THE ANALYSIS OF CULTURE OF LEARNING:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF KOREAN STAFF
IN A CHINESE WORKPLACE

BY

YUN DING

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Assoc. Prof. Pragasit Sitthitikul, Ph.D.   Asst. Prof. Anchalee Chayanuvat, Ed.D.
Examination Committee Chairperson   Member

                      Asst. Prof. Ubon Sanpatchayapong, D.Ed.
                          Member and Advisor

Approved by Graduate School

(Asst. Prof. Plt. Off. Vannee Sooksatra, D.Eng.)
Dean of Graduate School
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Yun Ding

Researcher

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the culture of learning of Korean staff in a Chinese workplace. The study objectives are to identify teaching strategies and to explore how the Korean staff improve their culture of learning in the context of second language acquisition and intercultural communication. Data were collected from teacher's journals, classroom recordings, and semi-structured interviews with six Korean participants. The analysis follows grounded theory consisting of open, axial and selective codings. The findings reveal three teaching strategies: contextual approach, cultural teaching, and Internet buzzwords teaching methods. The contextual approach emphasizes integrating language learning with real-life cultural experiences enhancing practical communication. Cultural teaching emphasizes understanding and embracing Chinese culture to facilitate smoother for the Korean staff's communication in a Chinese workplace. Internet buzzwords teaching strategy incorporates contemporary language and cultural trends making communication more relevant and engaging. To improve Korean staff's culture of learning, they employed three key methods: learning through media platforms, gaining cultural experiences and integrating Chinese language learning with hobbies. These approaches help them bridge cultural gaps and enhance intercultural communication. This study highlights the importance of cultural learning and its role in language learning providing practical insights for language educators and learners to enhance cultural learning in diverse work environments, thereby improving intercultural communicative competence.

(Total 113 pages)

Keywords: Culture of learning, intercultural communication

Student's Signature …... Thesis Advisor's Signature ....

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

The world is a community. Globalization has always been the trend of the future (Graddol, 2006). Based on this information, I have also noticed that with the rapid development of the world's transportation and modern communications industry, there will be more and more communication and cooperation between different countries, races and ethnic groups in the world (Simpson, 2012). According to Jackson (2014), people from different cultural backgrounds need to learn the local language because of their communication needs. Certainly, mastering a language requires the abilities of listening, speaking, reading, and writing or the four language skills (Liperote, 2006, p. 46).

In addition to the four abilities mentioned above, a language encompasses culture as well (Mazari & Derraz, 2015, p. 350), and it is also a form of expression of culture (Jiang, 2000, p. 328). The use of language must follow the rules of culture (Bonvillain, 2019). In other words, culture determines thinking and the way language is expressed. The communication between people of different languages and cultural backgrounds is not only the communication of language, but also about culture. When people of different cultural backgrounds communicate, culture and language are expressed. Hence, the theory of intercultural communication was first proposed by E.T. Hall in 1959, which means communication between native speakers and non-native speakers (Hall, 1959). Intercultural communication requires appropriateness as well as linguistic accuracy (Pikhart & Koblizkova, 2017, p. 45). Humans can use different modes of linguistic communication and communicate effectively according to different cultural backgrounds.

In a sense, Chinese as a second language class is a place for intercultural communication. The fundamental aim of second language teaching is to achieve intercultural communication (Sun, 2013), that is to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. The class in this study is in a Korean company in China, where I work as a Chinese language teacher. I am responsible for teaching Chinese to the Korean employees in the company, for whom Chinese is a second language. As a teacher of teaching Chinese as a second language, he/she should have the ability to "acquire the language and understand the culture of the other party, while retaining his/her own cultural identity, and be able to maintain a balance between the two languages and cultures in order to communicate successfully" (Kramsch, 2014, p. 30). Along with teaching language knowledge, it is crucial to foster students' communicative abilities and their capacity for using foreign languages for intercultural interaction, to adapt to communicative needs.

When I teach Chinese to those Korean staff, they often ask me the similar questions, "Why am I unable to express myself fluently? Why can't I understand what my Chinese colleagues are saying?" I can interpret that the learners were distressed and confused. My answer is that they only learned the language and did not understand the culture of the target language, so they failed in actual communication due to the differences in Chinese and Korean culture. Hence, we can find that language and culture are inseparable.

According to the above background, I hope that I can use my research to promote Korean employees' cultural learning, improve their communicative competence, and achieve their goal of learning a second language. Therefore, my research topic focuses on "The analysis of culture of learning: A qualitative study of Korean staff in a Chinese workplace". In other words, this research can be another channel to make teaching Chinese motivating and fruitful to intercultural education.

1.2 Statement of the problems

My Korean students master pronunciation and grammar correctly through basic courses, but they often cannot express their thoughts, and in many cases, they misunderstand their Chinese colleagues when they talk with them due to the cultural differences. Cultural differences include differences in language, values, cognitive perspectives, moral practices, ways of thinking, etc. (Galanti, 2000). The main four problems of Korean employees are as follows.

First, they lacked the experience in the real Chinese speaking environment, they had previously studied stereotypical written Chinese only in a Korean classroom and they rarely spoke with Chinese natives. Thus, when they came to work in China, I found that they could not communicate smoothly. They had to adjust their classroom Chinese to Chinese in real life. For example, in contrast to stereotypical written Chinese, which often uses outdated vocabulary and grammatical structures, spoken Chinese is simpler and more understandable, often using more modern and practical vocabulary and grammatical structures, such as "对不起(I am sorry)" instead of "我很抱歉(my apologies)". In communication with native Chinese, the Korean employees need colloquialisms that are easy to understand.

The second problem is the interference of their mother tongue in communicating in Chinese. In other words, it's a linguistic problem due to cultural differences. From my observation when I teach them in class, I can see that they sometimes translate Korean to Chinese to talk to me or to write a paragraph in Chinese. For instance, Chinese and Korean have completely different sentence structures. Chinese people say "我吃水果" (I eat fruit), while Koreans say "나는 과일을 먹어" (I fruit eat). When communicating, they often translate Korean directly into Chinese. Although the simple sentences do not cause ambiguity and Chinese people can understand them, when it comes to longer and more complex sentences, the Chinese language spoken in this literal way is completely incorrect. Because this is not really the correct Chinese way of speaking.

The third problem is the different understanding brought about by the difference in cognitive perspective. Specifically, it means that when Korean students

choose sentences to express their intentions, they actually express and understand them in a cognitive way of Korean culture. This can lead them to unconsciously violate communicative norms, social conventions, or not conform to the requirements of time and space, and ultimately fail to achieve the desired effect or complete communicative effect. For instance, in Korean culture, it is common to use indirect language and expressions when conveying negative opinions or criticism, in order to avoid causing offense. Instead of saying "I don't like your idea," a Korean speaker says, "It's an interesting idea, but have you considered other options?" This indirect approach is confusing or unclear to Chinese colleagues, who are used to more direct forms of communication to obtain information.

Fourth, the social skills are different, mainly in greeting, communication, table manners and work etiquette. A very common example is the greeting. Chinese frequently use the sentence: "Have you eaten yet?" as a greeting, similar to hello in English, but what Koreans can't understand is why they ask if they have eaten yet when they meet. In terms of greeting etiquette, Koreans also have body language, they bow to say hello, but Chinese people choose to shake hands or wave as a greeting body language.

Through the classroom's context, it can be seen that culture influences communication in subtle and multifaceted ways. I found that this Korean group is more open to accepting and learning than rejecting when faced with cultural conflicts. Hence, the study of these issues can help learners better understand Chinese culture, establish a keen intercultural awareness, and improve intercultural adaptation skills to achieve effective intercultural communication.

1.3 Significance of the study

In recent years, China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative has gained increasing international recognition, while many policies have attracted foreign companies to set up branches in China. The value of Chinese as a working language has been further enhanced, the international spread of Chinese culture has also been provided with a

favorable international environment and cultural opportunities. Many countries have incorporated Chinese into their school curriculum, and the number of international learners of Chinese is increasing year by year. As an important carrier of communication, language is also synchronizing the transmission of culture (Jiang, 2000, p. 328). The study of intercultural communication has emerged to meet the needs of such an increasingly developed intercultural internationalization and interpersonal interaction. Intercultural communication examines how diverse cultural origins influence values and thought processes, how different social structures affect role relationships and social norms, and how different communicative contexts influence language usage and communication styles (Hurn, 2013).

In a Chinese teaching as a second language, teachers act as the "intercultural speakers", that is to say, teachers themselves must have good intercultural communication skills to accept and spread other languages and cultures in teaching. For learners, understanding and accepting culture can also break down barriers to learning as soon as possible, and make learners learn language and culture with respect, understanding and enjoyment. For the Korean employees in this study, learning Chinese while enhancing their understanding of Chinese culture can help them to learn Chinese better and improve their intercultural communication skills.

Whether it is the needs of learning Chinese or the needs of the development of the global economy, culture of learning plays a vital role. The teaching of Chinese as a second language mentioned in this study is also inseparable from the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence. In other word, this study is very important and relevant. It can effectively help Korean employees understand Chinese culture such as values and ways of thinking and communicate smoothly with Chinese at work and in life.

1.4 Context of the study

In 2019, China promoted all-round opening up, increased efforts to attract foreign investment, and implemented a series of foreign-business friendly systems.

Many foreign-funded enterprises have established companies in China. In order to live and work in China, foreign employees of these companies need to learn Chinese. Therefore, this research is being done in a Korean company in China.

The Korean company mainly manufactures parts and trades with Chinese companies and has about 2,600 Korean employees who rotate regularly. The company hopes that Korean employees learn Chinese and Chinese culture to the level of adapting to local customs, have no barriers in communication with Chinese employees in the company, and be able to perform appropriate Chinese etiquette. When working with Chinese trading companies, they can also demonstrate excellent intercultural communication skills to help the company achieve better performance. Therefore, the company has established a regulation that mid-level leaders must study Chinese and Chinese culture. According to the company's regulations, 18 middle-level leaders among these Korean employees in China need to attend VIP Chinese courses every day. Through the study, if they pass the HSKK6 or one of the Mandarin test levels, they can get a promotion and salary increase from their work.

These 18 Koreans are divided into 3 classes. Each contains 6 students. They study with the Chinese teachers. I am one of the teachers. My six participants passed HSK 3 before they came to China. They know some basic and simple Chinese words and short sentences. However, there are many difficulties when they start work and communicate with Chinese people in China.

Besides pronunciation, a crucial problem is the inability to communicate because of the barriers of intercultural communication. There are many differences between Korean and Chinese cultures. In Chinese daily communication, it is a common and usual manner to address a colleague directly by name or say "you", but it is rude in Korean culture. Therefore, the misunderstanding arising in the first communication is that Koreans feel disrespected. Then, the actual communication failed. Thus, intercultural communication is very important.

In light of the above reasons, the Korean staff are very active in learning

Chinese and Chinese culture in order to better work and live more comfortably in China.

1.5 Objectives of the study

This study aims to find out what teaching strategies facilitate the Korean staff's intercultural communication skills and ways they improve their culture of learning.

1.6 Research questions

This study has 2 research questions:

1.6.1 What teaching strategies facilitate intercultural communication and language learning among these Korean staff in study?

1.6.2 How do Korean staff improve their culture of learning?

1.7 Scope of the study

There are four parts of this section: qualitative methodology, participants, data collection and data analysis.

1.7.1 Qualitative methodology

A qualitative methodology involves collecting and analyzing non-digital data (e.g. text, video, or audio) to make sense of the concepts, ideas, or experiences. It can be used to gather insights into issues or to generate new research ideas (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge, 2001). Researchers use different sources of data to understand the topic they are studying, they gather information through participant-observation, interviews, questionnaires on which participants write in a descriptive manner, focus groups, participant-writing, field recordings, documents, case studies, and artifacts. Most of the data are not numerical (Given, 2008). Qualitative methodology has been used in high educational research (Savenye & Robinson, 2005, p.65), because it

emphasizes a deeper understanding of social phenomena, respects the practitioner's interpretation of their own behavior, and facilitates problem solving and the promotion of educational practice. Therefore, I use this research method in my study.

There are many methods of data collection in qualitative research. In my study, I use teacher's journals, recordings of class and interviews to collect data and analyze them using grounded theory suggested by Strauss and Cobin (2005).

1.7. 2 Participants

The participants are from a Korean company. They are all Koreans, aged around 40. Before coming to China, they all learned simple Chinese in Korea (at about HSK3 level). They mainly learned Chinese listening and speaking skills in order to communicate with Chinese people when they live and work in China.

1.7.3 Data collection

Data collection is the process of gathering, measuring, and analyzing data from a variety of relevant sources to find answers to research problems (Gallagher, 2009, p.65). I garner different data as follows:

1.7.3.1 Teacher's journals

Teacher's journals can be an excellent tool for collecting data in an educational setting (Chen, 2013, pp. 131-143). In the teacher's journals, I record the teaching activities and strategies of the class, students' reactions, their problems and challenges. These are the first part of my data. Through the teacher's journals, I can understand students' learning situation, find the problems and challenges in their learning, reflect on and summarize my teaching methods, and constantly adjust teaching strategies to achieve the teaching objectives.

1.7.3.2 Recordings of class

The main content of these recordings are the presentation and pair work of Korean employees. Every Monday in class, I ask them to do presentations in the Chinese language they have learned. Topics can include communication problems at work, weekend activities, or recent interesting events, with a focus on how to use the Chinese language and workplace culture they have learned, and how they adjust themselves to the Chinese lifestyle in China. Regarding pair work, I divided the six Korean employees into three groups of two random people each, which were periodically adjusted later to allow for new conversations and interactions. According to the need of the language and the actual life in China, I set conversation contexts related to Chinese culture and language for the Korean employees, and assigned specific tasks and roles to them, such as discussing a dinner gathering, using discount coupons purchased on the app at a restaurant, etc.

The above classroom content was recorded as the second part of my data. Watching it multiple times, I can capture any cultural elements that facilitate language learning.

1.7.3.3 Interviews

In my research, semi-structured interviews are used to collect information from the students. Semi-structured interviews, in which the researcher asks some predetermined questions or themes and then follows up when the subject responds, produces robust data that can shed light on the subject's experiences, beliefs, or opinions (Peters, 2015). I plan to conduct one-on-one interviews with each of the six students twice. One interview was in the middle and the other was at the end. The participants did not reveal their identity when they were interviewed.

Based on the above theory, I use open-ended questions because open-ended questions are the most effective way to gather detailed information about the experiences of the interviewees (Züll, 2016). This is also applicable to my context. Some example questions are: What are the challenges that Korean staff face when learning Chinese in a Chinese workplace? Can you describe your experience learning Chinese in

a Chinese workplace? What cultural differences did you notice during the learning process? What are the cultural differences that affect the teaching and learning process? What teaching methods were most effective for you? In summary, I focus on the detailed information about the experiences of Korean staff learning Chinese in a Chinese workplace. These interviews were the third part of data.

1.7.4 Data analysis

In this study, the grounded theory suggested by Strauss & Cobin (2005) is used to analyze the three data namely teacher's journals, recordings of class, and the interviews. It contains three phases: open, axial and selective coding.

1.7.4.1 Open coding

Open coding involves coding all data into categories, regardless of their relationships to each other. This method can be useful for identifying themes and patterns in the data (Strauss & Cobin, 2005, p. 124). I use it to categorize different teaching strategies used by the teacher, cultural challenges encountered by students, and common themes in class discussions.

1.7.4.2 Axial coding

Axial coding involves linking codes to identify relationships between them. This method can be useful for exploring how different themes and categories are interconnected (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019, pp. 81-100). I use it to examine the relationship between teaching strategies and cultural challenges, or the impact of class discussions on intercultural communication skills.

1.7.4.3 Selective coding

Selective coding involves choosing specific data to code and analyze. This method is useful for focusing on specific aspects of the data (Strauss & Cobin, 2005). It

provides a more in-depth analysis of specific themes or topics. I use it to focus on the most effective teaching strategies or the most significant cultural challenges encountered by students.

These analysis methods can provide a structured and organized way to analyze data (Strauss and Cobin, 2005) collected from teacher's journals, classroom recordings and interviews about teaching intercultural communication to Koreans in China. Based on this information, I can identify themes, patterns, and relationships in the data and provide a more in-depth understanding of the teaching and learning process.

1.8 Definition of terms

Intercultural communication refers to communication between Chinese and Koreans who differ in terms of language and cultural background in my study.

Teaching Chinese as a Second Language (TCSL): In my context, the teacher is Chinese, and those students come from Korea. The main content of instruction is about listening and speaking Chinese, as well as knowledge of Chinese culture and social etiquette.

The Koreans in my research are my students who work in Nanjing. They are around 40 years old and just came to China for a year. They learned some basic Chinese words before they came, at about the level of HSK3. But in fact, they could not communicate with the Chinese in daily life. They studied Chinese with me for a year, six of them agreed to participate in the study.

Communicative competence means that my students can communicate effectively by understanding each other's meaning and responding with correct and appropriate language, depending on the context.

Chapter 2 that follows provides information on the reviews of literature.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This Chapter first reviews the situation of second language teaching and learning. The next focus is on teaching Chinese as a second language. Then the Chapter showcases the significance of intercultural communication investigated by scholars and authors in China and overseas. Finally, the Chapter describes the research related to the culture of learning.

2.1 Second language teaching and learning

This section contains a review of the literature in two areas, second language teaching and learning.

2.1.1 Second language teaching

Second language teaching is concerned with the process and study of how to teach people to acquire a second language, which is often referred to as L2 or target language, as opposed to L1 (the native language).

Saussure (2006) saw language as a 'sign' and studied it symbolically. When used to refer to things, linguistic symbols, together with 'general symbols', can form an effective communication structure that allows for the exchange of information. These communication structures have different connotations and manifestations in different regions and ethnic groups, i.e. the differences in cultural factors in different languages. Therefore, in addition to mother tongue skills, which are acquired through the subtle influence of the community and social culture to which one belongs, the teaching of a second language needs to be planned and structured. It aims to develop effective communication skills that are similar to those of the mother tongue and can express

different cultural connotations.

In China's university English language syllabus, the ultimate aim of language teaching is to develop students' ability to communicate in written and oral form. The concept of communicative competence, which refers to both linguistic and communicative competence, was first proposed by Lehmann (2007) thoughted that linguistic competence is a reflection of a second language learner's mastery of phonology, vocabulary and grammar, while communicative competence is the learner's ability to use the second language to express themselves correctly, which is a reflection of the learner's mastery of the culture of the target language.

Hinkel (2006) supposed that traditional language teaching advocated the learning of language ability, mainly the training of four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (pp. 109-131). Since the 20th century, communicative competence has been recognized and paid attention to by more scholars (Brandl, 2008). The focus of second language teaching has shifted from the internal forms of language (phonics, vocabulary, grammar) to the external forms of language (social culture, national thinking, values) (Johnson, 2006, pp. 235-257). Deman (1987) proposed a new concept: "the fifth dimension"-cultural teaching. He believes that culture is related to listening, speaking, reading, and writing language. Big skills are closely related, and second language teaching begins to move from a monotonous language circle into a vivid social culture.

In recent years, the Chinese teaching community has also paid great attention to cultural teaching, and scholars such as Gao (2002) have affirmed that view. An example of this is cited below.

> "This new type of second language teaching, which focuses on culture and communicative competence, is another major element after listening, speaking, reading and writing, and it helps to teach and acquire a second language more quickly and accurately. Because language and culture are interdependent, learning a language requires an understanding of the culture it

reflects, and understanding that culture requires a mastery of the language that carries it. In the case of Chinese as a second language, for example, as shown in Figure 1, the goal of teaching culture is to make second language learners aware of the beliefs and values behind the language through cultural products and practices" (pp. 6-7).

It can be seen that the process of learning the target language is essentially the process of learning another culture across one's own home culture, so the second language teaching curriculum needs to include a cultural element that serves the language teaching, from a common knowledge culture to a comparative knowledge culture and then to a communicative culture, which means that the cultural competence that needs to be developed in second language teaching is in fact an intercultural communicative competence.

In summary, teaching a second language includes both the instruction of the language and the mutual understanding of culture. In second language teaching, different methods should be used for different teaching targets, to integrate language teaching into the social culture, to compare cultural differences in various aspects, to help students broaden their cultural knowledge, and then to better understand the true meaning of the language, and to effectively improve students' ability to communicate across cultures.

2.1.2 Second language learning

Second language learning has been an important research topic in the field of applied linguistics. It is a complex and multifaceted process that involves a range of cognitive, psychological, and sociocultural factors (Littlewood, 2004, pp. 501-524). For example, the behaviorist perspective views language as being learned through habit formation and reinforcement; the cognitive perspective emphasizes the role of mental processes, such as memory and attention. The sociocultural perspective focuses on the role of social interaction and context in language learning (Nor & Ab Rashid, 2018, pp. 161-167).

There are many factors that influence second language learning. One of the most influential theories about second language acquisition is Krashen's input hypothesis. Krashen (1985) believed that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to input that is beyond their current level of competence. According to this theory, language input should be comprehensible, meaningful, and interesting in order to facilitate learning. Long's (1996) interaction hypothesis suggests that interaction with a more proficient speaker can facilitate second language acquisition. These theories emphasize the importance of providing ample opportunities for learners to engage in language input.

Nassaji & Kartchava (2017) said that feedback is also an important aspect in second language learning. Ellis (2009) suggested that feedback should be provided in a timely and constructive manner and should focus on specific aspects of language use. It is also important to consider the proficiency level of the learner when providing feedback. Novice learners may benefit from more explicit corrective feedback, while more advanced learners may benefit from implicit feedback that encourages them to self-correct (El Tatawy, 2002).

Dörnyei (2009) stated that motivation for language learning is an important factor for successful language learning. Motivation can be influenced by a variety of factors, including attitudes toward the target language, perceived utility of the language, and the learner's personal goals and values (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). Ametova (2020) proposed that there are two main types of motivation in second language learning: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation refers to the learner's desire to learn a second language in order to communicate with people in the target language community and to learn about their culture (Gardner, 2001). Instrumental motivation refers to learners' desire to learn a second language for practical reasons, such as passing an exam or getting a job (Dörnyei, 1998). A strong motivation to learn leads to better learning outcomes. The Korean employees in this study have both kinds of motivation, and these motivations are very helpful for them to learn Chinese. By learning Chinese language and Chinese culture, they can achieve both effective Chinese communication and job advancement.

Ortega (2014) proposed that the learning environment plays an important role in second language learning. The type of learning environment, whether formal or informal, can have a significant impact on learners' motivation, engagement, and ultimately success in learning a second language (Dörnyei, 2001).

In formal learning environments such as schools and universities learners are often required to follow a structured curriculum and adhere to specific rules and expectations. While this can provide a solid foundation for language learning, it can also create a sense of pressure and anxiety for some learners, particularly those who feel like they are not making progress or are struggling to keep up with the pace of the course. Conversely, informal learning environments, such as language exchange programs or online language communities, can provide learners with more autonomy and flexibility, which may help to foster a sense of ownership and engagement in the learning process (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In this study, the learning environment for the Korean employees is the company and daily life, which gave them an immersive learning environment, added autonomy and flexibility to their learning, and provided them with the opportunity to experience and use the language and culture.

Language and culture are closely linked. Kramsch (1993) thought that learners who are able to understand and appreciate the cultural context in which a language is spoken tend to be better able to master that language. For example, learners who are able to grasp the nuances of a language's social conventions, such as politeness or formality, are better able to use the language appropriately in a variety of contexts (Kasper & Rose, 2002). However, culture can also pose some challenges for second language learners, especially those who are unfamiliar with the cultural norms of the target language community. Learners who are unaware of cultural differences may inadvertently make social mistakes or fail to communicate effectively with native speakers, which can cause misunderstandings and hinder their progress in learning the language (Gudykunst, 2003). To overcome these challenges, it is important for second language learners to engage in cultural learning activities that promote cultural awareness and sensitivity.

In all, second language teaching and learning is a complex and multifaceted process influenced by a range of factors, including the language, culture, motivation, feedback, learning environment and so on. By understanding the role of these factors in second language teaching and learning, educators and learners can develop effective language learning strategies that promote engagement, motivation, and cultural sensitivity.

2.2 Teaching Chinese as a second language (TCSL)

This section describes the situation of TCSL in China, with a particular focus on 3 new features, and also includes the development of TCSL in Korea as an example.

2.2.1 Views on TCSL

Teaching Chinese as a second language refers to the teaching of the language to subjects for whom Chinese is not their mother tongue (or first language).

The history of research related to the teaching of Chinese as a second language is not long, but it has developed relatively quickly. Teaching of Chinese as a second language began in the 1950s, the 1980s was the stage of building the theoretical framework of the discipline, and the 1990s was the stage of deepening the theoretical research of the discipline. Since the 21st century, the teaching of Chinese as a second language has entered a period of combining structure, function and culture (Duan & Li, 2014, p. 581). The holding of the World Chinese Conference marked a new stage in teaching Chinese as a foreign language in China.

At the early stage of the creation of Chinese as a second language, Lv (1987) discussed the nature and characteristics of teaching Chinese as a second language and the task of building the discipline and put forward theories such as the overall design of Chinese teaching and the four major teaching aspects (pp. 62-63). Drawing on Western teaching theories, he focused on summarizing China's teaching experience and began to explore the construction of a theoretical framework and system for the discipline of

teaching Chinese as a second language.

"Mediated language theory" and "bias analysis" were introduced into the study of TCSL, which Wang (2011) considered to be the beginning of Chinese second language acquisition research in China. Subsequently, the study of second language teaching and learning has gradually become an emerging field in the study of second language acquisition in Chinese as a foreign language.

Zhang (1990) proposed a new way of thinking about the teaching of Chinese as a second language (pp. 89-91). He introduced the concept of "communicative culture", which led the traditional study of culture in teaching to a new direction of intercultural communication research. Zhang's article has also led to a debate on the teaching of "communicative culture" and "intellectual culture" in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language. It is particularly important to mention that in the late 1980s, inspired by the new teaching theory of the West, which proposed the functional approach and emphasized the development of communicative competence, Chinese scholars summarized the characteristics of Chinese and teaching experience, and proposed the teaching principle of "combining structure-function-culture". This philosophy of Chinese teaching has become the consensus of most teachers and scholars in China and is also shared by more and more overseas Chinese teachers and scholars.

In the 1990s, Chinese bias analysis was the most fruitful area of research on teaching Chinese as a second language to foreigners. 2000 to the present is the third stage of research on teaching Chinese as a second language to foreigners, and it is also a period of great development in this field. The results of research on TCSL to foreigners in this period have surpassed those of previous studies in terms of quantity and quality.

In terms of TCSL, Zhao (1996) pointed out that "the teaching mode and teaching method of TCSL should be based on the Chinese characteristics and Chinese characters." Zhang (2007) proposed a "separate language, focused literacy" model. In terms of the teaching structure and procedures, he presented two points: the separation of spoken language teaching from Chinese character teaching, with spoken language

first and then Chinese characters; and the separation of Chinese character writing from Chinese character recognition, with writing first and then recognition.

Zhou (1996) considered that phonetics, vocabulary and grammar are the superficial factors, while cultural practices are the deeper factors in communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds. Many scholars agree with this view and have conducted related studies. In 2005, Liu and Yue (2005) stated: "Teachers must pay full attention to the cultural differences between the mother tongue and the target language. Zhao (2013) believes that the concept of culture teaching can be applied to the local uses from the American "21st Century Foreign Language Learning Standards" to make second language learners aware of the culture hidden behind the language. When learners of Chinese as a second language understand the behavioral patterns of the second cultural group, i.e. deep cultural concepts, this helps second language learners to understand more deeply and thus achieve their teaching goals.

From the analysis of the literature, most of the theoretical studies on teaching Chinese as a second language are based on Western theories of second language teaching, or even copied and applied, which are effective, but the mainstream teaching methods in China do not reflect the characteristics of Chinese characters and their Chinese culture, and it is difficult to fundamentally solve the problems of teaching Chinese as a second language.

2.2.2 The situation of teaching Chinese as a second language in China

TCSL has a history of more than half a century, and has been developing rapidly in China, with the following three new features.

2.2.2.1 A new teaching mode

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 in 2019, the biggest challenge facing international Chinese teaching is the change of teaching mode, i.e. face-to-face to online teaching, which brings a series of problems in teaching philosophy, ability, psychology,

management system, technical conditions, etc., breaking the traditional education model. Zhang (2019) considers that the impact of external factors and the accelerated changes in internet technology on international Chinese education is not temporary, and the mode of international Chinese education is not reverting to the old days. Instead, the combination of online and offline teaching modes becomes an inevitable choice (pp. 30-38). It can largely compensate for the shortage and unevenness of teachers. Resources such as online teaching platforms and online teaching videos have not only helped teachers establish advanced teaching concepts and change the way they teach in the classroom but have also improved their teaching abilities. Online teaching, language learning Apps, catechisms and other language teaching methods are gradually being accepted by educational institutions and learners with the development of modern education technology. Particularly during the epidemic, online teaching is carried out globally breaking down the time and space boundaries between countries. Learners use the fragmented time to learn on mobile and are also able to independently choose the content, time and place of study according to different purposes, a free and flexible way of learning that saves time and efficiently learns the most cutting-edge Chinese culture and the most understandable basic knowledge of Chinese and also enhances the interest in learning. This is a more convenient, efficient and accessible way of learning for young people to learn Chinese (Wu, Wang, Wang, Hussain, & Wang, 2021).

2.2.2.2 New teaching contents

Based on my teaching experiences, the early stages of the development of Chinese as a second language, due to the lack of both theoretical and empirical support, the teaching contents and materials were generally relatively old and did not meet the language habits of 21st century society. In addition to the development of the Internet and the further rise of online teaching, the old and written contents of the previous teaching of Chinese as a second language largely lead to the inability of learners to communicate in Chinese after learning Chinese for a period time, which is not only detrimental to learners' learning of Chinese, but also to their daily communication.

Li (2005) believes that the ultimate aim of Chinese teaching is to develop

students' communicative competence, so the selection of teaching content must be in line with real life. Gao & He (2008) have pointed out that the prominent feature of the current Chinese teaching is its practicality, and therefore teaching Chinese as a second language should pay more attention to the learning of new words and phrases in real-life contexts, in addition to learning Chinese in the traditional classroom way. Tang (2000) thought that a more important topic in current Chinese teaching is the new words and new meanings of Chinese Internet words (pp. 47-50). He points out that more attention must be given to new words on the Internet, as well as the new meanings given to some words in the 21st century that deserve attention and gives corresponding teaching arrangements. Wang (2013) believed that foreign students in China are more likely to master Chinese vocabulary that is in line with the current trend, through which they can help them understand the Chinese in the new era and understand the current Chinese popular culture, so that they can communicate effectively with others (pp. 55-58).

Therefore, in recent years, the teaching of Chinese as a second language has undergone a new reform, introducing more everyday colloquialisms and Internet buzzwords in the classroom, and following the principles of progressiveness, scientific, practicality and openness proposed by Zhu (2011) in the selection of materials. What Wang (2013) particularly indicated was that the advanced stage of teaching Chinese as a second language should be taught by combining internet buzzwords and culture. This new teaching content has become a new feature of the pilot development of Chinese teaching for foreigners in China.

2.2.2.3 A new teaching priority

The rise of Chinese as an international language has increased the need to explore how to teach intercultural communicative competence, in addition to language teaching and cultural teaching, teaching Chinese as a second language has added a new teaching priority in recent years, which is to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence (Geng, 2018). Language teachers must make intercultural communicative competence a key goal of their teaching, as enabling language learners

to become 'intercultural speakers' (Byram, 1997) has been widely recognized so far as a fundamental goal of language education (Bi, 2005).

In Geng's view, teaching Chinese as a second language was itself a form of intercultural communication (pp. 152-154). In practice, some teachers insist on traditional language teaching as the focus, neglecting the teaching of culture and the cultivation of intercultural communication skills, which naturally creates obstacles to the teaching of Chinese and the dissemination of Chinese culture. From the perspective of intercultural communication, in addition to the existing culture courses such as Chinese history, art, literature and science, most Chinese education institutions in China offer special comparative courses on their own culture and Chinese culture for students from different countries and cultural backgrounds, so as to help students better understand cultural differences in the process of comparison and to help them better communicate interculturally in their daily lives.

The previous information also enhances the practicality of cultural teaching, which means that the development of learners' intercultural communication skills is the new focus of teaching, in order to facilitate learners' better learning of the language, mastering intercultural communication strategies and skills, and achieving the goals of teaching Chinese as a second language.

2.2.3 Overseas cases

Lin's (2010) data shows that in the United States, Chinese has become the third most common foreign language and is the foreign language with the fastest growth in the number of people taking it. In France, the number of Chinese learners is the highest in Europe, and the annual growth rate is also among the highest in Europe. In Japan, almost every university offers Chinese as a subject, and Chinese has become one of the optional foreign languages for high school students. The first Confucius Institute was established in Korea in 2004, and the Confucius Institute and Confucius Classroom are non-profit educational institutions built with the cooperation of China and abroad to promote the Chinese to the world. In the past decade or so, with the vigorous promotion

of the Chinese government, the trend of Chinese teaching going global, represented by Confucius Institutes, is still developing. There are now 548 Confucius Institutes and 1193 Confucius Classrooms around the world, branching out into 154 countries, and it can be said that international Chinese teaching has opened up a new era of popularization. It is worth mentioning that international Chinese education in the new era places more emphasis on the intellectual, emotional and developmental needs of the educated, and focuses on the service function and communication role of language education. For example, in a project to promote the improvement of local medical standards in Pakistan, the teaching of "Chinese + medical" is provided to medical personnel (Shu, 2013, pp. 206-207).

This study is based on Korean students who have studied Chinese in Korea for a while before coming to China. Thus, this thesis focuses on the latest situation of teaching Chinese as a second language overseas, taking Korea as an example.

In the case of Korea, it is originally part of the "Chinese cultural sphere", as it has used Chinese characters for a long time in its history, but after gaining national independence, Chinese education was discontinued for a while and then gradually resumed in the 1970s. Chinese was included as an optional subject in the college entrance examination; in 2009, Chinese character classes were included in the experiential activity classes in primary schools and as an elective subject in junior high schools; and in 2015, the Korean Ministry of Education syllabus required enhanced Chinese character education in primary schools (Chang & Gao, 2019). Korea was one of the first countries in the world to incorporate Chinese into its national education system, and its Chinese education level is among the highest in the world (He & Wu, 2022, pp. 62-71).

Until now there are many names of places and places in Korea that are marked with Chinese characters, and Korean secondary schools have Chinese classes that teach the 1,800 Chinese characters that need to be known as promulgated by the Korean Ministry of Education, and many Korean students have some basic knowledge of Chinese characters, which is an advantage for Koreans learning Chinese. Currently,

there are also more and more schools offering Chinese classes from primary schools to universities, and most primary schools are staffed with Chinese teachers, and teaching is done through native Korean teachers in conjunction with Chinese teachers. At the same time, there is a growing number of private Chinese teaching institutions and online Chinese teaching platforms for foreigners, such as the Chinese Centre in Seoul and Happy Chinese on mobile platforms.

In addition to the increase in the number of schools offering Chinese education for foreigners, the number of Chinese related majors in Korean universities has also increased, diversified and refined compared to the beginning of the 21st century. Similar to the "Chinese + major" mentioned above, Korean institutions offer "subject + language" type majors. Of these, 80% of Chinese related majors in specialist institutions are in business, tourism and translation, such as Chinese business, Chinese for tourism and Korean Chinese translation. The proportion of majors in Chinese language, sinology and economic and trade has increased in undergraduate institutions. They have reduced the majors that used to focus on classical literature and Chinese culture and increased the majors that focus on Chinese language skills and are related to economics, trade and tourism (He & Wu, 2022, pp. 62-71). In Korea, market demand has driven the construction and development of Chinese disciplines in Korean universities, with an increasing proportion of employment-oriented majors. It is evident that the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language in Korea places more emphasis on specialized uses, emphasizing practicality and the application of Chinese in the actual workplace.

Compared to some other countries, Korea, as a country historically influenced by Chinese and culture, with close economic and trade ties with China in the context of globalization, and close to China with important geopolitical significance, has a good foundation and strong momentum for teaching Chinese as a second language. Both the curriculum and the specific courses are already well established. However, it is undeniable that there are still problems in teaching Chinese as a second language in Korea. For example, the initial teaching of Hanyu Pinyin pronunciation is usually done by Korean teachers in each school. Korean teachers can explain the pronunciation

methods and characteristics in Korean when teaching zero-based Korean students, so that the students can understand the teacher's instructions more easily. This is an advantage for Korean language teachers. However, the disadvantage is also obvious such as the pronunciation. Because the pronunciation of the Korean teachers may not be totally correct. For instance, the 'ü' is a difficult pronunciation because it is not in their mother tongue, or even a similar sound to 'ü'. This pronunciation makes it difficult for them to pronounce it correctly. Furthermore, the teaching of Chinese as a second language in many schools or institutions is more limited to language education and communication. This happening lacks the infiltration of cultural attributes and does not focus on the perspective of learners' cognitive. This phenomenon has been confirmed in my actual teaching of Chinese as a second language, as Korean students generally lack intercultural communication skills due to the lack of cultural education in Chinese teaching.

The above information showcases Chinese as a second language is currently developing well in both China and Korea. At the same time the current problems of teaching Chinese to Koreans are obvious, which paves a good foundation for research on teaching intercultural communication in teaching Chinese to Koreans.

2.3 Intercultural communication

This section provides an intercultural communication background, views on intercultural communication and intercultural communication skills.

2.3.1 Background

Kovecses (2006) said that language represents culture. Different peoples have different languages, and when they communicate in their languages, they are actually communicating with each other's cultures, which means intercultural communication is taking place (Ting & Chung, 2005, p. 352).

The study of intercultural communication originated in the United States in

the late 1950s. On the basis of communication science, Wang (2012) considered that intercultural communication has incorporated the research results of anthropology, linguistics, culture, sociology and other disciplines, and established a theoretical framework and research methods of an independent discipline.

In 1959, Hall first introduced the concept of "intercultural communication", and his book - The Silent Language (1995) became the founding work of modern intercultural communication research.

As scholars tend to shift their research focus from comparing and analyzing differences in cross-cultural communication to studying the dynamic and changing intercultural communication, Gudykunst (1983) constructed a theory of intercultural communication. His book - Intercultural Communication Theory: Current Perspectives (1983) marked the emergence of intercultural communication as an independent discipline.

2.3.2 Views on intercultural communication

In the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (Richards, 2000), intercultural communication means the exchange of ideas and information, between people of different cultural backgrounds.

Durant & Shepherd (2013) argued that Intercultural Communication studies communication between different cultures and social groups, describing the communication processes and related issues between groups of individuals from different cultural backgrounds (pp. 19-34).

Hall (1959) claimed intercultural communication is communication between native and non-native speakers as well as any communication between people who differ in their linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Lauring (2011) saw intercultural communication as an attempt to understand

how people from different countries and cultures act, communicate and perceive the world around them (pp. 231-255).

Guilherme (2012) proposed that intercultural communication focuses on recognizing and respecting those who have cultural differences, with the goal of mutual adaptation between many different cultures, leading to multiculturalism rather than complete assimilation. It promoted cultural sensitivity and allowed for intercultural empathetic understanding (pp. 366-380).

Through the above information, it can be concluded that culture is an important factor in intercultural communication. In this study, intercultural communication refers specifically to the exchange of information and culture between Chinese and Koreans who work in China. Although China and Korea belong to the Asian region, both are inseparable from the traditional Confucian culture and have many similarities. However, the differences in historical changes, geographical environment, living habits, and ways of thinking have also led to cultural differences and conflicts between Chinese and Korean people when they use Chinese in intercultural communication.

2.3.3 Intercultural communication skills

Intercultural communication skills were first introduced by the American sociolinguist Hemmings in 1972. He summed up communicative competence as language knowledge and the ability to use language knowledge, that is, to speak the right words to people in the right place and in the right way. It follows that understanding intercultural communicative competence must be communicatively effective and appropriate. According to Spitzberg (2000), the former refers to people's ability to achieve the desired purpose through communicative behavior, while the latter refers to people's ability to use the most appropriate communicative behavior in a particular social environment or situation (pp. 375-387).

Fantini & Fellini (2012) also believed that communicative competence was

reflected in individuals' appropriate and effective communicative behaviors in specific situations. In addition to being effective and appropriate, he suggested that intercultural communicative competence consists of three factors: knowledge, motivation, and skills, and that intercultural communicative competence required adequate intercultural knowledge, positive motivation, and effective communicative skills, and that all three factors should be present at the same time; none of them can constitute intercultural communicative competence alone.

According to Chen & Starosta (2012), a person with intercultural communication skills could flexibly choose the exact and appropriate form in a certain social environment, rather than just speaking and writing according to the academic norms and social etiquette of a certain social group, which simply meant that intercultural communication was flexible and required specific analysis of specific problems and cannot copy the rules and regulations.

To sum up, scholars' explanations and analyses of intercultural communication have different perspectives but there are certain commonalities. In the context of multiculturalism in dynamic interaction, the premise of intercultural communication between China and Korea is to accept and tolerate each other's different cultures, to understand the cultural background, customs and habits, and cognitive perspectives of the communication objects, and to focus on the effectiveness, appropriateness and flexibility of communication in different occasions to conduct successful intercultural communication.

2.4 Culture of learning

This section provides an overview of researchers' studies of culture of learning, then it shows the cultural differences between China and Korea in different aspects, including language, values and cognitive perspectives. Finally, it reviews ways of learning culture of learning.

2.4.1 Views on culture of learning

Culture of learning is an important research element in intercultural study. In the field of foreign language teaching research, cultural learning is usually intertwined with the concept of cultural teaching, and in some literature, it appears as the concept of cultural acquisition or second culture acquisition. Since the target population of this thesis is Korean staff working and living in China (the target language country), and the ultimate purpose of learning Chinese is to achieve intercultural communication, this part focuses on the literature review of culture of learning in intercultural communication.

Culture of learning in intercultural study focuses on the enhancement of intercultural communication competence after a series of intercultural adaptation and adjustment (Jackson, 2019). Paige (2015) states that learning about culture is the process of learning about a culture other than one's own (pp. 200-204). Specifically, it is the process by which students acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to communicate effectively across cultures with people from different cultures (Chen & Yang, 2016, pp. 262-288). Learning culture is a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process in which learners engage in a way that integrates cognitive, behavioral, and affective (Paige et al., 2003, pp. 173-236).

In the field of intercultural communication research, "culture of learning" has also received attention from scholars of intercultural adaptation and intercultural training. Although the research directions have their own focus, in a sense, they are closely related to the cultural learning practices of learners. Intercultural adaptation mainly focuses on sojourners who work and study abroad for a long period of time, and most of the research perspectives adopt the subjective perspective, i.e., from the perspective of the learners to overcome cultural conflicts and adapt to new cultural environments, and rely more on the learners to exert their own subjective initiative in cultural learning (Gill, 2007, pp. 167-183).

Ward et al. (1999) believed that intercultural adaptation should be divided into two dimensions: psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation (pp. 659-677). Kim (2001) defined intercultural adaptation as a dynamic and gradual process from the perspective of psychological adaptation and explores the psychological changes they

experience when faced with conflicts, stress, anxiety, and other problems caused by cultural differences. Learners grow psychologically, and eventually they are able to cope with the various stresses in their lives and adjust to the resulting adverse emotional experiences in a timely manner. In terms of socio-cultural adaptation, Ward et al. (2005) believed that cultural learning is the process by which a sojourner acquires social knowledge and skills related to the culture of the destination country in order to better survive and develop in the new culture. These are also exactly what Korean employees need for cultural learning in order to work and live mutually in China.

2.4.2 Cultural differences between China and Korea

With the gradual spread of Chinese in Korea, the language is no longer the main problem in Sino-Korean communication, but the real obstacle is that the participants all understand the words of others according to their own cultural customs and foresight. If the speakers' cultural practices are different, it is easy to cause misunderstanding and even lead to complete failure of communication. Therefore, Hofstede (2011) proposed that understanding cultural differences is the first problem to be solved in intercultural communication.

Galanti (2000) presented that cultural differences refer to the differences in outlook on life, values, ways of thinking, moral customs, knowledge structure, social beliefs and language that are formed by people living in different countries or regions during their different social life experiences.

Geographically, Korea is China's neighboring country. Culturally, Korea used Chinese characters until the creation of the Korean language, many people would consider Korean culture to be roughly the same as Chinese culture. Although there are many commonalities between Chinese and Korean cultures. However, similarity does not mean the same. Since the Goguryeo era, Korea has had its own unique cultural origins. Different living environments and different national psychology had also led Koreans to develop their own understanding of Confucianism and coupled with extensive contact and interaction with Western culture, Korean culture has continued to

enrich and develop, gradually forming its own characteristics. In general, the differences between Chinese and Korean cultures are mainly manifested in linguistic and cultural differences, differences in values and differences in cognitive perspectives.

2.4.2.1 Cultural differences in language

Bonvillain (2019) pointed out that when people of different cultures communicate with each other, the first problem they encounter is the cultural barrier in language, especially when they do not share a common language. Even when the language expresses the same meaning and the two parties have different cultures, language barriers still arise at various levels due to multiple factors such as pronunciation, vocabulary, semantic concepts, and cultural issues related to the language.

According to Tang (2000), some linguistic rules and cultural patterns of the native language are inevitably "transferred" to the other culture and linguistic system, and when linguistic knowledge in the native culture contradicts or conflicts with certain linguistic phenomena in the foreign culture, people tend to rely on the linguistic rules, communicative habits, cultural backgrounds, and ways of thinking of the native language to understand. This creates a gap in intercultural communication (pp. 47-50).

Wang (1998) believed that the cultural connotation of vocabulary has a strong national character, and the meaning of the vocabulary of each language expands or shrinks with the change of time and social development, while some words gradually accumulate some associative meanings due to frequent use, which can be called the cultural connotation of vocabulary. Based on Wang's theory, the cultural connotation of words presents different situations. In fact, only some of the words correspond to each other, while some other words are not exactly the same in terms of meaning or cultural connotation, even though they are partially explained. For example, green hat is just a green hat in Korean, while in Chinese, green hat means your partner is cheating on you.

2.4.2.2 Differences in values

In intercultural communication research, differences in values are fundamental to understanding the differences between cultures (Routamaa & Hautala, 2008, pp. 129-137). Hofstede (2011) summarized the cultural scales of different value patterns, and the difference in cultural scales between Chinese and Korean cultures is mainly reflected in the power distance.

Lee & Law (2000) thought that power distance is used to indicate the degree to which people accept the unequal distribution of power in an organization (pp. 685-704).

Compared to the West, China is a large power-distance country (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994). However, compared to Korea, China is a country where power distance is relatively small, where equality is emphasized, where individual abilities are valued, and where supervisors consult with subordinates. Korea is influenced by the traditional Confucian culture and places a lot of emphasis on power distance, mainly in terms of seniority and social status. The Korean language has a well-developed honorific system, and everyone needs to use honorific language when speaking to elders, even if there is not much age difference. Therefore, when you first meet someone, Korean people ask their age to determine if they need to use honorific language, while in China, it is strange to ask their age when they first meet.

2.4.2.3 Different cognitive perspectives

Lücke & Roth (2014) considered that cognitive perspective is a unique and stable attitude, emotion and style that people show towards a certain thing or phenomenon (pp. 169-190). The relationship between people living in a certain cultural environment and their own cultural environment is one of mutual influence and common development and change, which causes people living in two different cultural environments in China and Korea to form different cognitive perspectives.

Due to the different cognitive perspectives of the two peoples, people have different actual feelings and connotations of the same physical objects. For example, Chinese people believe that red represents joy and good fortune, so they use red for important occasions such as national celebrations and wedding ceremonies. Korean people have a preference for white. In the view of the Korean people, white symbolizes nobility and purity, so Korean people like to use white color items in many important occasions. In China, white is generally used in funerals.

For the use of numbers, whether it is the amount of the gift, the choice of quantity, or even the structure of classical poetry, Koreans prefer to use odd numbers, which is a clear indication of their love for odd numbers. Chinese people generally consider even numbers to be auspicious, and therefore use even numbers on many important occasions. For example, Chinese people use "good deeds come in pairs" to express their blessings to others on certain important occasions, the red envelope must be 200 or 600 RMB, and the gift to others at the Chinese New Year must be an even number. This is not allowed in Korea because odd numbers are the symbol of good luck.

In all, Korea, as a neighbor of China, shares certain similarities with China, but also has many differences. The focus in this study is on the differences between Korean culture and China, mainly in the following areas: cultural differences in language, differences in values and differences in cognitive perspectives. These differences cause some problems in intercultural communication between Korea and China, so how to overcome these problems and improve intercultural communication skills is the focus of this study.

2.4.3 Ways of culture of learning

The concept of "culture of learning" has emerged as a pivotal theme in contemporary educational research and practice (Thomas & Brown, 2011). It represents a fundamental shift away from conventional, teacher-centered pedagogies towards a holistic approach that fosters a dynamic, interactive, and collaborative learning environment.

At present, there is not much research on cultural learning ways in the fields of intercultural communication and foreign language teaching and learning. However, there is a lot of research on "culture teaching", which is the counterpart of culture learning. This is mainly due to the fact that scholars have reached a consensus on the connection between language and culture. In addition, with the clear orientation of language teaching towards the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence, culture teaching has attracted the attention of researchers at the theoretical level, especially foreign language teaching researchers.

With regard to cultural learning, Chinese researchers have also focused on the development of cultural teaching, that is, exploring how language learners learn the culture of the target language from the perspective of cultural teaching. The development of foreign language teaching theory and intercultural communication research has also prompted scholars of TCSL to pay attention to how to carry out cultural teaching, so as to help learners better learn, understand and internalize Chinese culture.

Studies on cultural teaching in TCSL can be divided into the following two aspects (Zhang & Chen, 2006). The first one is teaching content. Most researchers tend to differentiate the content of cultural teaching according to its closeness to communication, focusing on those cultural elements that have a direct impact on the interpretation of communicative meanings in the classroom (Meng, 1992). Other scholars adopt a holistic and comprehensive view of cultural teaching, believing that the content of cultural teaching should involve all aspects such as material, spiritual and moral (Kou,2009). The second aspect is the discussion of teaching methods. Examples include cultural exchange activities (Kinginger, 2004), cultural comparisons (Hofstede, 2001) and cultural presentations (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009).

Teaching must be a process in which "teaching" and "learning" promote each other (Munna & Kalam, 2021). The literature discussed above focuses on cultural teaching methods and contents. Compared with the research on cultural teaching, the research on ways of cultural learning has not attracted much attention. There is not yet

a wealth of research results explaining the process and methods of cultural learning from the perspective of language and culture learners. For Korean staff, in addition to learning Chinese in the classroom, real life is also a place for them to learn culture, because real life provides them with extensive and diversified cultural contacts. Different from cultural learning in the classroom, cultural learning in life is more focused on the overall experience of body and mind (Hallowell, 2017). Therefore, focusing only on cultural teaching in the classroom and neglecting the process and ways of cultural learning from the perspective of the learner as the main body has certain limitations. In this study, I hope to fill this gap by discussing how Korean staff engage in cultural learning from their perspectives.

2.5 Conclusion

In the above research literature, researchers and authors have explored different perspectives on the context of culture, differences, intercultural communication competence and the new requirements for second language teaching in the context of globalization and cultural pluralism. Through the theories of these scholars, we can see the reasons and importance of intercultural communication. The contrast between the cultural differences between China and Korea provides a useful entry point for research on TCSL to mainly Korean students. In particular, the introduction of cultural teaching shifts the traditional focus of TCSL (listening, speaking, reading and writing) to cultural teaching, so that students can understand and respect the differences between cultures and thus be able to adapt to different cultures in their communication.

TCSL is a Chinese specialty, and researchers and authors have studied its current situation in China and overseas, reviewing the past, analyzing the present and looking at the needs for future development. As can be seen from the literature, many researchers have attached great importance to the teaching of intercultural communication in TCSL. Starting from the textual features, cultural connotations, contextual connotations and pragmatic rules of Chinese, they have studied various aspects of intercultural communication teaching and put forward new teaching models,

contents and priorities. Taking the market of TCSL in Korea, scholars have unearthed the current problems of teaching Chinese as a foreign language to Korea. The lack of cultural education in Chinese has led to a general lack of intercultural communication skills among Korean students. In response to these problems, scholars have proposed new ways of teaching intercultural communication that are more in line with contemporary practice, based on three teaching models (interactivity, pluralism and contextual orientation), in order to improve students' intercultural communication skills.

The concept of "learning cultures" represents a significant shift in education towards interactive and collaborative learning environments. Even though there is extensive research on 'teaching for culture' which emphasizes the link between language and culture, there is a clear gap in understanding the processes and methods of cultural learning from the learner's perspective.

However, it can also be seen from the above literature that most authors have taken a Western perspective, and the theories about teaching Chinese as a second language are based on Western English language teaching, while the development of theories about Chinese language teaching with Chinese characteristics is still immature, especially theories about cultural learning for Korean students. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how Korean staff engage in the learning culture.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This Chapter is on methodology. There are 6 sections. The Chapter gives the information on the research methodology including the study inquiry, its scope, data collection, data analysis, and ethics. The Chapter ends with the conclusion.

3.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the intercultural communication of Koreans in China. The research participants are Korean workers from Korean companies in China. It explores two main aspects. The first aspect is to investigate the intercultural communication challenges faced by Korean staff while learning Chinese in a Chinese workplace. Then the study identifies effective teaching strategies that can enhance the Korean staff's intercultural communication skills. According to the objectives of the study, on the one hand it explores the happenings in this particular group of participants, on the other hand it finds out countermeasures.

3.2 Methodology

In this study, I employ qualitative as my research methodology. There are several reasons why I apply this method to my work. Firstly, it emphasizes logical reasoning, philosophical reflection, historical evidence and regulatory judgment (Stake, 2010). It is also considered to be a series of data collection and analysis techniques, including the use of purpose sampling and semi-structured, open-ended interviews, observation. This data is usually in the form of a narrative to understand a concept, idea or experience and is a fundamental approach to predictive analytics. It mainly relies on the researcher's rich practical experience, subjective judgment and analytical ability to infer the nature and development of things and focuses on discovering insights that can

lead to testable hypotheses (Dudwick, Kuehnast, Jones & Woolcock, 2006).

Secondly, qualitative researchers usually do not have a preconceived, limited set of questions to study (Yauch & Steudel, 2003, p.472), its questions are open-ended and dynamic, allowing participants to ask the questions that are most important to them, which helps to tap into the creativity of the respondents and gain more ideas through interaction with them.

Importantly, qualitative analysis has been used in higher education research (Savenye & Robinson, 2005, p. 65). Because they emphasize a deeper understanding of social phenomena, respect practitioners' interpretations of their own behavior, facilitate problem solving and the advancement of educational practice, and can help educators to identify patterns or new perspectives during the exploratory phase of research.

In my context, qualitative research is the most appropriate survey for research because it presents in-depth information about a small group of people (six participants), including background, interests, etc., describing how people interpret what they are experiencing. Through the collection of this data, I can analyze them and end up in words that express the researcher's understanding of a phenomenon (Merriam, 2015, p.16).

Through the above information, it is clear that qualitative analysis is most appropriate in this study context.

3.3 Context of the study

With the global economic situation and the increase in China's efforts to attract foreign investment, many foreign companies have been established in China. These companies trade with Chinese companies and their foreign employees need to live in China, therefore, for both work and life reasons, they need to learn Chinese and Chinese culture in order to communicate fluently.

This research was carried out in a Korean company in China, which manufactures electronic components and trades with Chinese companies, with a company-wide workforce of approximately 2,600 Korean employees who rotate regularly. The company expects Korean employees to master Chinese language and Chinese culture, to work with Chinese employees without barriers, and to show good business manners when doing business with other Chinese companies. According to the company's rules, 18 of these mid-level leaders among Korean employees in China are required to attend VIP Chinese classes every day. The 18 middle-level leaders were divided into 3 classes according to their level, with 6 students in each class and a Chinese teacher. My class in one of these. In order to motivate Korean employees to learn Chinese, the company stipulates that if they pass the HSKK6 exam, they can receive a promotion and a salary increase.

The six participants are my students, they have been in China for one year and a half. Before coming to China, they had passed the HSK level 3 exam. They knew some basic and simple Chinese words and phrases. After arriving in China to start work, every Monday to Friday they attend Chinese lessons for one hour each day before lunch. As of now, they have been studying Chinese with me for 15 months. For the above reasons, they are still passionate and motivated to learn Chinese and Chinese culture every day.

3. 4 Scope of the study

Under this sub-topic, location, participants, data collection, and data analysis are explained.

3.4.1 Location

This study was conducted in the Lucky Company (pseudonym). It is a Korean company that was established in 2002 and has been operating since then. The company is part of the electronic equipment manufacturing industry and focuses on research, development and production of ancillary products for electronic equipment. The company employs 8,000 people, of which 2,600 are Korean.

The Lucky Company is divided into two areas, one for administrative work and the other one for production lines. The Korean employees work mainly in the administrative area, where they are responsible for product design and production line business communication. The Koreans often hear the jargon of electronic products from the Chinese staff; hence their professional vocabulary has been learned and reinforced in their daily work, but there are still some difficulties in daily life communication and work handover for those Koreans. Also due to the Covid-19 epidemic, the Koreans experienced lockdown and worked online. Based on the above, at the request of the participants, I arranged for them the Oral Intensive Course (1 hour/per day), to enable them to communicate smoothly in their lives and work.

3.4.2 Participants

6 participants are my students from the Lucky Company. All of them are Koreans, aged around 40 years old. Before being sent to work in Nanjing, they had already passed the HSK3 exam in Korea. They mainly learned Chinese listening and speaking skills to live and work in China. They know some basic and simple Chinese words and short sentences. In fact, after arriving in China, these Koreans found that the Chinese they had learned were not good enough to communicate effectively with the Chinese. This study is to help them solve problems and improve their intercultural communication skills. In addition, the study showcases what impacts the improved intercultural communication skills have on learning Chinese. Fortunately, the Korean staff agreed to join this study. In order to protect the privacy of the participants, the name of the Korean company and the names of the participants are pseudonyms.

Table 3.1 This Table shows the Korean participants' backgrounds

Name	Age	Gender	Chinese Background (year)	Chinese level	Learning Goals
Parker	43	Male	2	HSK 4 (He knows 400 words and can communicate in Chinese)	HSKK 6

Table 3.1 This Table shows the Korean participants' backgrounds (cont.)

Name	Age	Gender	Chinese Background (year)	Chinese level	Learning Goals
Rhon	41	Male	2	HSK 3 (He knows 180 Chinese words and understands simple Chinese words, but he cannot communicate in Chinese.)	HSKK 6
Orien	39	Male	2	HSK 3 (He knows 300 words and can communicate in Chinese)	HSKK 6
Simon	46	Male	2	HSK 3 (He knows 200 words and can communicate simply)	HSKK 6
Vincent	45	Male	2	HSK 3 (He knows 250 words and can communicate simply)	HSKK 6
Fischer	40	Male	2	HSK 3 (He knows 300 words and can communicate in Chinese)	HSKK 6

Based on the table above, 6 participants namely Parker, Simon, Vincent, Fischer, Rhon and Orien. Their Chinese levels are about the same, Paeker is the best one and has mastered a lot of vocabulary. Rhon's Chinese is relatively weak, he can understand daily communication but cannot express himself in Chinese. They have classes together every day and aim to reach HSKK 6 Chinese level. In this thesis, HSK stands for Chinese Level Test, HSKK means Chinese Proficiency Spoken Test. HSKK 6 is the highest level of the HSKK exam. It requires students to master around 3,000

common words and to be able to understand and express their opinions fluently in Chinese.

3.4.3 Data collection

Data collection is the process of gathering, measuring, and analyzing data from a variety of relevant sources to find answers to research problems (Gallagher, 2009, p.65). The data is divided into first-hand and second-hand data (Stenbacka, 2001). The first-hand data (directly available data) is used in this study. To obtain the data, I used the teacher's journals, recordings and interviews as tools for data collection.

3.4.3.1 Teacher's journals

The teacher's journal is a tool to record the teaching process and students' performance. It can be used to collect data to support teaching research and evaluation. Through the teacher's journal, I can better review and analyze Korean students' learning situation and the effectiveness of teaching methods and strategies, then I can make timely adjustments. The teacher's journals contain the following:

1) Record students' performance: I record students' performance in the classroom, such as participation during classroom activities, understanding of and response to instructional content. This information can be used to understand the difficulties and challenges students encounter when learning Chinese, as well as their responses to teaching methods and strategies.

2) Documenting the teaching process: I document my teaching process, such as the materials used, teaching methods and strategies, and teaching assessments. This information can be used to understand which teaching methods and strategies work best for students learning Chinese and which areas need improvement.

3) Record reflections: I record my own reflections and observations, such as assessments of student performance, observations of classroom climate, student questions and feedback, etc. This information can be used to understand problems and challenges in the teaching process and to find ways to improve.

These data help me to design effective teaching strategies that foster intercultural communication and language acquisition.

3.4.3.2 The recordings of class

In this study, the recordings include two aspects: presentations and pair work conversation.

Each presentation provides a structured and supportive environment for learners to practice speaking and communicating in the target language (Kuo, 2012, pp. 101-110). In addition, presentations can provide insights into the culture and customs of the target language, helping learners to better understand and appreciate the cultural differences (Shumin, 2015, pp. 56-63). I have the Korean staff do presentations in Chinese based on the teaching in class on Mondays. The presentation topics include communication issues at work, weekend activities, or recent interesting events, which focus on how to use the Chinese language and culture they have learned, and how to live a Chinese lifestyle in China.

One significant benefit of pairing conversation is the ability to receive immediate feedback from a partner (Ellis, 2017). By working together, learners can correct each other's mistakes, and this feedback helps them to identify areas where they need to focus their efforts. Pairing conversation also provides the opportunity for learners to improve listening skills (Vandergrift, 2007, pp. 78-101). By actively listening to their partner, learners can improve their comprehension, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

I divided the six Korean employees into three groups of two random people each, which were periodically adjusted later to allow for new conversations and interactions. According to the need of the language and the actual life in China, I set conversation contexts related to Chinese culture and language for the Korean employees, and assigned specific tasks and roles to them, such as discussing a dinner gathering, using discount coupons purchased on the app at a restaurant, etc.

These two activities were recorded as my second part of data. This allows me to make several iterations of observations, focusing on how they use the Chinese language and culture they have already learned, and to record the difficulties and challenges in their use.

3.4.3.3 The interviews

The interview method is one of the most common methods of collecting data orally (Pei, 2002). The interview process is actually "a face-to-face social interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee" (Yuan, 1997). Through the interaction between the researcher and the interviewee, the researcher can collect each interviewee's personal experiences and interpretations related to the subject, conduct in-depth and detailed analysis, and obtain a more holistic and explanatory understanding of the "quality" of things. This method allows for a more comprehensive examination of the intercultural communication and Chinese language learning situation of Koreans in China and brings the findings closer to reality.

In this study, the interviews were held in the middle and at the end. The interviewees are six Korean staff. They are my students who have been studying Chinese with me for a year. I planned to use semi-structured interviews to gather information from the students. One-to-one interviews with each of the six participants were conducted for one hour each, and the interviews were recorded in the form of notes. Participants do not reveal their identities during the interviews.

The semi-structured interview is an informal interview that has only a rough idea of the interviewee (Horton & Macve & Struyven, 2004). The researcher has an outline of the interview in advance and asks appropriate questions based on the research design, while allowing for active participation by the interviewee to better understand the interviewee's perspective. In semi-structured interviews, I use open-ended interview questions because open-ended questions allow respondents to give the answers from their point of views and the interviewer can probe for more information if needed (Brenner, 2012). Respondents' responses are then followed up so that data can be

generated to elucidate the interviewees' experiences, beliefs or opinions (Peters, 2015).

The interviews focused on the following three areas: the first section investigates the participants' knowledge of Chinese culture, including traditional Chinese culture, language culture and the latest trends in Chinese culture, and how they use these cultures in their actual communication. The second part focuses on the communication problems that the participants encounter in their real life and work. The last section investigates the participants' attitudes and needs towards intercultural communication, including their interest in cultural differences, their willingness to learn about culture in Chinese classes and the future impact of mastering such culture on their learning of Chinese.

Based on the above focus, I developed open-ended questions for the interviews. For example: What are the challenges that Korean staff face when learning Chinese in a Chinese workplace? What cultural differences did you notice during the learning process or the working process? What are the cultural differences that affect the communication process? What teaching methods were most effective for you? These questions help me gather the data of communication issues and cultural challenges that the Korean staff encounter in their studies and work. The data can be used as an important basis for the analysis of the intercultural communication skills of Koreans in China and provide a more reasonable interpretation of the findings.

To sum up, the above data comes from the teacher's journals, recordings of class and interviews. The aim is to use these data to analyze the current situation of intercultural communication among Koreans in China. It can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the actions of the observed and to summarize where the problems lie.

3.4.4 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a process of collecting, organizing and interpreting qualitative data to understand what it represents, to capture themes and patterns and

answer research questions (Mihas, 2019). The data collected from the teacher's journal, recordings of class, and interviews are analyzed using the grounded theory method, which involves open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Cobin, 2005).

3.4.4.1 Open coding

Open coding is the initial stage of grounded theory. The data collected from the teacher's journals, recordings of class and interviews is broken down into smaller parts. It is then to use open coding to identify patterns and relationships between these units (Glaser, 2016, p. 108-110). In this stage, the data is read multiple times to identify and categorize the key themes that emerged from the data. For example, when analyzing a teacher's journals, I categorize the data according to teaching methods, challenges and success cases. When analyzing classroom recordings, I classify the data according to the type of intercultural communication activity and the Korean staff's responses. When analyzing interviews, I categorize the data according to their experiences of applying intercultural communication skills in their work.

Based on the insights gained through open coding, teachers can develop strategies for improving intercultural communication skills in the classroom. This may involve modifying the teaching approach to better engage all Korean staff or incorporating activities and discussions that promote cultural understanding and appreciation.

In general, open coding is a powerful tool for analyzing data related to intercultural communication. It can provide valuable insights into the ways in which students and teachers interact in the classroom, include the activities that provide' valuable insights', such as content analysis of classroom interactions, observation of intercultural communication patterns, surveys to gather perspectives on intercultural dynamics, thematic coding of communication barriers and successes, interviews with Korean staff about their intercultural experiences. By using this approach, it develops strategies for improving intercultural communication and promoting cultural understanding and appreciation among Korean students.

3.4.4.2 Axial coding

Axial coding builds on the categories identified in open coding by exploring the relationships and connections between the categories. Axial coding involves identifying how the categories relate to each other and how they contribute to the central themes and concepts in the data (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019, p. 81-100). In this stage, the relationships between the themes are examined, and the categories are refined and detailed.

Once the data is categorized, the researcher can use axial coding to analyze the relationships between categories. For instance, the difficulties faced by Korean staff is related to the cultural barriers they encounter in the Chinese workplace, and the improvement of Korean employees' intercultural competence is related to classroom teaching methods. This relationship is noted, and the categories are refined to reflect this connection.

By following the steps outlined above, I can identify patterns and themes in the data, and use the findings to understand how teachers are teaching.

3.4.4.3 Selective coding

Selective coding involves selecting a core category or theme that serve as the central focus of the analysis. This stage involves bringing together all the categories and themes identified in the previous stages of coding. Selective coding focuses on the most important and relevant aspects of the data (Holton, 2007, p.265-289) and is a useful tool for analyzing qualitative data in education.

After open coding and axial coding, I begin a selective coding process. This involved focusing on a small number of categories and exploring them in detail, where I can gain a deeper understanding of the data and discover new insights into the topic under study. In this study, I focus on the main issue of intercultural communication among Korean employees and examine pedagogical approaches to dealing with this

challenge.

By using these three methods, I can develop a comprehensive understanding of the data collected from teacher's journals, recordings of class, and interviews. This process helps the researcher or me identify patterns and relationships in the data and develop meaningful conclusions and insights about the topic being studied.

3. 5 Ethical consideration

Research ethics refers to a series of guidelines and obligations that guide and constrain the ethics and behavior of researchers in scientific research and related contexts, including obtaining the voluntary consent of subjects, allowing them to end their research participation at any time, minimizing risk and suffering to subjects, ensuring that the expected benefits of research outweigh the risks of research, and the disciplinary quality, academic integrity and social responsibility of researchers, social responsibility, etc (Wiles, 2012).

Understanding research ethics is important for all who conduct research projects or use and apply the results of research. Research is a public trust, and if the results are to be of value, it must be conducted ethically, be trustworthy and socially responsible. All parts of a research project - from project design to the submission of results for peer review - must be competent in order to be considered ethical. When even one part of a research project is faulty or conducted unethically, the integrity of the whole project is called into question.

It is the responsibility of the researcher to seek out and fully understand the policies and theories of research practice that are designed to ensure impartiality. All researchers should be familiar with basic ethical principles and ensure the safety of research subjects and prevent rash or irresponsible research methods.

In this study, I followed the following ethical principles. (1) Participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and could withdraw or discontinue the

study at any time. (2) The research must avoid unnecessary physical and mental suffering of participants. (3) Interviews do not involve participants' private questions. (4) Participants' private information is protected, and this paper does not refer to any private information of participants. (5) All data are for research only and are confidential.

3.6 Conclusion

This Chapter identifies the direction of the research around the theme of intercultural communication and the use of qualitative analysis as a methodology based on the focus of the research. There are many ways of collecting data in qualitative analysis, I used the teacher's journals, recordings and interviews to collect data. In the teacher's journal, I record students' performance in the classroom, such as participation during classroom activities. Teaching processes, methods and reflections are also recorded in the teacher's journal. Regarding the recordings of class, I can watch it repeatedly to find out more details. The last part of the data came from the interview method. The interviews were conducted in a one-on-one format. Open-ended interview questions were designed mainly around the key aspects of teaching Korean staff Chinese language and Chinese culture and improving their intercultural communication skills. Their answers were collected as the data.

The next step is my data analysis. This began with 'open coding', in which I analyzed the data collected to identify and categorize the different concepts, themes and ideas that emerged from the data. The data was broken down into smaller segments, each of which was given a descriptive label. This was done to capture the raw data and generate initial categories without preconceived notions. After open coding, 'axial coding' is the next step. It involves organizing the categories identified in open coding into more structured relationships. I explored the connections between categories, looking for patterns and relationships with the aim of creating a more coherent and comprehensive picture of the data. The final stage was 'selective coding'. This involves further refining and integrating categories and relationships. I chose a core category based on the research theme, i.e. the central theme that ties everything together. The

relationships between the core category and the other categories are also sorted out and used to create a more refined and abstract theoretical framework.

By combining the results, I can understand the situation of intercultural communication and Chinese language learning among Koreans in China. They serve as the basis for the conclusion in the next chapter. However, this study has limitations because the study participants were only six Korean employees. Research on teaching intercultural communication should not be limited to Korean employees working in China. The researcher should think about how to integrate intercultural communication related content into the classroom of TCSL, use scientific and effective teaching methods to carry out teaching activities, directly improve the level of intercultural communication and achieve the purpose of communication.
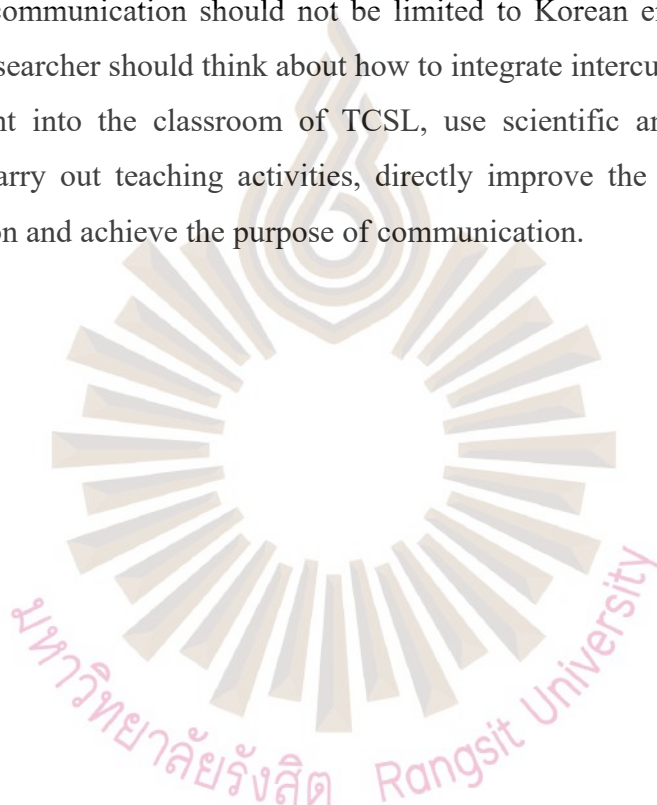
Chapter 4

Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter discusses the teaching and learning of intercultural communication skills to find the answers to the following two research questions：

1) What teaching strategies facilitate intercultural communication and language learning among the Korean staff in this study?

2) How do Korean staff improve their culture of learning?

Three data namely teacher's journals (TJ), recordings of class (RC) and the interviews (IW) are analyzed to garner the information for the two research questions. The first question is answered first followed by the second as follows:

4.2 Teaching strategies

This part displays the answers to research question 1 of this study. Among the 3 data, teacher's journals are analyzed first.

4.2.1 Teaching strategies from teacher's journals

Based on the teacher's journals, the teaching strategies facilitating intercultural communication skills development contain 3 main findings: (1) Contextual teaching strategy, which involves setting up scenarios relevant to the work and life of Korean staff for teaching. (2) Cultural teaching strategy, which integrates cultural education into Chinese language teaching. (3) Incorporating teaching strategy for Internet vocabulary, which involves integrating internet buzzwords, trending words, and

new meanings of old words into the teaching. These strategies are not only effective in improving Korean staff's Chinese language learning and use but also useful in increasing social skills. They all played a crucial role in increasing engagement, interest, and intercultural communication skills.

The first teaching strategy or the contextual teaching is discussed here. I have found that in four teacher's journals (TJs1&4), the teaching genre increases Korean staff's learning motivation, capturing their attention and creating their positive learning impressions. Some parts of teacher's journals that support this result are:

"The context of this lesson is a situation in a product line, and the vocabulary is mainly product-related. The purpose of this lesson was to enable Korean staff to communicate fluently with Chinese staff on the production line in the testing of electronic products. As the context was closely related to their daily work, everyone showed high concentration in class, and actively spoke in the word-building session, demonstrating a strong motivation to learn." (TJ 1)

"After using the contextual teaching strategy continuously for 2 months, I noticed that the 6 Korean staff had a more positive desire to express their ideas and show themselves than before, they were more confident, and their expression and communication skills were significantly improved, specifically: Parker's expressions were more authentic, he could communicate in long and complex sentences, and also use communicative terms according to the specific context; Simon was very interested in Chinese etiquette and culture, he could communicate fluently and appropriately in the simulated social situations; Vicent actively expressed his opinions in class and joked in Chinese from time to time in a very authentic communicative way; Rhon changed his style of only listening but not speaking, before his expressions were all single words and could not be formed into sentences, now he actively participated in contextual activities and could express his ideas in complete sentences. Orien's foundation is better, but he used to learn all the written language, which seemed a bit strange in daily communication, but now his

expressions have changed to a more lifelike one and he is more fluent in communication." (TJ 4)

The analysis of the teacher's journals above showed that the contextual approach produced positive results. Details are as follows:

1) Increased concentration and motivation: In TJ 1, it is mentioned that all the employees displayed a high level of concentration during the lesson and actively participated in word-building sessions. This suggests that the contextual approach engaged the learners and motivated them to participate actively.

2) Increased confidence: TJ 4 shows the positive changes observed in individual learners. Several employees, including Parker, Simon, Vincent, Rhon and Orien, showed improvements in their communication skills. They became more confident in expressing themselves, using complex sentences, and adapting to specific contexts. This increased confidence suggests that the contextual approach helped boost their self-assurance in using the language.

3) Enhanced communication skills: The descriptions of individual employees in TJ 4 provide specific examples of improvements in their communication skills. These include authentic expressions, fluency in various contexts, active participation in class activities, and the ability to form complete sentences. These outcomes indicate that the contextual approach contributed to enhancing the employees' practical communication abilities.

By immersing students in real-life and practical contexts, this approach fosters a deeper understanding of the language and its application in various situations (e.g. their daily work-TJ 1, expressing ideas-TJ 4). This strategy has proven to be effective in not only enhancing language learning but also in developing valuable work and life skills among Korean staff. As a result, Korean staff have excelled in their language skills and have made significant improvements in their overall skills.

One key aspect of the contextual teaching strategy is its emphasis on promoting initiative and active participation. Through real-life scenarios and interactive activities, Korean staff are encouraged to take the lead in their learning process. This

increased autonomy and engagement translate into the development of crucial work skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making. In dealing with Chinese language challenges in a real environment, staff find solutions with ease and confidence. These skills are transferable to the workplace, enabling Korean staff to tackle tasks effectively and make informed decisions independently.

Furthermore, the contextual approach provides ample opportunities for Korean staff to engage in class discussions. By exploring topics and themes relevant to their work and daily lives, staff develop a strong interest in learning. This heightened motivation leads to a more profound level of engagement, active participation, and the ability to articulate their thoughts and ideas effectively. Participating in class discussions enhances their communication and interpersonal skills, enabling them to express themselves clearly, listen attentively to others, and collaborate effectively in team settings. These skills prove invaluable in the workplace, where effective communication and teamwork are vital for productivity and success.

In summary, the contextual teaching strategy facilitates language learning and also enhances the work and life skills of Korean staff. By promoting initiative, active participation, and a strong interest in learning, this approach develops problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making abilities. Additionally, it encourages effective communication and interpersonal skills.

The second effective teaching strategy is cultural teaching. Cultural teaching in this study refers to the development of cultural competence, which is the ability of Korean staff to interact effectively with Chinese people. It includes the development of cultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for effective intercultural communication and interaction. Through classroom content on Chinese culture, such as major Chinese festivals and celebrations, workplace social etiquette, general life etiquette, cultural taboos, and comparisons of cultural differences between China and Korea, Korean staff members were able to cultivate intercultural awareness and cultural adaptability, and to help them solve communication problems due to cultural differences in a multicultural environment. The evidence shows in the TJs (5&6).

"The topic we studied in class today was moving to a new house. We talked about how when Chinese people move to a new house, their friends go to celebrate the night before and call it a 'warm home'. Home warming is a characteristic of Chinese culture. Chinese give their friends '红包'(money in red envelopes) to express blessing. The Korean staff were surprised and envious because in Korea friends would give laundry detergent or toilet paper as gifts. As a cultural contrast, I explained the situation in China, where most congratulations are expressed through red envelopes. The Korean staff were very engaged and asked me to include more culture. They memorized the language content about Chinese etiquette and culture in these classes very quickly." (TJ 5)

"Today's class topic is colors. While explaining vocabulary, I introduced the cultural connotations of Chinese words, many of which are given more derivative and symbolic meanings in addition to their own meanings. For example, a yellow movie means a pornographic movie, red song means patriotic song, the green hat means your partner cheated on you. At this point, Fischer and Rhon said they finally understood what their colleagues meant by the red song, and they had been wondering why the song had a color. This is the typical cultural difference that leads to communicative failure. And by learning the cultural connotation of the vocabulary, they began to understand the cultural meaning contained in Chinese." (TJ 6)

The cultural teaching strategy has proven to enable Korean staff to understand Chinese culture, accept cultural differences, build intercultural awareness, and help them connect language learning with cultural connotations. Finally, they can appreciate the real meanings of words in communication so as to make correct responses and achieve successful communication.

In addition, incorporating Chinese Internet buzzwords is also an effective teaching strategy. Integrating Chinese Internet buzzwords refers to the practice of integrating popular words and phrases commonly used on the Chinese Internet and

social media platforms into language teaching. First, these buzzwords are drawn from contemporary online communities and social media platforms, reflecting current trends, language evolution, and cultural differences. By incorporating them into language teaching, learners are exposed to the latest expressions and language developments, ensuring that their language skills remain relevant and up to date. Second, Chinese Internet buzzwords often carry cultural connotations, humor, or contextual meanings beyond their literal definition. Learning these buzzwords allows learners to gain cultural insights and gain a deeper understanding of contemporary Chinese society, online culture, and popular trends. As a result, learners are better prepared for culturally nuanced intercultural interactions, allowing them to communicate with greater sensitivity and authenticity. In essence, Chinese Internet buzzwords are a dynamic bridge between language learning and cultural understanding, improving language skills and intercultural abilities.

The effectiveness of the teaching process incorporating Chinese Internet buzzwords can be inferred from several key indicators. First, teacher's journals (TJs) revealed that Korean staffs' interest and engagement increased when Internet buzzwords were integrated into language teaching. This increase in interest indicates that learners are actively engaged in the learning process, which is a key factor in language acquisition and skill development. Additionally, specific examples provided in TJs demonstrate how Korean employees not only learn buzzwords but also apply them in real-world contexts, such as discussions about COVID-19, cultural connotations, and contemporary social phenomena. The process demonstrates the utility and relevance of buzzwords in real-life communication, demonstrating that learners successfully bridge the gap between language learning and real-life communication needs. This is evidenced by the TJs (9, 10):

> "Because there are more infected people recently, the company's conversation is all about the Covid-19. Some new internet words such as "阳过、阳康、天选之子" were used very frequently. Therefore, I added Internet buzzwords to classroom teaching. For example, during the Covid-19, there were some Internet buzzwords associated with the Covid-19 in China, such as "大白、

静默 (Medical staff and Lock down). I set a class topic: the Covid-19, which focused on the vocabulary related to the epidemic, the new words derived from the Internet, and the ways and terms of medical treatment in China. The Korean staff in the class were very interested, saying that the Chinese words are very practical and helpful to them." (TJ 9)

"In Friday's class, I assigned the assignment "Talk about the Internet buzzwords you know" and asked the Korean staff to compile the Internet words they heard and saw. In the next week, an "Internet buzzword sharing session" was held, the Korean staff talk about their experiences of encountering these words. I asked them to guess the meaning of the words based on the context and background, and then I explained. This way they could practice their language skills and enhance their impression and understanding of the Internet words. Everyone was very active and asked a lot of interesting questions, such as '躺平、内卷、996'." (TJ 10)

By incorporating these buzzwords, Korean staff increase their vocabulary and improve the relevance of their Chinese language skills to meet their communicative needs in the contemporary environment. In addition, it promotes cultural awareness and understanding and facilitates more meaningful intercultural communication. Therefore, incorporating Chinese Internet buzzwords in language teaching is a valuable teaching strategy.

Based on the analysis of the teacher's journals, the three effective teaching strategies were: contextual teaching strategy, cultural teaching strategy, and teaching with Chinese Internet buzzwords. The contextual teaching strategy increased the Korean staff's interest and active participation and deepened their memory of language learning. The cultural teaching strategy helped Korean staff accept and recognize cultural differences and build intercultural awareness. In addition, the incorporation of Internet buzzwords improved the usefulness of Chinese and further deepened cultural learning. The above three methods helped Korean staff to promote intercultural communication skills at the interest, knowledge and attitude level.

4.2.2 Teaching strategies from the recordings of class

By analyzing the recordings of class, I have come up with 2 effective methods which were: contextual teaching strategy, teaching combined with the Internet buzzwords.

Firstly, in the recording classes, the Korean staff can use the new words they learned last week in the presentation every Monday and know what kind of contexts they can use them in. This shows that the contextual approach to language learning deepens impressions and allows Korean staff to remember the specific contexts in which to use the words, thus laying a linguistic foundation for improving intercultural communication skills. For example, in RC1, Simon's speech is about salary, and he says that when he gets paid, he spends his money "大手大脚(lavishly)", and at the end of the month, when he has no money, he has to "精打细算(spend it wisely)"; Fischer talks about how he would live a 奢侈(luxurious) life if he were very rich. Park discusses his views on buying luxury goods. Chinese idioms are very difficult for foreigners to understand and remember. Because of the contextualization, they were impressed by the words and idioms related to money and could use them flexibly when expressing their ideas.

Secondly, the pair work practice in the recordings of class shows that the teaching incorporating Internet buzzwords helped Korean staff discover communicative topics, improve their confidence in using Chinese to communicate, and help them integrate into the workplace life of the company. Some evidence comes from the RCs (2,6) as follows:

"Orien: 你是小阳人吗? (Have you got Covid-19?)

Vicent: 上周是，不过这个星期我已经阳康了！(I got it last week, but I've recovered this week!）

Orien: 真羡慕呀！恢复的真快！感觉怎么样？(I'm so envious! You recovered so quickly! How do you feel?)

Vicent: 我还不错，但是我的家人们还都是小阳人，我得照顾他们。(I'm OK, but my families are still sick. I have to take care of them.)" (RC 2 Pair work)

"Rhon: 你的孩子去上学了吧？能适应这里学校的生活吗？(Your kids go to school, right? How are they adapting to school life here?)

Fischer: 昨天第一天，我的儿子还是不适应，毕竟刚来中国才一周。(Yesterday was the first day. My son is still not used to it. After all, he has only been in China for a week.)

Rhon: 我的孩子们看起来也不适应，但是不知道为什么昨天的考试，她们俩都得了满分，看来我是白担心了！(My kids don't seem to be used to it either, but I don't know why they both got full marks in yesterday's test, it seems I was worrying for nothing!)

Fischer: 你这哪里是担心！你这明明是凡尔赛！(You're not worrying! You're just showing off!)" (RC 6 Pair work)

Overall, the recordings of the class provide evidence of the positive impact of the contextual teaching strategy and Integration of Internet buzzwords teaching strategy. The Chinese language they had memorized through the situational approach was used in their presentations and they could express what they wanted to say fluently. Through the use of internet vocabulary, they behaved more like native Chinese communicators. It can be seen that these two teaching strategies effectively contributed to the Korean staff's improvement of intercultural communication skills.

4.2.3 Teaching strategies from interviews

Based on the analysis of the two interviews, the three teaching strategies described above have been further demonstrated to facilitate language learning and intercultural communicative competence

In the interviews, all 6 Korean staff agreed that the teaching strategies helped

them a lot in learning Chinese, especially the classroom content and methods were no longer rigid, the classroom content such as hypothetical situations, explanation of Chinese culture, and internet buzzwords attracted their attention and made them impressed with what they learned. It solved the problem that they knew Chinese but could not communicate and increased their confidence to communicate in Chinese. These 3 teaching strategies promoted their intercultural communication skills in terms of communicative confidence, knowledge aspects, application skills and socialization.

The Korean staff felt that the contextual approach gave them an immersive experience that makes the classroom engaging, maintains a high level of interest in learning, and impresses them with what they have learnt in the classroom. After class sometimes even if they don't know the meaning of some Chinese words, they can complete the communication by guessing the meaning of their Chinese colleagues through the context. Some evidence is as follows:

"I just know that the class content has become more interesting and I no longer feel sleepy but want to listen and talk about it. Sometimes I don't know the meaning of words, but I can guess based on context. Rhon and I are in a team, there is no interpreter during the night shift, we both often use the context to help us understand what our Chinese colleagues mean!" (Fischer, personal communication, February 8, 2023)

"I remember one of the lessons was a hypothetical scenario of playing badminton with friends. I learned the vocabulary about badminton and weekends and remembered it so well. Last week I went to play badminton with my Chinese friends and communicated with them in the Chinese I learned in the classroom, and it was very smooth and fluent." (Park, personal communication, February 8, 2023)

The cultural teaching enabled the Korean staff to understand the differences between Chinese and Korean cultures, establish intercultural awareness, and gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, such as ways of thinking, values, eating habits,

taboos, and workplace culture, especially, because of their work, mastering workplace culture knowledge helped Korean staff avoid workplace taboos and improve their social skills. Here is some evidence from the interviews:

"When I first came to China, I said to my colleague, "You are a woman like a fox." I wanted to compliment her for being smart. But my colleague's expression was strange. After studying Chinese culture, I realized that in Chinese fox means cunning, a derogatory word, I can't say that." (Orien, personal communication, March 28, 2023)

"At first, I thought that the basic everyday language of greeting, apologizing, and thanking was simple in form, but I often felt unsure of how to use these simple words appropriately in actual communication. After learning the cultural contents, I can now communicate with my colleagues with confidence and generosity." (Simon, personal communication, March 28, 2023)

Based on the above evidence, cultural teaching has demonstrated a positive role in promoting the learning of Chinese and improving the communication skills of Korean staff.

The Internet Chinese buzzwords teaching helped Korean staff to learn more about the new meanings of old words on the intellectual level, and to understand the cultural content of Chinese words and the emotional atmosphere of current communication on the cultural level. As a result, they were able to receive the communication information correctly, make the right response, and accomplish fluent and successful intercultural communication.

In the second interview, Parker, Vicent, Fischer and Orien agreed that the challenge of learning Chinese is the new meaning of the old word, which they know, but the new meaning is completely different in that context. By learning the internet buzzwords, they can not only master the common vocabulary in Chinese, but also to

learn the latest expressions of current Chinese thinking, which improves their intercultural communication skills.

> "During the lockdown period of the Covid-19, my colleagues said that we could have cloud dinner and cloud drink, but I did not understand what they meant at all. After studying in class, I realized that "cloud" means "online". Cloud dinner and cloud drinking refer to eating, drinking and chatting together through video." (Fischer, personal communication, March 28, 2023)

> "I found many Internet buzzwords that are very interesting, which changed my views on Chinese culture. At first, I thought Chinese culture was more serious, but the more I learned, the more I felt that there is a lot of humor in Chinese culture. For example, "eat melon" means to watch other people's events without getting involved. The word "melon" refers to a hot gossip event, I call myself "melon eater"." (Vicent, personal communication, March 28, 2023)

Integrating Internet vocabulary into the classroom helps the Korean staff have a better understanding of Chinese culture and thought processes. Furthermore, for Korean staff who need to integrate into Chinese society, understanding and mastering Internet buzzwords can help Korean staff understand new things and concepts in current social life, help them quickly integrate into Chinese society, reduce barriers in communication, and improve their ability to capture effective information in the communication process, so as to communicate successfully.

In all, teachers can use contextual teaching strategy, cultural teaching strategy, and Internet buzzword teaching strategy to facilitate intercultural communication and language learning among the Korean staff. Contextual teaching strategy can solve the problem of Korean staff' separation of learning and use and lack of context, cultural teaching strategy can solve their problem of being influenced by Korean language and Korean culture, Internet buzzword teaching strategy can reduce the barriers of their social communication and learn to express themselves in Chinese way of thinking. The

above three methods make Korean staff learn Chinese language and Chinese culture more actively and effectively improve their intercultural communication level.

Table 4.2 This Table shows how each strategy supports teaching and learning

Teaching Strategies	How Teaching Tools Support Teaching and Learning
Contextual Teaching Strategy	1. Engages learners through real-life scenarios and relevance to daily work. 2. Deepens learners' memory of language through contextualization. 3. Increases motivation and active participation in class activities. 4. Builds confidence in using Chinese language in practical situations.
Cultural Teaching Strategy	1. Provides cultural knowledge and awareness necessary for intercultural communication. 2. Teaches differences between Chinese and Korean cultures, including values, etiquette, social norms and so on. 3. Helps learners understand cultural connotations in language and behavior. 4. Improves social skills and confidence in navigating cultural differences.
Incorporating Internet Buzzwords	1. Integrates current and relevant language expressions from Chinese internet culture. 2. Enhances learners' understanding of contemporary Chinese society, trends, and pop culture. 3. Encourages the use of up-to-date language and cultural references in communication.

Table 4.2 This Table shows how each strategy supports teaching and learning (cont.)

Teaching Strategies	How Teaching Tools Support Teaching and Learning
Incorporating Internet Buzzwords	4. Enables learners to respond effectively to modern communication needs and nuances.

4.3 Ways to improve culture of learning

This section focuses on analyzing the data to get answers to the second research question. Through data analysis, the three main ways used by Korean staff to improve their culture of learning are: learning through media, cultural experience, and "Chinese + hobbies".

4.3.1 Ways from teacher's journals

Data obtained from TJs show that Korean staff improve their culture of learning through learning through media. All six Korean staff have learned new vocabulary through the media, and know to distinguish between some near synonyms, as well as authentic expressions. The related journals are as follows TJs (11-13):

"Q&A: Fischer asked a lot of questions outside of the textbook, such as the difference between "爱你"(love you) and "爱上你"(fall in love with you), and the difference between "明明"(obviously) and "偏偏"((indicates that something turns out just the opposite of what one would expect or what would be normal). I asked Fischer where he learned them from. Fischer said he learned them from Chinese TV programs. These questions were interesting and at the same time aroused everyone's interest. So, I explained with the plot and clips of the TV program and gave examples of how these words are used in daily life and the meaning they express. Everyone quickly understood and used these words correctly in conversation." (TJ 11)

"The topic of today's class was to discuss the current social involution issue, and the six Korean staff members expressed themselves fluently and used a lot of vocabulary outside of the textbook, such as "小镇做题家、破防"(a very poor man from a small town who studied very hard, breakdown). They said that because they often see related news and videos on Weibo and Tik Tok, and they use translation software to look up the new words, they remember them well and use them because they are learning independently and are very interested in them." (TJ 13)

In the light of the analysis of the teacher's journals, it can be seen that the media stimulated the interest of the Korean staff and motivated them to take the initiative to learn. They actively asked questions beyond the textbook, showing their curiosity and desire to study the language in depth. Through exposure to various media platforms, such as Tik Tok, Chinese TV dramas and Weibo, they were able to absorb a rich and expanded vocabulary and were exposed to real-life language-using environments. The Korean staff were able to enhance their understanding of the nuances of vocabulary and expressions beyond their textbook knowledge. This exposure to real-world language usage enhances their ability to understand and effectively utilize Chinese.

In summary, the use of media platforms, such as music, Chinese TV series, and Weibo, was helpful in improving Korean staff' intercultural communication skills in learning Chinese. By learning outside the classroom, the Korean staff were exposed to real-life language usage and cultural nuances, expanding their vocabulary and deepening their understanding of Chinese culture. The integration of media not only captured their interest, but also increased their confidence in expressing their thoughts and opinions and improved their fluency in intercultural communication.

4.3.2 Ways from recordings of classroom

The recordings of class indicate the media and cultural experience enhanced the Korean staff's culture of learning. Another way for Korean staff to utilize media is by posting their creative content on media platforms such as WeChat, Tik Tok, sharing

their lives and opinions, and interacting with their Chinese friends in the comments section. Through these interactions, Korean staff can hone their intercultural communication skills, learn to navigate cultural differences, and develop cultural sensitivity and empathy. In their presentation (RC 6), the four Korean staff talked about how they learnt how to use WeChat in China and how they shared their lives in WeChat's circle of friends. They told interesting stories about their interactions with their Chinese friends in the comments section of their circles, using the Chinese language they had learnt from their own interactions. In RC 8, Fischer talked about his views on the hot news in Tik Tok, where he tried to use new vocabulary in order to express his views more accurately. In RC 10, Rhon mentioned in his speech that he is shy and embarrassed to speak Chinese, so he prefers to chat with his Chinese friends on social media platforms, a process that has taught him a lot of new vocabulary and new ways of expression. All these show the positive effect of the media on their ability to improve their interaction.

Cultural experiences play a pivotal role in promoting the intercultural communication skills of Koreans through knowledge acquisition, cultural immersion, and practical application. Firstly, cultural experiences provide a wealth of knowledge about different cultures, traditions, and customs. By actively engaging in cultural activities and interactions, Korean staff gain insights into the social and cultural aspects. This knowledge serves as a foundation for understanding cultural differences and fosters respect, and open-mindedness when communicating with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Secondly, cultural experiences offer opportunities for immersive cultural immersion. By participating in cultural events, Korean staff are exposed to authentic cultural contexts. Immersion enables firsthand experiences of cultural practices, rituals, and daily life, allowing for a deeper understanding of the nuances and complexities of different cultures. This experiential learning enhances intercultural communication skills by sensitizing individuals to cultural cues, non-verbal communication, and cultural sensitivities, ultimately improving their ability to navigate and engage in culturally diverse environments.

In the RCs (3, 4, 5, 7, 9), all of the Korean staff presented their experiences of attending Chinese festival parties, including significant occasions such as New Year's Day, New Year's Eve, Chinese New Year, and the Lantern Festival. They provided details about the intricate planning involved in hosting dinner parties for Chinese traditional festivals, highlighting the significance of specific dishes, decorations, and customs associated with each celebration. The Korean staff discussed the importance of understanding and respecting Chinese traditions, such as offering greetings, giving the children 红包(the money in red envelopes), and participating in cultural activities during these festive gatherings.

These RCs show a way for Korean staff to improve their intercultural communication skills. By participating in Chinese festival parties, Korean staff gained a tangible understanding of Chinese culture. These cultural experiences deepened their cultural knowledge. Instead of teachers and boring textbook knowledge, Korean employees were confronted with colorful activities. They naturally mastered the Chinese language and culture, and their understanding of the Chinese language and culture transitioned from perceptual knowledge to cultural understanding and rational knowledge. These activities heightened their interest in learning intercultural communication, it also sharpened their intercultural communicative skills, enabled the Chinese and Korean staff to respect each other, enhanced their friendship, and promoted intercultural cooperation in the workplace.

Overall, the media utilization and cultural experiences has proven to be instrumental in the growth of intercultural communication skills among Korean staff. By actively participating in cultural events, using media platforms for communication, and immersing themselves in Chinese traditions and customs, Korean employees have gained practical knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and effective communication strategies.

4.3.3 Ways from the interviews

The analysis of the interview data further confirms the above methods for Korean staff to improve their culture of learning: learning through media, cultural experience, and also indicates another method: Chinese + hobbies.

In the first interview, in terms of strategies and ways on effective Chinese language learning and improving intercultural communication skills, all six interviewees mentioned media, four mentioned TV and Tik Tok, and two mentioned Weibo. Four interviewees said that when they encountered words they did not know while watching TV or Tik Tok, they would look them up in the dictionary or use translation software to figure out the meaning and usage. The other two interviewees said they would directly ask their Chinese friends what the Chinese characters mean and how to use them. All of the interviewees agreed that Chinese TV dramas and Tik Tok short videos are livelier and more interesting than boring language learning, and also contain a lot of intercultural knowledge and stories. The analysis of the following interview data further supports the conclusion that Korean staff improve their intercultural communication skills through media.

> "In the process of watching TV series and the hot news, we have deeply experienced the charm of Chinese culture. After we searched the translation or asked Chinese friends for the sentences that we did not understand, we remembered them very clearly and knew how to use them." (Fischer, Orien, Vicent, Park, Simon, Rhon, personal communication, February 8, 2023).

> "What I do most is to watch Chinese TV series, I prefer romance movies. I watch each one many times, so I am especially familiar with all the Chinese in them. Some of them I don't know what they mean, so I ask the teacher in class, and after the teacher explains them my impression is very deep, after a long time I find I accumulate a lot of communicative spoken language, which also helps me to improve my communication skills." (Fischer, personal communication, February 8, 2023)

Responses on how to use Chinese for intercultural communication outside the classroom, they focused on attending major Chinese festivals, attending company dinners and exploring Chinese cuisine. In other words, these activities are also cultural experiences. They engage in intercultural communication in cultural experiences.

All the six interviewees mentioned the Korean staff's active participation in major Chinese festivals as a way to utilize the Chinese language in intercultural communication. Festivals such as Chinese New Year, Mid-Autumn Festival, and the Lantern Festival were highlighted as opportunities to engage with Chinese colleagues, friends, and communities. By immersing themselves in these cultural celebrations, the interviewees were able to practice their Chinese language skills, exchange greetings, and participate in traditional customs and activities.

Four of the interviewees specifically mentioned company dinners as a significant context for utilizing Chinese language in intercultural communication. These events provided a platform for building relationships with Chinese colleagues, clients, and business partners. By engaging in conversations during these dinners, the interviewees practiced their Chinese language skills, navigated cultural norms, and demonstrated respect and cultural sensitivity.

Two of the interviewees emphasized their experiences of finding and enjoying Chinese food. Through interactions with local Chinese restaurant owners and staff, they were able to engage in conversations, learn about the dishes, and expand their knowledge of Chinese culinary culture. These experiences allowed them to practice their Chinese language skills in practical situations, ask questions about the food, and understand cultural references associated with Chinese cuisine.

Respondents' answers collectively emphasized the positive aspects of intercultural communication in cultural experiences. Respondents participated in major Chinese festivals, company dinners and tastings of Chinese food, and used Chinese in real-life situations. These experiences provided respondents with opportunities to hone their language skills, demonstrate cultural awareness, and deepen their understanding of

Chinese customs and traditions. The combination of language and cultural immersion fostered mutual respect, cultural sensitivity, and the ability to navigate intercultural environments, thus promoting effective intercultural communication.

Another way to improve the learning culture, as indicate in the analysis of the interview, is "Chinese + hobbies". Combining the pursuit of hobbies with language learning creates a dynamic learning environment that reinforces language skills and cultural knowledge. This means that Korean staff can interact with Chinese friends who share their interests. These interactions provide opportunities to practice language skills and exchange cultural insights. Through these hobbies, Korean staff can learn about cultural nuances, adapt to different communication styles, and deepen their intercultural communication skills based on shared interests and cultural understanding.

"I like to play badminton and golf, so I often go to the gymnasium near my home and play with Chinese people. When playing, I need to use Chinese to socialize with them. At first, I couldn't understand much of what they were saying, and I learned as I went along, then slowly I realized I could understand, and I could talk with them." (Park, personal communication, March 28, 2023)

"I love dancing. When I came to China, I found out that the unique Chinese culture is square dancing, and I was happy to join the dance team in the square and dance with them. They always like to dance and chat with me at the same time, and as we talked, I found that my Chinese became better and my social skills improved." (Orien, personal communication, March 28, 2023)

The analysis of the above interview responses shows the positive impact of hobbies on intercultural communication competence. Korean staff use hobbies as a means to improve intercultural communication skills: they create opportunities for language practice and cultural enrichment through hobbies. By learning Chinese language and social skills and practicing them repeatedly in their hobby activities, they

improve their proficiency and flexibility of application and increase their self confidence in intercultural communication.

Overall, the analysis shows that the "Chinese + hobby" approach is an effective strategy used by Korean staff to improve their intercultural communication skills. It demonstrates the importance of incorporating personal interests and hobbies into language learning, as it not only makes the learning process more enjoyable, but also provides a meaningful and authentic context for language practice and cultural engagement. By combining their interests with their learning experiences, the Korean staff are able to make progress in their language skills while developing their ability to communicate across cultures.

4. 4 Conclusion

Through an analysis method based on grounded theory, the results in this Chapter yields effective teaching strategies and development methods for enhancing Korean staff's culture of learning.

To tackle the first research question, three teaching strategies that have proven effective in facilitating intercultural communication and language learning are identified. The first strategy is the Contextual teaching strategy, which emphasizes the creation of a learning environment mirroring real-life situations. By practicing intercultural communication skills within relevant contexts, Korean staff can enhance their ability to communicate effectively across cultures.

The second teaching strategy, the cultural teaching strategy, involves the integration of cultural elements into the language learning process. By exposing Korean staff to various aspects of the target culture, such as traditions, customs, and social norms, this strategy fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of the cultural context in which the language is used. By gaining insights into the cultural nuances and communication styles of the target culture, Korean staff cannot only improve their language skills but also develop their proficiency in intercultural communication.

Lastly, this Chapter highlights the teaching approach that combines language instruction with Internet buzzwords. This strategy allows Korean staff to stay updated with the latest online language usage and expressions. By incorporating these buzzwords into their language repertoire, they can engage in conversations and communicate more effectively.

As of the second research question, Chapter 4 uncovers three ways in which Korean staff develop their culture of learning. One prominent strategy is learning with the help of media. Utilizing platforms such as social media and online resources, Korean staff found support in their efforts to enhance their intercultural communication skills. These digital tools provide opportunities for exposure to diverse cultures, expanding their cultural knowledge and fostering effective communication across borders. WeChat friend group interactions and the use of Tik Tok and Weibo are just a few examples of how Korean staff use media to enhance intercultural communication skills. Another effective strategy is the cultural experience, which involves engaging in immersive cultural experiences. By wholeheartedly engaging in cultural events, festivals, and activities, Korean staff immerse themselves in the customs, traditions, and daily practices of different cultures. This firsthand exposure provides them with practical insights and fosters a deeper understanding of cultural nuances, communication styles, and social dynamics. Whether it be attending local cultural festivals, partaking in traditional rituals, or interacting with Chinese, Korean staff actively seek out these experiences to sharpen their intercultural communication skills. Lastly, learning Chinese in combination with personal hobbies or interests is also an effective way to improve. Korean staff reported that this combination not only facilitated their proficiency in intercultural communication but also enhanced their overall ability to navigate intercultural interactions.

Chapter 4 serves as a comprehensive exploration of the teaching and learning of intercultural communication skills among Korean staff and successfully answering two research questions. Through the analysis of teacher's journals, the recordings of Class, and interviews, the chapter identifies teaching strategies such as the contextual teaching strategy, cultural teaching strategy, and teaching combined with Internet

buzzwords. Furthermore, it highlights development approaches including learning with media, engaging in cultural experiences, and combining language learning with personal hobbies. The insights provided in this chapter offer some suggestions for ways to improve intercultural communication skills, ultimately enabling effective communication across cultures.

As a teacher, I have gained insights from the research conducted in this chapter, which has enhanced my knowledge and understanding of how to enhance Korean staff's intercultural communication skills. The identification of three effective teaching strategies, namely the contextual teaching strategy, cultural teaching strategy, and teaching combined with Internet buzzwords, has been particularly useful in my teaching practice.

The contextual teaching strategy has taught me the importance of creating a learning environment that mirrors real-life situations. By incorporating authentic and relevant contexts into language lessons, I can provide Korean staff with practical opportunities to practice intercultural communication skills. This strategy has not only improved their ability to communicate effectively across cultures but also increased their confidence in real-world intercultural interactions.

The cultural teaching strategy has been instrumental in broadening my approach to language instruction. By integrating cultural elements, such as traditions, customs, and social norms, I can foster a deeper appreciation and understanding of the cultural context in which the language is used. This strategy has not only improved Korean staff's language skills but has also developed their intercultural communication proficiency by enabling them to navigate cultural nuances and communication styles more effectively.

The teaching strategy that combines language instruction with Internet buzzwords has proven to be a valuable tool in keeping Korean staff engaged and up to date with current buzzword usage. By incorporating popular buzzwords into lessons, I can help them connect with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds in

intercultural settings more effectively，and to understand the true meaning of conversations.

Furthermore, the Chapter's exploration of development approaches has provided me with strategies to enhance intercultural communication skills among Korean staff. The integration of media, such as social media platforms and online resources, has opened up new avenues for exposure to diverse cultures, expanding cultural knowledge, and fostering effective communication across borders. Additionally, the emphasis on immersive cultural experiences and combining language learning with personal hobbies has highlighted the importance of practical engagement and personal interests in enhancing intercultural communication skills.

In conclusion, the analysis conducted in Chapter 4 has significantly contributed to my understanding as a teacher. The identified teaching strategies and development approaches have been invaluable in enhancing Korean staff's intercultural communication skills. By incorporating the contextual teaching strategy, cultural teaching strategy, and teaching combined with Internet buzzwords, as well as encouraging learning with media, engaging in cultural experiences, and integrating personal hobbies, I can foster a more effective and engaging learning environment. These insights have not only enriched my teaching practice but have also empowered Korean staff to communicate confidently and effectively in their Chinese workplace.

Chapter 5

Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

This Chapter concludes and discusses the results of this study, which is based on the 2 research questions.

1)What teaching strategies facilitate intercultural communication and language learning among these Korean staff in study?

2) How do Korean staff improve their culture of learning?

After the conclusion and discussion, recommendations are given.

5.1 Conclusion

I have found out from data analysis that there are 3 strategies that facilitate intercultural communication and language learning among the Korean staff in my study. In addition, the improvement of Korean staff's cultural learning is also 3. These findings are presented in Table 3 below and the discussion is given accordingly.

Table 5.3 This Table showcases the brief findings of the two research questions

What teaching strategies facilitate intercultural communication and language learning among the Korean staff in this study?	How do Korean staff improve their culture of learning?
Contextual approach	Learning through media platforms
Cultural teaching	Cultural experiences
Internet buzzwords teaching strategy	Chinese + hobbies

5.1.1 Teaching Strategies

The study identifies 3 teaching strategies that facilitate intercultural communication among Korean staff in a Chinese workplace.

The first strategy is a contextual approach. This strategy is a powerful tool for bridging the gap between language acquisition and its actual use. It also promotes language learning and intercultural communication through authentic communicative contexts. In terms of language acquisition, this approach gears the Korean staff to learn and understand Chinese through real-life scenarios. For example, these Korean employees learned Chinese from phrases and expressions in business negotiations, speeches and social interactions during their daily work. They used Chinese terms that mean agree (好的), disagree(再看看吧), compromise (就这样吧), choices (二选一), and even a phrase like 'no problem'(没问题) in Chinese. In addition, when they got stuck with new vocabularies in business documents, they guessed the meanings from the surrounding words. I also found out from the interview (Section 4.2.3) with them that sometimes, they even discussed among themselves and helped one another to get Chinese words or phrases to convey the correct meanings to their Chinese co-workers. This shows they applied a 'contextual approach' to communication where language learning takes place in their own context.

In terms of practical use, the contextual approach allows learners to adapt their language skills to a variety of social and professional scenarios (Zhu, 2012). Korean staff can apply what they have learned in the classroom to the actual communication, especially when encountering the same situations (e.g. business negotiation, Covid-19 testing, and product quality reports) that are set up in the classroom. They respond positively with confidence and can communicate fluently. Practical activities have shown the success of this approach in improving intercultural communication skills thereby.

Next is cultural teaching. It refers to my teaching of the customs (e.g. Chinese festivals, the food culture, and end-of-the-year parties), traditions (e.g. holiday

celebrations, wedding celebration rules, and visit etiquettes), and behaviors (such as workplace etiquettes and table manners). These topics help Korean staff bridging the gaps between language and culture and reduce interferences of their native culture as well as enable them to communicate appropriately in social and professional settings.

In mitigating the interference of mother-tongue impacts of culture on Chinese language learning, I enhance their cultural awareness and sensitivity by comparing the similarities and differences between Chinese and Korean cultures. This approach allows students to recognize how their native cultural norms and language structures might affect their acquisition of the Chinese language. For instance, when exploring linguistic honorifics, I, as a teacher, could discuss how both Chinese and Korean languages utilize different forms of address to convey respect and hierarchy. When comparing the sentence structures of Chinese and Korean, I could talk about the different positions of a subject, a predicate and its object.

In practice, cultural teaching allows them to understand intercultural communication. For example, on "Dragon Head Raising Day" (a Chinese holiday), Chinese employees may ask one another if they have had their haircut. Through cultural teaching, Korean employees are not surprised by such a question because they know that according to Chinese tradition, getting a haircut on that day can bring good luck throughout the year.

The third strategy is Internet buzzwords teaching strategy. I integrate Internet buzzwords into Chinese language teaching. This strategy helps Korean staff master the Chinese informal language (e.g. greetings and exclamations), innovations, technical terms, and expressions in the Digital 21st Century. By learning the Internet buzzwords, they can better communicate with Chinese people.

Also, Internet buzzwords enhance Korean staff's cultural understanding. This is because Internet buzzwords are not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also reflect local culture and values, such as "996" and "内卷" reflect the phenomenon of fierce competition in Shanghai, and "躺平" is a reflection of the current values of most young

people. Based on this learning, they gained a deeper understanding of the characteristics and trends of contemporary Chinese culture. Korean staff are, thus, able to improve their linguistic expression and cultural understanding in intercultural communication, thus enhancing their ability to interact and cooperate with Chinese people.

5.1.2 Improvement of culture of learning

The study identified 3 ways in which Korean staff improve their culture of learning in the Chinese workplace.

The first is learning through different media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo and Tik Tok. Korean staff can access rich and diverse resources and are not limited by time and space. For example, by watching popular videos on Tik Tok, Korean employees are exposed to daily phrases, the latest buzzwords and expressions. By reading content on WeChat or Weibo about Chinese culture, tourism and fashion, Korean employees can learn about China's historical background, traditional customs and contemporary social dynamics. These can help them better deal with hot issues in intercultural communication.

In addition, the interactive function of the media platforms can provide Korean employees with real language usage opportunities. As an example, they can communicate and interact with Chinese people by commenting and replying in WeChat's group and Tik Tok comment section. Such interactions not only provide an opportunity to practice their language expression skills, but also enable them to understand Chinese perspectives and values, promoting mutual understanding and friendly relations.

The second improvement sees cultural experiences, which refer to the participation in various cultural activities that allow Korean staff to feel and experience Chinese customs, traditions and daily life. By actively participating in these cultural activities, Korean staff can gain first-hand experience which can help them better understand Chinese culture. For example, participating in traditional festival

celebrations is a common form of cultural experience. During Chinese New Year, Korean staff participate in a series of activities on New Year's Eve, such as eating New Year's Eve dinner, setting off firecrackers, and New Year's greetings. By experiencing the traditional celebrations, they can gain a better understanding of Chinese customs and deepen their emotional ties with their Chinese colleagues.

As well, participating in cultural experiences in daily life provides Korean staff with a real context for practical communication. For instance, Korean employees can try to taste Chinese food and learn about Chinese food culture. Whether they dine in a restaurant or make dumplings with their Chinese colleagues, these hands-on experiences provide them with more opportunities to learn and use Chinese and exercise their communicative skills.

The last way is "Chinese + hobbies". It is a creative approach that combines language learning with personal passionate hobbies (e.g. sports, art, food, etc.) so that learners can find new fun and motivation in the learning process. This approach reflects the virtuous circle effect between language learning and hobbies. By learning Chinese while immersing themselves in their favorite activities, Korean staff are able to gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, bring them closer to their Chinese colleagues, and build meaningful connections. For example, one of the Korean staff enjoyed playing golf and often went to play with their Chinese colleagues and friends in their spare time. He learns Chinese vocabulary and expressions related to golf and is able to practice socializing with his Chinese friends. Another Korean staff member, who loves to watch films, actively uses Chinese to discuss with his Chinese colleagues and friends, and in this way expands his Chinese vocabulary and improves his expressions.

Korean staff are stimulated by the way "Chinese + Hobbies" and gain a rich intercultural experience. While improving their language skills, they deepen their understanding of Chinese culture. In this way, Korean employees can break down the barriers between them and their Chinese colleagues and establish meaningful intercultural exchanges.

5.2 Discussion

The findings of this study provide insights into teaching strategies that facilitate intercultural communication and language learning among Korean staff in the Chinese workplace. In addition, this study also sheds the ways in which Korean staff can develop intercultural communicative competence. This section discusses these findings. The teaching strategies are discussed as follows.

5.2.1 Discussion on teaching strategies

The teaching strategies include contextual, cultural and Internet buzzword teaching approaches. The first one discussed is the contextual teaching strategy.

5.2.1.1 Contextual teaching strategy

This study shows that the contextual teaching strategy can effectively improve Korean staff's intercultural communicative competence. By learning the language in a set context, on the one hand, deepens Korean staff's memory of vocabulary and grammar, and on the other hand, deepens their understanding of Chinese pragmatics.

This finding coincides with the conclusions reached by some scholars exploring the potential of contextual pedagogy to enhance intercultural communicative competence. Smith (2015) suggested that students who learn in simulated scenarios demonstrate better vocabulary recall than traditional classroom learning (pp. 395-402). Smith & Johnson (2017) highlighted the potential of contextual pedagogies to promote cultural integration and meaningful communication (pp. 315-332). These consistencies reflect that contextual approach has the following advantages:

Firstly, contextual teaching strategy has the advantage of enhancing language retention. When learners encounter vocabulary and grammatical structures in real-world scenarios, contextual cues embed knowledge more deeply in their memory and deepen their understanding of grammar. This means that when learners engage in dialogue, their

vocabulary recall becomes more fluent and natural, and the differences in grammatical structures and language usage are directly felt.

Another advantage of contextual teaching strategy is the development of cultural pragmatics. Communication is not just about recognizing words and sentence structures, but also about understanding appropriate usage and meaning in a particular cultural context. Through the contextual approach, learners are able to understand how to use sentences to best effect. Especially when they encounter the scenarios they have assumed in class in real-life applications, they use Chinese more accurately and confidently to communicate positively.

To sum up, the contextual teaching strategy is effective. By setting up work or life scenarios, they can deepen their memory of vocabulary and grammar and know how to apply Chinese correctly for communication.

5.2.1.2 Cultural teaching strategy

This study demonstrates that the cultural teaching strategy can improve the intercultural communicative competence of Korean staff. By teaching learners customs, traditions, values, and cultural taboos, it helps them to better understand and respect other cultures and improves their communicative competence in different situations.

As in Lee & Kim (2019) study, they argued that cultural pedagogy plays a key role in helping learners understand cultural differences, enhance cultural sensitivity, reduce intercultural misunderstandings, and promote effective intercultural communication (pp. 1-15). Wang (2015) considered that the cultural teaching approach for learners with different backgrounds, ages, and language abilities has a positive impact (pp. 408-414). Whether in an educational setting or in corporate training, a cultural teaching approach can help learners to better adapt and integrate into different cultural environments. Cultural teaching approaches foster intercultural communicative competence in its own unique way.

Firstly, cultural teaching strategy improves learners' cultural sensitivity and adaptability. By learning customs, traditions, values and so on, learners can gain a deeper understanding of different cultures, adapt to social norms, etiquette and understand some non-verbal cues. Sensitivity to cultural differences enables learners to deftly adjust their cultural interactions and adjust their communication style, language, and etiquette to the preferences and expectations of the other party to avoid intercultural misunderstandings.

Secondly, cultural teaching strategy fosters open-mindedness. Through cultural teaching, learners are exposed to knowledge of cultures different from theirs. When learners show an interest in learning, they are more willing to take the initiative to learn about and explore other cultures. This open-mindedness enables them to tolerate and appreciate cultural diversity, eliminates prejudice and discrimination against unfamiliar cultures, and contributes to the fact that they can effectively cooperate, communicate and negotiate with people from different cultural backgrounds.

In all, the efficacy of cultural teaching strategy in improving intercultural communication competence is indisputable. The findings of this study are consistent with those of contemporary scholars. This approach goes beyond language learning to deepen learners' cultural understanding, improve their cultural adaptability, and engage in intercultural communication in a multicultural context.

5.2.1.3 Internet buzzwords teaching strategy

This study proves that integrating Internet buzzwords into a language course can help learners to understand contemporary language trends. It also enables them to learn more authentic expressions such as Chinese humor and popular culture. Chen & Wang (2018) explored the significance of integrating internet buzzwords in language teaching. They emphasized the positive impact of highlighting this approach in bridging cultural gaps and promoting meaningful communication (Chen & Wang, 2018, pp. 345-352). In conjunction with the findings of this study, the internet buzzwords teaching approach has the following advantages.

Incorporating Internet buzzwords into language courses can enhance learners' understanding of contemporary culture and improve their cultural literacy. As Li, Wang & Zhang (2018) pointed out, the use of Internet buzzwords reflects the changing social dynamics, values, and attitudes in a culture (pp. 92-97). By integrating these buzzwords into language teaching, learners can gain insight into current cultural trends and develop a more nuanced understanding of the target culture. This deepened cultural awareness enables learners to navigate intercultural interactions with greater sensitivity and adaptability.

Moreover, as Internet buzzwords often contain multiple layers of meaning, it may be difficult for non-native speakers to understand the true meaning of the expressions, learners who are familiar with these terms can convey their thoughts exactly and express themselves in a more authentic and local way. This deepens their ability to connect with others, fostering meaningful conversations.

In conclusion, integrating Internet buzzwords into language courses is a dynamic and effective strategy for improving intercultural communicative competence. The findings of this study resonate with those of contemporary scholars, reinforcing the impact of this approach in bridging cultural gaps and enhancing communication.

5.2.2 Discussion on ways to improve culture of learning

There are 3 ways that encourage Korean staff to improve their culture of learning: learning through the media platforms, cultural experiences and "Chinese + hobbies". Each discussion is exhibited below:

5.2.2.1 Learning through different media platforms

Learning through media platforms (WeChat, Weibo and Tik Tok) has quickly become a new way for Korean staff to improve their intercultural communication skills. Lee & Chang (2020) have studied in depth the potential of learning on media platforms to enhance intercultural communication skills and have also emphasized the positive

and dynamic impact of media on intercultural competence (pp. 25-45). This study also highlights positive impacts.

Firstly, a significant advantage of media platform learning is the convenient and flexible access to learning resources. Different from traditional classroom teaching, this learning mode is not limited by time and space, and learners can learn Chinese and Chinese culture freely. This flexibility helps learners adapt to busy work schedules, ensuring that learning blends seamlessly with everyday life. The rich learning resources from the media can help learners to understand Chinese language and culture in a holistic way, not only in the classroom, thus cultivating learners with a broad perspective and intercultural communication skills.

Furthermore, the personalized learning pathways provided by media platforms allow learners to plan their language learning independently. Learners can find a variety of learning resources and adapt language learning content such as videos, podcasts, articles and interactive practice according to their interests and preferences. This personalized learning approach motivates learners to actively seek out and interact with opportunities on the platform. These authentic interactions improve their language proficiency and enrich their cultural life, thus ultimately facilitating their intercultural communicative competence.

To sum up, using media platforms for learning is an effective way, and its flexible, easy-to-use, and personalized learning paths highlight the far-reaching positive impact of media platforms on developing learners' intercultural communicative competence.

5.2.2.2 Participating in cultural experiences

By engaging in a variety of cultural activities, learners are able to develop a deep understanding of different traditions, customs, and undergo different cultural experiences, leading to an effective approach to intercultural interaction. Smith & Garcia (2019) have explored the impact of cultural activity participation on the

development of intercultural communicative competence, corroborating the significance of this approach (pp. 89-104). Their research underscores the pivotal role of engaging in cultural experiences to foster cultural awareness and effective intercultural communication. Combined with this research, participation in cultural experience has the following effects.

Participation in cultural activities fosters a rich cultural awareness that goes beyond theoretical knowledge. Instead of learning about culture only from the classroom, learners are actively involved in hands-on experiences. This experiential learning deepens their understanding of cultural nuances, customs and traditions, which helps to reduce misunderstandings and promote friendly exchanges.

Another important effect of participating in cultural activities is the development of skilled adaptations. Cultural experience provides learners with opportunities for intercultural communication, and requires learners to adjust their behavior, communication methods and responses to adapt to the current cultural environment when exposed to unfamiliar customs and traditions. This high level of adaptability allows them to transition seamlessly between different cultural backgrounds, thereby developing a sense of comfort and ease in intercultural interactions.

To sum up, cultural experience plays an important role in improving learners' intercultural communicative competence in terms of cultural awareness and proficiency in adaptation.

5.2.2.3 "Chinese + hobbies"

In a multicultural workplace, the "Chinese + hobbies" approach is a means of promoting cultural integration and mutual understanding. By integrating language learning into activities that Korean staff are passionate about, they develop an interest in Chinese language and culture, become more motivated to learn and use Chinese, and are better able to understand and appreciate Chinese culture.

There are extensive explorations by many researchers on the use of "Chinese +" as a teaching mode in teaching Chinese as a second language, and various variants of the "Chinese +" approach have been studied, for example, "Chinese + culture" (Chen & Zhang, 2021, pp. 47-55), and "Chinese + content" (Liu & Chang, 2020, pp. 309-328). Wang & Kim (2017) argued that through language practices related to personal interests, learners are more likely to stay motivated and interested in learning, which leads to improved language fluency and accuracy (pp. 69-94). Li & Kim (2019) proposed that through shared interests, language becomes a bridge between outsiders and native speakers. They can build closer relationships and better mutual understanding by using Chinese to discuss topics of common interest (pp. 1-15). The "Chinese + hobbies" proposed in this study is an innovation of the "Chinese +" model, and it also confirms that the combination of language and hobbies can improve intercultural communication skills.

Firstly, "Chinese + hobbies" makes use of individual interests to fully motivate learners. In hobby activities, language is no longer an isolated learning task, but a channel for communication with native speakers about common interests. This authentic interaction stimulates their desire to learn more and allows them to have meaningful conversations around their hobbies. This purposeful exchange becomes a motivation that inspires them to work harder to improve their language proficiency and communicative competence.

Furthermore, "Chinese + hobbies" can broaden learners' vocabulary and provide them with opportunities for practice. When pursuing an interest, learners gradually acquire terminology related to their interest, so that they can express themselves more confidently and accurately in communication in this area. Communicating with native speakers who share a common interest provides learners with opportunities to practice their language and communication skills. These practical opportunities can enhance learners' ability to use the language in real-life situations.

In conclusion, "Chinese + hobby" is an effective way for improving intercultural communicative competence. Active interest, purposeful language learning

and authentic communicative opportunities develop learners' communicative competence.

5.3 Recommendations

This section offers recommendations to 3 groups of people: teachers, the company, and the future researchers.

5.3.1 Teachers

I was hired by this Korean company to teach Chinese to the Korean staff. Based on the research background and the findings of this study, I give the following recommendations to teachers who teach in multicultural venues.

Firstly, new teachers need to receive training. Such training includes: (1) Teachers need to be trained in intercultural knowledge, such as understanding the values, beliefs, practices and social norms of different cultures. They need to respect and appreciate these differences to avoid prejudice against other cultures. (2) Teachers need to learn intercultural communication styles. This includes learning non-verbal communication skills, intercultural communication etiquette and negotiation skills so that they can communicate effectively with Korean employees from different cultural backgrounds. (3) Teachers need to learn how to resolve intercultural conflicts. In a multicultural environment, conflicts and misunderstandings may arise. These trainings are designed to help them understand and become aware of the differences between cultures and to improve their ability to teach and deal with conflict in a multicultural environment.

Secondly, teachers need to understand the learning needs of their learners and develop corresponding teaching strategies based on learning needs. Teachers can use the 3 strategies mentioned in this study in language courses, i.e., setting up work and life scenarios, adding multicultural content, and combining the teaching of Internet buzzwords.

Furthermore, teachers can make use of different media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo and Tik Tok to find new and interesting teaching resources for learners' better understanding of classroom context.

Finally, teachers should regularly assess learners' intercultural communication and language learning. Qualitative and quantitative methods can be used to assess the effectiveness of teaching strategies and learning methods, and learners' opinions on classroom teaching can also be solicited. Based on these, teaching strategies and learning materials are updated and refined to ensure that they remain relevant and effective.

5.3.2 Companies

Companies can create a supportive and inclusive environment that promotes intercultural communication and language learning among employees in the following ways:

Firstly, companies can increase budgets for language training programs. The purpose of increasing the budget for language training is to ensure that employees have access to adequate resources and support. For example, companies can invest more resources in quality teaching materials, learning materials and online platforms to support employees' language learning. More specialized language teachers are also a good option for companies. Such teachers have extensive teaching experience and expertise, they are able to develop personalized learning plans based on employees' needs and levels and provide targeted feedback and guidance.

Additionally, companies can organize various cultural experiences such as holiday celebrations, language corners and language competitions. Such activities not only provide an opportunity to practice language skills, but also promote co-operation and communication among employees and create a positive learning atmosphere. These measures improve employees' language skills and also promote intercultural

communication and teamwork, laying a solid foundation for the company's international development.

5.3.3 Future researchers

In order to further investigate intercultural communication and language learning in a multicultural workplace, I recommend the future researchers as follows:

Researchers can conduct longitudinal and comparative studies of the teaching strategies in this study. Longitudinal evaluations can assess the long-term effects of these teaching strategies on learners' intercultural communicative competence and language proficiency and understand the sustainability of these strategies. Comparative studies can explore the effectiveness, adaptability, and generalizability of these teaching strategies in different multicultural contexts.

With the rise of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), 3D printing and Machine Learning, researchers can investigate how to integrate virtual reality and artificial intelligence into the teaching of language learning and intercultural communication and explore innovative teaching strategies. For example, by using AI to set up classroom contexts, virtual reality technology can not only give students an earful, but also allow them to experience the language and culture they are learning. They can participate in virtual dialogues, browse exotic landscapes, and even take part in simulation activities of daily life scenarios. On the other hand, teachers can use AI to create a language learning platform. Personalized teaching can be achieved by offering customized lessons based on individual student needs and providing instant feedback on pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. AI can analyze each learner's progress and adjust the difficulty of tasks, accordingly, ensuring a tailored learning experience that maximizes learning efficiency.

By exploring these areas of research, future researchers can contribute to the advancement of intercultural communication theory and practice, ultimately leading to successful communication and collaboration in multicultural workplaces.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview 1

1. What is your opinion about the Chinese language and culture after starting a language course in China?

2. What are your particular challenges while learning Chinese?

3. In what ways has the teacher helped you solve these challenges?

4. Can you describe any specific strategies or techniques you've used to learn Chinese more effectively?

5. How has the cultural context of China influenced the way you learn Chinese?

6. How much progress have you traced from this Chinese language course so far?

7. How do you use Chinese outside of class for intercultural communication? Please describe these experiences.

8. How has the improvement of Chinese intercultural communication skills affected your work and life?

9. What aspects of Chinese language and Chinese culture would you most like to learn?

10. Looking ahead, what are your goals for the course in this quarter?
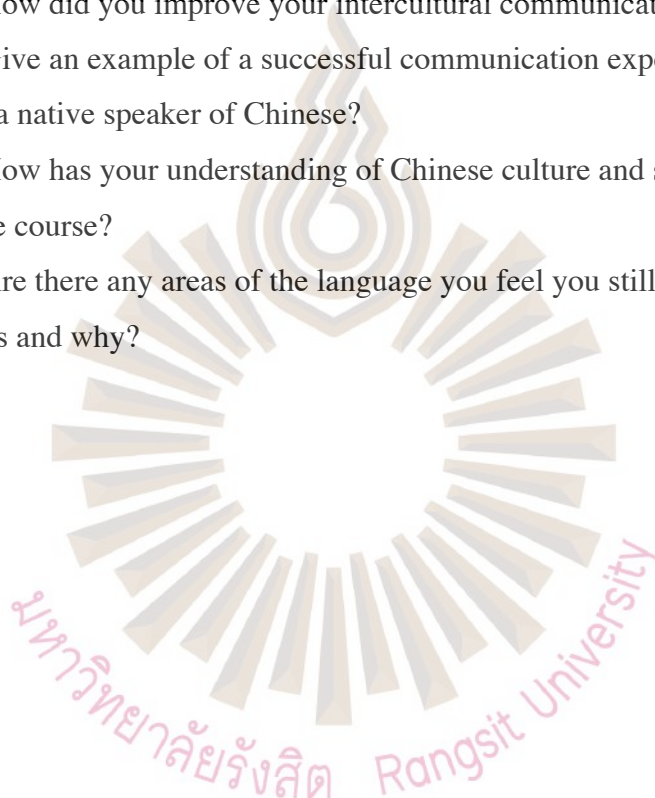
Appendix B

Interview 2

1. Have you achieved your language learning goals? If yes, please explain how? If not, what obstacles did you encounter?

2. How has your confidence in using Chinese changed over the course of the program?

3. What is the most challenging problem in learning Chinese for you?

4. Were there any particular teaching methods or ways that were especially effective for you?

5. How did you improve your intercultural communication skills in Chinese?

6. Give an example of a successful communication experience you had in Chinese with a native speaker of Chinese?

7. How has your understanding of Chinese culture and society improved throughout the course?

8. Are there any areas of the language you feel you still need to work on? If so, which ones and why?

Appendix C

IOC Mark for interview 1

IOC Mark for interview 1

No.	Questions for Interview 1	Rating by Experts		
		Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3
1	What is your opinion about the Chinese language and culture after starting a language course in China?	+1	+1	+1
2	What are your particular challenges while learning Chinese?	+1	+1	+1
3	In what ways has the teacher helped you solve these challenges?	+1	+1	+1
4	Can you describe any specific strategies or techniques you've used to learn Chinese more effectively?	+1	+1	+1
5	How has the cultural context of China influenced the way you learn Chinese?	+1	+1	+1
6	How much progress have you traced from this Chinese language course so far?	+1	+1	+1
7	How do you use Chinese outside of class for intercultural communication? Please describe these experiences.	+1	+1	+1
8	How has the improvement of Chinese intercultural communication skills affected your work and life?	+1	+1	+1
9	What aspects of Chinese language and Chinese culture would you most like to learn?	+1	+1	+1
10	Looking ahead, what are your goals for the course in this quarter?	+1	+1	+1

+1 means the item that matches the stated objectives

0 means the unclear item and the rater is unsure whether it meets the stated objectives

-1 means the item that does not match the objectives

Appendix D

IOC Mark for interview 2

IOC MARK for interview 2

No.	Questions for Interview 2	Rating by Experts		
		Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3
1	Have you achieved your language learning goals? If yes, please explain how? If not, what obstacles did you encounter?	+1	+1	+1
2	How has your confidence in using Chinese changed over the course of the program?	+1	+1	+1
3	What is the most challenging problem in learning Chinese for you?	+1	+1	+1
4	Were there any particular teaching methods or ways that were especially effective for you?	+1	+1	+1
5	How did you improve your intercultural communication skills in Chinese?	+1	+1	+1
6	Give an example of a successful communication experience you had in Chinese with a native speaker of Chinese?	+1	+1	+1
7	How has your understanding of Chinese culture and society improved throughout the course?	+1	+1	+1
8	Are there any areas of the language you feel you still need to work on? If so, which ones and why?	+1	+1	+1

+1 means the item that matches the stated objectives

  0 means the unclear item and the rater is unsure whether it meets the stated objectives

-1 means the item that does not match the objectives

Appendix E

Certificate of Research Ethics

COA. No. RSUERB2023-127

Certificate of Approval
By
Ethics Review Board of Rangsit University

COA. No.	**COA. No. RSUERB2023-127**
Protocol Title	Teaching Chinese to Korean Staff in a Chinese Workplace: A Case of Intercultural Communication
Principle Investigator	Yun Ding
Affiliation	Suryadhep Teachers College, Rangsit University
How to review	Expedited Review
Approval includes	1. Project proposal
	2. Information sheet
	3. Informed consent form
	4. Data collection form/Program or Activity plan
Date of Approval:	5 September 2023
Date of Expiration:	5 September 2025

The prior mentioned documents have been reviewed and approved by Ethics Review Board of Rangsit University based Declaration of Helsinki, The Belmont Report, CIOMS Guideline and International Conference on Harmonization in Good Clinical Practice or ICH-GCP.

Signature.........................

(Associate Professor Dr. Panan Kanchanaphum)
Chairman, Ethics Review Board for Human Research

Biography

Name	Yun Ding
Date of birth	04 06 1986 of birth
Place of birth	Jiangsu, China
Education background	Nanjing Institute of Population Management University, China
	Bachelor of Management, 2009
	Rangsit University, Thailand
	Master of Education in Bilingual Education and English Language Teaching, 2023
Address	Suryadhep Teachers College, Rangsit University, Pathum Thani, Thailand
Email Address	dydean8820@gmail.com