กลยุทธ์ในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมของนักศึกษาชาวจีนที่เรียนในประเทศไทย:
กรณีศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏนครปฐม

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัญหาและกลยุทธ์ในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมของนักศึกษาชาวจีนที่เรียน
ในประเทศไทย กลุ่มตัวอย่าง คือ นักศึกษาชาวจีนที่ศึกษารายวิชาภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสารในภาคเรียนที่ 2 ปีการศึกษา
2566 จำนวน 41 คน ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยใช้การวิจัยเชิงผสมผสาน (Mixed Methods Research Approach) เก็บรวบรวมข้อมูล
เชิงปริมาณจากแบบประเมินความสามารถทางการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณด้วยค่าเฉลี่ย และ
ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตราฐาน และเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพจากการสัมภาษณ์ และการสังเกตในชั้นเรียน วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิง
คุณภาพด้วยการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา (Thematic Content Analysis) ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่าง
วัฒนธรรมของนักศึกษาจากการประเมินตนเองในภาพรวมอยู่ในระดับสูง อย่างไรก็ตาม นักศึกษาชาวจีนยังคงมีปัญหาในด้าน
ความสามารถทางด้านภาษาอังกฤษ และความรู้ด้านวัฒนธรรมไทย กลยุทธ์ที่นักศึกษาใช้ในการแก้ไขปัญหาที่เกิดขึ้นขณะ
สื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมของนักศึกษาคือ การใช้ภาษาท่าทางโดยการยกมือขอให้ผู้สนทนาพูดซ้ำและพูดช้าลง ทั้งนี้ หากการ
สื่อสารยังไม่ประสบความสำเร็จ นักศึกษาจะใช้แอพพลิเคชั่นแปลภาษาเพื่อให้การสื่อสารประสบความสำเร็จได้ นอกจากนี้
นักศึกษาชาวจีนได้ให้ข้อเสนอแนะที่เป็นประโยชน์ต่อการโครงการแลกเปลี่ยน ดังนี้ กิจกรรมที่มีส่วนช่วยในการปรับตัวและ
เรียนรู้ทางวัฒนธรรม คือ การฝึกอบรมภาษาไทยและภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการสื่อสารเบื้องต้น การจัดกิจกรรมการเรียนรู้เกี่ยวกับ
วัฒนธรรมเพิ่มมากขึ้น การมีที่ปรึกษาชาวไทย และการจัดเตรียมเพื่อนคนไทย

คำสำคัญ: กลยุทธ์ในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม นักศึกษาชาวจีน การปรับตัวทางวัฒนธรรม

Intercultural Communication Strategies of Chinese Students Studying in Thailand: A Case Study of Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the intercultural communication strategies of Chinese students in Thailand. The participants were 41 Chinese students who were studying English for Communication, Semester 2 of 2023 at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University. This study applied mixed-methods research approaches. Quantitative data was collected from the intercultural communicative competence self-assessment, and analyzed by mean and standard deviation. Qualitative data were collected from interviews and classroom observation. Thematic content analysis (Anderson, 1998) was utilized in analyzing the qualitative data. Findings revealed that the students' intercultural communication competence (ICC) was considered high. However, two main obstacles to ICC emerged including English abilities and knowledge of Thai culture. The strategies Chinese students used in communication with Thai teachers were body language of raising hands together with speaking Thai and English and also using translating applications. To specify, students use strategies such as using gestures, raising their hands to request repetition, or slower speech from the interlocutor. However, if the communication remains unsuccessful, students may turn to translation applications to achieve successful communication in addressing communication problems that arise. Regarding the participants' suggestions about activities promoting their intercultural communication competence, they recommended including basic Thai and English language training, providing cultural exchange activities, assigning Thai advisors, and also arranging Thai buddies.

Keywords: Intercultural communication strategy, Chinese students, Self-adaptation

1. Introduction

Intercultural communication (IC) has significantly become an essential part of everyday life, crossing various contexts like tourism, education, and business. It involves interactions between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, where conveying meaning requires navigating both linguistic and cultural differences (Noonkong, Damnet, & Charttrakul, 2019; Yan Ye, 2019). The communication aspect encompasses verbal and non-verbal elements such as language usage, facial expressions, and tone, while

the cultural dimension involves understanding various lifestyles and values. Effectively bridging these gaps demands not only cultural knowledge but also communicative competence, which is essential for both intra- and cross-cultural communication. Thus, individuals often need to acquire new languages and adapt to different cultures to foster smoother interactions within society, though such adaptation can sometimes present challenges in communication across cultures.

The complex interchange of global politics, economics, and society has facilitated extensive cross-cultural exchanges, leading to Thailand's increasing popularity among Chinese tourists and individuals fascinated by Thai language and culture. Consequently, there has been a noticeable rise in Chinese people learning Thai, particularly following China's liberalization policies in recent decades. Thai educational institutions have adapted to accommodate the growing number of Chinese students by establishing collaborative programs and exchange initiatives. The expansion in interest is partly driven by China's substantial youth population, which exceeds the capacity of domestic universities, and motivates students to seek educational opportunities abroad, especially Thailand. Currently, the number of Chinese students studying in Thai universities has risen continuously since 2014, numbering over 14,000 in 2020. As a result, interactions between individuals with linguistic and cultural differences happen all the time in this context.

In the academic area, there has been a noticeable increase in the enrollment of international students choosing Thailand as their study destination. As a result, many Thai higher education institutions have established Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with counterparts in China and other ASEAN member countries to facilitate exchange programs. These agreements serve not only to enable Thai students to pursue further studies overseas but also to offer a range of academic programs to foreign students, allowing them to study in Thailand and gain exposure to new languages and cultures. Consequently, the diverse linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds of students participating in these exchange initiatives highlight the imperative of English as a lingua franca for communication. As a result, engagement in intercultural communication becomes unavoidable for these students, as they are obligated to interact in a language other than their own with both educators and members of the host society. However, the academic success of Chinese international students is influenced by factors such as academic stress, financial limitations, language barriers, and loneliness (Zhang & Wang, 2016). Among these challenges, the lack of intercultural knowledge stands out as the primary hindrance. To address psychological, sociocultural, and academic obstacles, it is imperative for these students to prioritize the acquisition of intercultural competence (Wette & Furneaux, 2018). Proficiency in this area facilitates social integration, improves intercultural communication, supports in understanding of course materials, and enhances confidence in seeking support from advisors and peers. Eventually, this can alleviate academic pressure and improve cultural adaptation difficulties among Chinese international students.

Drawing on previous research by Nomnian & Jhaiyanuntana (2018), the adaptation of Chinese undergraduate students to the Thai host culture is significantly influenced by communication breakdowns and misunderstandings of Thai cultural norms when interacting with Thais in English within a Thai-speaking environment. The increasing presence of Chinese students in Thai universities has brought attention to their struggles with life adjustment and integration into Thai culture. Given the growing population of Chinese

students in Thai universities, there is a pressing need to investigate intercultural communication strategies and socio-cultural adaptation challenges, as well as to devise solutions to facilitate successful learning.

Concerning promoting intercultural competence at the research cite, there has been an implementation of policies and missions aimed at enhancing its internationalization efforts. As a result, universities have established cooperative agreements with domestic and international institutions, particularly those in Southeast and East Asia, such as the People's Republic of China. These agreements frequently involve student exchange programs with universities like Yunnan National University, Guangxi Normal University, and Foreign Language Universities in China. Consequently, there has been a consistent incursion of Chinese students to study at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University, with their numbers steadily rising. When studying abroad, Chinese students must navigate and adapt to various aspects of their new environment, including communication styles, customs, and cultural norms (NPRU, 2019).

To prepare an insightful exchange program in tertiary educational contexts, as well as to increase cultural awareness for a better understanding of English intercultural communication in a Thai public university for Chinese students, the analysis of intercultural communication strategies should be examined. This analysis is essential for the successful development of English intercultural communication at the university level.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Intercultural Communicative Competence: Definitions and Strategies

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is a crucial aspect of effective communication in today's globalized world. Scholars have proposed various ICC definitions and strategies differently. Regarding the meaning of ICC, Byram (1997) defines ICC as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes." This definition emphasizes not only linguistic proficiency but also cultural awareness and sensitivity. Similarly, Fantini (2000) describes ICC as "the ability to create and interpret meaning across cultures in interaction with others." This definition underscores the interactive and dynamic nature of ICC, emphasizing the importance of mutual understanding and interpretation in intercultural communication.

Concerning the ICC model, Byram (1997) proposes the ICC Model, which consists of savoirs (knowledge), savoir-faire (skills), and savoir-être (attitudes). He emphasizes the role of cultural awareness, communicative skills, empathy in ICC development, and the holistic nature of intercultural competence. Similarly, Deardorff (2006) proposes that ICC comprises three interrelated components: knowledge, attitudes, and skills. To be specified, the ICC model generally comprises knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

2.2 Intercultural Communication Strategies

Intercultural communication strategies are essential for navigating the complexities of interactions between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. This literature review explores various strategies employed to enhance intercultural communication effectiveness, drawing from scholarly research and theoretical frameworks.

2.2.1 Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity

Cultural awareness and sensitivity form the foundation of effective intercultural communication. scholars such as Ting-Toomey (1999) emphasize the importance of understanding cultural norms, values, and communication styles. By developing cultural empathy and suspending ethnocentric biases, individuals can engage in more meaningful and respectful cross-cultural interactions.

2.2.2 Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

Verbal and nonverbal communication play significant roles in intercultural exchanges. Gudykunst and Kim (2003) highlight the significance of adapting language usage, tone, and speech patterns to align with cultural norms. Additionally, nonverbal cues such as gestures, facial expressions, and body language convey implicit messages that vary across cultures, necessitating sensitivity and interpretation skills. However, using non-verbal communication can have a negative effect on conversation. Some negative facial expressions such as trough the eyebrows or frowning may lead to a boring conversation (Abramova et al., 2020).

2.2.3. Adaptation and Flexibility:

Adaptation and flexibility are key strategies for overcoming cultural barriers in communication. Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity proposes stages of increasing cultural competence from denial to integration. Individuals who demonstrate adaptability and openness to cultural differences are better equipped to navigate diverse social contexts and build rapport with interlocutors.

2.2.4 Active Listening and Empathy

Active listening and empathy are fundamental strategies for fostering mutual understanding and trust in intercultural interactions. Hargie and Dickson (2004) underscore the importance of attentive listening, empathy, and perspective-taking in overcoming communication barriers. By demonstrating genuine interest and validating others' perspectives, individuals can bridge cultural divides and enhance interpersonal connections.

2.2.5 Conflict Resolution and Mediation

Conflict resolution and mediation skills are crucial for managing intercultural conflicts that may arise due to misunderstandings or cultural differences. Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) advocate for constructive approaches to conflict resolution, such as assertive communication, negotiation, and compromise. Cultivating a collaborative problem-solving mindset fosters harmonious relationships and promotes conflict transformation.

In conclusion, intercultural communication strategies encompass a range of cognitive, linguistic, and behavioral competencies aimed at facilitating effective cross-cultural interactions. By cultivating cultural awareness, adapting communication styles, and fostering empathy, individuals can navigate diverse cultural contexts with sensitivity and respect. Additionally, there is no research study to find out problems and intercultural communication strategies among Chinese students at the research cite. As a result, to accomplish handling successful learning among Chinese students, research on problems of intercultural communication and strategies used by Chinese students studying in Thailand: A case study of Nakhon

Pathom Rajabhat University was employed to find out problems and solutions for better preparation for Chinese exchange students.

3. Purposes of the Study

1. To examine the intercultural communicative competence level of Chinese students studying in a Thai public university.

2. To investigate the Chinese's problems of communication when studying in Thailand.

3. To investigate the intercultural communication strategies used by Chinese students studying in a Thai public university.

4. Research Questions

1. What is the intercultural communicative competence level of Chinese students studying in a Thai public university?

2. What are the Chinese's problems of communication when studying in Thailand?

3. In what way do Chinese students employ intercultural communication strategies when encountering intercultural communication problems in a Thai public university?

4.

5. Significance of the study

The study has significant implications in several domains:

1. To enhance successful intercultural communication among Chinese students in the Thai context, fostering appropriate social interactions and negotiation skills can be beneficial.

2. Intensive training courses on appropriate English intercultural communication can be developed to give Chinese students a deeper understanding of English intercultural communication in a long-term Thai public university setting.

3. A training model and handbook on effective English intercultural communication can be developed to help Chinese undergraduates and other international students adapt to studying long-term in Thai public universities.

6. Research Methodology

This study applied the mixed-methods research design (Creswell & Clark, 2011) for triangulation of data collection and analysis. The quantitative data were collected from an ICC self-assessment questionnaire while the qualitative data were collected from interviewing and classroom observation. The questionnaire survey was carried out on the first day of the lesson. The purpose was to find out the participants' primary knowledge and skills of ICC. Along with 16 weeks of teaching and learning, the classroom observation was taken three times including at the beginning, after the midterm week, and on week 14 of regular teaching in semester two of the academic year 2023. Finally, the interview was conducted on the last day of teaching, lasting for 30 minutes.

6.1 Population

The study population consists of Chinese students currently enrolled at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University. Data were sourced from the International Relations Office and the Academic Promotion and Registration Office of the university for semester two of the academic year 2023, totaling 236 individuals.

6.2 Participants

In this study, 41 second-year Chinese students majoring in Thai Program were selected based on the purposive sampling technique. The focus was on classroom communication in English for Communication course where participants were asked to speak English with teachers.

6.3 Research Instruments

In this study, three research instruments employed were: 1) a questionnaire about intercultural communicative competence self-assessment; 2) an in-depth interview on intercultural communication strategies; and 3) classroom observation.

6.3.1 Intercultural Communicative Competence Self-Assessment Questionnaire

The ICC self-assessment questionnaire by Suwanasom (2019) was used. The 5 domains with 22 questions on ICC were employed including attitudes towards ICC; knowledge of ICC; skills of interpreting and relating; skills of discovery and interaction; and critical cultural awareness of ICC. The questions in this part were developed based on Byram's ICC model with regard to their perceptions of intercultural communication mentioned in a self-assessment of Byram's intercultural experience (Byram et al, 2002, p. 31-32). This part included a five-point Likert scale to analyze the questionnaire in terms of the intercultural communication strategies found and measure intercultural competence dimensions which are knowledge, skills, attitudes and cultural awareness. The five-point Likert scale was used to rate the different opinions and each item is rated on a range of scores from 1-5 points as well as the score's interpretation. To ensure the quality of the research instrument used in this study, the questionnaire accepted content validity testing with experts assessing and revising it based on the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). Only questions with an IOC value exceeding 0.5 were selected. Reliability testing of the entire questionnaire was conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with results indicating high reliability, exceeding 0.7 for all measures.

6.3.2 An in-depth interview on intercultural communication strategies

For the qualitative data, a sample group of nine individuals was selected using homogeneous criteria. This approach was chosen because Chinese students studying abroad often share similar backgrounds and characteristics. The selection process involved announcing the opportunity and selecting students who voluntarily participated in group interviews. Each group interview comprised three students, resulting in three groups categorized based on students' university origins in China.

Interviews focused on intercultural communication strategies used by Chinese students when encountering their intercultural communication problems and cultural experiences. In organizing the interview groups for this study, emphasis was placed on using the Thai language for communication to the greatest extent possible. This was done to allow Chinese students to reflect on their various thoughts and attitudes and to observe their proficiency in Thai language communication. Therefore, the interview groups

consisted of only three sample individuals to stimulate Chinese students to have the maximum opportunity to speak and converse in Thai. The guided interview questions were scheduled as follows:

1. What are your problems when studying in Thailand? How did you probe those problems?

2. If there is a communication problem with Thai teachers or friends while studying, what methods or strategies do you use to solve the problem or ensure successful communication?

3. If your interlocutor can speak both Thai and English, and there is a problem during the conversation, which language would you choose to communicate to ensure the greatest understanding? Why?

4. What Thai culture did you learn when studying in Thailand?

5. Please suggest activities or methods to promote your ability to communicate both in Thai and English more quickly and effectively.

6.3.3 Classroom observation

Classroom observations were peer observation which aims to assess the students' intercultural communication strategies used while interacting with the Thai teacher. It seeks to find out the students' ICC problems and strategies used to overcome those problems.

6.4 Data collection

6.4.1 A quantitative data

6.4.1.1 ICC self-assessment questionnaire

In this study, the quantitative data were collected from the ICC self-assessment questionnaire and was carried out for the 41 second-year Chinese students' use of English intercultural communication strategies in Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University. The participants were asked to do the ICC self-assessment on the first day of the lesson with regard to their perceptions of intercultural communication drawing upon Byram's ICC model (1997) based on five intercultural competence domains, namely knowledge, skills to interpret and relate, skills to discover and interact, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness.

6.4.2 A qualitative data

6.4.2.1 An in-depth interview on intercultural communication strategies

The qualitative data from this in-depth interview was used as it enables the researcher to find out the participants' problems and strategies used when encountering ICC problems. Nine volunteer students were invited to attend an in-depth interview that lasted for thirty minutes on the last day of learning. The interview was conducted in English and Thai.

6.4.2.2 Classroom observation

In a classroom observation, the teacher observes the peer during teaching in class and seeks to find the phenomena happened in the classroom and the student's interaction with the teacher in order to find out the strategies the students used during communicating with the teacher in English classroom where the students were forced to speak only English. The observation was taken 3 times including at the beginning, after the midterm week, and on week 14 of semester 2/2023.

6.5 Data analysis

6.5.1 A quantitative data

6.5.1.1 The ICC self-assessment questionnaire

The quantitative data were analyzed by descriptive and presented in mean scores and standard deviation (S.D.). The interpretation was based on Likert's (1932) psychometric scale. Each item was rated based on a range of scores from 1-5 points, representing 1 as "strongly disagree", 2 as "disagree", 3 as "not sure", 4 as "agree" and 5 as "strongly agree", as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The Interpretation of the ICC score

Score range	Mean rating	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	strongly agree	very high
3.41-4.20	agree	high
2.61-3.40	not sure	moderate
1.81-2.60	disagree	low
1.00-1.80	strongly disagree	very low

6.5.2 A qualitative data

In analyzing the qualitative data, thematic content analysis (Anderson, 1998) was employed for data gained from interviews and classroom observation.

7. Findings

Findings are presented in two main parts: 1) the intercultural communicative competence level of Chinese students, and 2) the intercultural communication strategies used by Chinese students.

7.1 The intercultural communicative competence level of Chinese students

The key findings of this study were categorized, according to Byram's (1997) ICC domains, into knowledge, skills to discover and interact, skills to interpret and relate, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness, respectively. For the first research question, the mean scores were computed in order to determine the levels of overall ICC as well as its components. The obtained mean scores would indicate the higher the mean, the higher the level of ICC. Also, the number of participants and their percentages per category in the criteria suggested by Saricoban and Oz (2014) were calculated. These criteria, then, were used to show the distribution of the categorical data regarding the ICC levels in the sample (high, moderate, and low level of the ICC of undergraduate ELT students):

High level: $3.50 < M < 5.00$

Moderate level: $2.50 < M < 3.49$

Low level: $1.00 < M < 2.49$

The findings are described below.

Table 2 Overall intercultural communicative competence level of Chinese students

Items	Intercultural Communicative Competence Domain	x	SD	Interpret
1.	Skills to discover and interact	4.45	0.48	Very high
2.	Skills to interpret and relating	4.40	0.62	Very high
3.	Attitude	4.25	0.40	Very high
4.	Knowledge	4.10	0.52	High
5.	Critical cultural awareness of ICC	4.08	0.53	High
	Overall	4.26	0.51	very high

Table 2 demonstrates that overall, the intercultural communicative competence of Chinese students was very high ($\bar{x}$ = 4.26). When considering the individual factor, they had a very high competence level of skills to discover and interact ($\bar{x}$ = 4.45), followed by skills to interpret and relating ($\bar{x}$ = 4.40), and attitude ($\bar{x}$ = 4.25), respectively. However, they had a high level of ICC on both knowledge ($\bar{x}$ = 4.10) and critical cultural awareness of ICC ($\bar{x}$ = 4.08).

Regarding the skills to discover and interact which resulted in the highest score, the findings from the interview also asserted that they were aware of interacting with Thai teachers and friends. For example, student CA4 stated *"I learned that interacting with Thai teachers and Thai friends is different. This is because Thais are concerned about seniority."*

Consequently, findings from the interview confirmed that the Chinese students gained knowledge on various cultural topics. For example, Student CA3 stated that "I learned many topics on Thai culture such as food, dressing, traditional customs, teaching, music, and communication culture. Similarly, student CA19 also confirmed that he had learned Thai culture for many topics such as history, poetry, festivals, good manners, and local customs.

However, the score on critical cultural awareness was considered the lowest among the factors. This is in line with the comment from Student CA13 who asserted that *"It is difficult for me to find the appropriate word choices to suit the teachers".*

7.2 The Chinese students' problems when studying English for communication at a public Thai university

Findings from the interview showed that Chinese students had two major problems when studying English for Communication at a public Thai university. They were: 1) low proficiency in basic English for communication; and 2) self-adaptation. The problems are elaborated below.

7.2.1 Low English proficiency

Findings from the interview show that Chinese students had low English proficiency. They had problems with basic English for communication. To clarify, before studying in Thailand, the students were focused on training to speak Thai and learning Thai culture rather than learning English. As a result, they paid more attention to improving Thai and learning Thai culture. As stated by student CA21, he stated in Thai which means that he cannot speak English. His English is considered low. He prefers speaking Thai

instead. Similarly, student 14 asserted that she had problems in English. It is more difficult to learn. So, she prefers to learn Thai.

7.2.2 Self-adaptation

Findings from the interview show that Chinese students had some problems with self-adaptation. Regarding some cultural differences between Thailand and China, this factor impacts Chinese students when living in Thai contexts. As stated by student CA2 in the interview, "I had problems when studying here. It was about the really hot weather. It made me feel uncomfortable sometimes. In Yunnan, the weather is rather cool. So, I might take time to adapt myself to the new environment". Likewise, student CA14 also asserted that she had problems with Thai food. The taste of food is mainly sweet. However, I help myself by cooking my own dish. It's o.k. Here, I can find cooking materials easily".

7.3 The intercultural communication strategies used by Chinese students when interacting with Thais in a public Thai university

Findings from the interview on intercultural communication strategies used by Chinese students when interacting with Thais emerged in two aspects including raising hands to ask for repetition and speaking slowly and self-adaptation. In terms of raising hands to ask for repetition and speaking slowly, findings from the interview show that Chinese students tended to use a strategy of asking for repetition on unclear pronunciation or unfamiliar words and expressions because they were not familiar with the accents, stress and intonations. They asserted that they tended to use this strategy more than other strategies. As stated by student CA4, she said that she would ask the teacher to repeat if she could not catch any words or expressions. This is because understanding what the speakers say is the most important factor in communication. Concerning asking to speak slowly, Chinese students tended to ask the teacher to speak slowly than the normal rate whenever the teacher spoke too fast. As stated by student CA16, he stated that "If the teacher speaks too fast, I always raise my hand to ask the teacher to speak slowly. This is because I'm not used to the teacher's accent. To confirm the strategy of asking for repetition and speaking slowly used by Chinese students, findings from classroom observation also asserted that the students tend to ask the teacher to repeat whenever they do not understand what the teacher said. They always asked the teacher both in Thai and English to repeat since they were unfamiliar with the teachers' accents. For example, student CA17 raised his hand and said "I don't understand. Please say it again." Similar to student CA6 who smiled and said in Thai as this means "Can you speak slowly? I cannot hear you clearly."

However, the students also asserted that they tended to use translating applications whenever the conversation could not be understood by the teacher. It was the best choice to make the conversation successful. As stated by student CA4 who mentioned that "I always use Google Translate to show the English or Thai meaning to the teachers. I think this way is easier for both of us to understand our conversation correctly".

Additionally, findings from the interview reviewed the Chinese students' suggested activities to promote intercultural communicative competence in two ways including arranging Thai buddies and joining cultural activities. They were beneficial for them both in their living and studying culture and languages. Concerning joining cultural activities, they suggested the activities contributing to cultural adjustment

included Thai language training, English language training, providing Thai advisors, and arranging Thai buddies.

8. Discussion

The most remarkable result from the data was that the students' ICC is considered at a very high level, especially on the skills to discover and interact which is regarded as the highest score. According to the results, these Chinese students tend to use the skills to discover and interact more than other intercultural communication strategies. Additionally, they demonstrated the strategy of raising hands to ask for repetition and speaking slowly.

These findings were in response to their low English proficiency and problems with basic English for communication. As a result, they had to find strategies to help them accomplish when communicating in English with the teacher. A strategy of raising hands could be a good signal from them that they need some help.

Another strategy they used was raising their hands to ask for repetition. Concerning their low English proficiency and the different accent, pace and pausing, and stress and intonation of Thai teachers who teach English, the Chinese students were unfamiliar with these styles of speaking. In order to their communication breakdowns, the strategy of raising hands to ask for repetition helped them overcome the problems. In reference to the study of Phumpho & Nomnian, (2019), findings show that in terms of communicative styles, pace and pausing, and intonation together with accent and pronunciation were considered the two key factors that directly impacted communication between Thai people and their ASEAN partners. Similarly, findings on the Chinese university's listening problem were conducted by Thao (2020). He noted that students had problems with their listening comprehension related to the high speech rates of the speakers. As a result, the body language of raising hands could be a good signal for teachers that these Chinese were having some problems and asking for help. Noticing this body language could help teachers find solutions for the Chinese students appropriately.

In conclusion, the study on the intercultural communication strategies of Chinese students studying in Thailand revealed that the students' intercultural communication competence affected the students' daily life and their study in some way. Even though their intercultural communicative competence was very high, they still had some problems while communicating with the interlocutors who shared different languages and cultures. Factors influencing the daily life of Chinese students were languages and cultural differences. As a result, the strategies they used to overcome the problems were raising hands to ask the interlocuter for repletion and speaking slowly. This body language could be a good signal for teachers. Additionally, the advantageous suggestions from the Chinese students for activities contributing to the cultural adjustment of Chinese students included Thai language training, English language training, providing Thai advisors, more cultural learning, and arranging Thai buddies. This could be beneficial to universities for further arranging and preparing for Chinese students in Thai contexts.

9. Limitations

The limitation of the study concerns the size of the sample group. Only 41 students among 236 is considered too small. In addition, only nine students participated in the interview. the results may not be representative of the population being studied. This can lead to a lack of generalizability of the results.

10. Implications

Findings from the study suggest that a model of an intensive training course on appropriate English intercultural communication can be developed to give Chinese number students a deeper understanding of English intercultural communication and to help students adapt to studying at long-term Thai public universities successfully.

11. Recommendations

According to the results and the conclusion of this study, the recommendations for further study are presented as follows:

1) As the objectives of this study are to explore the intercultural communication competence and strategies used to overcome ICC problems, further study should also look into the relationship among the English proficiency level, students' IC competence, and students' ICC strategies.

2) To verify the reliability and validity of the results, an in-depth interview should be conducted with more participants.

3) Most of the items from the self-assessment questionnaire in this study mainly focused on measuring the intercultural communicative competence of the participants. Therefore, further study might consider adapting or adding more items to the three factors of ICC including attitude, knowledge, and skills to be covered areas of ICC.

4) Due to the time constraint, the number of participants in this study was only 41 Chinese students. Therefore, further study may include more participants in order to gain more generalized information from the larger population.

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