g., the ICCLE and the Standards).

Second, some studies have investigated intercultural teaching and learning in Chinese language education from the perspectives of students, including students from originally Chinese families (e.g., Ganassin, 2017) and international students in China (e. g., Duan et al., 2021; Li & Gong, 2013). These studies reveal some shortcomings in the students' understanding of culture and performance in intercultural interactions. This study has contributed by exploring teachers' views and teaching activities and providing an alternative interpretation of the problems involved in teaching culture and IC in Chinese classes mentioned by the above studies. For example, some students in those studies mentioned that their teachers' teaching materials are repetitive, which corresponds to the findings in this study that some novice teachers had no information about their students' existing knowledge at the beginning or they just followed the topics in the textbooks.

Third, a number of other researchers have previously conducted studies on experienced Chinese teachers. For example, Guo and Liu (2020) and Ye (2017) investigated various aspects of the transnational experiences of some Chinese teachers, most of whom have lived and worked overseas for many years. CI teachers are not a homogenous group. This study has started from the perspectives of novice teachers and focused on their views on teaching culture and IC. Language teachers are important actors in this process of teaching IC (Sercu, 2005). The participants in this study gained a deeper understanding of culture and IC teaching through dealing with complex situations in CIs in the UK. The study has thus increased knowledge of the complexity and richness of the situation of overseas Chinese teachers, and its analysis of the teachers' experiences can be a reference for other novice language teachers.

Fourth, there is a gap between theories and practices in Chinese intercultural teaching. In chapter 3, some ICC models in foreign language education in China (e.g., Gu, 2017; Zhang & Yao, 2020) were mentioned. However, in my study these

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theories were not mentioned in preservice training or in the interviews with the participants. On the one hand, this omission may be because these theories focus mostly on English teaching. Chinese language teaching contains its own complexity in terms of intercultural teaching, given the diversity within Chinese culture and various teaching environments. It is not easy to combine these theories with the context of Chinese language education. On the other hand, failure to note such theories indicates that some trainers and teachers in TCSOL pay insufficient attention to current IC research, which echoes the view that more research is still needed to develop a Chinese intercultural teaching (Zu, 2016).

Overall, some theories related to IC (e.g., culture, cultural and intercultural approaches, and ICC) support this study's aim to capture the complexity of teachers' perspectives on teaching culture and IC and analyse how their experiences in the CIs affect their views. This study of CI Chinese teaching has broadened the range of application of these concepts and theories and enriched understanding of TCSOL in terms of teaching culture and IC. It has responded to some calls in the existing literature for more field research and in-depth research on integrating IC in Chinese language education (Zu, 2016; Jin & Dervin, 2017).

### **8.2.2 Methodological Implications**

First, the methodological significance of this study can be reflected in the area of its multilingual research approach. Two languages were involved in my study: Chinese and English. The ways in which I chose to use different languages in different stages of this study may provide some reference for other researchers. In my study, English is the target language when presenting the findings and Mandarin Chinese is the source language of the interviews. Choosing Chinese as the interview language was a deliberate strategy to generate trust, confidence, and trustworthiness (Hennink, 2008; Holmes et al., 2013). And, as Chinese native speaker, analysing in Chinese helped me to immerse myself in the original data (Irvine et al, 2013). Moreover, the advantage of my diverse linguistic and cultural knowledges enabled me to refer to many studies and viewpoints in Chinese literature. Addressing

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knowledge developed in and for the Chinese language context broadened the theoretical knowledge of the study by offering an opportunity to share culturally different perspectives on teaching culture and IC (Choy et al., 2017).

Furthermore, previous research on teachers' viewpoints mostly used the method of one round of interviews with one or more than one group of teachers (e.g., Burduşel et al., 2015; Wang, 2017). In this study, I collected data from the CI teachers three times in 1 year. As changes in teachers' perspectives or behaviours may happen at different stages (Liu & Fisher, 2006), tracking teachers' ideas over a period of time was helpful for understanding the processes through which they constructed their perspectives, especially those of novice teachers who may be more open to new ideas (Kwo, 1994). The study's findings indicated that the preservice training the novice teachers underwent in China and their teaching in the UK had both influenced the teachers' view of teaching culture and IC to some extent. On the other hand, as I could not interview each participant face-to-face when they were in the UK, I also paid careful attention on how to build and keep rapport with my participants during their year abroad (see section 4.7.2). For example, I used the participants' first and preferred language to communicate with them. I also shared similar experiences of working in the CIs with the participants to encourage them to share their inner thoughts (Seidman, 2006). Finally, building interpersonal relationships with the participants alongside the research was useful to develop the necessary rapport with my participants.

In addition to making a contribution to the literature on research theory and methodology, this study also offers contributions to educational practice. These are discussed next.

### **8.2.3 Practical Implications**

Although this study has demonstrated that teachers noticed the importance of culture and IC in Chinese teaching, its findings also echoed some Chinese scholars' assumptions that no complete and effective way to cultivate ICC has yet been found in some Chinese teachers' minds (Zu, 2016; Shi, 2020). In light of the findings of CI

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teachers' teaching experiences and perspectives on teaching culture and IC, I therefore offer the following suggestions for improvement in TCSOL and Chinese teacher development.

First, my analysis (in sections 3.1 and 3.2) revealed the gap between theories and practice and some ambiguity surrounding these notions of culture, IC, ICC in TCSOL in some teachers' minds. In this thesis, after reviewing literature in English and Chinese on culture, IC, ICC, and intercultural teaching, I selected relevant research and theories from both English scholars (e.g., Byram, 2021; Jin & Dervin, 2017) and Chinese scholars (e.g., Gu, 2017; Zu, 2013) and from language publications related to how to integrate IC into language teaching. These theories can work as a guide to inform Chinese teachers of what knowledge, skills, and attitudes to promote in their students in the TCSOL context. My analysis of theories, such as ICC (Byram, 1997; 2021), interculturality (Dervin, 2016; Jin, 2018), and some intercultural teaching pedagogies (e.g., Liddicoat et al, 2003; Holliday, 2018), as discussed in section 3.3, may help some teachers to better understand IC in Chinese language education. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate some shortcomings in teachers' understandings of how to teach culture and IC. These findings suggest directions for improvement and development for teachers in TCSOL, namely students' engagement.

A second contribution concerns the design of teaching culture and IC in Chinese language classes. As for the teaching goals, these varied situations presented in this study require teachers to set and adjust their specific teaching goals on how to teach culture and IC to cope with their actual teaching. For example, as did some of the teachers in my study, TCSOL teachers may prioritise cultivating students' curiosity and interests in Chinese culture as a goal for learners with low motivation of Chinese learning. Regarding how to arrange the teaching of culture and IC in a set curriculum, the experiences from the participants in this study can provide some lessons to other teachers. Some participants mentioned the fact that the course runs for a limited time. They sometimes had to refuse to 'overload the boat,' that is, to give priority to linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge over IC and ICC. But

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teachers can use specific teaching techniques in such situations. For example, they can encourage learners to comment on stereotypical and prejudiced statements such as “Chinese people are ...” during grammar practice and to challenge their responses (Byram et al, 2002). In addition, the existing research indicates that teachers can make creative use of the textbooks to serve their intercultural education goals (Baker, 2012; Wang, 2017). Rather than abandoning textbook content directly, teachers can learn to reuse textbook content, for example, by encouraging students to find additional materials or identify stereotypes in textbooks (Wang, 2017).

Thirdly, concerning teachers’ professional development in the teaching of IC, reflection may be important. Reflection is important for teachers’ development because teachers can try out their conceptions in new practices that are drawn from their previous experience (Liu & Fisher, 2006). Without such reflection, overseas teaching experience remains mere experience. The first point worth reflecting on in term of teaching IC is the teachers’ own overseas experience and keeping a journal of it as an IC teaching resource (Holliday, 2018). A second point about reflection concerns teachers’ awareness of a possible tendency to stereotype Chinese people’s behaviour in their instruction methods. For example, in this study, despite being told to notice over-generalisation, some of the participants sometimes asked students questions like what is “Chinese people’s favourite colour”. Thus, Chinese teachers should be sensitive to their own expressions in classes and reflect on their teaching consciously to avoid stereotypical attributions; when they hear their students uttering such stereotypes, they need to guide the students to question and challenge them.

Finally, the study suggests implications for IC training of TCSOL teachers. Training needs not only to ensure that teachers understand why they should integrate IC into their classes, for what purposes, and with what benefits, but also needs to guide them on how to integrate culture into language teaching, especially for novice teachers who are unfamiliar with teaching techniques (Kwo, 1994). In this study, the findings showed that even though the trainees had constructed certain ideas about

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teaching culture and IC before going to the UK, and the goals they set also included the intercultural dimension, the teaching content and teaching actions they experienced during training were still focused on the traditional comparison and information-providing ways. Thus, there is the need for a more clearly articulated methodological and pedagogical framework to support intercultural teaching and learning in Chinese language education. In addition, it is important to let the teachers to know that they need not be the only ones dealing with these complex matters of teaching culture and IC abroad. The institutions or trainers, such as CI, can provide platform for teachers to communication or ask help from other teachers who have experienced similar situations.

Overall, I suggest implementing the four points above to provide reference teaching and teaching development in terms of teaching culture and IC in the context of TCSOL. Understanding my participants' experience and perspectives on teaching culture and IC can help Chinese teachers or other language teachers to realise and prepare for the complicated situation that novice TCSOL teachers may face in their first year of teaching. A carefully designed training programme that reflects an understanding of their reality is important in shaping the future teaching and learning of Chinese language generally.

### **8.3 Limitations of the Study**

This study offered an exploration of how Chinese language teachers, represented by CI teachers, integrate IC into Chinese teaching. Despite a carefully designed research methodology, the study has certain limitations.

The first limitation derives from the qualitative approach. I was aware that the limitations of the study may arise from this methodological choice. As indicated in section 4.2, this study employed qualitative interviews as its main way to collect data because interviews enabled the participants to speak of their lived experience in CIs and to offer their thoughts. Although classroom observation was involved in the methodology, in practice I observed only five participants in class. Most of the participants' experiences and classroom performances were collected only through

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the descriptions they provided in the interviews. One drawback of interviews is that it is impossible to know whether the participants honestly and openly shared their experiences. Their verbal accounts may not have accurately reflected their actual behaviour as I did not observe all the participants' classes directly, and then the data collection may be deemed "generally more vulnerable" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 141). In addition, the interviews may have been greatly affected by the emotional state of the interviewees at the time of the interview (Patton, 2002, p. 306), and this could possibly have affected the validity of the data and called into question the accuracy of the participants' memories.

There is no denying that undertaking more data collection methods such as more extensive classroom observation could have provided further insights into the interview material, thus enabling me to address the research questions in more depth. However, I only observed five teachers' classes. As mentioned in chapter 3, the participants in this study worked in different areas in the UK, and they were far apart from each other. In addition, classroom observation also carries certain ethical limitations. Some participants pointed out that classroom observation needs the school's cooperation and needs to be arranged with it. When underage students are observed, the approval of their parents has to be sought. The interviewees did not want to intrude on their students' privacy and trouble the school because they were all newcomers there. As a result, only a small amount of observation data was collected. Consequently, ideas and intercultural encounters which the teachers defined as important, and which are the focus of this study, were not observable.

In this study, the data collection and interpretation adhered to the social constructionist approach (Berger & Luckmann, 1991), that is, it was therefore specifically interested in personal perspectives and experiences. Considerable attempts were made to develop a sound rapport with and mutual trust between the participants and myself. I adopted good interviewing practice, and this allowed me to investigate lived experience. The approach taken enabled in-depth exploration of the personal and subjective, which could be regarded as a strength rather than a limitation. Moreover, every effort was made to ensure the participants'

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confidentiality and the ways in which their data would be used and reported. For example, I gave information sheets and consent forms to all the participants and informed them of their right to anonymity. I also assigned them pseudonyms to make sure that they felt safe about sharing their experiences and emotions openly. Although I employed interviewing as my study's main method of data collection, I believe that I have gathered rich data and rigorously analysed it through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to support me in answering my research questions.

Secondly, focusing on teachers only is also a limitation of this study. Teachers play an important role in intercultural Chinese teaching (Zu, 2016). While the voices and stories from other perspectives, such as CI students, administration staff, other local teachers or families of the learners, might have offered additional insights, this study foregrounded the experiences of the teachers themselves. This approach may have created certain limitations. For example, whether students accept teachers' perceptions and their perceptions of this issue were not studied. Furthermore, the teachers' evaluation of their own IC teaching may be subjective. However, concentrating solely on the novice teachers' perspectives enabled an in-depth exploration of these experiences, which the inclusion of other perspectives would not have allowed for.

The third limitation of the study is the size of its sample in that the responses gathered from 12 CI teachers in the UK cannot represent the experience of all Chinese teachers as a whole. Employing a snowballing technique for participant recruitment also meant that most of the participants are from the top 10 universities in China and so their knowledge levels and abilities may be greater and less representative than those of other novice CI teachers. Although these CI teachers' levels do not represent the average professional level of all CI teachers, the findings of the study do nevertheless represent the realities for a particular group of people in a particular space and time to a certain extent. Despite their limited generalisability, the findings of this study have tried to describe "what was" at a particular time for CI teachers in the UK, and readers and researchers will be able to determine the degree of the transferability of my findings and the extent to which

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they find parallels with their own studies.

Overall, no matter how hard a researcher tries to do her best in research, the final study will inevitably be limited by its research angle, the research time available, the research method, and the researcher's ability, all of which make it difficult to do any better. However, I have experienced a complete research process and gained a great deal as a novice researcher. The limitations of the current study may offer the potential for further research that can make TCSOL and teaching IC become more holistic. Next, I will discuss some further research directions based on my study.

#### **8.4 Directions for Further Research**

Although this study has responded to TCSOL's call to contribute to Chinese language education research by investigating teachers in CIs in the UK, the discussion on integrating IC in Chinese education also requires perspectives and stories from different sides because "truth is always partial" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 654). Possible strands of future research could analyse Chinese language learners, particular teaching methods and modules, and other factors influencing IC learning.

First of all, studies conducted with students could provide a supplement for teachers' ideas regarding interculturalising Chinese language teaching. Students are an important element in intercultural teaching and learning because learners are also able to reflect upon their identities and experiences during the process of learning (Jin, 2021). By contrasting the views of teachers and students, a clearer picture of foreign language teaching could be created. It is desirable for teachers to know learners' perceptions and needs, as it is particularly important for them to reflect on their teaching and to develop curricula that meet the needs of both teachers and students.

Furthermore, there is a call reflected in the findings of this study that front-line teachers still need pedagogical guidance on how to integrate IC into their teaching.

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The study showed that although the objectives for teaching culture and IC have been outlined through documents or presented in the preservice training course, further decisions have to be made as to what cultural and intercultural aspects should be included to enhance communication and how they can be introduced to students. There do not seem to be any clear criteria that can facilitate such decisions. Researching and developing teaching methods under an intercultural approach which CI teachers or other Chinese teachers can refer to are issues that need to be resolved. For example, there is a need to find ways to combine existing intercultural teaching methods (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, Holliday, 2018; Byram, 2021) with the context of Chinese teaching to explore and develop teaching principles or teaching models applicable to TCSOL. Action studies in workshops or courses that implement the model through different highly reflective classroom dynamics could be one topic for a continuation study.

Another issue that deserves attention from future studies rests on studies into the training and education of Chinese teachers, for example, the TCSOL major in China. This study analysed only the “culture and communication” module in CI training, which is just one component of the intensive preservice training for CI teachers. Many teachers graduate from university with a major in TCSOL. In the TCSOL professional education process, educators can devote plenty of time to sorting out theoretical knowledge and give learners the opportunity to practise and develop. Investigating the teaching objectives and contents of TCSOL courses offered in universities could also help to delve more deeply into the cultivation of teachers’ ICC and their IC teaching.

Furthermore, this study focused on the role that classroom teaching can play in the cultivation of students’ ICC in Chinese classes in the context of CIs. However, the role of classroom teaching is limited for developing some intercultural skills such as the skill of interaction (Byram, 2021). As Deardorff (2009) argues, the development of ICC is a lifelong process and the process of becoming interculturally competent requires a great amount of effort beyond the classroom. In the interviews, the teachers also mentioned the importance of extracurricular activities and intercultural

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encounters outside classes. Such a view accords with the research on and discussion of experiential learning (Baker, 2012, 2015; Hall, 2012). Thus, it would be interesting to explore the impact of cultural activities in communities, learners' families, or internet media on foreign language learners.

### **8.5 Final Remarks on the Study**

This study investigated a special teacher group, novice Chinese teachers in CIs. This study was concerned with their perspectives on integrating IC in CI Chinese classes along with how their views were constructed in preservice training and were impacted by their year's teaching in the UK. I conducted an empirical investigation by analysing documents, preservice training, classroom observation, and teacher interviews, etc. Some valuable first-hand information was obtained which not only helped in understanding teachers' ideas on how to integrate IC into Chinese language teaching in the classroom, but also uncovered the problems that theories such as Byram's ICC model (1997, 2021) and interculturality (Dervin, 2010; Jin & Dervin, 2017) were not fully recognised by some Chinese teachers or applied in TSCOL. For example, some teachers did not include the skill of discovery in their teaching objective, while some teachers ignored the intercultural experience which is valuable in the interculturality approach (Jin & Dervin, 2017; Holliday, 2018). Moreover, the analysis of challenges CI teacher faced (chapter 6) and the reconsideration (chapter 7) of CI teachers in this study may provide pedagogical insights for teachers who are frustrated by outdated and essentialist methods and to agencies which want to move away from simply teaching Chinese language, culture, and customs in a traditional way towards an intercultural approach that cultivates learners' IC competence.

This study explored Chinese teaching from the perspective of intercultural teaching. It has provided some new angles for the reform of Chinese language education. Although the cultivation of ICC cannot be achieved solely through teaching Chinese, Chinese teachers should be aware of their responsibilities and make contributions to the learners' development of it. Integrating IC into Chinese classes is an essential

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part of the development of TCSOL, as its integration represents a shift from transitional teaching of culture to intercultural teaching in Chinese education. As current research and the teaching climate in China promote educational reform and innovation towards the intercultural direction in this field (Shi, 2020), Chinese teachers have more opportunities to attempt and adopt an intercultural approach in order to enable students to connect with the world in the classroom and better adapt to the requirements of Chinese international education.

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## List of Appendices

### Appendix A. The content of “Cultural Competence” in ICCLE (Level 6)

Cultural competence	Description of objectives
Cultural knowledge	<p>1 learners can further learn that the individuals and communities of the countries they live in have the right to learn different languages;</p> <p>2 learners can further learn that individuals, communities and the society of the countries they live in have the right to use different languages;</p> <p>3 learners can further understand the development, communication and achievement in economy, culture, science and education locally and in China.</p> <p>4 learners can further learn China’s achievement in literature, arts, science, ideology, and their contributions to other cultures around the world;</p> <p>5 learners can further learn the developments of Chinese language and culture, and their positions in, contributions to, and functions in other cultures;</p> <p>6 learners can know more about the cultural connotations of common Chinese idioms, proverbs, typical historical figures and events.</p> <p>7 learners can know more about the linguistic and non-linguistic function of communication in Chinese language and culture;</p> <p>8 learners can know more about the social structure and interpersonal relationship in Chinese culture;</p> <p>9 learners can know more about the social etiquette and customs in Chinese culture;</p> <p>10 learners can know more about the Chinese people’s</p>

	<p>business founding history and their contributions to the local society;</p> <p>11 learners can know more about the Chinese people's business founding history and their contributions to the local society;</p> <p>12 learners can further understand that culture is divided into stages. They can see and handle cultural phenomena in light of their development and changes.</p>
Cultural understanding	<p>1 learners can further understand that culture can not only be acquired, but it can also be learned via language;</p> <p>2 learners can know more about the relationship between culture learning and language learning, the latter being an important component of the former;</p> <p>3 learners can further understand the psychological structures, ways of thinking and values of Chinese culture;</p> <p>4 learners can further understand the cultural multiplicity, dynamics and permeability;</p> <p>5 learners can further use the modes of critical thinking in the learning and understanding of Chinese culture and local culture. They can tolerate, understand, and learn from other cultures.</p>
Cross-cultural competence	<p>1 learners will have a further understanding of the commonalities and differences between Chinese culture and the local culture;</p> <p>2 learners will further develop their cross-cultural competence through learning Chinese culture. They will consciously develop their role in bridging Chinese culture and the local culture;</p> <p>3 Learners will learn more in viewing Chinese and their own culture and ideology more objectively by comparisons between Chinese culture and the local culture;</p> <p>4 learners can proactively make contributions to the mutual</p>

	<p>understanding, mutual learning, mutual promotion, mutual appreciation and mutual improvement between Chinese culture and the local culture.</p>
<p>International perspectives</p>	<p>1 through learning Chinese language, learners will understand the world culture and further expand their international perspectives;</p> <p>2 learners will learn more about Chinese culture and their origins;</p> <p>3 through learning Chinese language and culture, learners will develop their ability to interpret the pluralistic phenomena in the world from different perspectives;</p> <p>4 through learning culture, learners will broaden their way of thinking and perspectives, develop integrated thinking in consideration of various cultural factors, and understanding globalization and plurality.</p> <p>5 learners will acquire some knowledge of the cultural origin between China and the countries they live in;</p> <p>6 learners can think globally and assimilate critically the advanced cultures of the world today; broaden their international perspectives through learning the history, culture, arts, and customs of different countries around the world;</p> <p>7 learners will consciously develop a strong sense of global citizenship;</p> <p>8 learners will develop their social service abilities and get very clear about the responsibilities they should shoulder in the world today.</p>

**Appendix B. The content of “Culture and Communication” in The TCSOL Standards**

Standards in culture and communication	Substandards
<p>Teachers should be familiar with the basic knowledge of Chinese culture, and be able to explain and introduce Chinese culture in their teaching.</p>	<p>Teachers should demonstrate their understanding of Chinese culture, its major characteristics, basic values and contemporary implications.</p> <p>Teachers should be able to help their students understand the Chinese belief and value systems, ways of thinking and communication, and social and cultural customs by incorporating cultural products and practices into their teaching.</p> <p>Teachers should be able to integrate aspects of Chinese culture in their language teaching.</p> <p>Teachers should be familiar with Chinese culture in their language teaching.</p> <p>Teachers should be familiar with Chinese artistic performance and be able to apply them in their teaching.</p>
<p>Teachers should be familiar with basic knowledge about contemporary China, and be able to introduce China to learners objectively and accurately.</p>	<p>Teachers should be familiar with the basic knowledge about contemporary China.</p> <p>Teachers should be familiar with the current important issues about contemporary China.</p> <p>Teachers should be able to introduce China objectively and accurately.</p>
<p>Teachers should demonstrate an awareness of</p>	<p>Teachers should demonstrate their understanding of major cultures in the world.</p> <p>Teachers should respect different cultures and have</p>

<p>intercultural communication.</p>	<p>multicultural awareness.</p> <p>Teachers should be aware of the major differences and similarities between Chinese culture and other major cultures and be mindful of them in teaching.</p>
<p>Teachers should be able to demonstrate skills in intercultural communication</p>	<p>Teachers should demonstrate their understanding of basic principles and strategies in intercultural communication.</p> <p>Teachers should be competent in intercultural communication, and be able to solve problems in teaching intercultural communication effectively.</p> <p>Teachers should be able to use English or the native/official language of the target country for communication, and as a pedagogical language for teaching Chinese if necessary.</p>

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## **Appendix C. Participant Information Sheet**

### Participant Information Sheet (English)

I would like to invite you to talk about your perspectives and experience of integrating intercultural communication into Chinese language teaching. Please take the time to read the following information and feel free to ask any question you may have before agreeing to participate in this study.

Title: How to integrate intercultural communication into Chinese language teaching: an interpretive study of the perspectives and experiences of teachers in Confucius Institutes in the UK

The purpose of this study is to investigate Chinese teachers' perspectives on teaching Chinese culture and intercultural communication in Confucius Institutes, as well as to explore the teachers' reflections on their original understandings through a 1-year intercultural teaching experience in the United Kingdom.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in three interviews in the next year in three times. Whether you want to participate in the research or not depends entirely on your own choice. There is absolutely no compulsion. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences for you. You have the right to refuse to respond to any question in the interviews. This interviews will be recorded and transcribed afterwards, for the purpose of data analysis. The records and transcriptions of the interview will be kept secure and private and the access will be limited to the researcher only.

Please note that you will be identified by a pseudonym, and there will be no way to connect your name at any time during or after the study. The results will be used until the completion of this study, after which all personal information will be deleted from the electronic files and shredded in paper documents. The research results will be provided upon your requests via the email address provided below. You will not be identified in any publication.

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Please also read and complete the Consent Form after reading through this Participant Information Sheet.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the School of Education Ethics Sub-Committee at Durham University. If you have any questions, requests or concerns regarding the conduct of the research project, you can contact the following: Yiyi Cao, [yiyi.cao@durham.ac.uk](mailto:yiyi.cao@durham.ac.uk)

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## 参与者信息表 (中文版)

我希望您能够参与这个研究，谈谈你对在汉语中融入跨文化交际的观点和经验。在您同意参加本次研究之前，请仔细阅读以下信息并提出您的任何疑问。

**研究题目: How to integrate intercultural communication into Chinese language teaching: an interpretive study of the perspectives and experiences of teachers in Confucius Institutes in the UK**

这项研究的目的是调查中国教师对孔子学院教授中国文化和跨文化交际的看法，以及在英国一年的跨文化教学后，教师对自己最初理解的反思。

如果您同意参加此项研究，您将被要求在之后的一年中接受三次采访。您可以自由决定是否参与此研究。如果您决定参与，您可以在任何时间选择退出，并且不会给您带来任何影响。

您有权拒绝回答采访者提出的任何问题。为了进行数据分析，此次访谈将被录音并转录。采访的记录和转录的安全性和隐私性也会得到保证。访问权限仅限于采访者。

所有包含您个人信息将受到保护，并且在研究期间或之后。在任何发表的报告中，您的回答都不会与您的名字联系起来。研究结果将会一直使用到本研究结束，所有的包含个人信息的纸质版以及电子版的文件将会删除或粉碎。研究结果将根据您的要求通过我下面提供的电子邮件地址提供。

此项研究将由杜伦大学教育学院伦理委员会审核批准。对于此项研究，如果您有任何问题，要求或想法，请通过邮件方式联系：[yiyi.cao@durham.ac.uk](mailto:yiyi.cao@durham.ac.uk)

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## Appendix D. Declaration of Informed Consent

### Declaration of Informed Consent

- I agree to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to explore the new teacher's construction of perspectives on Chinese culture teaching in Confucius institutes.
- I have read the participant information sheet and understand the information provided.
- I have been informed that I may decline to answer any questions or withdraw from the study without penalty of any kind.
- I have been informed that data collection will involve the use of audio recording devices.
- I have been informed that all of my responses will be kept confidential and secure, and that I will not be identified in any report or other publication resulting from this research.
- I have been informed that the investigator will answer any questions regarding the study and its procedures. Cao Yiyi, School of Education, Durham University can be contacted via email: [yiyi.cao@durham.ac.uk](mailto:yiyi.cao@durham.ac.uk) or telephone: 0086 18330265857
- I will be provided with a copy of this form (with English and Chinese versions) for my records.

Any concerns about this study should be addressed to the School of Education Ethics Sub-Committee, Durham University via email to [ed.ethics@durham.ac.uk](mailto:ed.ethics@durham.ac.uk).

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Date                      Signature of Participant

I certify that I have presented the above information to the participant and secured his or her consent.

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Date                      Signature of Investigator

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### 同意声明书

- 我同意参与本研究，该研究的目的是探讨孔子学院新教师对中国文化的理解和教学。
- 我已经阅读了参与者信息表并了解所提供的信息。
- 我已被告知，我可以拒绝回答任何问题或退出研究，不会给我个人带来任何损失。
- 我已被告知，数据收集将涉及音频记录设备的使用。
- 我已被告知，我所有的回复都将被妥善保管和保密，我的个人信息将不会出现在任何报告或本研究相关出版物中。
- 我已被告知，研究人员有责任回答任何有关该研究及研究过程中的问题。我可以通过电子邮件: [yiyii.cao@durham.ac.uk](mailto:yiyii.cao@durham.ac.uk) 或电话:0086 18330265857 进行联系
- 我会得到这份表格的副本(中英版本)。

对这项研究的任何关注都应通过电子邮件发送给杜伦大学教育伦理委员会。

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日期                      参加者签名

本人已将上述资料呈交参加者，并取得其同意。

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日期                      研究员签名

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## Appendix E. Interview Protocol for Trainees (Stage 1)

A. Participants: 12 trainees who will become CI teachers

B. Icebreakers:

Thank the trainers for taking part in interview

Explain shortly about my study and the interview, and answer their question

Ask the student to sign consent form

C. Interview

In English

1 How do you understand culture and intercultural communication (IC) in Chinese teaching?

2 What are the aims of teaching culture and IC in Chinese teaching? What do you expect the Chinese learners to achieve from it?

3 What are the main focuses in teaching culture and IC in Chinese language classes? Why?

4 What kind of teaching methods do you think are helpful to achieve the culture and IC teaching aims?

5 Do you think there are any problems that need Chinese teachers' attention in teaching culture and IC?

6 What did you find useful in your preservice training in terms of teaching culture and IC?

7 Did your understanding of culture and IC change after training?

8 Do you plan to prepare any teaching materials before going to the UK?

9 Do you have anything else you want to share?

In Chinese

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- 1 你是怎么理解汉语教学中的文化和跨文化交际的呢？
  - 2 你认为汉语教学中文化和交际教学目标是什么呢？你希望学生得到什么？
  - 3 你觉得在文化和交际方面教学重点是什么？
  - 4 你觉得什么样的教学方法有助于实现文化和交际教学的目标？
  - 5 在教学过程中你觉得还有什么值得汉语老师注意的问题吗？
  - 6 在文化和交际的教学上，你觉得这次培训中的什么内容你觉得很有用？
  - 7 培训前后你对文化和交际教学的理解有变化吗？
  - 8 培训结束后，到英国就职前，你还打算准备什么文化和交际方面的材料吗？
  - 9 你还有其他想要分享的吗？

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## Appendix F. Interview Protocol for Trainers (Stage 1)

A. Participants: Three trainers who teach courses related to Chinese culture and IC

B. Icebreakers:

Thank the trainers for taking part in interview

Explain shortly about my study and the interview, and answer their question

Ask the student to sign consent form

C. start interview

In English

1 How do you perceive teaching culture and IC in Chinese teaching?

2 What do you think was the focus in your preservice training in terms of culture and intercultural teaching? Why?

3 Do you give students any advice on this in your course?

4 What do you think of the training in terms of culture and IC? Is there anything that needs to be improved?

5 Besides training, what do you think trainees should prepare in terms of teaching culture and IC?

6 Do you have anything else you want to share?

In Chinese

1 你是怎么看待汉语教学中的文化和跨文化交际教学的呢?

2 在文化和跨文化教学方面, 你觉得教师培训的重点是什么? 为什么?

3 您在课程中给了学生这个方面的什么建议吗?

4 您怎么看待这次培训的文化教学部分的培训? 有需要提高的吗?

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5 除了培训，您觉得受训老师应该准备和提高什么方面的学习？

6 你还有其他想要分享的吗？

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## Appendix G. Interview Protocol for CI Teachers (Stage 2)

A. Participants: 12 CI teachers
B. Icebreakers: Thank the trainers for taking part in interview Warm up chat
C. Interview In English 1 Have you taught anything related to culture and communication in your classes? Can you describe your teaching process to me? 2 Have you had any impressive experiences teaching culture and communication? Have you met any challenges in this process? 3 How do you choose the cultural content for your classes? Do the textbooks help? 4 Did you add your own teaching material? If so, can you give me an example? 5 What teaching methods have you used? How do they work? 6 Do you want to continue using these methods or make some adjustments? 7 What do you think is the aim of teaching what you mentioned in terms of culture and IC? 8 Do you think you have achieved this aim? Did anything interfere in the process? 9 In your experience of teaching culture and IC in a CI classroom, what things have you done well? What things need improving? 10 What else do you want to share with me?  In Chinese 1 你在课堂上教过和文化和交际相关的内容吗? 你能给我描述下你的教学过程

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吗？

2 在教授文化和交际时，你有没有什么印象深刻的经历？遇到了什么挑战吗？

3 你是如何选择课堂上的这些文化和交际相关的教学内容的？

课本在选择文化和交际的教学内容上对你有帮助吗？

4 你自己补充了什么内容吗？为什么？

5 你使用了什么教学方法来教授文化和交际相关的内容？

6 你想继续使用这些方法，还是想调整？为什么？如果调整，你会做什么调整？

7 你教授这些文化和交际的内容的目标是什么？

8 你认为你达到这个目标了吗？在这个过程中是什么影响了你？

9 根据你在孔院和孔子课堂教授文化和交际类内容的经验，你觉得你哪些方面做得很好？哪些方面最需要改进？

10 你还想和我分享什么？

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## Appendix H. Interview protocol for CI Teachers (stage 3)

A. Participants: 12 trainees who will become CI teachers

B. Icebreakers:

Thank the trainers for taking part in interview

Warm up chat

C. Interview

In English

1 Can you recall a class related to culture and IC? Can you describe the process in detail?

2 Do you often use these teaching methods (mentioned in your last answer) in your classes? What else have you used?

3 What is your aim in teaching culture and IC in Chinese classes?

4 Do you think you have achieved these aims? Did anything interfere in this process?

5 What do you think is the focus in teaching culture and IC in Chinese language classes? Why?

6 Do textbooks help you choose cultural teaching content? Have you added other teaching materials? Why?

7 In the process of teaching culture, have you had any experiences that have made an impression on you? Can you describe them to me?

8 In your experience of teaching culture and IC, what things have you done well? What areas need improving?

9 What changes do you think your teaching experience in the UK has made to your previous perspectives on culture and IC?

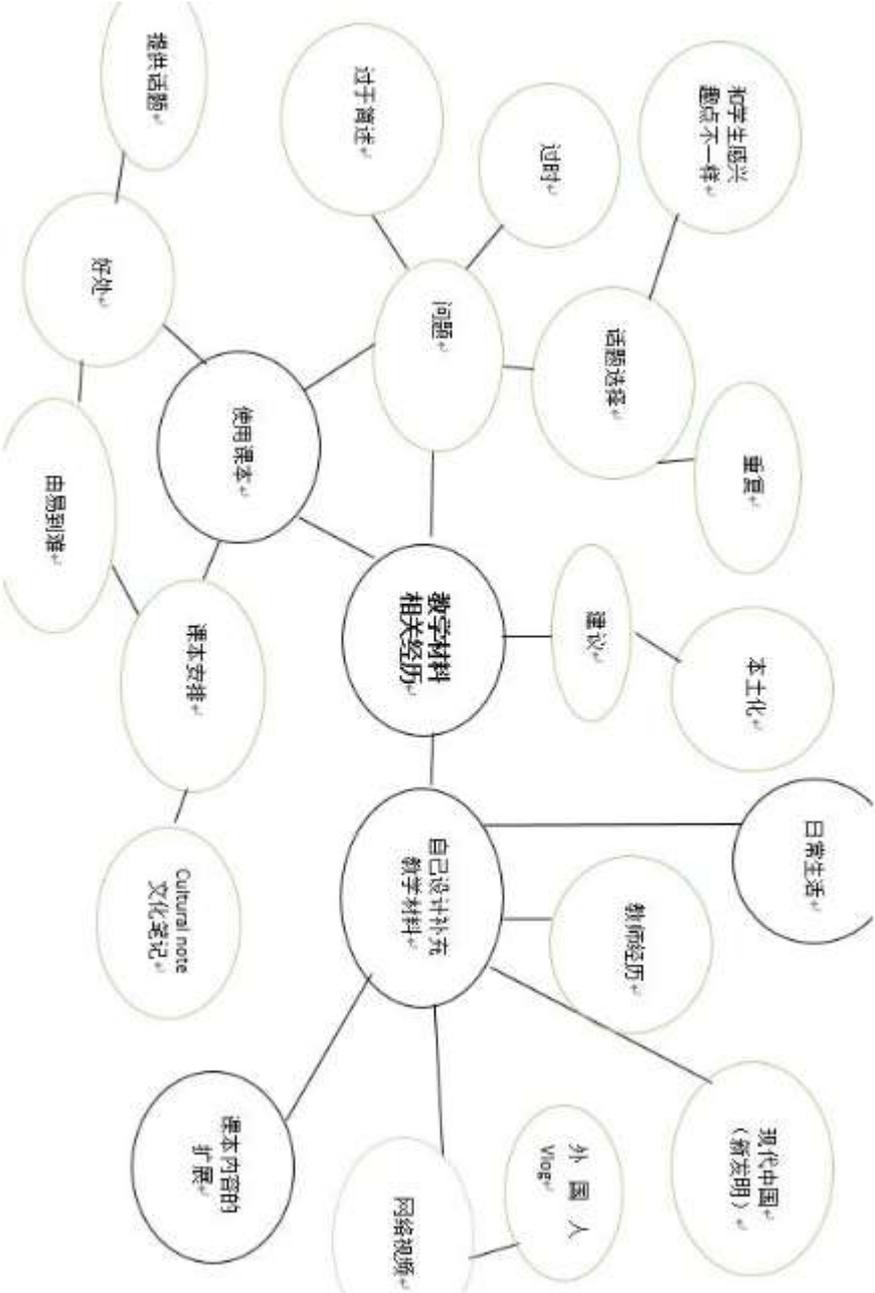
10 What else do you want to share with me?

In Chinese

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- 1 你可不可以回忆一节和文化和跨文化相关的课？你能详细描述一下过程吗？
  - 2 这节课里的方法是你在教授文化和交际内容时经常使用的教学方法吗？你还使用过什么别的方法吗？
  - 3 你在汉语课堂中融入文化和交际方面的内容的目标是什么呢？
  - 4 你认为你达成这些目标了吗？如果没有，是什么影响了你？
  - 5 你认为进行文化和交际教学的重点是什么？为什么？
  - 6 课本在选择文化教学内容上对你有帮助吗？你补充过其他教学材料吗？
  - 7 在教文化和文化的过程中，有没有什么给你留下深刻印象的经历？你能给我描述一下吗？
  - 8 根据你在文化和交际教学方面的经验，哪些方面做得很好？哪些方面最需要改进？
  - 9 你在英国的教学经历对你之前的对文化和文化的理解有什么影响吗？
  - 10 你还想和我分享什么？



Appendix J. An example of mind map of one theme



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## Appendix K. Comparison list of aims of world language and culture promotion agencies

Nation	Institute	Aims
The United Kingdom	The British Council	We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. This enhances the security, prosperity and influence of the UK and, in so doing, helps make the world a better, safer place.
France	Alliance Française	To promote the French language and francophone culture around the world. Understanding and adapting to the different learning styles, we offer French courses and classes in Paris all year round.
Germany	Goethe Institut	We promote knowledge of the German language abroad and foster international cultural cooperation. We convey a comprehensive image of Germany by providing information about cultural, social and political life in our nation. Our cultural and educational programmes encourage intercultural dialogue and enable cultural involvement. They strengthen the development of structures in civil society and foster worldwide mobility.
Spain	The Instituto Cervantes	To promote and teach Spanish and to spread the culture of Spain and Spanish-speaking countries. Spanish must represent a proposal for friendship and comprehension, a tool of concord and of tolerance, and a channel for creation and understanding between peoples and cultures.
Japan	The Japan Foundation	The Japan Foundation conducts programs in the three major areas of Arts and Cultural Exchange, Japanese-Language Education Overseas, Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange, as well as Strengthening Cultural Exchange in Asia. There are applicable programs in each of these areas, and a support is provided for activities conducted by individuals and organizations that are involved in international exchange.
China	Confucius institute	To enhance people's understanding of Chinese language and culture, to develop friendly relations between China and the rest of the world, to promote the development of a multicultural world,

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		and to contribute to building a harmonious world.
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Source: The British Council website:

[http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/folder\\_what-we-do/what-we-do/](http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/folder_what-we-do/what-we-do/); Alliance

Françoise website: <http://www.alliancefr.org/en/who-are-we>; The Instituto

Cervantes website: <http://www.cervantes.es/default.htm>; Goethe Institut website:

<http://www.goethe.de/uun/org/ltb/enindex.htm>; The Japan Foundation:

<http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/program/instruction.html>; Confucius Institute website:

<http://www.hanban.edu.cn/>.