

An Empirical Study of University Students' Intercultural Communicative Competence

Chenchieh Su^{1,a,*}

¹*School of Foreign Languages, Zhaoqing University, Zhaoqing, China*

^a2226767165@qq.com

*Corresponding author: Chenchieh Su

Abstract: *This study conducted a statistical analysis of the intercultural communication situation of university students in Zhaoqing University in Guangdong Province, China, in the hope of deepening the depth and breadth of research on intercultural communication, making up for the shortcomings of qualitative research, strengthening the intercultural communication teaching ability of university foreign language teachers, and expanding the reform of foreign language education.*

Keywords: *Intercultural communicative competence, University students, Empirical study*

1. Introduction

Globalization and regional economic integration are the trend of development in the world today, and with the increasing development of international trade and international investment, resources and talents are moving around the globe on a large scale. The links between countries are getting closer and closer, so the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence has become an important part of talent training and higher education reform in the new era. Intercultural communication is a form of communication between individuals of different cultures, either through language or non-verbal means (Hymes 1972; Kim 2001; Nadia 2020; Omaggio 2001; Deardorff 2006).^{[1][2][3][4][5]} Byram (2000) notes that the development of intercultural communicative competence has become an important part of foreign language teaching and research.^[6]

Byram (1997) pointed out that English learners who target the Anglo-American culture cannot engage in substantive intercultural communication and do not meet the requirements of using English as a lingua franca in multilingual and multicultural contexts^[7]. According to Byram's model of intercultural communication, relevant competences include attitudes, knowledge, interpretation and association, discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. Taking this model as a reference, EFL teachers should not only enhance students' knowledge of multiculturalism but also lead them to observe similarities and differences between cultures from their own perspective, to respect and understand multiculturalism, and to be able to manage intercultural conflicts.

Dai (2009) and Hu (2008) have argued that in China, teaching of English at university has neglected to train students in intercultural communicative knowledge and intercultural communicative competence.^{[8][9]} Although students' ability to cope with examinations has improved, there has been no significant development in intercultural communicative competence and performance. Lacking the professional knowledge and competence required for intercultural communication, it is difficult to adapt to the needs of modern society. A fill-in-the-blank education with a bias towards exam results no longer meets today's requirements. In Asia, English instruction more often than not leads to better marks but often neglects the transmission of target cultural knowledge and the cultivation of practical intercultural communicative competence. If one lacks the cultural background knowledge and competence needed for intercultural communication, it is difficult to adapt to the needs of modern society.

In this study, data from a sample of university students from Zhaoqing University in Guangdong Province, China, are analyzed by means of questionnaires and statistical analysis to explore the status of their intercultural communicative competence and whether there are differences in intercultural communicative competence under the influence of different genders, mother tongue backgrounds, majors and other factors. Topics such as the strength of students' intercultural communicative competence, their attitude towards intercultural communication, the problems and difficulties they face when learning intercultural communication, and their expectations of learning intercultural communication are also

investigated. The findings of this study will contribute to the development of students' intercultural communicative awareness and intercultural communicative competence, as well as make recommendations for instructors' teaching and training in intercultural communication.

2. Literature review

In terms of the teaching mode of intercultural communicative competence, Crook (2014) states that exposure to cultural value dimensions such as power distance, high versus low context cultures, and collectivism versus individualism are important foundational knowledge that students need to learn. She proposes to create an environment in which students can identify and describe the cultural values shared through communication, criticize the communication patterns presented in the activities, and transfer this knowledge to their own personal experiences through group and class discussions by watching various clips from a television series. Such a learning activity can help students identify a range of cultural values, recognize the role of ethnocentrism in intercultural communication and assess intercultural communicative competence.^[10]

Furstenberg (2010) teaches intercultural competence in the French classroom as a model for engaging university students in person, exchanging ideas and opinions on current events and topics of interest. American and French students participate in a learning process that leads them to consider other points of view. They describe their own cultures, beliefs and traditions respectively and interact in a dynamic process of enquiry, discovery, exploration and interpretation. They engage in a sociable activity by asking as well as discovering ways to clarify how each other's perspective influences actions in their native culture.^[11]

Lu (2016) used constructivism as the theoretical basis to explore a diversified teaching mode for the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence in non-English majors, and used the visual introduction mode, the comparative analysis mode, the case study mode and the practical activity mode to stimulate students' learning interest and intercultural communicative competence according to the non-English majors' own characteristics and English learning style.^[12]

According to Zhou (2022), English teachers can optimize the traditional English teaching mode and establish the students' main position by applying the "Output Oriented Approach (POA)" in teaching intercultural communication in university English. Teachers can make use of the power of online technology to combine online and offline teaching, and consider students as the main subjects of the classroom, and carry out rich teaching activities to mobilize students' interest in learning and improve their learning ability and intercultural communicative competence.^[13]

Wang and Sun (2022) have claimed that, to promote the development of students' intercultural communicative competence, we need to start from three aspects: firstly, to put conceptual innovation in the first place in practical foreign language teaching, secondly, to actively use new media to guide students to understand foreign cultures, and thirdly, to integrate cultural education into practical foreign language teaching.^[14]

In order to seek the difficulties encountered in teaching intercultural communicative competence and its solutions, scholars have conducted empirical research on the intercultural communicative competence of teachers and students. Huang & Kou (2012) investigate students' perceptions in intercultural communication courses. Data indicated that 63.8% percent of the students choose verbal and nonverbal communication as useful content of the intercultural communication course, 51.2% cultural and communication and 49.5% interpersonal communication. In terms of learning difficulty in the course, the data showed that 26.26% percent of the students found the related theory to be the most difficult; 19.1% percent of students found the differences between Chinese and Western cultures most difficult; 16.31% percent of students found the course not easy to learn because of the lack of real-life practice. For effective learning techniques, watching videos and movies is most favored while lecturing and seminars are also regarded as effective.^[15]

Yang, Kwan, Wang, and Ng (2015) proposed a study to explore stakeholders' perceptions of intercultural communicative competence in higher education in the hospitality industry and to examine which intercultural communicative competences are important for the career development of graduates. The study used in-depth interviews and content analysis to find 10 intercultural communicative competence programs representing intercultural communicative competence in hospitality schools in China. Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA were used in order to examine the importance of intercultural communicative competence for graduates' career development. The results showed that all

stakeholders agreed on the importance of intercultural communicative competence to hospitality graduates in their careers. The majority of graduates wanted to combine intercultural communicative competence with bilingualism and enjoyed the experiential learning associated with intercultural communicative competence. Language teaching or learning should not be separated from ICC learning, and the use of the internet to supplement classroom teaching is encouraged.^[16]

Chai and Gong (2016) investigated the current situation of intercultural quality education among university students in Beijing University of Technology, examining the current situation, awareness, satisfaction, purpose and hope of students' participation in intercultural quality education practice in the university, indicating that the university should enhance the influence and coverage of intercultural education, and at the same time guide students through "experience-participation -In this study, it was suggested that schools should enhance the influence and coverage of intercultural education, and guide students to develop intercultural quality through the cycle of "experience-participation with a purpose".^[17]

Wu (2020) investigated the intercultural communicative competence of two classes of non-English majors at Nanchang Institute of Technology through a quantitative time-course study. Through nearly one year of teaching intercultural communicative competence development based on the concept of whole-person education, it was found that the intercultural communicative competence of the experimental class was better than that of the study participants in the control class, thus proving that teaching college English under the concept of whole-person education helps improve students' intercultural communicative competence.^[18]

Crucially, Hu (2005) surveyed journal papers on intercultural communication and found that domestic research was dominated by general discourses and discursive articles, with a low proportion of empirical papers, thus calling on intercultural communication researchers to vigorously strengthen empirical research in China.^[19] It is this call that prompted us to conduct an empirical and quantitative study with university students in Guangdong Province, located in the Greater Bay Area, in an attempt to explore the competence, attitudes and tendencies of university students in intercultural communication.

In short, previous empirical research on intercultural communication among university students leaves much to be desired, and there is less cross-comparison and linkage between the research papers. The aim of this paper is to echo the call of the previous work and to improve the quantity of empirical research by conducting a case study of the intercultural communicative competence of university students in China.

3. Research method and findings

The surveyed population of this study was university students in Zhaoqing University, Guangdong Province. The questionnaires were distributed in September 2021 through technologies such as public questionnaire platforms and mobile clients, and a total of 2,308 valid questionnaires were collected from students of all grades on campus. The sample structure was analyzed as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Structure of the sample.

Gender	Sample	Proportion (N=2308)
Male	1060	45.93 %
female	1248	54.07 %
Native Language Background		
Mandarin	474	20.54 %
Cantonese	1257	54.46 %
Hakka	246	10.66 %
Min	331	14.34 %
Subject		
Foreign Language Majors	500	21.66 %
Non-foreign language majors	1808	78.34 %

3.1 Research method

The questionnaire referred to the framework of intercultural communicative competence proposed by Arasaratnam & Doerfel (2005) to test students' strengths and weaknesses in five areas, and translated into Chinese to avoid comprehension barriers during the test^[20]. Arasaratnam & Doerfel categorized

intercultural communicative competence into five areas, namely: Intercultural Experience, Empathy, Interaction Involvement, Motivation and Global Attitude. The term “Intercultural Experience” refers to the experience and opportunity to engage in intercultural communication. “Empathy” refers to a person's sensitivity to the views and needs of others. An empathetic person can anticipate the behavior of others and can adapt their own behavior to the situation. “Interactive Involvement” refers to the willingness to engage with different cultures or to experience intercultural communication activities. “Motivation” refers to the emotional associations that communicators make when anticipating and carrying out intercultural communication activities. The development of intercultural communicative competence is often related to the willingness to engage in intercultural communication activities. “Global Attitude” refers to a tolerant and positive attitude towards other cultures. One should be open to different cultural perspectives and acknowledge the existence of different perspectives that are equally meaningful and valid across cultures.

Statistical analyses were conducted using t-tests and one-way ANOVA (one-way analysis of variance) to test whether there were significant differences between the different factors compared to Arasaratnam & Doerfel's intercultural communicative competence framework. The results of the survey were analyzed using SPSS 19.0 software on the returned questionnaires. The study used a five-point Likert Scale, ranging from “have very much experience”, “have some experience”, “have experience”, “have little experience”, and “have no experience”, each of which was given a score of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The maximum score for the five questions was 25 and the minimum score was 5. The higher the score, the higher the student's intercultural communicative competence. The relationship between each factor and intercultural communicative competence was tested at a $p < 0.05$ level of significance. For the one-way ANOVA, $F > 1$. If the F value exceeded a significant level of 1, post-hoc multiple comparisons were conducted by LSD. The correlations between intercultural communicative competence and other factors were analyzed as follows.

Table 2: t-test for gender in intercultural communicative competence (“*” indicates $p < 0.05$).

N=2308	male (N=1060)	female (N=1248)	P value
Mean	15.013	19.418	0.000*
Standard deviation	0.6296	0.7649	

3.2 Findings

3.2.1 Intercultural communicative competence

The results of the analysis of the different gender backgrounds are shown in Table 2. The table shows that there are significant differences in intercultural communicative competence between students of different gender backgrounds. Females were higher than males in intercultural communicative competence and there was a significant difference.

Table 3: F-value of native language background in intercultural communicative competence (“*” indicates $p < 0.05$).

N=2308	Mandarin (1) (N=474)	Cantonese (2) (N=1257)	Hakka (3) (N=246)	Min (4)(N=331)	F-value	P-value	Post-hoc comparison
Mean	18.301	17.873	15.121	15.969	926.423	0.000*	1>2>4>3
Standard deviation	1.038	1.029	0.895	1.533			

The information in Table 3 shows that there are significant differences in intercultural communicative competence among students with different mother tongue backgrounds. On post-hoc comparison, the mean size ranking in terms of intercultural communicative competence was: Mandarin > Cantonese > Min > Hakka. There were significant differences between Mandarin and Cantonese, Mandarin and Min, Mandarin and Hakka, Cantonese and Min, Cantonese and Hakka, and Hakka and Min.

As shown in Table 4, there is a significant difference between foreign language majors and non-foreign language majors in terms of their intercultural communicative competence. Foreign language majors were higher than non-foreign language majors, and there were significant differences.

Table 4: *t*-test of intercultural communicative competence of the departments (“*” indicates $p < 0.05$).

N=2308	Foreign language majors (N=500)	Non-foreign language majors (N=1808)	P value
Mean	23.020	15.839	0.000*
Standard deviation	1.0908	1.2394	

3.2.2 Identification of intercultural communication

In addition to testing the strengths and weaknesses of students' intercultural communicative competence, quantitative questions were used to understand students' identification with intercultural communication. There are three quantitative questions that are hypothesized: (1) the more students understand what intercultural communication is, the more they agree with it; (2) the more students agree that it is necessary to learn intercultural communication, the more they agree with it; and (3) the more students agree that intercultural communication can assist them in their professional studies, the more they agree with it. The corresponding quantitative questions were: (1) What do you know about intercultural communication? (The options were “very well”, “well”, “okay”, “not well” and “very little”). (2) Do you think it is necessary to learn about intercultural communication? (The options are “very necessary”, “necessary”, “okay”, “unnecessary”, “very unnecessary”) (3) Do you think that intercultural communication can help you in your professional studies? (The options are “strongly agree”, “agree”, “okay”, “disagree”, “strongly disagree”) The maximum score for the three questions was 15 points, with a minimum score of 3 points. The higher the student's score, the higher the level of identification with intercultural communication. The statistical results are shown below.

Table 5: *t*-test for gender in intercultural communication identification (“*” indicates $p < 0.05$).

N=2308	male (N=1060)	female (N=1248)	P-value
Mean	8.476	10.452	0.000*
Standard deviation	2.3443	3.6020	

From Table 5, we know that there is a significant difference in intercultural communication identity between students of different gender backgrounds. Female students were higher than male students and there was a significant difference.

Table 6: *F*-values of native language background in intercultural communication identity (“*” indicates $p < 0.05$).

N=2308	Mandarin (1) (N=474)	Cantonese (2) (N=1257)	Hakka (3) (N=246)	Min (4)(N=331)	F value	P value	Post-hoc comparison
Mean	12.833	8.304	9.276	9.746	1387.425	0.000*	1>4>3>2
Standard deviation	1.329	1.579	0.576	0.764			

Table 6 shows that there were significant differences in intercultural communication identity among students with different native language backgrounds. After post-hoc comparisons, the mean sizes were ranked as follows: Mandarin > Min > Hakka > Cantonese. There were significant differences between Mandarin and Cantonese, Mandarin and Min, Mandarin and Hakka, Cantonese and Min, Cantonese and Hakka, and Hakka and Min.

Table 7: *t*-test of subject departments in terms of intercultural communication identity (“*” indicates $p < 0.05$).

N=2308	Foreign language majors (N=500)	Non-foreign language majors (N=1808)	P-value
Mean	13.622	8.416	0.000*
Standard deviation	0.8582	0.7569	

As can be seen in Table 7, there is a significant difference between foreign language majors and non-foreign language majors in terms of intercultural communication identity. Foreign language majors are higher than non-foreign language majors, and there is a significant difference.

3.2.3 Opinions on Learning Intercultural Communication

Table 8: Students' views on intercultural communication learning.

(1) What do you think are the priorities of learning intercultural communication? (Multiple choice)		
Answer	Sample	Proportion(N=1808/500)
Foreign language skills	1140 (Non-foreign language majors)	63.05 %(N=1808)
	486 (Foreign language majors)	97 %(N=500)
Theoretical knowledge and practical examples of intercultural communication	1027 (Non-foreign language majors)	56.8 %(N=1808)
	490 (Foreign language majors)	98 %(N=500)
Literacy in acceptance and tolerance of foreign cultures	1078 (Non-foreign language majors)	59.62 %(N=1808)
	481 (Foreign language majors)	96.2 %(N=500)
Maintaining a sense of identity with one's own culture	1037 (Non-foreign language majors)	57.35 %(N=1808)
	472 (Foreign language majors)	94.4 %(N=500)
(2) What do you think are the difficulties in learning intercultural communication? (Multiple choice)		
Answer	Sample	Proportion(N=1808/500)
Foreign language skills	1121 (Non-foreign language majors)	62 %(N=1808)
	486 (Foreign language majors)	97.2 %(N=500)
Theoretical knowledge and practical examples of intercultural communication	907 (Non-foreign language majors)	50.16 %(N=1808)
	487 (Foreign language majors)	97.4 %(N=500)
Literacy in acceptance and tolerance of foreign cultures	781 (Non-foreign language majors)	43.19 %(N=1808)
	494 (Foreign language majors)	98.8 %(N=500)
Maintaining a sense of identity with one's own culture	623 (Non-foreign language majors)	34.45 %(N=1808)
	459 (Foreign language majors)	91.8 %(N=500)
(3) What do you think are the ways to improve intercultural communicative competence? (Multiple choice)		
Answer	Sample	Proportion(N=1808/500)
Teachers teaching in all foreign languages	642 (Non-foreign language majors)	35.5 %(N=1808)
	254 (Foreign language majors)	50.8 %(N=500)
Teachers providing theoretical knowledge and practical examples of intercultural communication	1048 (Non-foreign language majors)	57.96 %(N=1808)
	495 (Foreign language majors)	99 %(N=500)
Teaching through episodes, films or online teaching platforms	1033 (Non-foreign language majors)	57.13 %(N=1808)
	495 (Foreign language majors)	99 %(N=500)
Learning through cross-country travel or international school exchanges	938 (Non-foreign language majors)	51.88 %(N=1808)
	420 (Foreign language majors)	84 %(N=500)
Hiring foreign teachers	770 (Non-foreign language majors)	42.59 %(N=1808)
	492 (Foreign language majors)	98 %(N=500)

The questionnaire concluded by collecting students' opinions on learning intercultural communication. The answers can be multiple choice and the questions include: (1) What do you think are the priorities of learning intercultural communication? (2) What do you think are the difficulties in

learning intercultural communication? (3) What do you think are the ways to improve intercultural communicative competence? The results are shown in the chart below.

Table 8 shows that for both foreign language majors and non-foreign language majors, the learning priorities and difficulties of intercultural communication include “foreign language skills”, “theoretical knowledge and practical examples of intercultural communication”, “literacy in acceptance and tolerance of foreign cultures”, and “maintaining a sense of identity with one’s own culture”. In the survey of ways to improve intercultural communicative competence, “teachers providing theoretical knowledge and practical examples of intercultural communication”, “teaching through episodes, films or online teaching platforms”, and “learning through cross-country travel or international school exchanges” were chosen by more than 50% of the students.

4. Discussion and analysis

First, women are more competent than men in intercultural communication, and there are significant differences (see Table 2). According to sociolinguistic research, women prefer to use modal words, euphemisms, etc., and focus on the elegance and subtlety of language. Women also pay more attention to the normality of speech than men. ^{[21][22]} In other words, in order to achieve communicative purposes more effectively, women’s intercultural communicative competence has also increased. Students whose mother tongue background was Mandarin were higher in intercultural communicative competence than those whose mother tongue background was Cantonese, Min and Hakka respectively (see Table 3). Although there is no supporting evidence from relevant studies, it is not difficult to infer that the reason for this may be related to the linguistic status of Putonghua. The government has been promoting Putonghua since 1956, and together with its spreading in school and the media, Putonghua as an official language has gradually become a dominant language. People whose mother tongue is Mandarin do not need to learn Mandarin as further as those whose mother tongue is Cantonese, Min and Hakka, and therefore intend to learn a foreign language more, indirectly contributing to the learning and development of intercultural communicative competence. Foreign language majors have higher levels of intercultural communicative competence than non-foreign language majors (see Table 4). In general, students who are more motivated to learn a foreign language also have higher intercultural competence.

Female students have higher levels of intercultural communication identity than males, and there are significant differences (see Table 5). Many studies have shown that females are more sensitive than males to language use, particularly the differences between standard and non-standard, prestige and non-prestige languages. They choose words, pronunciation, intonation and even variants of speech according to social norms. ^{[23][24]} One of the aims of female conversation is to establish a harmonious interpersonal relationship, which may also be reflected in the level of intercultural communication identity. There were also significant differences in intercultural communication identity between students of different mother tongue backgrounds. In the post-hoc comparison, Mandarin was higher than Min, Hakka and Cantonese (see Table 6). It is inferred that students whose mother tongue background is Mandarin may have a higher interest and motivation in learning intercultural communication due to the fact that they did not learn other Chinese dialects when they were growing up, thus promoting intercultural communication identity. People tend to look forward to learning new things because of the compensatory mentality, and intercultural communication learning is one of them. Secondly, it is understandable that students’ reactions are influenced by practical communicative or life demands. Learning an additional language or culture can be a plus for future work and life. Foreign language majors are more likely to identify with intercultural communication than non-foreign language majors, and there are significant differences (see Table 7). This is similar to the analysis in Table 4, where there is a positive correlation between language learning motivation and intercultural identity.

It should be noted that students whose mother tongue background is Cantonese performed better than Min and Hakka on the survey of intercultural communicative competence, but in terms of intercultural communication identity, students whose mother tongue background is Cantonese were lower than Min and Hakka. For the moment, it is probably because students whose mother tongue is Cantonese have long been influenced by Hong Kong culture, including language, music and drama, and therefore perform better in intercultural communication. However, as they mostly use Cantonese, which is their mother tongue, for everyday communication in the Guangdong area, their motivation and interest in intercultural communication is low, which affects their identity.

Examining the students’ views on intercultural communication, “Foreign language skills”, “Theoretical knowledge and practical examples of intercultural communication” and “Literacy in

acceptance and tolerance of foreign cultures” are all important to the students. Of these, “Foreign language skills” are the most crucial. In addition, the higher percentages of the ways to improve intercultural communicative competence are “Teachers providing theoretical knowledge and practical examples of intercultural communication”, “Teaching through episodes, films or online teaching platforms”, and “Learning through cross-country travel or international school exchanges” (see Table 8). Of these, “Teachers providing theoretical knowledge and practical examples of intercultural communication” is the most popular.

Note that, although the survey of students’ views on intercultural communication shows a general desire to strengthen “Foreign language skills”, “Teachers teaching in a foreign language” is not highly favored as a way to improve intercultural communicative competence. In particular, only half of the foreign language majors chose “Teachers teaching in all foreign languages” (50.8%). This at least suggests that students prefer to learn intercultural communication in Mandarin or in a combination of Mandarin and a foreign language.

In addition to the statistical findings and inferences from the survey, the following recommendations are made to improve intercultural communication competence and performance of university students.

Through interactive activities, foreign language courses can enhance students’ intercultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity. For example, it can be rehearsed by having learners act out the intercultural communication videos they watch to ensure they understand the expectations and implicit messages in the videos. Such exercises can develop and enhance students’ social interaction skills, adaptability and intercultural communicative competence.

Multimedia devices have become critical tools used in the university classroom. Multimedia information offers students more content to learn and makes it easier for them to understand multiculturalism. Multimedia activities encourage students to work in groups, express and develop their knowledge in a variety of ways. By participating in multimedia activities, students can learn real-world skills related to technology, as well as techniques for synthesizing and analyzing complex content.

Research has shown that the development of intercultural communicative competence cannot be achieved through the teaching of a foreign language alone, but requires the support of society and schools, community activities, and extra-curricular activities.^{[25][26]} Instructors can guide students to read foreign literature, original foreign films and foreign language newspapers to encourage them to accumulate knowledge about intercultural backgrounds and social customs. Schools can sponsor activities such as a campus radio station in foreign languages, a foreign language corner, and a song contest in foreign languages. Outside of school hours, teachers can lead students in volunteer activities to help foreigners as a way to further develop their intercultural communicative competence.

5. Conclusion

The study investigated intercultural communicative competence, attitudes toward intercultural communication, views on intercultural communication study and ways to improve intercultural communicative competence among university students in Zhaoqing University, Guangdong Province in China, through a quantitative research method. It is found that female students, students whose mother tongue is Mandarin and foreign language majors performed better in terms of intercultural communicative competence and intercultural communication identity. In terms of views on intercultural communication learning, “Foreign language skills”, “Theoretical knowledge and practical examples of intercultural communication” and “Literacy in acceptance and tolerance of foreign cultures” should be emphasized. In terms of ways to improve intercultural communicative competence, “Teachers providing theoretical knowledge and practical examples of intercultural communication”, “Teaching through episodes, films or online teaching platforms”, and “Learning through cross-country travel or international school exchanges” were highly rated. The study concluded with three suggestions for the development of intercultural communicative competence among university students.

This study still has shortcomings. On the one hand, manpower and time constraints make it difficult to conduct a large sample. A large-scale survey on students’ intercultural communicative competence could be designed, and the type and scope of intercultural communicative competence survey could be expanded. On the other hand, the content of the questionnaire needs to be more complete to reflect students’ performance in intercultural communication. Students’ academic performance is one of the factors to be explored, for example. In addition, it is crucial to learn from and absorb the mainstream research paradigms and methods of intercultural communication from abroad, and effectively strengthen

the depth of it. The study of intercultural communication is intimately linked to a number of disciplines, such as psychology, communication, sociology and management. Hence, it is certain and noteworthy that the study of intercultural communication will continue to develop in a multidisciplinary manner.

Acknowledgements

We thank the editor and the reviewers for their useful feedback that improved this study. This work was supported by The Special Project for Higher Education Scientific Research of the Guangdong Provincial Education Department: An Empirical Study on the Intercultural Communicative Competence of Guangdong University Students—A Case Study of Zhaoqing University (2021GXJK340).

References

- [1] Hymes, H. (1972). *On Communicative Competence*. In J. B. Pride and J. Holmes. *Sociolinguistics*. Baltimore: Penguin Books.
- [2] Kim, Y. (2001). *Becoming Intercultural: An Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation*. Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- [3] Nadia, A. (2002). *Interculturality, Interaction and Language Learning*. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 3, 284-286.
- [4] Omaggio, A. (2001). *Teaching Language in Context*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
- [5] Deardorff, K. (2006). *Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization*. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10, 241-266.
- [6] Byram, M. (2000). *Assessing Intercultural Competence in Language Teaching*. *Sprogforum*, 6, 8-13.
- [7] Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- [8] Dai, W. (2009). *Thirty Years of Foreign Language Education in Chinese Universities*. *Foreign Language World*, 1, 2-4.
- [9] Hu, W. (2008). *Review and Reconsideration of the Reform of English Teaching in China*. *Foreign Language*, 5, 18-23.
- [10] Crook, B. (2014). *Teaching Intercultural Communication with "An Idiot Abroad"*. *Communication Teacher*, 1, 9-13.
- [11] Furstenberg, G. (2010). *A Dynamic, Web-based Methodology for Developing Intercultural Understanding*. *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Intercultural Collaboration*, 49-58.
- [12] Lu, H. (2016). *A Constructivist Teaching Model for Non-English Major Intercultural Communication Courses*. *Journal of Hebei Agricultural University (Agriculture and Forestry Education Edition)*, 5, 81-85.
- [13] Zhou, H. (2022). *Exploring the Teaching of Intercultural Communication in University English from the Output-oriented Method*. *English Square*, 34, 88-91.
- [14] Wang, N., & Sun, Y. (2022). *Research on the Teaching of Foreign Language Practice in Universities under the Perspective of Intercultural Communication*. *Education and Teaching Forum*, 49, 86-89.
- [15] Huang, Y., & Kou, Ying. (2012). *Empirical Study on Intercultural Communication Teaching for English Majors in Chinese Universities*. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 8(6), 21-29.
- [16] Yang, H., Kwan, R., Wang, P., and Ng, S. (2015). *An Empirical Study of Intercultural Communicative Competence: A Case Study of Hospitality Higher Education in China*. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 3, 102-112.
- [17] Chai, J., & Gong, W. (2016). *A Survey on the Current Situation of Intercultural Quality Education for University Students: The Case of Beijing University of Technology*. *Beijing Education in Beijing (Moral Education)*, 1, 26-28.
- [18] Wu, J. (2020). *A Study on the Development of Intercultural Communication Skills of Non-English Majors in the Application-oriented Talent Cultivation Model: Nanchang College of Technology*. *Modern Vocational Education*, 18, 84-85.
- [19] Hu, W. (2005). *The Empirical Study of Intercultural Communication*. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research (Bimonthly Journal of Foreign Languages)*, 9, 323-327.
- [20] Arasaratnam, A., & Doerfel, L. (2005). *Intercultural Communication Competence: Identifying Key Components from Multicultural Perspectives*. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 2, 137-163.
- [21] Lakoff, R. (1975). *Language and Woman's Place*. New York: Harper and Row.
- [22] Trudgill, P. (2003). *A Glossary of Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- [23] Sunderland, J. (2006). *Language and Gender: An Advanced Resource Book*. London: Routledge.

[24] Eckert, P. (2000). *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice*. Oxford: Blackwell.

[25] Deardorff, K. (2004). *Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as A Student Outcome of International Education at Institutions of Higher Educations in The United States*. Raleigh: North Carolina State University.

[26] Chen, M., & Starosta, J. (1997). *A Review of the Concept of Intercultural Sensitivity*. *Human Communication, 1*, 1-16.