



**A STUDY OF CHINESE EXCHANGE STUDENTS' DEGREES OF
INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND ATTITUDES
TOWARD THAI LANGUAGE LEARNING AT
A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN THAILAND**



**BY
XIE XIANG ZHEN**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION
IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION
SURYADHEP TEACHERS COLLEGE**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL, RANGSIT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2020**

Thesis entitled

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was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Education in Bilingual Education

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chinese great poet Qu Yuan once said, “the road ahead will be long, and my climb will be steep.” In the process of climbing and completing my study, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people for their selfless help.

First of all, I would like to acknowledge my thesis advisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Ratchaporn Rattanaphumma for her professional academic accomplishment (knowledge, attitude, research ability, and teaching skills) that made me trust her and respect her. She gave me very professional academic suggestions and instructions, helped me gradually build confidence in academic research, and guided me to independent academic study. Moreover, she encouraged me with great patience and sincerity, giving me the courage and hope to deal with the difficulties in the research process, so that I was able to complete the thesis, I am so grateful and honored to be her student.

Secondly, I am very grateful to Ph.D. Jamie Wallin, who gave me professional guidance in academic reading and writing. Meanwhile, I appreciate to four experts, Asst. Prof. Dr. Kittitouch Soontornwipast, Asst. Prof. Dr. Noparat Tananuraksakul, Asst. Prof. Dr. Tanisaya Jiriyasin and Dr. Suthee Khamkaew, who made contributions to my proposal, IOC of the questionnaire, and Inter-Coder Validity of the interview data.

In the end, I owe great appreciation to my family and friends. In the past two years, they have given me huge financial support and emotional encouragement. I am very grateful for everything I had been through in Thailand.

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 Program : Master of Education in Bilingual Education
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Abstract

This study was designed to examine Chinese exchange students' degrees of intercultural sensitivity and attitudes toward Thai language learning. A mixed-methods approach was employed by quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire and interview as the instruments were adopted in this study. The participants consisted of 63 Chinese exchange students who participated in a Thai language program at a private university in Thailand. The students were requested to complete a questionnaire and then participated in a semi-structured interview. The descriptive statistical analysis was computed by Mean and Standard Deviation. The findings showed that 1) Chinese exchange students' degree of intercultural sensitivity was high; 2) Chinese exchange students' attitudes toward Thai language learning were moderate. The findings emphasized the significance of exchange programs for promoting intercultural sensitivity and positive attitudes toward language learning. It enlightens administrators and teachers who should reconsider the educational policy and pedagogical interventions to enhance the effectiveness of exchange programs for students. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that diversity and size of the sample should be increased. In addition, the impacts of the exchange program on other dimensions should be further considered.

(Total 134 pages)

Keywords: Intercultural Sensitivity, Attitudes toward Thai language learning, Chinese exchange students

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

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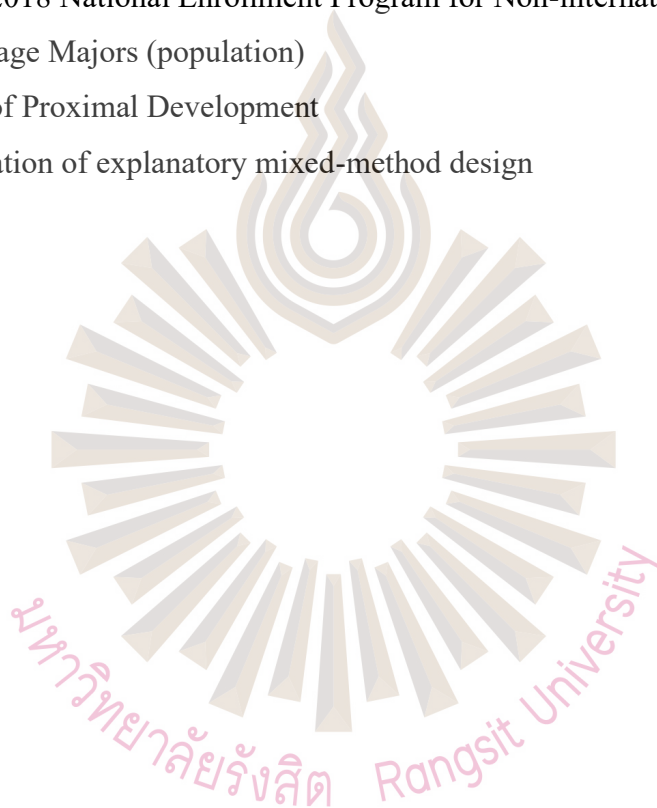


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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
ATLL	Attitudes toward Thai Language Learning
IS	Intercultural Sensitivity
IOC	Item Objective Congruence
SD	Standard Deviation



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background and the rationale of the study, the research objectives, research questions, research hypotheses, definition of terms, and research scope. It also provides the conceptual framework, significance, and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background and Rationale of the Study

1.1.1 Globalization, Internationalization, and Higher Education

After World War II, globalization has become the most significant development trend that affects the world with the development of world peace and stability and technology and the internet. Globalization means the opening and integration of business, trade, and economic activities between countries, so it is necessary to make the fundamental political, ideological, cultural, and social aspects of life in different countries of the world more unified. Developments in technology, computers, and the Internet have accelerated and strengthened over the past few decades. As Babones (2008) divides globalization into three main areas: global economic, global cultural, and global political, globalization has tightened people, culture, markets, beliefs, and practices closer together (Sorrells, 2012). To cope with the trend of globalization, the internationalization strategy has gradually developed and become famous in plenty of industries (Adel, Zeinhom & Mahrous, 2018). The globalization of knowledge and education has paralleled the development of the globalization of the world economy (Brooks & Normore, 2010). The cognizes of education have been changed and inspired (Keengwe, 2010; Sinagatullin, 2006).

In 2003, internationalization became one of the formalized terms to redefine higher education after the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) conference, in which higher education was defined as ‘an international service industry is also regulated by the international market and trade agreements’ (Bassett, 2006). It undoubtedly turned education into a trade competition behavior, and governments of various countries responded quickly to the international competition for education. (Leask, 2008). For example, strategic plans for governments and educational institutions, Erasmus (Plus) program, and Education Action Plan for the Belt and Road Initiative. Within universities, the internationalization of higher education is a strategic response to globalization (Maringe & Foskett, 2012), usually understood to mean the integration of international or intercultural dimensions into the tripartite mission of higher education’s functions on teaching, research, and service (Knight, 2004; Scott, 2000). Cultivating global citizens with international competitiveness and intercultural leadership has become an educational goal for universities. Sinagatullin (2006) in the book of *The impact of globalization on education* clarifies that the primary goal of global education intends to a) prepare the younger generation to live, work and collaborate with people of different cultures, racial, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds; b) train creative and reflective people who can make effective decisions and take responsibility for the status and future of their country and the world; and c) cultivate students' global capabilities so that they can effectively function in their microculture, mainstream culture, and global society.

Global citizens who respect cultural diversity and are committed to the global common good are requirements for international education in the environment of globalization and internationalization. Global citizen means the individual has global citizenship, and global citizenship refers to an individual’s “awareness, concern, and embracing diversity meanwhile promoting social justice and sustainability, equipped with a sense of responsibility to take action” (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013). Education plays a vital role in global citizen. Mannion, Biesta, Priestley & Ross (2011) have proved that more education is more closely connected with a person’s positive identity as a global citizen. Berg and Schwander (2019) found that study abroad program has a long-term impact on students’ global citizenship, participants are more

interested in the local activities, they respect local culture and enjoy to the discussion about international and trans-cultural issues, and so on.

The increase in the number of international students is the most direct reflection of international education. More and more students choose to study abroad or gain international learning experience. According to the 2019 Report of IEE (The Institute of International Education): Open Doors Report on International Education Exchange. International students (students from the world who went to universities in the United States) have been showing rapid progress since 2005. The growth trend has maintained a relatively high number, over one million international students studied in the United States since 2015. At the same time, the report reported that the cost of study abroad for undergraduates, more than 85% are supported by their families, which indicates that study abroad is not only a strategy of the government and universities but also a learning way fully recognized by students and their parents. Therefore, parents are willing to invest more education costs on the choice of study abroad for the young generation. Concerning the choice of majors for study abroad, the report shows that the choices of students show diversity, while the top rankings are engineering, business, mathematics, computer science, humanities, and arts.

China has become the world's largest export of study abroad. Only in 2016, the total number of students study abroad was 544,500, of which 31,000 were in Thailand. According to the report of Education on the Belt and Road (2018), the Belt and Road Initiative encourages more Chinese students to go to Thai universities. In 2016, 30,000 Chinese students chose marketing and Thai language courses. Taking Rangsit University as an example, it has established programs cooperation with nearly 30 countries 150 universities in which of them, about 25 universities of China have established cooperation with Rangsit University, accounting for 17%, ranking first, until 2020 (RSUIP.ORG, 2018). Among the Chinese cooperation universities, over 95% are universities located in the provinces of southern China, which are adjacent to Thailand such as Guangxi and Yunnan provinces. In 2013, Rangsit University and Yunnan University of Finance and Economics co-founded Bangkok Business School, which is the first-degree education institution founded by China in Thailand. In addition

to joint school running, sino-Thai cooperation is still carried out in the form of programs, including summer study tours, short-term exchanges, and long-term exchanges, among them language exchange programs are one of the most popular programs.

1.1.2 Study Abroad Program

Study abroad is widely defined as an academic experience that enables students to complete part of their degree program through educational activities abroad (Eduan, 2019). University internationalization research shows that many universities have adopted a two-pronged activity in the process of internationalization, including home-based internationalization and abroad-based internationalization (Joris, Otten, Nilsson, Teekens & Wächter, 2000). Maringe (2010) categorized the multiple methods into five groups, a) international curriculum reform programs; b) cooperative research and corporate programs; c) student and staff mobility programs; d) international student recruitment; d) joint programs such as dual-degrees, distance learning programs, and study abroad (long-term and short-term exchange program). Since the establishment of the post-World War I modern era, the third grade overseas has been the most popular way of study abroad, which is led by faculty, as well as has been a hallmark of study abroad (Hoffa, 2010). According to the Open Doors Report of study abroad participation by major from IIE, 2014, study abroad programs offer multiple creative curricula, language acquisition, and multi-cultures. In different countries, subject-specific courses from science to humanities are provided, enabling students to acquire new knowledge while immersed in the local community.

Policies around the world are encouraging students to study and plan in different countries to provide convenience and financial support for students; today students around the world can come together for such programs with welfare policies, such as:

a) Erasmus (abbreviation for European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) – A program of the European Commission that provides college students from more than 30 European countries the chances to study

at other European institutions with which their institutions have established cooperation programs, founded in 1987, over 2,000 universities participate in the program. Erasmus builds up more programs called Erasmus+ to offer a broader range of projects and to encourage participation from non-EU countries in 2014. (2018 Erasmus+ Program Guide V1)

b) Education Action Plan for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – A plan issued in 2017, and it reiterates the significance of education in achieving the goals of “people to people bonds” and explores tangible actions to promote an educational exchange, for example, cooperation to improve mutual-connectivity, cultivation, and training of human resources, setting up broader mechanisms of cooperation. Only taking the data of Chinese students outbound in 2017 as an example, 66100 Chinese students studied in 37 BRI countries, and the growth rate of Chinese students in BRI countries is 15.7% (A report of Education on the Belt and Road, from The British Chamber of Commerce in China).

1.1.3 Benefits of Study Abroad

Study abroad has a positive effect on the development of various skills in the 21st century, such as intercultural skills, language skills, communication competence, and which has created more career opportunities and has a long-term impact on career development and promotion. Among them, the significance of intercultural skills accounted for 76%, ranking first; the significance of language skills accounted for 48%, and the significance of communication skills accounted for 54%. That was from the 2017 report of the IIE, "Gaining an Employment Edge: The Impact of Study Abroad on 21st Century Skills & Career Prospects". Study abroad also plays a significant role in cultivating students for global citizenship (Kishino & Takahashi, 2019; Dolby, 2008; Berg & Schwander, 2019), which will further the education and benefit them in their career. The EU surveyed more than 56,000 participants in the Erasmus (plus) program and reported in 2014 report “European Commission, The Erasmus Impact Study, 2014.” that after graduating five years, the unemployment rate for Erasmus students was 23% lower than those who did not participate in the Erasmus program.

International education not only helps students with language acquisition and communication skills but also helps students to develop various perspectives and intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence is a commonly measured outcome of study abroad by researchers. Intercultural competence is often considered as a principal goal of all study abroad programs; it contains typically three areas: cognitive/knowledge, affective/attitudes, and behavior/skills (Meyer-Lee & Evans, 2007). Intercultural sensitivity is a kind of intercultural competence, as well as a positive affective ability (Chen and Starosta, 1997, 2000). Bennett, J. & Bennett, M. (2004) agree that intercultural sensitivity is the necessary ability to interactive with people with different cultural backgrounds in different environments effectively. Intercultural sensitivity has been found to correlate with sufficient communication competence and intercultural communication satisfaction (Foronda, 2008; Tuncel & Paker, 2018). Through the comparison of intercultural sensitivity before and after the study abroad program, researchers found that students' degree of intercultural sensitivity is higher than the degree before they participated (Edmunds, 2020; Jackson, 2011). Students who participate in the study abroad program are more intercultural sensitive than those who do not participate in the study abroad program (Demetry & Vaz, 2017; Anderson & Lawton, 2011).

Study abroad programs are generally believed to be beneficial for language learning (Dewey et al., 2014). Furthermore, the benefits enlarge cultural understanding (Allen 2010) and improve linguistic development. Language development benefits from a variety of assumptions that study abroad courses can provide students with an immersive environment, and learners can access rich second language input and output. The use of language occurs in a real, conversational, and immediate feedback environment, which is considered an effective way of acquiring. A large number of experiments conducted by researchers have proved that study abroad has a positive and significant impact on students' language acquisition, such as oral speaking, listening, language proficiency, reading skills, and local idioms (Di Silvio, Donovan & Malone, 2015; Tschirner, 2016; Watson & Wolfel, 2015). Study abroad has an impact on students' language learning, intercultural competence, subject knowledge, social growth, career

impact, academic development, and institutional loyalty, according to the classification of Meyer-Lee & Evans (2007). The research shows that study abroad has a positive influence on language learning. However, different students have a different cognition of study abroad with their perspectives and authentic experiences and emotions; Additionally, some research has noticed that some of the students have more individual and essential perceptions toward studying a language abroad. The study of Conroy (2018), investigates that Chinese students study the second language in a study abroad program in Australia. Moreover, it records much feedback about students' individual experiences, which provides a perspective to understand these students' learning emotions and experiences. Such as, the students share their understanding of food and entertainment behaviors and activities. Furthermore, the experience of language learning, mistakes about grammar and words, oral speed, pronunciation, and the feelings of communication with native speakers.

Research on the motivation for Chinese study abroad shows that language learning is one of the critical reasons (Cheng-Yi & Jehn-Yih, 2019). In China, although the number of Thai language majors and students studying Thai continues to increase, Thai language is still a non-international language for Chinese students. Research (Chen & Liang, 2013) show that Chinese researchers and teachers still consider that there are many improvements in Thai language teaching and learning, such as more appropriate textbook and curriculum design, more comprehensive testing methods, and more practical and comprehensive language skills. Chinese students are prone to problems with inappropriate spoken language and learning strategies in Thai language learning. Because of the lack of a real language communication environment, many Chinese students have “dumb Thai.” In the study of Ya (2010), she conducted a questionnaire on Thai language among 147 undergraduate students in a university. Among them, only 12% of the students thought Thai language was simple; more than 41% of students think Thai language is difficult for them. Students' answer for the question of which parts are more accessible and complicated in the process of Thai learning process, students agree with the reading Thai (22%), and Thai pronunciation (21%) are easy for them, in contrast, students consider that listening (25%) and vocabulary (18%) are difficult for them. Moreover, 89% of students expressed

willingness to Thai universities for short-term or long-term Thai language or related majors if economic conditions afford. It also further emphasizes why most universities that offer Thai language courses in China have cooperated with Thai universities in Thailand, and also proved the importance and effectiveness of Thai language exchange programs. However, there is little research to study the learning outcomes or attitudes of Chinese exchange students who took participants in a program in Thailand.

1.1.4 Importance of intercultural sensitivity and attitudes toward language learning

Chen and Starosta (1997) defined intercultural sensitivity as “an individual's ability to develop a positive affective towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences, thereby promote appropriate and effective behaviors in intercultural communication.” They considered “emotion” as the keyword. Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) pointed out that cross-cultural sensitivity is the reaction that individuals show when they face people with different cultural backgrounds. This ability of reaction is a prerequisite for purposeful communication. Therefore, when Chinese exchange students were in Thailand to participate in a Thai language exchange program, the more positive their intercultural sensitivity was, the more likely they were to help them communicate actively and effectively, which would help them improve their language learning. In the process of language learning, attitudes to Thai learning affected the outcomes of Thai exchange program learning. As Baker (1992) pointed out: “in the life of a language, attitudes to that language apparently be significant in language restoration, reservation, decay, or death.”. Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi & Alzwari (2012) agrees with Baker and reiterates that if a learner shows a negative attitude towards language learning, then the learner will not show interest and tendency to acquire the target language by showing willingness to communicate with others. Therefore, learners' attitudes should be incorporated into language learning, as this may affect their performance in acquiring the target language, which should be paid attention to by teachers and researchers.

1.1.5 Statement of the Study

The emphasis placed on the international competitiveness of students in international education developed in the environment of internationalization and globalization has encouraged researchers to pay attention to intercultural and language competence. While, when students study abroad, they had a lot of real experience and attitudes toward the study program, and it could be reflected in the degree of intercultural sensitivity and their ability to acquire the target language. Intercultural sensitivity and learner's learning attitude play a role in study abroad (language learning), but these two factors are studied separately to different objects or in different studies. Besides, few researchers pay attention to Chinese exchange students, especially the situation of Chinese exchange students in Southeast Asian universities. Therefore, this study specifically targets Chinese exchange students studying in Thailand, using quantitative and qualitative research methods to investigate the intercultural sensitivity and attitudes (toward Thai language learning) of Chinese exchange students when they participated in a Thai language exchange program in Thailand.

1.2 Research Objectives

1.2.1 To investigate the degrees of Chinese exchange students' intercultural sensitivity after they finished the exchange program

1.2.2 To investigate Chinese exchange students' attitudes toward Thai language learning after they finished the exchange program

1.3 Research Questions

1.3.1 What are the degrees of Chinese exchange students' intercultural sensitivity after they finished the exchange program?

1.3.2 What are Chinese exchange students' attitudes toward Thai language learning after they finished the exchange program?

1.4. Research Hypotheses

1.4.1 Chinese exchange students' degrees of intercultural sensitivity is high after they finished the exchange program.

1.4.2 Chinese exchange students have positive attitudes toward Thai language learning in Thailand after they finished the exchange program.

1.5. Definition of the Terms

1.5.1 Intercultural Sensitivity

In this study, it refers to Chinese exchange students' ability to develop positive emotions related to intercultural differences. Especially it refers to Thai cultures and cultural differences between Thai and China. It is measured by five factors, which are interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness (Chen and Starosta, 1997 & 2000).

1.5.2 Attitude

In this study, the attitude refers to Chinese exchange students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes toward Thai language learning, such as thoughts, feelings, and experience (Eagly and Chaiken, 2007).

1.5.3 Thai Language Learning

It refers to Chinese exchange students' informal (out of the classroom) and formal (in the classroom) learning of Thai language. It is related to informal and formal knowledge and skills, the experience of Thai language learning.

1.5.4 Thai Language Exchange Program

It refers to a cooperative program established by Rangsit University and universities of China to improve Chinese students to learn Thai language in Thailand. a Thai language exchange program in this study was conducted from August 2019 to June 2020.

1.5.5 Chinese Exchange Students

It refers to Chinese students who participated in a Thai language exchange program. The students are third-year undergraduate students, and they have studied Thai language for two years in previous universities in China.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study investigated the Chinese exchange students' degrees of intercultural sensitivity and attitudes toward Thai language learning. There are 70 Chinese exchange students engaged in the exchange program at Rangsit University from the academic year of August 2019 to April 2020.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

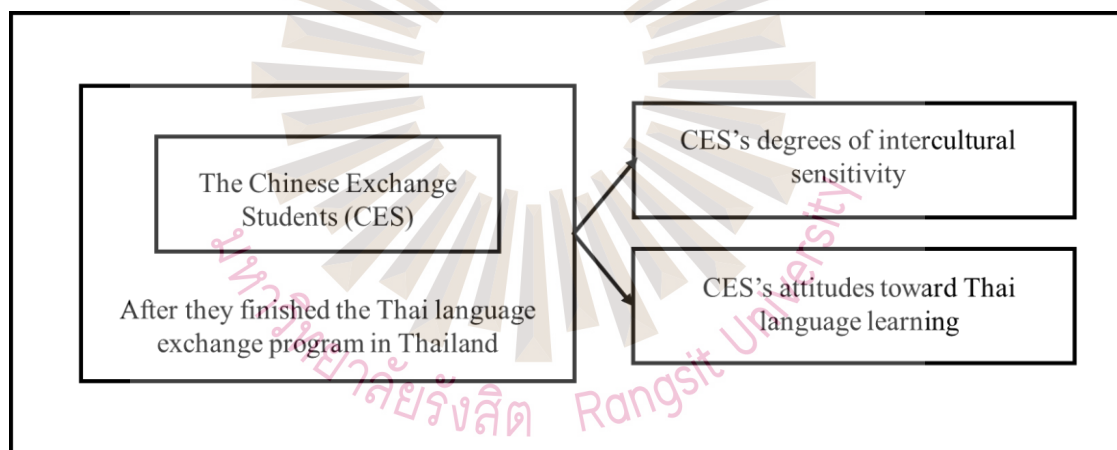


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework was based on the abroad environment providing the language learners (Chinese exchange students) with a target language learning environment (Thailand) where they created a living and studying with different cultural experiences. Thus, the study aims at investigating their intercultural sensitivity and attitudes toward Thai language learning which may be affected by the abroad environment and experience.

1.8 Significance of the Study

1.8.1 For Students

For students participating in the study, it provides an opportunity for them to think critically about their emotions and behaviors related to intercultural sensitivity and think about their attitudes toward Thai language learning.

For future Chinese exchange students, it may shed light on the critical and necessary of intercultural sensitivity and may make students beware of their attitudes toward Thai language learning, including experiences, emotions, and comments.

1.8.2 For Researchers

Given the rare research data on Chinese exchange students, this study may provide some research data related to Chinese students, which may provide some references for future researchers interested in this topic or problem.

1.8.3 For Administrators and Teachers

The findings may provide administrators and teachers of the exchange program with information about the intercultural sensitivity of Chinese exchange students and information about students' attitudes towards Thai language learning, and it can help teachers to strengthen the emphasis on students' intercultural sensitivity and learning attitudes. Meanwhile, the abroad exchange program as part of higher education for cultivating international students, the findings can pave the way to improve the management and design of the exchange program.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

1.9.1 The study was carried out only in a private university and for the only a small number of participants (not more than 63 students), therefore the findings may not be generalized into a large population of Chinese exchange students.

1.9.2 The study was carried out only for Chinese exchange students. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all foreigners who learn Thai language.

1.10 Summary

This chapter shows the backgrounds of the study, which contains global higher education, study abroad programs, benefits of studying abroad, as well as the importance of intercultural sensitivity and positive attitudes toward language learning. Then, it shows the statement of the study, due to the rare and awareness of related research. Besides, it shows that two research questions, which consist of Chinese exchange students' degree of intercultural sensitivity and their attitudes toward Thai language learning. Furthermore, it shows definitions of the main terms and conceptual framework, which is related to study abroad. Additionally, it shows the study significance for students, researchers, as well as administrators, and teachers of the exchange program. It also shows the limitations of the study, which are the diversity and size of participants.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part is the review of related literature as the background for a better understanding of the present study. It contains the following main parts: internationalization of higher education, study abroad, intercultural sensitivity and language learning, attitudes toward language learning, related learning theories, and research.

2.1 Globalization and Internationalization of Higher Education

Globalization has promoted the mobility of the global population, and technological advances have facilitated intercultural communication and intercultural interactions, thus promote intercultural connections across regions (Tamam, 2010). Especially with the development of communication technologies making the young generation feel no distance no matter where they are, as well as feel familiar with different cultures, and feel more open to study and live in different countries. With the deepening of economic globalization and regional integration, cooperation between geopolitical countries has also accelerated. For example, the ASEAN and China's "Belt and Road" regional cooperation development strategy (Tao, Dadao & Yi, 2016). Educational cooperation between geopolitical countries is also continually developing. For example, overseas education in China and Thailand, overseas school running, and academic links are also continuously developing more innovative cooperation models. The foundation of global education has also become a question of survival and cooperation between different cultures, countries, nationalities, races, races, genders, social classes, and language groups.

Altbach and Knight (2007) considered that globalization and internationalization have a relationship, but not the same conception. In the discussion background of higher education, globalization in the environment of economic and academic trends, while the internationalization includes the policies and practices conducted by educational

systems and institutions and even personal response to the global academic environment. Therefore, it can be inferred from their description of globalization and internationalization that globalization is a force, while the internationalization of higher education is an attitude or response to potential trends and opportunities.

Wan (2018) defined the internationalization of higher education as ‘the intentional expansion of the spatiality of post-secondary education through cross-border mobilities and connections among institutions, students, scholars, knowledge, programs, and delivery (systems and providers). Tye and Tye (1998) wrote in the book of Global education: a study of school changes that one of the aspects of global education involves is the cultivation of cultural understanding, including the skills of perspective-transforming that taking other positions to view things. Therefore, universities invest large amounts of money, efforts, and strategies into international campus setting, recruiting international staff and international programs for students, considering the internationalization as a common goal to help students develop the international competence and competitive for the global and international marketplace in the future. Leask (2008) also agree that internationalization is a positive force essential for developing students’ intercultural competence. No coincidence, teachers, educators, and academics, they all strive to prepare students to become global citizens and equip them with a better degree of intercultural competence (Eisenchlas & Trevaskes, 2007), where they can survive within globalization and an international world (Bourn, 2009).

The development of globalization has promoted the internationalization of higher education, and studying abroad has become one of the basic measures for the internationalization of higher education. Meanwhile, leaders in international education get a clear understanding of the transformative functions of study abroad programs in developing students. Dwyer (2004) has put forward up the goals of study abroad as follows: development on academic, career, and intercultural, as well as personal and social growth. These have become the competencies necessary for students' study and professional life in a global and internationalized world. (Altan, 2018). The multiple advantages of studying abroad have accelerated the internationalization of higher education while attracting more and more students to choose to study abroad.

2.2 Study Abroad

Studying abroad is not only an academic training but also a transformative learning opportunity. In the period of studying abroad programs, students learn new knowledge both inside and outside the classroom. Students face with a significant range of challenges in terms of language and cultural diversity while abroad, living and learning, along with people in other cultures (Bolen, 2007). There are so many aspects that could influence the educational programs and abroad environments. Such as language acquisition, intercultural competence, discipline-specific knowledge, and research skills. Although the learning outcomes of overseas study or exchange programs may vary due to individual factors, such as individual learning motivation, learning habits, and methods, learning time and energy, individual intelligence and personality, personal family background, and in the growing environment, these factors will produce distinct individual differences in the performance of the offshore learning or exchange projects under the same conditions (Kinginger, 2009, 2011; Taguchi, 2016; Jackson, 2018).

2.2.1 Intercultural Competence Benefits of Studying Abroad

Knowledge about cultural differences, compassion for other cultures, the ability to have the competence of interacting with others, and competency of a foreign language is becoming increasingly important, studying abroad is a way for students to develop or enhance empathy for other cultures and favorable attitudes towards other people. (Lambert, 1994). Deardorff (2006, 2011) pointed out that intercultural adaptability and intercultural sensitivity as crucial parts of intercultural competence have become prominent universities' responsibility, and it is vital to achieving success for students in the global competitive environment. Facing multicultural growth, individuals need to cultivate intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence to intercultural understanding and communication. Such competence help them to have an understanding of their own culture, meanwhile to develop a sense of appreciation for other people with different cultural backgrounds, interests, and perspectives. In plenty of research, researchers have also found that intercultural sensitivity and

effective communication and satisfaction (Tuncel & Paker, 2018), mindfulness and empathy (Menardo, 2017), ethnocentrism (Tamam & Abdullah, 2012), global citizenship (Mellizo, 2018), social satisfaction is related (Sizoo, Plank, Iskat & Serrie, 2005) and intercultural networks (Olson & Kroger, 2001). These findings emphasize the importance of intercultural sensitivity and further attract the attention of researchers to promote a theoretical and practical understanding of intercultural sensitivity construction.

Living and learning alongside people in other cultures, students encounter a significant range of attitudes regarding multicultural diversity while abroad, promoting their intercultural competencies, such as cultural self-awareness, effective intercultural communication, and intercultural sensitivity. The study of Nuske (2017) uses a vertical hybrid approach that includes interviews, narrative essay writing, and poetry writing tasks to investigate how Americans' perceptions of self and language learning have evolved among Americans who study Japanese in Japan and Japanese who study English in the United States. The results show that participants' understanding of different experiences changes with changes in trait dynamics, and participants see different experiences as an essential life transition into adulthood. Some people have essential meanings from the moment they can use the target language in real situations outside the classroom, while others abandon language learning and set other goals for study abroad. Through a comparative study of 264 undergraduates (study abroad group and non-study abroad group) from four universities in Colombia, the impact of study abroad on their level of intercultural competence analyzed. Ramirez (2016) found that the average level of improvement in the intercultural competence of overseas students was 0.511 standard deviations from the average level of non-expatriate students. In research of Maloney & Asbury (2018), the research utilized the Drop-off strategy to help international students understand and improve their intercultural competence. Such a strategy to enhance cross-cultural capabilities is more convenient to carry out in the environment of real cultural differences, and cannot improve through the study of book text. Research of Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004), the results from the data collection show that it gives support for the hypothesis that study abroad has a positive influence on the development of intercultural sensitivity for U.S. university students.

The similar results from the research of Langley and Breese (2005) showed that most of the students' attitudes toward other cultures are becoming less biased, as well as less stereotypical attitudes toward people of other cultures. At the same time, they view and appreciate other cultures with critical thinking and becoming more desirable to learn about different cultures. The research from Walliams (2005) also supports the positive results that the students who have experience of studying abroad show more significant skills in intercultural communication than these students who haven't abroad experience; and students who studied abroad have a higher degree of intercultural communication skills at the beginning and at the end of the semester than those students who did not study abroad. The results show that students are exposed to different cultures, which is a better predictor of intercultural communication skills than the location in pre- and posttest scores of students.

2.2.2 Language Benefits of Studying Abroad

The numerous findings of study programs, including exchange programs, show that study abroad has a positive effect on students' language learning, whether it is learning interest, motivation, self-confidence, or listening, speaking, reading, and writing of knowledge, skills, and ability to perform. The data derived from an empirical study that involved 81 German students who participated in an ERASMUS program were studying in the British for less than one academic year. The students' views (the clear majority of students in both groups (77.5 % in Group 1; 85.4 % in Group 2) highlight the potential of international student interactions as a viable source of second language acquisition, second language self-motivation, and intercultural learning. "The most thing is that the learners interacted with other international students, thus developing their second language fluency by pushing themselves to use the language in an environment. Other than fluency improvement, students also mentioned the contribution of LF interaction to building their vocabularies: everyone has their own active vocabulary. By talking to international students, I picked up new words that I like but have not used actively yet." (Hessel, 2019).

In the study of Hernández (2016), it surveyed that 20 undergraduate participants who are native speakers of English and took participant in a Spain program in Madrid for one month, additionally, none of them had the experience of study abroad before. The outcomes of the survey concluded that participants' vocal performance is improved, the pre- and post-program SOPI (a tape-mediated test of oral proficiency) scores show that 15 of the 20 participants made a SOPI gain of at least +1 on the ACTFL scale during their time in Madrid. Six students made a gain of +2, and another nine students made a gain of +1. The study of Leonard & Shea (2017) shows that participants were 39 native English speakers (United States (33), Canada (4), and Australia (2)) acquiring Spanish in Argentina. Results show that participants experienced significant gains across complexity, fluency, and accuracies, such as understanding and speaking of native speakers under pressure in real communicative contexts, knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, and speed and proficiency in responding dialogue. Using a qualitative, phenomenological research approach, Yang (2019) conducted a separate, semi-structured interview with five Chinese students enrolled in American undergraduate or graduate programs. Identify the positive impact of study abroad on students from their perspective. Participants stated in the report there had significant transformations in their views and behaviors about themselves, others, and the world, which led to more open and flexible attitudes as well as acknowledging the limitations of their environment.

2.2.3 Exchange students' Attitudes for Studying Abroad

Long before the current researchers pay attention to the significance of the individual perspectives and perceptions of students in exchange programs and study abroad programs, previous researchers have proposed in their research that people should pay attention to the perspective and perception of individual students. Researching learners' views on themselves and overseas learning, whether objective or not, can inspire researchers, teaching staff, and project managers, as well as students' learning and language use behaviors, to help them improve (Pellegrino, 1998). Laubscher (1993) said, "Although the students might have difficulty clearly saying what happened to them, they believe that things have changed them. Even though there are such difficulties, students' perspectives about the experience will help educators gain

valuable insights into study the influences of education abroad program”. Miller and Ginsberg (1995) said: “...during study abroad, in particular, it is the learner’s perspectives that matter, for they seize the learning opportunities and employ the learning strategies, and their views are authentic and original based on experience.”.

After studying for a semester in Denmark, 60 American college students learned and developed their knowledge and understanding of themselves and others in various cultures and cultures based on the collection and summary of their views on participation and learning. Many students report that they have acquired knowledge about diversity and consider issues from the perspective of local and global communities. Whether it is different behaviors when taking public transportation, or finding different ways of getting along with homestays; or education practices and policies for the new environment, and national politics and policies, students have received unique new Feelings and opinions (Vandermaas-Peeler, Duncan-Bendix & Biehl, 2018). Lai (2018) conducted a random survey of Hong Kong students (2013-2014) participating in the HKU Worldwide Exchange Program (A program encouraging Hong Kong university students to study abroad for a certain period in the whole world universities), taking HKU exchange students in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia as representative cases. Hong Kong exchange students who participated in these exchange programs expressed their changes and improved during and after the exchange programs. Such as got improvement of communication skills, “Going abroad to build an international reputation, enhance self-confidence, and enhances the ability to communicate: share their ideas and thoughts about their own cultures, meanwhile, they understand the ideology of work and life in Hong Kong and China, and aspirations to achieve innovative goals.”.

Furthermore, embraced cultural diversity, got used to respect different cultures and people with different cultural backgrounds, “I got along well with people of different cultures, races, and backgrounds. I show respect and sincerity to others, while others also had genuine interests in my own culture.”. Besides, the students got more improvement in abilities and skills, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, independence in life.

2.2.4 Thai language exchange program at Rangsit University

For the Chinese students who participated in the Thai language exchange program, this opportunity of learning and living in Thailand provides them with an authentic native environment of using Thai language with native Thais and an environment of immersing into Thai cultures and Thai life. For example, Kunming University of Science and Technology has cooperated with an Thai language exchange program for Chinese students with Rangsit University. The exchange program is expected to cultivate students with an international perspective, as well as intercultural communication competence and applied skills. Chinese universities expect that in terms of teaching objectives, the courses of exchange program offered by Rangsit University will be consistent with those provided by a Chinese university so that students' language knowledge and skills can be connected and continuously improved (Kunming University of Science and Technology, 2020). The Chinese students participating in the Thai language exchange program of Rangsit University come from two universities and two majors respectively. Rangsit offers different Thai language courses for Chinese students based on their original majors. While the exchange program is designed to improve students' Thai language skills, enhance their pragmatic Thai language application, and learn better for Thai cultures. One of the Chinese student groups is students studying business. The Thai language courses provided by Rangsit university focus on the teaching of business Thai, including macroeconomics, economic law, Thai organization, and management art, business writing and reading, and business conversation and negotiation. The other class is for students from the Thai language major, for them Rangsit university focus on the learning of the Thai language itself and Thai cultures, including Thai language reading and writing, Thai language listening and speaking, Thai language comprehension, Thai translation to Chinese, Thai traditional life cultures, Thai grammar, and foreign languages in Thai. All of the courses involve Thai language learning and Thai cultures learning, moreover Rangsit university organized kinds of activities at the campus for students to learn broad Thai cultures, such as Loy Krathong Festival, agricultural products fair, Thai concert and stage show, campus traditional market, rsuegg nival, interesting sports competition, Songkran festival, Halloween party, King ceremony, Buddhist chanting.

2.3 Intercultural Sensitivity and Language Learning

Sinagatullin (2019) indicates that multiculturalism and intercultural competence are concepts put forward in the environment of globalization and internationalization. It is challenging to discuss multiculturalism without considering the global and international environment. Global education and international education are bound to merge with multiculturalism, and intercultural competence helps individuals from one culture Interaction and penetration into another culture.

Deardorff (2011) states that many different terms describe the concept of intercultural competence, such as “multiculturalism, intercultural adaptation, intercultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence, international communication, intercultural communication, global capabilities, intercultural awareness, and global citizenship.” Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman (2003) define intercultural competence as "the ability to think and take action in interculturally appropriate ways." The goal of intercultural competence is “effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations” (Deardorff, 2011). Intercultural competence in the way of “avoiding misunderstanding and creating opportunities to interact appropriately with people from different cultures” (Fabregas Janeiro, 2009). Harrison & Peacock (2009) emphasize that the development of intercultural competence not only comes from interactions with people of other cultural backgrounds but also through awareness, appreciation, and sensitivity to intercultural issues. Therefore, intercultural sensitivity is the first and essential step to achieving this intercultural goal (Wilkey, 2013).

2.3.1 Intercultural Sensitivity

The concept of intercultural sensitivity has been studied within the framework of intercultural competence and effectiveness and intercultural adaptation as early as the 1950s (Chen and Starosta, 1997, 2000). Different scholars hold different theoretical perspectives. Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) thinking intercultural sensitivity from the perspective of individualism and collectivism and considering that intercultural sensitivity includes three elements: the understanding of cultural behaviors, open-

mindedness to cultural differences, and the behavioral flexibility in the host culture. They declare that “to play a role in other cultures, people must be interested in other people's cultures, be sensitive enough to aware cultural differences and also be willing to alter their behavior show respect for people of other cultures. A reasonable term that summarizes these individual qualities is intercultural sensitivity.”. Bennett (1986) considers that intercultural sensitivity is related to the ability of the interactants, who can not only effectively transform his abilities, but also the cognition and behavior from the denial stage to the integration stage, in the process of intercultural communication, this transforming process makes them emerge empathic ability to accept and adapt cultural differences. To support the concept, Bennett (1993) proposes intercultural sensitivity as a development process that includes six stages: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration. Nevertheless, Chen and Starosta (2000) argue that Bennett's concept of intercultural sensitivity seems to be similar to the concept of intercultural communicative competence. Moreover, describing it as “a sensitivity towards the importance of cultural differences and towards the people's opinions in other cultures.”. (Chen & Starosta, 2000). Altshuler, Sussman & Kachur (2003) consider that intercultural sensitivity is the ability to “discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences.” Interest in and being able (intercultural sensitivity) to recognize cultural differences is a prerequisite for changing behavior (intercultural competence). Hammer et al. (2003) note that “higher intercultural sensitivity is associated with more significant potential for exercising intercultural competence. It means that intercultural sensitivity is a precursor to intercultural competence. Those with higher degrees of intercultural sensitivity are more likely to have higher levels of intercultural competence and are better able to deal with these intercultural differences (Tamam, 2010).

Chen and Starosta (1997, 2000) conceptualized intercultural sensitivity to make up for the shortcomings or confusion of the concept of intercultural sensitivity, and they state that intercultural sensitivity includes six components: self-esteem, self-monitoring, open-mindedness, empathy, interaction, involvement, and suspending judgment. And it is measured by the intercultural sensitivity scale, which has five factors: interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness. They consider that intercultural

sensitivity belonging to the affective dimension, which is one of intercultural communication competence's three aspects. Intercultural sensitivity is conceptualized as an individual's ability to create positive affective attitudes towards cultural differences, including understanding, respect, toleration, and appreciation. It promotes appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication. Moreover, they argued that intercultural communication sensitivity is a prerequisite for intercultural communication competence, which means people with higher intercultural sensitivity will become more confident global citizens as their understanding of cultural differences becomes more sophisticated. While they accordingly develop a theoretical model and Intercultural Sensitivity Scale as an instrument for measuring the sensitivity of intercultural communication sensitivity.

2.3.2 Intercultural and Language Learning

Life and interaction shape human thoughts and language; language is like a channel that helps people to carry their thoughts; no one could deny that there is thinking without language (Kecskes, 2014). It believed that the speech community has common in understanding the world not only through a common language but also through thinking, behavior, and other ways, in other words, their "culture." Since the 1990s, foreign language education in North America and Europe has implemented two basic concepts: First, the speakers of the language simultaneously are people who belong to multiple cultures, and the second is that language and culture are inseparable in real life, so they should more closely link to informal teaching (Ennis, 2015). Moreover, more researchers also believe that the goal of language teaching has changed from the development of language knowledge and awareness to the development of communicative competence. Therefore, cultural tolerance should also change from the development of cultural knowledge and awareness to the development of intercultural competence (Benett, J., Bennett, M. & Allen, 2003; Neuner and Byram, 2003; Hu & Byram, 2009). Kramsch (2004) also agreed with that language in foreign language learning is considered to be inseparable from culture.

Teichler (2004) agrees that intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivity have not only become part of the university curriculum but have also included in the assessment of learning outcomes by higher education institutions. Ahamer (2011)

believes that people with different cultural backgrounds may have differences in traditions, beliefs, and opinions on the same issue. Intercultural competence has a significant effect on intercultural issues, which makes it essential to develop students' intercultural competence (Hammer et al., 2003). Students should learn not only linguistic and cultural contents (language and culture) but also be aware of the relationship between language and culture. Intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence are required for a language learner to achieve intercultural understanding and communication, thus help learners to be competent intercultural communicators under the context of diverse linguistic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, and that is considered an essential goal of language learning (Dombi, 2016; Yueqin, 2013).

Stafford, Bowman, Ewing, Hanna & Lopez-De Fede (1997) indicate that cultural sensitivity means being aware of cultural differences and similarities. Sensitivity plays a significant role in individual values, learning, and behavior. Cultural sensitivity begins with the recognition of differences between cultures, and these variations usually reflect in the ways of communication and connection between groups. An individual with cultural sensitivity not only has the ability to aware of various cultures but also to interact effectively with people of distinct cultural backgrounds. That' because they view all human beings as unique individuals and realize that different individual experiences, beliefs, values, and language affect personal perceptions.

2.4 Attitudes towards Language Learning

2.4.1 Attitude towards Language Learning

Eagly and Chaiken (2007) believe that attitude is consists of cognitional, affective, and behavioral attitudes. Attitudes consist of beliefs, feelings about phenomena, as well as dispositions to act in a certain way regarding the phenomenon. Cognitive attitude refers to the knowledge, thoughts, or belief of the attitude object, that is, language learners about the knowledge that they receive, and understand the process of language learning. Affective attitude indicates the person's feelings or emotions to the objects. "Attitudes express the emotions; inner feelings and emotions

of foreign language learners influence their perceptions and their attitudes towards the language” (Choy & Troudi, 2006). Behavioral attitudes represent the intention or tendency to take a specific action on an attitude object. Successful language learning can enhance the identity of the target language group, as well as adopt characterize and behavior of the member of the target language community. Kara (2009) considered that “Positive attitudes lead to the performs of positive behaviors on studying, thus the participants concentrated more on courses and making efforts on learning. Such students are more eager to solve problems, to gain information and practical skills for daily life, and to engage themselves emotionally.”

The tripartite components establish a loop of attitude formation, reaction, or performance that knowledge, emotion, and experience to generate attitudes, then it expresses beliefs, feelings, and behaviors (Huskinson & Haddock, 2004). For the attitudes toward language learning, Artamonova (2017) considers that positive language attitudes can encourage people to take practical actions on the language, and the experience generated from such actions can strengthen attitudes towards the languages.

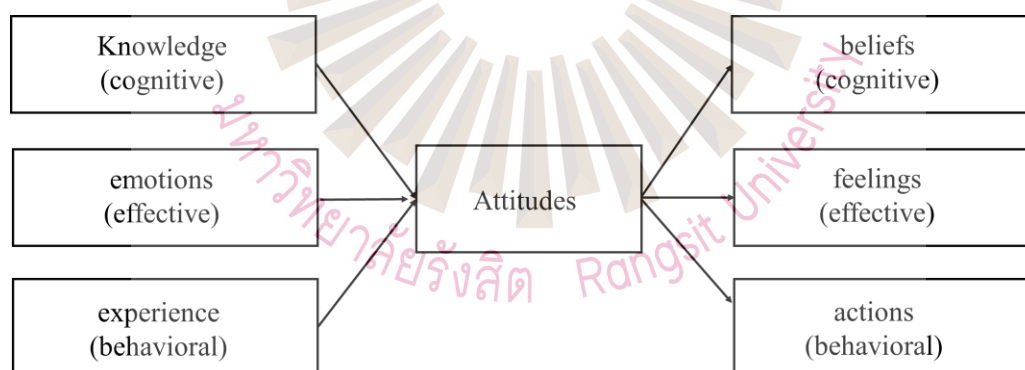


Figure 2.1 Attitude Structure in Attitude Formation and Response

Source: Based on Huskinson & Haddock, 2004

Garrett (2010) believes that language attitudes are learned, influenced by the social environment, and influenced by the beliefs, emotions, and behavior from community memberships, such as parents, friends and teachers, classmates. Similarly, fresh experiences and environments also affect language learning attitudes. For example, target language learning with native speakers can increase learners' positive

attitudes towards language learning. Artamonova (2017) believes that attitudes towards language learning and the language learned are essential factors that influence learners' behaviors related to the language and learning process. Research indicates that language learning is also challenging to separate from the accompanying culture of the language, and the study of language attitudes must also include cultural considerations related to the language (Belli, 2018).

2.4.2 Factors of Influencing Language Learning

One of the main goals of language learners studying abroad is to immerse themselves in the target culture and language to develop communicative competence, which helps learners “acquire the abilities necessary to communicate appropriately with people from a variety of cultures” (Heinzmann, Künzle, Schallhart & Müller, 2015). Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell (1995) proposed a framework (Figure 2.2): discourse competence, strategic competence, linguistic competence, social-cultural competence, and actional competence influence each other. Besides, the actional competence is related to pragmatics ability; it is involved in linguistic and sociocultural knowledge, interaction competencies of using the knowledge flexibly.

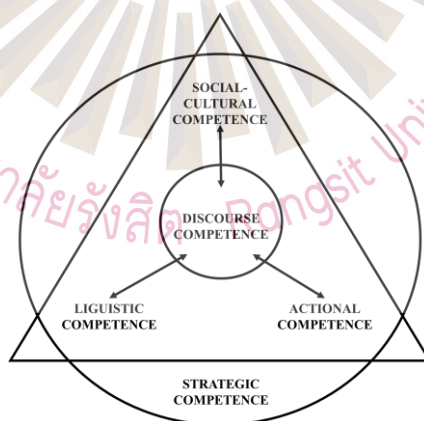


Figure 2.2 Schematic Representation of Communicative Competence.

Source: Based on Celce-Murcia et al., 1995

Although pragmatic competence will be acquired during study abroad, research states that many factors constrain learners to gain. Magnan & Lafford (2013) states that studying abroad provides learners with opportunities to interact with native speakers, and the quality interaction between learners and native speakers is the key to acquire the target

language successfully. That means learner has a positive learning attitude and participates in social interaction, that makes them better obtain significant linguistic outcomes (Isabelli-García, 2010; Kinginger, 2008). A positive interactive attitude is a manifestation of the willingness to communicate, and openness is the basis of the willingness to communicate, meaning learners' receptive of interaction with people who have cultural differences. According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2009), openness can be performed through intercultural knowledge and competence value. If a language learner shows a more positive intercultural attitude towards the host country's culture, the more openness of the learner is. The easier it is for learners to interact with the natives, the more their willingness and tolerance for communication are. More researchers (Baker-Smemoe, Cundick, Evans, Henrichsen, and Dewey, 2012) found that learners' willingness to communicate is related to anxiety, motivation, and apprehension during the interaction.

Meanwhile, it is considered that the personality of learners, the topics discussed, and the spoken ability of expression and understanding all contribute to the communication intentions. However, in unfamiliar environments, learners face issues of cultural differences, pragmatic rules, or sensitive topics (political topics, ethnic issues) that may affect language development. Collentine and Freed (2004) concluded that the learner's proficiency level before participating in the abroad program affects the learner's pragmatic competence and communicative ability. Moreover, the learner's success depends on the individual and social factors that shape the interaction, but the learner's differences are not only reflected in learning attitudes, but also gender, ethnicity, and other aspects (Isabelli-García & Isabelli, 2020). To study the development of learners in a study abroad environment, these above factors should be considered to recognize the versatility and complexity of the abroad learning environment.

2.4.3 Southern Chinese Students Prefer to Learn Thai Language

Language ability is an acquired ability to have a significant influence on life and work. Therefore, it is regarded as an essential indicator of human capital. More scholars have proposed the concept of language capital under the framework of human capital theory, and the research on language ability and wage level proves the theory's assertion.

For example, taking the Chinese labor market as an example, the research (Cui, Pan & Ye, 2018; Dovi, 2019) has proved that the ‘employment premium’ for language proficiency exists for younger people; and the research (Imai, Stacey & Warman, 2019; Zorlu & Hartog, 2018) shows that for immigrants, mastering the language of the immigrant country has a positive influence on jobs. Considering these theories, young students pay more attention to language ability, which will benefit their jobs in the future. In China, except English, as well as the other foreign language such as Japanese, Russian, French, Korean, German, Spanish, is the top popular foreign language, which is more popular than Thai language for the national students. According to the 2015-2018 Statistics of the National Enrollment Program for Non-international Language Majors. The reasons caused the differences are multiple; for Thai language, the geographical factor is still the most attractive and convenient for Chinese students. That is because that, 20 of 25 universities or colleges (80%) which provide Thai language programs for undergraduate students are located in adjacent provinces with Thailand, such as Yunnan and Guangxi province.

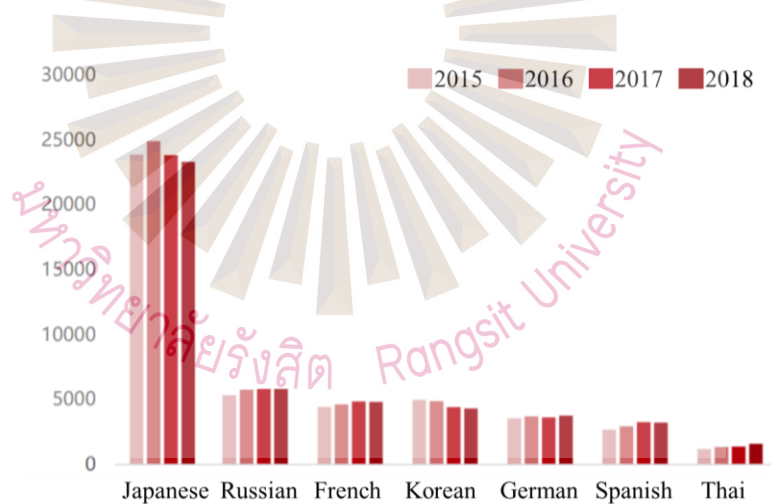


Figure 2.3 2015-2018 National Enrollment Program for Non-international Language Majors (population)

Source: Based on Duoqing capital, 2019

Taking Yunnan Province as an example, it is with its geographical proximity, popularity, literary integration, and commercial advantages that have continuously promoted the development of education in Southeast Asian countries in the field of education. The geo-economic promotes the geopolitical cooperation of education,

especially in the development of human resources and the development and application of science and technology to create a win-win situation, and effectively promote the development of geo-education. In Yunnan, students studying Thai, Burmese, and Lao language account for a high proportion. The situation is similar to the preference that students in the provinces of Northeast China tend to learn Russian. The neighboring geography has a significant impact on the development of educational cooperation, especially on language learning preferences.

Li sheng (2018), in her study, made a detailed survey on the learning willingness and motivation of secondary school students for Southeast Asian languages. The data came from 23 schools in Yunnan, including vocational schools. A total of 1968 students participated in the survey, and 116 people participated in the interview. Through data analysis, students are most interested in Thai in Thai, Burmese, Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian. Thai language is the foreign language students are most willing to learn, and students' interest in Thai is even more than the interest in learning English. Through interviews, students believe that learning a language in a neighboring country is more useful than learning English for their future life; Studying at these neighboring universities or working in these countries is more convenient and economical than going to English-speaking countries. Possibility, because studying in Southeast Asia is more economical, so choosing to learn these international languages has become very practical for them, unlike English, which has almost no use in everyday life. Reasons for being more willing to learn Thai include the influence of cultural propaganda, such as TV shows, movies, and music, lifestyle. Especially the bilateral trade and border tourism that is normal in daily life, and the encouragement and promotion of "non-common language has advantages" by local education policies. The preference for Thai language also reflects the development and education level of Thailand's economy. It is recognized in Yunnan and other places. It explains why the number of international students and exchange students in Yunnan and Thailand has increased year by year, and Chinese students are willing to be more willing, as well as learning Thai and considering living and working in Thailand.

According to Figure 2.1, learners will transform knowledge, emotions, and experiences into beliefs, feelings, and behaviors to express their attitudes towards a language. This means that the factors that affect learners' knowledge, emotions, and experience will also affect learners' language attitudes, as stated by Magnan & Lafford (2013) that learners' discourse competence is accomplished through language linguistic competence, social-cultural competence, and actional competence. The language application and emotional attitudes toward language also affect the learners' choice of learning the language, such as the Yunnan and Guangxi provinces located in southern China, the application requirements of Thai language far exceeds that of northern China. It promotes local governments and local universities to encourage students to learn Thai. Meanwhile, local students prefer Thai language to other languages due to the future employment markets and opportunities for working in Thailand.

2.5 Related Learning Theories

2.5.1 Input Hypothesis

Input is an essential component of all theories of language acquisition, including the interactionist approach (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Krashen (1981) established the Monitor Model theory containing five hypotheses for the second language acquisition. The five hypotheses are the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, the Natural Order hypothesis, the Monitor hypothesis, the Input hypothesis, and the Affective Filter hypothesis. "The Input Hypothesis supposes that learners acquire language by understanding information. More precisely, comprehensible input is the essential context ingredient - specified internal language acquisition mechanism also makes contributions to language acquisition." (Krashen, 1989).

In a simple way to say, input means that learners are exposed to the language in environments. Of course, the form of inputting language has several ways, such as reading or listening to the language. Moreover, for students, the conventional way is instructed by their teachers. Meanwhile, Krashen suggested that language acquisition

driven by comprehensible input, which refers to what students are receiving, should be able to be understood. If the contents of inputting are not understood, then it will not be acquired or remembered by the learners. Besides understanding the meaning of inputting, the degree of difficulty should also be concerned. “when communication is successful when the input is understood, and there is enough of it, $i+1$ will provide automatically” (Payne, 2011). It means that the current level of learners with a comfortable feeling, only the next level will make learners feel appropriate pressure and motivation to reach by learning new knowledge. To acquisition the language because if the degree of difficulty is too higher than a current degree, learners will lose confidence and give up. If the degree is lower or equal with the current degree, learners will not learn new things quickly.

2.5.2 Interaction Theory

The interaction hypothesis was promoted by Long (1981) then revised in 1996 (Long, 1996), in his paper the role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. The hypothesis stresses the development of language proficiency through face-to-face interaction and communication. In L.S Vygotsky's theory about the notion of the zone of proximal development, he explained how interaction serves as the bedrock of acquisition. Vygotsky claimed that learners learn through interpersonal activities, such as buy things from adults, play with adults, whereby they receive information that would be beyond their knowledge and abilities if children were acting alone. Subsequently, children may learn new things and new concepts with the assistance of others if the new knowledge is too difficult for them or without the assistance of others if the new knowledge that they can guess or try to understand with previous information.

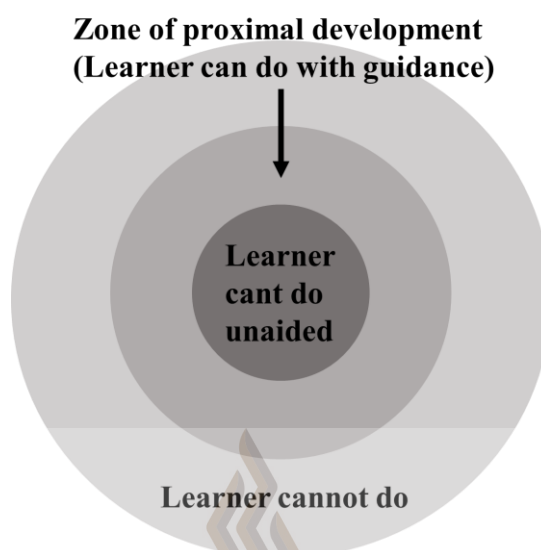


Figure 2.4 Zone of Proximal Development

Source: Based on Hedegaard, 2005

Research has found that interaction is beneficial for second language acquisition. Through the investigation of the core of interaction, namely input, negotiation, and output of meaning, as well as the characteristics of interlocutors, the study of Loewen and Sato (2018) found that interaction can effectively promote the development of the second language. An empirical study that involved 81 German students who took part in an ERASMUS program, after they studied in the UK for one academic year, the research found that language interactions happened among international student second language acquisition, improving students' acquisition and self-motivation of the second language, and intercultural learning (Hessel, 2019).

2.5.3 Output Hypothesis

Krashen argues that “speaking is the result of the acquisition, not its cause.” In contrast, Swain and Lapkin (1998) claim that comprehensible output also plays a significant role in the learning of the second language, the comprehensible output hypothesis assumes that learning happens when learners find differences between their linguistic knowledge and the target second language. Swain explains that noticing the gaps as one of two consciousness-raising functions helps learners to learn language

from their output. In the using another language process of trying to speak or write, learners can realize that they lack some knowledge, such as grammar knowledge or idioms, of features that are important for what they want to say, only learners notice the problems that what they do not know will the learners make efforts to learn. Another output function is the hypothesis-testing function, by which learners will know whether it leads to successful communication, or it leads to negative feedback when they try out a rule to test the expression of language.

According to the study of Jernigan (2012), it examined the effectiveness of output-focused for the development of second language pragmatic intercultural development among adult (English as a second language) learners in an intensive English program setting, and the result indicates that based-output instructional treatment has a significant effect on learners' performance. Research from Namaziandost, Dehkordi & Shafiee (2019), investigates the comparative influencing of input-based and output-based activities on vocabulary knowledge, and the results reveal that all of activities of input-based and output-based improve learners' productive vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, the results show similar levels of effects for input-based and output-based activities on vocabulary acquisition.

2.5.4 Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory, an approach to explain second language acquisition in the social environment, is paid more and more attention since the 1990s. The words "society" and "culture" are combined with the word "sociocultural." The members of society create a culture through the behaviors and products of creation. Sociocultural theories describe the development of human cognition as involved in the engagement of social activities, as in the process an individual has to interact with other people, objects, and events. Hence, human cognitive development is connected with social, cultural, and historical environments (Johnson, 2009). Sociocultural theories were first systematized and applied by Vygotsky in the 1920s and 1930s. Vygotsky discussed the relationship between sociocultural theory and cognitive development and claimed that the mind is distributed socially (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

Mental habits and functioning are consequences of our interaction and communication with others. Furthermore, the environment, context, and history also affected people's behaviors (Mantero, 2002). Lave and Wenger (1991) claim that "learning, thinking, and knowing are related among people participated in activity in a social and cultural world.". Mohammadi & Izadpanah (2019) surveyed 360 students to examine the relationship of students' function sociocultural identity and EFL learning proficiency, and the results indicated that there was a significant negative relationship between students' socio-cultural identity and their EFL learning. In another way, sociocultural plays an important role in second language learning.

Input and output theory emphasize the accumulation and application in the process of language learning. One of the most significant advantages of language learning in the target language country is that learners can fully involve in language input and output through communication. The interaction theory further puts forward the importance of moderate language difficulty and language learning environment. The socio-cultural theory emphasizes the important influence and function of culture on language learning. Learning and understanding the culture of the target language country help learners to learn and acquire the target language.

2.6 Related Research

In the study of Çiloglan & Bardakçı (2019), they investigate the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and language achievement of EFL students (English as a foreign language) in Turkey, using the "Intercultural Sensitivity Scale" developed by Chen and Starosta. The finding found that there is a weak positive correlation between students' intercultural sensitivity and English language achievement in Turkey. However, there is an essential positive correlation between intercultural sensitivity and language proficiency levels, and the researchers hold the agreement from their findings that participants' attitudes towards English are positively influenced by intercultural sensitivity.

In the study of Edmunds (2020), the difference of intercultural sensitivity between students who participated in a study abroad program and who did not was measured and compared by mixed approaches and, collecting the individuals' perception of their intercultural sensitivity and recollections of intercultural experiences. The findings show that the level of intercultural sensitivity of students who participated in a study abroad program is higher than those students who did not participate in a study abroad program. From students' comments, the study found that students agreed that the language barrier is an obstacle in communicating with native speakers. However, students show a positive about study abroad programs.

In the study of Su (2018), it assesses Taiwanese college students' intercultural sensitivity using the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale of Chen and Statosta, and the attitudes towards English and native English speakers. Furthermore, the results found that students have positive emotions for intercultural engagement and high interest in learning English, but have less confidence and moderate attitudes and enjoyment in intercultural communications and interactions with native English speakers.

In the study of Demircioglu & Cakir (2016), they investigate two group students who are divided into IBDP students and Non-IBDP students through whether they participate in an International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP). Meanwhile, the group of IBDP students studying in different countries, the UK, Turkey, Spain, and Mexico. They use the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale created by Chen and Statosta to measure students' intercultural sensitivity scores, and the findings show that there are differences between two groups on intercultural sensitivity scores and differences in gender, intercultural sensitivity score of female students is higher than male students. All the IBDP students' intercultural sensitivity is high; the distribution means the score is 96.53, the maximum score is 100. The research concludes that international programs help students increase their understanding of language and culture by creating learning communities.

In the study of Tuncel and Paker (2018), they investigate the exchange students who enrolled in the Erasmus program in Turkey. The students divided into two groups

and study two programs, intercultural communication and sociolinguistics, the courses including language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing), and culture (literature, history, and Turkish culture). The study uses the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale” developed by Chen and Starosta, to measure students’ intercultural sensitivity. The findings show that score of students’ intercultural sensitivity got significant improvement after the program than before participants, and the score of the intercultural communication group is higher than the group of sociolinguistics. From the students’ interviews, the students share more details about their attitudes toward intercultural experiences. Such as, they think the real cultures of they are surrounded by are different from the cultures they learn from the internet. They are getting more tolerant of the differences between others’ culture and their own. They are getting to be more sensitive and aware of the prejudices and empathy.

2.7 Summary

The literature shows the development of globalization and internationalization in higher education as a whole, and the development requires students equipped with corresponding languages and intercultural abilities. Studying abroad is the most common strategy in international education and has been proven to improve students' language learning and intercultural competence effectively. The literature also shows that intercultural sensitivity as one of the intercultural competences and language learning attitudes is an essential and valuable topic for study abroad education.

CHAPTER 3

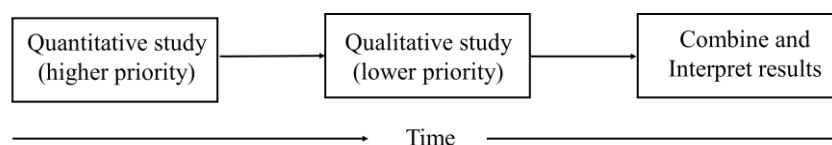
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter described the research design, population, and sample, research instrument. Furthermore, it described the validation and reliability of the research and its process of data collection and data analysis. The methodology was used to measure the intercultural sensitivity degrees of Chinese exchange students and to understand their attitudes toward Thai language learning.

3.1 Research Design

This study is a mixed-methods research (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2011), employing quantitative and qualitative approaches. It adopted the explanatory research design, which is one type of mixed-methods research. In this study, it was first using the quantitative method and then using the qualitative method to investigate Chinese exchange students' degree of intercultural sensitivity and attitudes to Thai language learning.

The justification for using mixed-methods is that first, it involves quantitative and qualitative methods in this study, it provides a complete understanding of research problems; second, in an explanatory design, it requires for carrying out a quantitative study then do an additional qualitative study to supplemental describe the results, to follow up and refine the findings (Fraenkel et al., 2011). Even there are some drawbacks of a mixed-methods study, such as time-consuming, more skills, energy for the researcher, the design still fits into the objectives of the study. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2006), the rule of explanatory design should be as follows:



According to the requirement of explanatory design, the research design of this study is as follows:

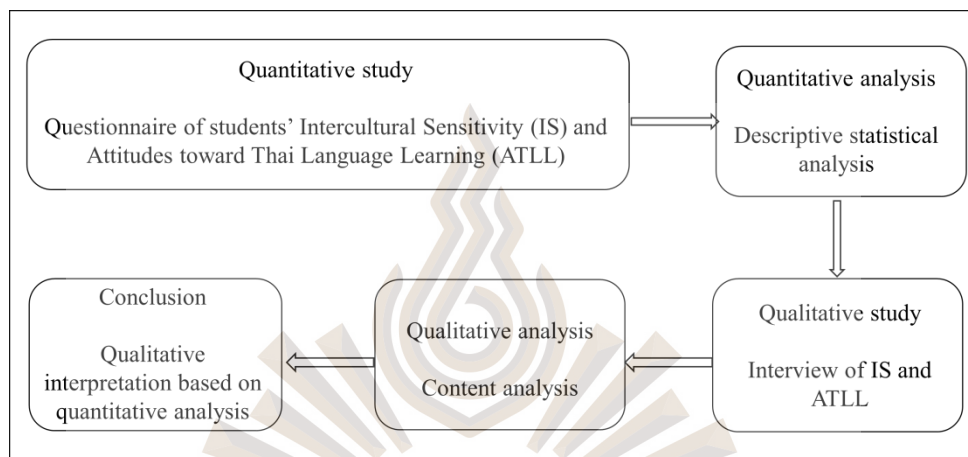


Figure 3.1 Illustration of explanatory mixed-method design

3.2 Population and Sample

3.2.1 Research Population and Sample

The population of this study was 73 Chinese exchange students who had enrolled in a Thai Language Program of the academic year of 2019 at Rangsit University, and they were all the third-year students majoring in Thai language. They had studied Thai language in China before, and they had the necessary skills and knowledge of Thai language. Due to the small number of the population, all participants aimed at the sample in this study. In this study, 63 volunteers were willing to participate and received 63 responses of questionnaires. Fraenkel et al. (2011) point out that there must be some differences between the sample and the population, and the high response rates are better than low response rates, but the representativeness of the sample is more important than the sample number. For the interview sample, purposive sampling was used for selecting the interviewees. Purposive Sampling selection samples by judging sample elements based on typical or representative criteria could help

researchers to collect more representative information, especially for information of attitudes (Ary et al., 2018). For the research questions, it needs to collect more representative attitudes. Therefore, the specific criteria for selecting interviewees were as follows: 1) Interviewees who were willing to participate in this interview; 2) Interviewees who had never been to Thailand before; 3) Interviewees contained female and male students; 4) Interviewees contained students who are with minority backgrounds and non-minority backgrounds.

The study selected nine students from participants who participated in the questionnaires as the interviewees for an interview. Due to the lower priority of the qualitative study, the interview population was less than the questionnaire population.

3.2.2 Context of the Study

Rangsit University is a comprehensive private university, founded in 1986. Since 2014, Rangsit University has started cooperating with some Chinese universities in this exchange program. From 2016, each year, there were about 50 Chinese exchange students participated in a Thai language program, and they studied Thai language in their previous Chinese universities for one year. Chinese exchange students studied Thai language at Rangsit University College of Liberal Arts.

3.3 Research Instruments

This study was employed two types of research instruments to collect data. The questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data as a quantitative instrument, and the interview was used to collect qualitative data as a qualitative instrument. The justification for using mixed methods to investigate research questions is that multiple measures are more reliable or valid than a single measure because that “several measures of the same construct can furnish support for one another as stakeholders conclude strengths or weakness” (Banta, 2004).

3.3.1 Questionnaire

This study was employed quantitative questionnaires based on Five Likert Scale to collect quantitative data. The five options of the Likert Scale were 1 very disagree, 2 disagree, and 3 somewhat agree, 4 agree, and 5 strongly agree; these options express their attitude towards the statement (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine & Walker, 2018). The justification of using a quantitative questionnaire was that the questionnaire is designed to measure three types of data about the respondent: factual, behavioral, and attitudinal (Mackey & Gass, 2015), while Bryman (2016) also points out that a well-constructed questionnaire can reduce the bias of form the influence of interviewers, thereby improving the consistency and reliability of the results. The justification for using the Likert Scale based on five-degree options is that in education research, the Likert Scale is the most commonly used attitude scale that discovers individual attitudes by asking them to respond to a series of statements. Moreover, five-degree options are commonly used (Fraenkel et al., 2011). The study participants were Chinese students; therefore, the questionnaires were translated into Chinese for them. To ensure the accuracy of the Chinese version of the questionnaire, the back-translation was checked by an expert who is proficient in Chinese and English, with excellent bilingual translation experiences. The questionnaire framework was as follows:

Table 3.1 Questionnaire Framework

Part 1	Background information
Part 2	Items of Intercultural Sensitivity Questionnaire
Part 3	Items of Attitudes to Thai Language Learning
Part 4	Additional comments

3.3.1.1 The Questionnaire of Intercultural Sensitivity (IS)

The questionnaire of IS was a 22-item questionnaire aimed at measuring students' intercultural sensitivity, and it had five factors on which its statements based: interaction engagement (6 items), respect for cultural differences (5 items), interaction confidence (5 items), interaction enjoyment (3 items), and interaction attentiveness

(3 items). Moreover, the questionnaire of IS was adopted from the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale of Chen and Starosta (Chen and Starosta, 2000). The justification of using a questionnaire of IS, which was developed by Chen and Starosta (2000), is that the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale is a measurement tool to measure intercultural sensitivity, and "it is a higher score for this indicator implies a higher intercultural sensitivity." Chen and Starosta (2000) indicated in their study that "it has demonstrated strong reliability and appropriate concurrent and predictive validity," according to the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of this scale is .86. Even though the reliability is worth using the scale directly, considering that the ISS has rarely tested for Chinese students and there is no full guarantee that it is high reliability for Chinese students. Therefore, the questionnaire of IS needs to be checked by IOC.

3.3.1.2 The Questionnaire of Attitudes toward Thai Language Learning (ATLL)

The questionnaire of ATLL was a 12-item questionnaire aimed at measuring students' three aspects' attitudes toward Thai language learning, which were cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes. Moreover, the questions of the ATLL were adopted and reversed by LAQ-LL ITEMS (Language Attitudes Questionnaire for Language Learners) of Artamonova (2017). Attitudes are considered to be formed and expressed through cognitive, affective, and behavioral parts (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007), and conceptualization of language attitudes contains these three components as well (Garrett, 2010).

3.3.2 Interview

In this study, a semi-structured interview was employed to collect the qualitative data of students' degrees of intercultural sensitivity and attitudes toward Thai language learning. The semi-structured interview adopted open-ended questions that were designed based on the striking questionnaire data results; meanwhile, the prepared interview questions were aimed to investigate the research questions. The interview data was a supplement explanation to the questionnaire data, mainly to provide more

detailed descriptions for the research questions. The justification of using the semi-structured interview is that it is a verbal questionnaire, and it is an excellent way to find out interviewees' minds, such as what they think or how they feel about something (Fraenkel et al., 2011). Additionally, the interview framework was divided into two sections: students' intercultural sensitivity and attitudes toward Thai language learning. The specific interview questions are: 1) After studying and living in Thailand, what did you think were significant differences from your previous perceptions? 2) What were the most difficulties you met when you talked with natives? 3) Are you a minority group person, did your local dialect help with learning Thai language? 4) Why did you choose to learn Thai language instead of learning English or another language (Lao, Malaysian, Burmese)? 5) Did you want to study and work in Thailand in the future? 6) What were the most helpful ways for you to learn Thai language when you studied and lived in Thailand?

3.4 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

3.4.1 Validity

Since the questionnaire was an adapted version, for making sure of the validity of the questionnaire, the content validity was necessary to be evaluated by three experts in education. According to Turner and Carlson (2003), validity is based on the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), which is used to evaluate the items of the questionnaires based on score rings from -1 to +1. For the instruments, the rating -1 refers to the stated objectives are incongruent, the rating 0 means the stated objectives are acceptable, and the rating +1 means that the stated objectives are very accurate. Items with a score below 0.5 will be revised. Items with a score greater than or equal to 0.5 will be retained or reverse. The formula for calculating the score is as follows:

$$IOC =$$

Where r = sum of the scores of individual experts

n = number of experts

Internal Validity

There were few kinds of threats for internal validity in research. According to Fraenkel et al. (2011), in this study, the main threat was the loss of subjects, such as illness or unwellness, that were well cared for by the researcher. To maintain the sample size, this study sought support from the administrators of students and support from the student monitors to increase the student's willingness to participate, at the same time, it took more flexible time for students to participate in this study.

3.4.2 Reliability

In this study, a pilot study was employed to test the reliability of the questionnaires. The participants were 37 Chinese exchange students who participated in a Thai language program at the same time with the research population of this study, from another Thai private university. The reliability was calculated by following the Cronbach's alpha. According to George (2010), the value of the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha is exemplified: ≥ 0.9 = excellent, ≥ 0.8 = good, ≥ 0.7 = acceptable, ≥ 0.6 = problematic, ≥ 0.5 = poor, ≤ 0.5 = unacceptable. Therefore, to make the questionnaire reliable, its Cronbach Coefficient Alpha must be at least 0.7. In the pilot study, the reliability of the IS questionnaire was .821, and the reliability of the ATLL questionnaire was .730, which were both acceptable.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

As an explanatory mixed-method study, the procedure of data collection was divided into two parts based on a time sequence. The first was quantitative data collection, then was qualitative data collection. Due to the whole world COVID-19 epidemic, the original planned offline data collection was adjusted to online data collection.

3.5.1 Quantitative Data Collection

An online questionnaire was designed on an online platform called Mike CRM, which was a leading service for data collection, and it was convenient using in both China and Thailand for Chinese students. The questionnaire was conducted in June 2020 and carried in one week. The return of the questionnaire was coded anonymously, and the personal identification background information of participants was kept confidential. Before the questionnaires, the consent form was distributed to the administration office to get permission from the office. Then the questionnaire was distributed to students through WeChat Groups organized by students' representatives, and the background and principles of the questionnaire were notified to the participating students. According to administration consideration of the questionnaire (Fraenkel et al., 2011), in this study, the period of the questionnaire was Monday to Friday instead of the weekend to express the level of formality.

3.5.2 Qualitative Data Collection

The interviews were carried out after the questionnaire data collection in June 2020. It lasted for one week; each interview was conducted approximately 15-25 minutes. Nine interviewees were selected based on the criteria reported in 3.2.1, and they were willing to help. The interview questions were based on the analysis of questionnaire data. The interviews were conducted in Chinese, and the responses were recorded simultaneously by audio equipment after getting their permission. According to the administration consideration of the interview (Fraenkel et al., 2011), in this study, the period of the interview was Monday to Friday instead of the weekends; Before the formal interview, the internet connection was examined. Moreover, the interviewee stayed in a quiet room; there was no other noise to interrupt or affect the interview. The recordings used audio equipment to record the data with the consent of the interviewees, and then the audio recordings were translated into text information in themes after the interviews.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

This study used descriptive statistical analysis by SPSS statistical software to analyze questionnaire data. The method of descriptive statistical analysis is computed to identify the items' Mean and Standard Deviation (SD). According to Srisaard (2010), the standards-setting of the Five-Likert Scale is interpreted and analyzed as follows:

The mean score is 4.50-5.0, which refers to participants who strongly agree.

The mean score is 3.50-4.49, which refers to participants who agree.

The mean score is 2.50-3.49, which refers to participants who are neutral.

The mean score is 1.50-2.49, which refers to participants who disagree.

The mean score is 1.00-1.49, which refers to participants who strongly disagree.

However, there are 7 items were reverse-coded for data analysis: 6, 8, 11, 13, 17, 18, and 19. Reverse-coding was used for these items because these items descriptions are considered as negative expressions instead of positive expressions. Therefore, the scores of reverse-coded items were transformed according to the reverse-score (1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1).

The Data Analysis of Intercultural Sensitivity

To understand the intercultural sensitivity degrees of students in more detail, descriptive data analysis was performed on the five significant factors as five parts to understand the level differences between the five factors; meanwhile, 22 items were analyzed to understanding the level of intercultural sensitivity of each of the five factors.

Table 3.2 The IS Mean Score Analysis and Interpretation

Mean Score	Interpretation
4.50-5.00	Students' degrees of IS are very high
3.50-4.49	Students' degrees of IS are high
2.50-3.49	Students' degrees of IS are moderate
1.50-2.49	Students' degrees of IS are low
1.00-1.49	Students' degrees of IS are very low

The Data Analysis of Attitudes toward Thai Language Learning

To understand the attitudes of students in more detail, descriptive data analysis was performed on the three significant factors to understand students' different aspects of attitudes to Thai language learning, and each statement of 12 items was analyzed by the whole sample population to find out the more detailed information about attitudes.

Table 3.3 The ATLL Mean Score Analysis and Interpretation

Mean Score	Interpretation
4.50-5.00	Students' attitudes toward Thai language learning are very positive
3.50-4.49	Students' attitudes toward Thai language learning are positive
2.50-3.49	Students' attitudes toward Thai language learning are moderate
1.50-2.49	Students' attitudes toward Thai language learning are negative
1.00-1.49	Students' attitudes toward Thai language learning are very negative

3.6.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The study used content analysis method to collect qualitative data. According to Fraenkel et al. (2011), content analysis is a technique to study human behavior through an analysis their communications, such as an individual or group's beliefs, attitudes, values, that revealed in their communications, it is considered extremely valuable for analyzing interview data.

According to the steps of the content analysis method and analysis steps (Fraenkel et al., 2011), the interview data analysis in this study had 1) taken the research questions and hypotheses as to the objectives, 2) set the theme around the keywords involved in the interview questionnaire, 3) formulated coding categories, 4) analyzed the results and conduct conclusions.

After categorizing the interview data into themes and sub-themes, experts were invited to evaluate the inter-coder validity of the contents' analysis. The presentation of data analysis was as follows:

Table 3.4 Illustration of Data Analysis

Research questions	Data collection	Data analysis
1. What are the degrees of Chinese exchange students' intercultural sensitivity after they finished the exchange program?	Questionnaire	Mean, SD
	Interview	Content analysis
2. What are Chinese exchange students' attitudes toward Thai language learning after they finished the exchange program?	Questionnaire	Mean, SD
	Interview	Content analysis



CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the results of the study based on two parts of data analysis, and one part is quantitative data analysis to the questionnaire, the second part is qualitative data analysis to semi-structured interview. The two kinds of data are mainly for figuring out two research questions, which are as follows: 1) What are the degrees of Chinese exchange students' intercultural sensitivity (IS) after they finished the exchange program? 2) What are Chinese exchange students' attitudes toward Thai language learning (ATLL) after they finished the exchange program?

4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis (Questionnaires)

4.1.1 Demographic Information of Participants

Table 4.1 Demographic Information of Participants

Items	Details	n=63	Percentage
Gender	Male	12	19%
	Female	51	81%
Ethnic group	Minority	24	38%
	Non-minority	39	62%
Local dialect helps learn Thai	Yes	14	22%
	No	49	78%
Had been to Thailand before	Yes	4	6%
	No	59	94%
Years of Staying in Thailand	0 ~ 0.5	6	10%
	0.5 ~1	55	87%
	1~2	2	3%

Table 4.1 Demographic Information of Participants (Cont.)

Items	Details	n=63	Percentage
Years of Learning Thai language	0 ~ 1	4	6%
	1 ~ 2	24	38%
	2+	34	54%
	4	1	2%

Table 4.1 shows that there was a total of 63 students who took part in the exchange program (Thai language program at Rangsit University), including 12 male students and 51 female students. It means that female students possibly preferred to learn Thai language than male students. The Minority group students were less than the Non-minority group students. That is because the population of minority groups is far less than the non-minority group in China. Fourteen students come from minority groups considered their local dialect and helped learn Thai language. All the non-minority students agreed that Mandarin is helpless for learning Thai language. 94% of students (N=59) had not been to Thailand before they engaged in the exchange program. It means that these students had no experience of living and studying abroad, especially of interacting with Thai natives in an authentic environment. 87% of students (N=55) had stayed for over half a year, but less than one year. It means that these students went back to China after they completed the exchange program. 92% of students (N=59) had studied Thai language for over one year, which means they were at the necessary level of Thai language before they came to Thailand.

4.1.2 Research Question 1: What are the degrees of Chinese exchange students' intercultural sensitivity after they finished the exchange program?

This part was designed to answer the first research question of this study, namely, what are the degrees of Chinese exchange students' intercultural sensitivity. The mean scores and SD of IS, and mean scores and SD of five parts and its items, these results were demonstrated as follows:

Table 4.2 Degrees of Intercultural Sensitivity (n=63)

No.	Description	Mean	SD	Degree
1	I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	4.16	.745	High
2	I tend not to expose myself before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.	3.46	.800	Moderate
3	I am open-minded to people from different cultures.	4.40	.661	High
4	I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterparts during our interactions.	4.02	.729	High
5	I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct with talkers.	3.57	.797	High
6	I avoid the situation where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct people.	2.94	.931	Moderate
7	I think people who disrespect my culture are annoying.	4.29	.792	High
8	I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.	3.75	.915	High
9	I respect the values of people from different cultures.	4.40	.814	High
10	I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.	4.35	.652	High
11	I think my culture is better than other cultures.	3.08	.1.067	Moderate
12	I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.	3.75	.740	High
13	I find it hard to start a conversation with people from different cultures.	3.21	.765	Moderate
14	I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.10	.777	Moderate
15	I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.02	.793	Moderate

Table 4.2 Degrees of Intercultural Sensitivity (n=63) (Cont.)

No.	Description	Mean	SD	Degree
16	I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.17	.685	Moderate
17	I get bored when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.37	.747	Moderate
18	I often feel excluded when I am with people from different cultures.	3.37	.747	Moderate
19	I often feel embarrassed when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.10	.893	Moderate
20	I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.67	.762	High
21	I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.	4.00	.596	High
22	I am sensitive to subtle meanings related to cultural differences during our interactions.	3.63	.848	High
Overall		3.63	.260	High

According to Table 4.2, participants' overall degree of IS was high ($M=3.63$, $SD=.260$). Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. Moreover, it showed that item 3 ($M=4.40$, $SD=.661$), item 9 ($M=4.40$, $SD=.841$), and item 10 ($Mean=4.35$, $SD=.652$) gained the three highest mean scores. It was obvious that participants agreed with the statements of item 3 "I am open-minded to people from different cultures," item 9, "I respect the values of people from different cultures," and item 10, "I respect the ways people from different cultures behave." However, the mean scores of individual items were different, to figure out the degrees of five factors of IS, the data analysis of five sections were further analyzed and interpreted, the findings are shown as follows:

Table 4.3 Degrees of Interaction Engagement (n=63)

No.	Description	Mean	SD	Degree
1	I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	4.16	.745	High
2	I tend not to expose myself before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.	3.46	.800	Moderate
3	I am open-minded to people from different cultures.	4.40	.661	High
4	I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterparts during our interactions.	4.02	.729	High
5	I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct with talkers.	3.57	.797	High
6	I avoid the situation where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct people.	2.94	.931	Moderate
Overall		3.76	.38	High

Table 4.3 showed that participants' degree of Interaction Engagement was high (M=3.76, SD=.38). Meanwhile, it showed that participants agreed with these statements, such as the statement of item 1 "I enjoyed interacting with people from different cultures" (M=4.16, SD=.745), the statement of item 3 "I am open-minded to people from different cultures" (M=4.40, SD=.661), as well as the statement of item 4 "I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterparts during our interactions" (M=4.02, SD=.729).

Table 4.4 Degrees of Respect for Cultural Differences (n=63)

No.	Description	Mean	SD	Degree
7	I think people who disrespect my culture are annoying.	4.29	.792	High
8	I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.	3.75	.915	High
9	I respect the values of people from different cultures.	4.40	.814	High

Table 4.4 Degrees of Respect for Cultural Differences (n=63) (Cont.)

No.	Description	Mean	SD	Degree
10	I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.	4.35	.652	High
11	I think my culture is better than other cultures.	3.08	1.067	Moderate
Overall		3.97	.49	High

In Table 4.4, participants' degree of Respect for Cultural Differences was high ($M=3.97$, $SD=.49$), which was the highest degree among the five factors of IS. Only item 11 showed a moderate degree ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.067$), which the statement was, "I think my culture is better than other cultures." All the other items, items 7, 8, 9, 10, the statements gained high agreements, such as "I respect the values of people from different cultures; I respect the ways people from different cultures behave."

Table 4.5 Degrees of Interaction Confidence (n=63)

No.	Description	Mean	SD	Degree
12	I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.	3.75	.740	High
13	I find it hard to start a conversation with people from different cultures.	3.21	.765	Moderate
14	I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.10	.777	Moderate
15	I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.02	.793	Moderate
16	I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.17	.685	Moderate
Overall		3.25	.42	Moderate

Table 4.5 showed that participants' degree of Interaction confidence was moderate ($M=3.25$, $SD=.42$). Only the item 12 gained a high mean score of 3.75, which was the statement "I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures" agreed by participants. To others statements, participants expressed a moderate attitude, such as item 15 "I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting

with people from different cultures,” it fell to a mean score 3.02, it was the lowest; item 14 “I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures,” it fell to mean score 3.10, it was the second-lowest.

Table 4.6 Degrees of Interaction Enjoyment (n=63)

No.	Description	Mean	SD	Degree
17	I get bored when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.37	.747	Moderate
18	I often feel excluded when I am with people from different cultures.	3.37	.747	Moderate
19	I often feel embarrassed when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.10	.893	Moderate
Overall		3.28	.67	Moderate

Table 4.6 showed that participants’ degree of Interaction Enjoyment was moderate ($M=3.28$, $SD=.67$), as well as the individual items’ degrees were moderate, participants expressed moderate attitudes to the statements “I get bored, I often feel excluded, or I often feel embarrassed when interacting with people from different cultures.” In contrast, Table 4.7 showed that the degree of Interaction Attentiveness was high ($M=3.77$, $SD=.58$), as well as all the individual items were high degrees. The statement of item 21 gained the highest mean score of 4.00, which was “I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.”

Table 4.7 Degrees of Interaction Attentiveness (n=63)

No.	Description	Mean	SD	Degree
20	I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.67	.762	High
21	I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.	4.00	.596	High
22	I am sensitive to subtle meanings related to cultural differences during our interactions.	3.63	.848	High
Overall		3.77	.58	High

In conclusion, for the first research question, “what are Chinese exchange students’ degrees of intercultural sensitivity?” it showed Chinese exchange students’ degree of intercultural sensitivity was high ($M=3.63$, $SD=.26$). Moreover, the results showed that the different degrees of five factors and individual items, among five factors of IS, Respect for cultural differences gained the highest mean score of 3.97; in contrast, Interaction confidence fell to the lowest mean score of 3.25.

4.1.3 Research Question 2: What are Chinese exchange students’ attitudes toward Thai language learning after they finished the exchange program?

This part was designed to answer the second research question of this study, namely, what are Chinese exchange students’ attitudes toward Thai language learning? The total mean score and SD, the mean scores of three factors and individual items, comparison between ethnic groups on Attitudes toward Thai language learning (ATLL). These results illustrated as follows:

Table 4.8 Attitudes toward Thai Language Learning (n=63)

No.	Description	Mean	SD	Attitude
1	Learning Thai language is important for college students in the south of China.	3.17	.773	Moderate
2	Learning Thai language is more useful than English.	2.46	.820	Negative
3	Daily Thai language learning is more important than academic Thai language learning.	3.95	.792	Positive
4	Thai language learning is easier than English learning.	3.13	1.039	Moderate
5	I like Thai language more than English.	3.05	.974	Moderate
6	I prefer to learn Thai language in Thailand than in China.	4.03	.761	Positive
7	I learn Thai language for future work instead of interest.	3.11	.918	Moderate

Table 4.8 Attitudes toward Thai Language Learning (n=63) (Cont.)

No.	Description	Mean	SD	Attitude
8	I prefer to continue studying Thai language (such as graduate programs).	3.49	.948	Moderate
9	I learn Thai language by talking with the natives.	4.02	.635	Positive
10	I learn Thai language by learning Thai cultures.	4.10	.712	Positive
11	I learn Thai language in a different way, no matter I am in Thailand or China.	3.10	.1027	Moderate
12	It is more useful for me to learn Thai language with online courses or online materials.	3.11	.918	Moderate
Overall		3.39	.415	Moderate

Table 4.8 showed that participants had a moderate attitude toward Thai language learning ($M=3.39$, $SD=.415$). Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. Meanwhile, item 10 gained the highest mean score ($M=4.10$, $SD=.712$) that means participants hold a positive attitude toward this statement “I learn Thai language by learning Thai cultures,” besides, the item 6 ($M=4.03$, $SD=.761$) showed participants hold a positive attitude to the statement “I prefer to learn Thai language in Thailand than in China.” The mean score of item 9 was 4.02, which showed that participants agreed with the statement, “I learn Thai language by talking with the natives.” In contrast, item 2 fell to the mean score 2.46, it was the lowest mean score, and it showed that participants expressed a negative attitude to the statement, “Learning Thai language is more useful than English.” Meanwhile, item 5 fell to the mean score of 3.05; it showed a second-lowest mean score, which statement was “I like Thai language more than English.”

The mean scores of individual items were distinct, to figure out the attitudes of three factors of ATLL, the data analysis of three sections were further analyzed and interpreted, findings are shown as follows:

Table 4.9 Cognitive Attitudes toward Thai Language Learning (n=63)

No.	Description	Mean	SD	Attitude
1	Learning Thai language is important for college students in the south of China.	3.17	.773	Moderate
2	Learning Thai language is more useful than English.	2.46	.820	Negative
3	Daily Thai language learning is more important than academic Thai language learning.	3.95	.792	Positive
4	Thai language learning is easier than English learning.	3.13	1.039	Moderate
Overall		3.18	.554	Moderate

Table 4.9 showed that participants' mean score of Cognitive attitudes was 3.18, which means that participants hold moderate cognitive attitudes toward Thai language learning. Item 2 gained the lowest score (M=2.46), showed that participants hold a negative attitude to the statement "learning Thai is more useful than English"; item 3 got the highest score 3.95, showed that participants agreed with the statement "Daily Thai learning is more important than academic Thai learning."

Table 4.10 Affective Attitudes toward Thai Language Learning (n=63)

No.	Description	Mean	SD	Attitude
5	I like Thai language more than English.	3.05	.974	Moderate
6	I prefer to learn Thai language in Thailand than in China.	4.03	.761	Positive
7	I learn Thai language for future work instead of interest.	3.11	.918	Moderate
8	I prefer to continue studying Thai language (such as graduate programs).	3.49	.948	Moderate
Overall		3.42	.589	Moderate

Table 4.10 showed that participants had moderate affective attitudes toward Thai language learning (M=3.42, SD=.589). Meanwhile, only the statement of item 6 gained the high mean score (M=4.03), which was "I prefer to learn Thai language in

Thailand than in China”; participants hold moderate affective attitudes on others statements, such as the statement of item 5 “I like Thai language more than English,” item 7 “I learn Thai language for future work instead of interest.”

Table 4.11 Behavioral Attitudes toward Thai Language Learning (n=63)

No.	Description	Mean	SD	Attitude
9	I learn Thai language by talking with the natives.	4.02	.635	Positive
10	I learn Thai language by learning Thai cultures.	4.10	.712	Positive
11	I learn Thai language in a different way, no matter I am in Thailand or China.	3.10	.1027	Moderate
12	It is more useful for me to learn Thai language with online courses or online materials.	3.11	.918	Moderate
Overall		3.58	.523	Positive

Table 4.11 showed that participants had positive behavioral attitudes toward Thai language learning (M=3.58, SD=.523). Among items of the behavioral attitudes, the statement of item 10 gained the highest mean score (M=4.10); it showed that participants agreed with “I learn Thai language by learning Thai cultures” as well as the statement of item 9 “I learn Thai language by talking with the natives,” which mean score was 4.02.

Table 4.12 Comparison of Ethnic Group and Three Factors of ATLL (n=63)

Description	Ethnic groups			
	Minority		Non-Minority	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Cognitive Attitudes	3.29	.71	3.11	.43
Affective Attitudes	3.56	.57	3.33	.59
Behavioral Attitudes	3.69	.52	3.51	.52

The participants came from different ethnic groups (Table 4.1), which means that they had different local dialects that might influence the attitudes toward Thai language learning. In Table 4.12, further statistical analysis showed that on the three factors of

ATLL, the mean score of Minority group students was higher than the mean score of the Non-Minority group students. On cognitive attitudes, participants' mean score of the minority group was 3.29; participants' mean score of the non-minority group was 3.11. On affective attitudes, participants' mean score of the minority group was 3.56; participants' mean score of the non-minority group was 3.33. On behavioral attitudes, participants' mean score of the minority group was 3.69; participants' mean score of the non-minority group was 3.51.

Table 4.13 showed that participants' mean scores of Non-minority groups were higher than participants of the Minority group on these items through the comparison of ethnic groups on attitude towards Thai language learning. Especially on these items, such as item 1, "learning Thai is more important for southern students," item 4 "Thai learning is easier than English learning," and item 5 "I like Thai language more than English." Only items of 3, 6, 12 were excepted.

Table 4.13 Comparisons of Ethnic Groups on Individual Items of ATLL (n=63)

No.	Description	Mean	
		Minority	Non-M
1	Learning Thai language is important for college students in the south of China.	3.33	3.08
2	Learning Thai language is more useful than English.	2.63	2.36
3	Daily Thai language learning is more important than academic Thai language learning.	3.79	4.05
4	Thai language learning is easier than English learning.	3.42	2.95
5	I like Thai language more than English.	3.50	2.77
6	I prefer to learn Thai language in Thailand than in China.	3.96	4.08
7	I learn Thai language for future work instead of interest.	3.25	3.03
8	I prefer to continue studying Thai language (such as graduate programs).	3.54	3.46
9	I learn Thai language by talking with the natives.	4.13	3.95
10	I learn Thai language by learning Thai cultures.	4.17	4.05

Table 4.13 Comparisons of Ethnic Groups on Individual Items of ATLL (n=63)

No.	Description	Mean	
		Minority	Non-M
11	I learn Thai language in the same way no matter I am in Thailand or China.	3.38	2.92
12	It is more useful for me to learn Thai language with online courses or online materials.	3.08	3.13

The above results in this part could answer the second research question, i.e., what are Chinese exchange students' attitudes toward Thai language learning? The participants had a moderate attitude toward Thai language learning ($M=3.39$, $SD=.415$). Among the three sections of ATLL, Behavioral Attitudes has the highest mean score ($M=3.69$, $SD=.52$), and the mean score of Cognitive Attitudes ($M=3.29$, $SD=.71$) was the lowest. The results showed that participants had a positive behavioral attitude toward Thai language learning and a moderate cognitive attitude toward Thai language learning. Moreover, the comparisons between ethnic groups and individual items of ATLL showed that there were differences in individual items of attitudes toward Thai language learning.

4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis (Semi-Structured Interview)

According to the method of content analysis, after collecting data of interview questions, the interviewees' excerpts were categorized into five themes and its sub-themes to provide a more detailed explanation for the two research questions.

There were nine volunteers, including six female and three male interviewees. They were anonymously numbered according to the orders of being interviewed, as shown in Figure 4.1. Among the three interviewees of the minority groups, only two interviewees considered that their local language was helpful for Thai language learning (N5 and N7).

Table 4.14 Ethnic Groups Information of Interviewees

	Minority Group	Non-Minority Group
Female	N5	N1, N3, N4, N6, N9
Male	N2, N7	N8

4.2.1 Research Question 1: What are Chinese exchange students' degrees of intercultural sensitivity after they finished the exchange program?

Through two interview questions, which are shown as follows: 1) After studying and living in Thailand, what did you think were significant differences from your previous perceptions? 2) What were the most difficulties you met when you talked with natives?

It was collected the following interviewees' excerpts, which were categorized into two themes, and it showed that the interviewees had a positive degree of Respect for the cultural differences. They expressed respect and appreciation for the Thai cultural differences with Chinese cultures. Moreover, the excerpts showed the interviewees' explanations of the low degree of Interaction confidence, such as lack of knowledge of Thai language, skills, and experience of interacting with foreigners. These supplement explanations were consistent with the results of the questionnaire data analysis, and it showed as follows:

Theme 1: Respect for cultural differences

Through the comparison of cultural differences with interviewees' previous experience and Chinese cultures, they noticed and accepted the cultural differences found in Thailand. The excerpts showed they respect different opinions, values, behaviors, and cultures of people with different cultures. The excerpts were as follows:

Sub-theme 1.1: Personal value

“In Thailand, there were many transgender students in schools, but no one laughed at and bullied them. When I met transgender students, I felt that Ren

Yao (shemale in Chinese) was an insulting word. I would not use this term to call them again. They made me think about respect and courage to be myself.” (N8, personal communication, 19 June, 2020)

Sub-theme 1.2: Life Environment

“After coming to Rangsit university, I found that it was free and open; there were often open markets on campus for selling things, such as local food and clothes. Everyone, including the people around, could come into campus. On the contrary, the Chinese campus is very closed and strict.” (N5, personal communication, 19 June, 2020)

Sub-theme 1.3: Behaviors

“Thai students like to sit on the ground when studying in the study room or library. In China, many people think it is inappropriate to prevent students from sitting on the ground. Thai universities treat students as adults, not like Chinese universities, are over-controlling of students.” (N6, personal communication, 18 June, 2020)

“After arriving in Thailand, I found that the real Thailand was very different from Thailand in the online world. Some Thai people even liked to speak some simple Chinese to us, like hello, thank you. They were favorable and friendly to us.” (N7, personal communication, 19 June, 2020)

Sub-theme 1.4: Religion and customs

“After coming to Thailand, the most obvious thing was there were many things in Buddhist culture, and there were many Buddha images in the Rangsit campus. However, these Buddha statues and other things did not make me feel out of place with the university.” (N3, personal communication, 18 June, 2020)

“You cannot touch the head of a child casually in Thailand. It is an act of expressing love in China, but this action is very impolite in Thailand. We should respect their custom, do in Rome as Rome does.” (N1, 4, 9, personal communication, 19 June, 2020)

All excerpts above obviously showed that interviewees expressed a high degree of respect for different cultures; it means they would like to respect the cultural differences, even adaption, and appreciation. Through expressed these phrases, “*not use this term to call them again; not make me feel out of the places; did in Rome as Rome does.*” These differences manifested in different aspects. It showed that the individual interviewee paid attention to different cultural differences. Meanwhile, all interviewees showed a tendency of respect, acceptance, and reflection to these differences.

Theme 2: Lack of Interaction confidence

The following excerpts of interviewees showed their low degree of interaction confidence. It means they had difficulties in having conversations confidently with natives. Moreover, they expressed negative enjoyment when interacted with natives through these negative phrased expressions, such as “*forgot or made mistakes; make it difficult for me to learn; makes me feel confused; worried about offending or embarrassing each other; difficult to fit into.*”

Sub-theme 2.1: Lack of Thai language knowledge

“Thai people stressed great importance to the use of polite language, including honorific words. Thai language words are also gender-specific and quite strict, and I did not pay special attention when studying in China. When I came to Thailand, I felt the obvious difference. At first, I often forgot or made mistakes.” (N3, 4, personal communication, 18 June, 2020)

“There are a lot of foreign words in Thai language, especially English. For example, Thai people like to use brand names to refer to items. I think young Thai people especially speak Thai mixed with English; they think it is cool. Nevertheless, the pronounce is different from the original English, which makes me feel confused; besides, Thai also contains a lot of Buddhist words, which undoubtedly makes it difficult for me to learn.” (N6, personal communication, 18 June, 2020)

Sub-theme 2.2: Lack of communicating experience and skills

“Native Thai people speak Thai very quickly, and spoken language is very different from the written language we learn at school, which often makes me find it difficult.” (N1, 2, 7, 9, personal communication, 18 &19 June, 2020)

“Although at the beginning, I was not used to communicating with Thai people, I was afraid of making mistakes. Therefore, I kept silent.” (N5, 6, personal communication, 18 &19 June, 2020)

Sub-theme 2.3: Lack of common topics

“It is different from China because Thailand is a religious country and a monarchy; therefore, I did not understand what the taboo topics were, and worried about offending or embarrassing each other.” (N5, personal communication, 19 June, 2020)

“Sometimes, what my Thai friends talked about, such as some Thai celebrities, somewhere in Thailand, or some traditional things, because I did not know, it was difficult to communicate, it was difficult to fit into.” (N1, personal communication, 18 June, 2020)

The interviewees stated that the reasons for the “difficult interacting with natives” were mainly caused by lacking interaction skills and experience and common

topics, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and established-special norms. At the same time, they also further described the lack of interaction experience with foreigners, and lack adaptability to communication, or the local things, which caused nervousness in communication. It was a further explanation for why their degree of interactive confidence was the lowest among intercultural sensitivity.

4.2.2 Research Question 2: What are Chinese exchange students' attitudes toward Thai language learning after they finished the exchange program?

Through four interview questions, 1) Are you a minority group person, did your local dialect help with learning Thai language; 2) Why did you choose to learn Thai language instead of learning English or another language (Lao, Malaysian, Burmese); 3) Did you want to study and work in Thailand in the future; 4) What were the most helpful ways for you to learn Thai language when you studied and lived in Thailand. The excerpts of interviewees categorized into three themes, which were cognitive attitudes, affective attitudes, and behavioral attitudes. For cognitive attitude, the excerpts showed the interviewees of Minority groups were much higher positive than Non-minority groups due to the help of dialects. It means that Minority students who could take advantage of their local dialects expressed more preference for Thai language learning than students of Non-minority groups. For affective attitudes, the excerpts of interviewees expressed that they would like to continue studying Thai language in Thailand in the future. For behavioral attitude, the excerpts of interviewees showed that they had a positive behavioral attitude; it means that they agreed with the ways of learning Thai by talking with natives and learning Thai cultures. The results of interviewees' supplement explanation were more positive than the results of the data analysis of the questionnaire, and it was shown as follows:

Theme 3: Cognitive attitudes

Through the excerpts of interviewees, it showed that the dialects of certain ethnic minorities are helpful for Thai language learning, which also made these minority students felt intimate and accessible with Thai language learning, such as the

expressions of “similarities in pronunciation and felt more accessible.” For non-minority students, there is no correlation between Thai and Mandarin.

Sub-theme 3.1: Dialect is helpful for Thai language learning

“I am from a minority group (Zhuang). I cannot speak the Zhuang dialect, but I can understand it. I think it helps a little, mainly because there are some similarities in pronunciation with Thai language.” (N7, personal communication, 19 June, 2020)

“I am from a minority group (Zhuang), and I can speak my local dialect. My local dialect words like "dog and father" pronounce almost the same as Thai language. It made me felt much more accessible to learning Thai language. I found that among classmates in university, students from the north had some pronunciations that were difficult to speak because there was no such pronunciation in Mandarin.” (N5, personal communication, 19 June, 2020)

Sub-theme 3.2: Dialect is not helpful for Thai language learning

“I am from a minority group (Miao). I can understand some dialects of the Miao, but I cannot speak. I do not think it is beneficial for learning Thai. (N2, personal communication, 18 June, 2020)

“I am not from a minority group. Mandarin does not help learn Thai.” (N1,3,4,6,8,9, personal communication, 18 &19 June, 2020)

Theme 4: Affective attitudes

Through the following excerpts of interviewees, the excerpts showed interviewees’ positive affective attitudes toward Thai language learning through their expressions, such as the preference for learning Thai language than English and the willingness to study Thai language and work in Thailand in the future. The reasons

were diversity, such as their dialect language intimacy with Thai language, Thai language's advantages as a non-international language, their hometowns (in the south of China) adjacent to Thailand, or they considered working and living in Thailand less much pressure than in China.

Sub-theme 4.1: Prefer Thai language

“I am from a minority group (Miao). However, emotionally, I would prefer to learn languages, and Thai is not as extensive as English, so I finally chose to learn Thai.” (N2, personal communication, 18 June, 2020)

“I chose Thai because my English is fine. If I learn Thai, it will increase my language advantages comparing with other people. Compared to Malaysia, Myanmar, and other Southeast Asian countries, I prefer Thailand.” (N1, personal communication, 18 June, 2020)

“Yunnan is adjacent to Thailand. Universities in Yunnan encourage students to learn Thai language. The development of cooperation between China and Thailand requires more people who can speak Chinese and Thai bilingually. I chose to learn Thai because I thought Thai would be more useful than English.” (N1,8, personal communication, 18 &19 June, 2020)

Sub-theme 4.2: Prefer to improve Thai and work in Thailand

“I am willing to work in Thailand for a few years and continue to improve my Thai language, but my family is all in China. Our living habits are different so that I will return to China in the end.” (N2,7,9, personal communication, 18 &19 June, 2020)

“I came to Thailand to study Thai language. I thought it was like planting a seed in my heart, which ties me with Thailand. I will come to Thailand again, and I hope to live in Thailand in the future” (N5, personal communication, 19 June, 2020)

“Because I have studied Thai, it would be a pity if I do not use Thai language in future work. If there is a chance, I would like to work in Thailand.” (N6, personal communication, 18 June, 2020)

“Working and living in China is very stressful. If there is a chance, I am willing to work and live in Thailand.” (N3, 4, personal communication, 18 June, 2020)

Theme 5: Behavioral attitudes

Through the following excerpts of interviewees, they considered the most helpful way for them to learn Thai language was communicating with native Thais and through learning Thai cultures, such as talking with Thai teachers, salespeople, owners of restaurants, and Thai students. The interviewees made friends with natives, traveled with them, and learned from them. The interviewees agreed with the positive expressions “exciting homework, feel interesting, courage and confidence, they taught me, understand my questions, helpful for listening and speaking, and learn Thai language and Thai cultures in a relaxed atmosphere.”

Sub-theme 5.1: Communicating with natives

“Thai teachers liked to arrange some exciting homework to help us consolidate the knowledge we learn in the classroom. For example, let us shoot a video of buying daily necessities. Therefore, we needed to talk to the natives (salesperson). This kind of homework made me feel very interesting. Even it made me felt the pressure; meanwhile, it trained me to talk with Thai people with more courage and confidence by steps.” (N1, personal communication, 18 June, 2020)

“Communicated with local people, such as cleaners, the owners of the restaurant, sellers of fruits. They taught me so many Thai words.” (N3,4, personal communication, 18 June, 2020)

“What most useful way to me was to study with Thai students who majored in Chinese. Because they learned a foreign language, therefore they understand my questions and problems easier, they helped me very patiently.” (N8, personal communication, 19 June, 2020)

“I thought the most effective way was to communicate with local people. Communicating with them was very helpful for my listening and speaking.” (N2,3,4,6,7, personal communication, 18 &19 June, 2020)

Sub-theme 5.2: Learning Thai cultures

“When we traveled to attractions with Thai friends in Thailand, we talked about many broad topics. It inevitably involved questions about Thai cultures and Thai language. My Thai friends shared a lot with me.” (N5, personal communication, 19 June, 2020)

“Thai teachers liked to let us learn Thai through interactive communication, music, and activities; There were activities such as learned Thai songs and dances; let us learn Thai language and Thai cultures in a relaxed atmosphere.” (N1,9, personal communication, 18 June, 2020)

4.3 Summary

In this chapter, through the analysis of quantitative data (questionnaire data) combined with the further supplement qualitative data (excerpts of interviewees), it shows that results in the two research questions: 1) Chinese exchange students' degree of intercultural sensitivity was high, especially on the Respect for cultural difference. In contrast, the interviewees' excerpts provided detailed explanations for the reasons why the degree of Interaction confidence among intercultural sensitivity was the lowest, based on the result of questionnaire data analysis. 2) Chinese exchange students holding moderate attitudes toward Thai language learning; only participants' behavioral

attitudes toward Thai language learning was positive based on the results of questionnaire data analysis. The excerpts of interviewees provided supplement explanation for participants' attitudes toward Thai language learning, and it further proved that participants preferred to learn Thai language by interacting with natives and learning Thai cultures.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter contains four sections. The first part was the findings of the study. The second part was the discussion based on the findings. The third part was suggestions and implications and the strategies to improve the students' intercultural sensitivity and attitudes. The fourth part was that the recommendations revealed the limitations of this study and the suggestions for improvement for future research.

5.1 Findings of Study

5.1.1 Chinese Exchange Students' Degree of Intercultural Sensitivity

Based on the data analysis of the intercultural sensitivity questionnaire, it showed that the degree of Chinese exchange students' intercultural sensitivity was high ($M=3.63$, $SD=.26$). According to Chen and Starosta (2000), it indicated that Chinese exchange students could create positive affective attitudes towards cultural differences, including understanding, respect, toleration, and appreciation. Among the five factors of IS, the degree of Respect for the cultural difference was the highest ($M=3.97$), it indicated that Chinese exchange students hold a positive attitude to the statements of respect for cultural difference. In contrast, the degree of Interaction confidence was the lowest ($M=3.25$), it indicated that Chinese exchange students had a moderate attitude to the statements of Interaction confidence, besides, Chinese exchange students showed lacking interaction confidence comparing with the other aspects of intercultural sensitivity.

Respect for cultural differences gained the highest score, as well as a result, which showed that Chinese exchange students agreed with the statements of item 9 ($M=4.40$) "I respect the values of people from different cultures"; and the statement of

item 10 ($M=4.35$) “I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.” The results indicated that Chinese exchange students hold much more open-minded attitudes to the differences among countries, had a positive attitude to realize, accept, and respect different cultures. From the descriptions of interviewees, detailed stories expressed they were sensitive to realize, accept, and respect the Thai cultural differences with Chinese cultures, such as the differences from the aspects of value, behaviors, the environment of life, religion, and customs.

In contrast with the high degree of respect for cultural differences, the interaction confidence fell to the lowest score among the five sections of IS, which indicated Chinese exchange students might not have strong confidence in interacting with people of different cultures. From the neutral mean scores of these statements, it showed that they might have difficulties to start a conversation, or they doubted they could interact confidently with people from different cultures. The excerpts of interviewees provided more detailed information and confirmed that they had troubles in Thai language knowledge due to lacking knowledge related to Thai language, such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and established special norms; besides lacking interacting experience, interacting skills, and common topics, these made them feel unconfident to interact with natives.

5.1.2 Chinese Exchange Students' Attitudes toward Thai Language Learning

Data analysis of Chinese exchange students' attitudes toward Thai language learning showed that Chinese exchange students had moderate attitudes toward Thai language learning ($M=3.39$, $SD=.415$). Among of three parts of ATLL, the highest score was behavior attitudes ($M=3.58$), it indicated that Chinese exchange students were willing to learn and improve their Thai language by communicating with Thais and understanding Thai culture. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. Cognitive attitudes and affective attitudes of Chinese exchange students toward Thai language learning were moderate. It indicated that Chinese exchange students likely did not agree with these statements of cognitive and affective attitudes, such as item 2 “Learning Thai language is more useful than English,” item “Thai language learning is

easier than English learning,” or item 5 “I like Thai language more than English.” In China, Thai language was not the primary foreign language for Chinese exchange students. It could be said that English is still the most important and popular foreign language for Chinese students in China, and Chinese students associate English proficiency to succeed in education and career development (Pan, 2016). Thai language was a non-international language. It is even less popular than Japanese, Russian, French, German, Spanish in China (2015-2018 Statistics of National Enrollment Program for Non-international Language Majors). Moreover, Thai is not commonly applied in the whole of China, either in workplaces or academic pursuits.

In contrast, students agreed with two statements, which were “Daily Thai language learning is more important than academic Thai language learning” and “I prefer to learn Thai language in Thailand than in China.” These two statements indicated that Chinese exchange students considered that learning daily Thai was more useful in Thailand, and they preferred to learn Thai language in Thailand. Moreover, comparison between ethnic groups on individual items of attitudes toward Thai language learning, it showed students of Minority group pay more attention to Thai instead of English. Meanwhile, they confirmed that learning Thai was significant for southern students, as well as agreed that Thai learning was easier than English learning, ethnic groups or the dialects were not the fundamental or most important reason for them to choose Thai. Through the detailed descriptions from interviewees’ narratives, interviewees shared their thoughts, and not all of the minority group students agreed with their local dialect to help them learn Thai language. However, all of them showed preferences to learn Thai and want to improve Thai in Thailand.

Even though Chinese exchange students had moderate cognitive attitudes and affective attitudes toward Thai language learning, Chinese exchange students had positive behavioral attitudes toward Thai language learning. The results showed that Chinese exchange students agreed with the statements of item 9 “I learn Thai language by talking with the natives” and item 10 “I learn Thai language by learning Thai cultures,” it indicated that Chinese exchange students accepted and preferred to learn Thai language by interacting with natives and understanding Thai cultures. Combining

with the narratives of interviewees, Chinese exchange students described the most useful way to learn Thai language, and the descriptions confirmed the same results. Chinese exchange students expressed that communicating with natives, such as interacting with cleaners, salesman, and waiters to learn new words and natural expressions; besides, Chinese exchange students learned Thai language through understanding Thai cultures in travels with Thai friends, as well as they, learned Thai language through Thai songs, dances, stories, and customs shared by their Thai teachers in classrooms.

5.2 Discussions of the Findings

5.2.1 Respect for Cultural Differences and Behavioral Attitudes toward Language Learning

5.2.1.1 Study Abroad Had a Positive Influence on Intercultural Sensitivity

Based on the findings of the study, it showed that after completing Thai language exchange program, Chinese exchange students' degree of intercultural sensitivity was high. It indicated that the study abroad had a positive influence on intercultural sensitivity, the conclusion was consistent with findings of the study of Sample (2013), it surveyed the students who were required to study abroad for at least one semester, and the result showed that there was a significant difference in intercultural sensitivity between students of studying abroad and not studying abroad. Besides, the same students showed a higher score of intercultural sensitivity after they studied abroad than before they went abroad. Study abroad programs have been conducted as an educational method that could influence the openness of students to the learning cultures found in the study of Clarke III, Flaherty, Wright & McMillen (2009), the similar findings had been proved in their study that the experience of studying abroad played a positive role in openness to diversity. De Bot, Lowie & Verspoor (2007) created the term social ecosystem to consider the influences of studying abroad on language learners. It argued that learners are nested in dynamic subsystems and interacted. These subsystems contain multiple variables, including

peers, religion, values, and beliefs, rules, and politics, which may affect the learners' target language learning. In this study, the living and learning environments of Thailand and China are distinct. The environment of Thailand provides Chinese exchange students with an environment with intercultural differences, which makes students easier to discover and experience the differences in Chinese and Thai cultures. They discovered differences, and then accepted and appreciated these intercultural differences. In this process, they have improved their intercultural competence, such as openness, understanding, and tolerance of intercultural differences. As Altshuler et al. (2003) argued, that intercultural sensitivities is the ability to “discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences.” Studying abroad provides learners opportunities and time that exposure to an intercultural environment that provides an environment to experience and distinguish intercultural differences. Meanwhile, the degree and competence of intercultural sensitivity developing with the experiencing and distinguishing the intercultural differences.

5.2.1.2 Cultural and Language Learning are Inseparable

Chinese exchange students' behavioral attitude was positive. They expressed and agreed that learning cultures and interacting with natives were their favorite ways to learn Thai language. It indicated that Chinese exchange students considered Thai cultures was essential for them to acquire better and understand Thai language, as well as learned from communication with natives. The findings in this study showed that Chinese exchange students preferred to learn Thai language through learning Thai cultures. It indicated that from the perspective of Chinese exchange students, they agreed that learning cultures contribute to learning the language. Sociocultural Theory claimed that culture and language are inseparable, foreign language learning and intercultural competence are closely related (Ennis, 2015).

When Chinese exchange students learned Thai in Thailand, they understood the meaning and rules of Thai in the authentic Thai environment, which was all embedded in Thai culture and traditions. An in-depth study of Thai culture helped Chinese exchange students communicate with Thais and improved their pragmatic skills in

Thai. The results were corroborated to more researchers' thoughts of Kramersch (2004), Ennis (2015), and Dombi (2016), they all supported that foreign language learning considered to be inseparable from culture, students should learn not only linguistic and cultural contents (language and culture) but also be aware of the relationship between language and culture. The inseparable relationship between culture and language makes language learners pay much attention to cultural learning in the process of language learning. According to Brown (2001), learners who are exposed to language-related cultures can better use an authentic and functional language, thus achieving meaningful interacting purposes. Moreover, Nguyen (2017) stated that learners equipped with cultural knowledge could develop more positive attitudes towards and tend to be more tolerant of other cultures. It explained why Chinese students tend to learn Thai in Thailand, and expressed their willingness to continue to improve Thai in the future, and they were willing to work and study in Thailand.

5.2.2 Interaction Confidence and Individual Attitude toward Language Learning

5.2.2.1 Variables of Attitudes toward Language Learning

In this study, the results showed that the cognitive and affective attitudes of Chinese exchange students toward Thai language learning were moderate. In the statement of item 2, Chinese exchange students hold a low positive attitude ($M=2.46$, $SD=.820$) to the statement of learning Thai language is more useful than English learning. However, due to the geographic advantages of economic cooperation, in the southern provinces of China, the needs of Chinese-Thai bilingual employees require the educational changes. Therefore, Thai language learning programs in universities flourished in the southern provinces adjacent to Thailand, meanwhile accelerate the cooperation development of Thai language and Chinese language exchange programs (Li sheng, 2018). The Chinese students' cognitive and affective positive attitudes toward Thai language learning are likely increasing with the influence of Thailand and Thai cultures. Moreover, minority students have different attitudes towards the influence of their local dialect on Thai language learning. The main factor is whether

they have acquired their minority language, for students who have acquired minority dialects, then they think that dialects are helpful to the study of Thai, and vice versa. In addition, minority students are more positive than non-minority students in terms of cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes towards Thai language learning. However, since mainland China has been promoting Mandarin, Mandarin instead of dialects are used in school education and workplaces, causing the gradual decline of dialects and fewer and fewer people who have learned dialects. At the same time, given the relatively small sample size of the study, the conclusions on the dialect and Thai language learning attitudes of (Southern China's ethnic minorities) need further research.

Chinese exchange students' degree of interaction confidence was moderate, and Chinese exchange students stated that the lack of language knowledge and communication experience and skills led to their lack of interaction confidence, but this was not just a factor of the intercultural sensitivity research area, which was also related to the factors that affect the students' language learning. Even though the theory of Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996) and the Zone of Proximal Development theory of L.S Vygotsky confirmed that interaction is beneficial for second language acquisition, more researchers (Baker-Smemoe et al., 2012) finds that learners' anxiety, motivation, and apprehension during the interaction still have a role in their willingness to communicate. Moreover, the learner's success depends on the individual and social factors that shape the interaction, but the learner's differences are not only reflected in learning attitudes but also gender, ethnicity, and other aspects (Isabelli-García & Isabelli, 2020). That may be the explanation of the differences in attitudes toward Thai language learning between the students of minority groups and the non-minority group. To study learners' development in an abroad environment, these factors should be considered to recognize the versatility and complexity of the abroad learning environment.

In this study, although Chinese exchange students' degree of interaction confidence was moderate, it did not mean that studying abroad had no positive effect on students' interaction confidence. Because the data of students' interaction confidence

before they engaged the program has not been collected, it could not be compared with the data of students' interaction confidence after they engaged the program. Therefore, it was not possible to prove whether the current degree of interaction confidence was improved or not. However, in the study of Cadd (2012) stated that during the period of studying abroad, students were exposed to different language environments, which increased the opportunities and experience of communication with natives, effectively reduced the students' communication anxiety, and improved the fluency of communication. It confirmed that studying abroad had a positive impact on students' interaction confidence.

5.2.2.2 Pragmatic Language Competence and Interaction Confidence are Positively Related

Based on the findings of the study, that Chinese exchange students' degree of interaction confidence was moderate, meanwhile they expressed their nervousness, worries, unsettlement, uneasiness, and cautiousness when they interacted with natives. In unfamiliar environments, learners face issues of cultural differences, pragmatic rules, or sensitive topics (political topics, ethnic issues) that may affect language development. It indicated that Chinese exchange students did not have enough experience and competence to communicate with natives, they had not "the ability to use language effectively to achieve a specific purpose and to understand the language in an environment" (Thomas, 1983), which means they had no effective and pragmatic competence to interact with natives.

Input theory (Krashen, 1989) and Output theory (Swain and Lapkin, 1998) state that comprehensive input and output play a significant role in the acquiring of the target language for language learners. For Chinese exchange students, they learned Thai language in Thailand, which gave their opportunities to input and output authentic Thai language through interacted with natives; thus, it had a high possible chance to improve their pragmatic Thai language competence. In this study, the results revealed that even though Chinese exchange students liked to communicate with Thai natives, and considered that communication promoted their

Thai language learning. However, due to lacking practical knowledge of Thai language, lacking practical communication experience, and skills, which caused that they had a moderate degree of interaction confidence during the communication with natives. In the same way, insufficient interaction confidence affected the employment and development of pragmatic language. Collentine and Freed (2004) claimed that the learner's proficiency level before participating in the abroad program affects the learner's pragmatic competence and communicative ability. Therefore, the two factors should be considered comprehensively to improve learners' acquirement of the target language.

5.3 Implications of the Findings

5.3.1 For Students

Students should expand individual experience and abilities of abroad life through diverse ways, such as traveling abroad, engaging short-term exchange programs, and long-term exchange programs. Students should learn to utilize multiple approaches, environments, and ways to improve their intercultural competence and pragmatic language ability. The current most popular exchange programs are conducted in the third year of undergraduates, and the length of exchange is half a year to one year. Most Chinese exchange students had no experience abroad, including abroad travels. It is a challenge for most students to live and study abroad for months, facing language challenges, cultural differences, and lifestyle adaption. If Chinese exchange students have a chance to travel abroad or engage in a short-term exchange program for one to two weeks in the first or second grade, it will enlarge the students' cognitions about life abroad, and it will shorten the adapted time to deal with difficulties of studying and living abroad.

5.3.2 For Teachers

Although the majority of researchers agreed that interacting with native speakers of the target language is the most effective approach to influent intercultural

attitudes and competence of learners, however, the researchers of Heinzmann et al. (2015) argued that contact with natives alone was not sufficient to acquire positive outcomes of intercultural competence. Shively (2010) argued that pedagogical interventions for pragmatic language learning assist students successfully to improve their intercultural communication skills as well as understanding and expressing of intercultural differences. Therefore, the teachers of exchange programs in the future could take some interventional pedagogical activities for students related to intercultural competence and pragmatic language competence. For example, teachers could design and arrange diversity activities and courses to provide students with cultural visits and cultural tourism, as well as chances to communicate broad topics with Thais, such as debates, speeches, drama performances, which will improve students' competence of intercultural and interactive language.

5.3.3 For Administrators

Internationalization of universities is the requirement and trend for global higher education development, and exchange programs are one of the most popular and effective ways. Universities should encourage and support more students to participate in exchange programs through reciprocal policies, financial support, and skills training for studying abroad. At the same time, universities should need to provide teachers with training in intercultural teaching strategies and skills to improve the students' learning outcomes of exchange programs.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

This study investigated students' degree of intercultural sensitivity and attitudes towards Thai language learning after Thai language exchange programs. To better understand the influences of abroad language exchange programs on students, the two recommendations may prove useful for future research. They are as follows:

5.4.1 Collecting and investigating comparable data

1) data from before and after Chinese students who participate in the abroad exchange program. Comparing the data differences, it can more effectively discover the changes in students' intercultural sensitivity and attitudes toward Thai language learning which are impacted by the abroad exchange program.

2) data from abroad students' group and domestic students' group (based on students whether participating in the abroad exchange program). It will prove the differences between the two groups on intercultural sensitivity and attitudes are influenced by different studying environment instead of the length of learning time. This kind of comparison data effectively improves the reliability of the impact of the abroad study program on students.

5.4.2 Increasing the size and diversity of participants

The sample size of this study was small, only 63 samples, and the ratio of male to female was imbalanced. There were 12 males and 51 females. The study only used one private university as a sample resource. Thus, the research findings cannot be generalized. In future research, from more universities, Chinese exchange students who study in a Thai language program can be invited as research samples, including private and public universities, that can increase the size and diversity of students.

5.5 Summary

This chapter summarizes the findings of this study. It is found that Chinese exchange students' overall degree of intercultural sensitivity was high, and respect for cultural differences was the highest degree, while interaction confidence was the lowest degree. Meanwhile, the Chinese exchange students' attitude toward Thai language learning was moderate, and cognitive attitudes gained the lowest mean score, which showed moderate while behavioral attitudes gained the highest mean score, which showed positive. Then, it conducts relevant discussions based on the findings, such as

the positive influences of study abroad on intercultural sensitivity, the indivisibility between cultures and language learning, the influencing variables of attitudes toward language learning, the relevance between pragmatic language competence and interaction confidence. Thus, it puts forward application suggestions for administrators, teachers, and students. Finally, given the design and findings of this study, recommendations are made for future research.



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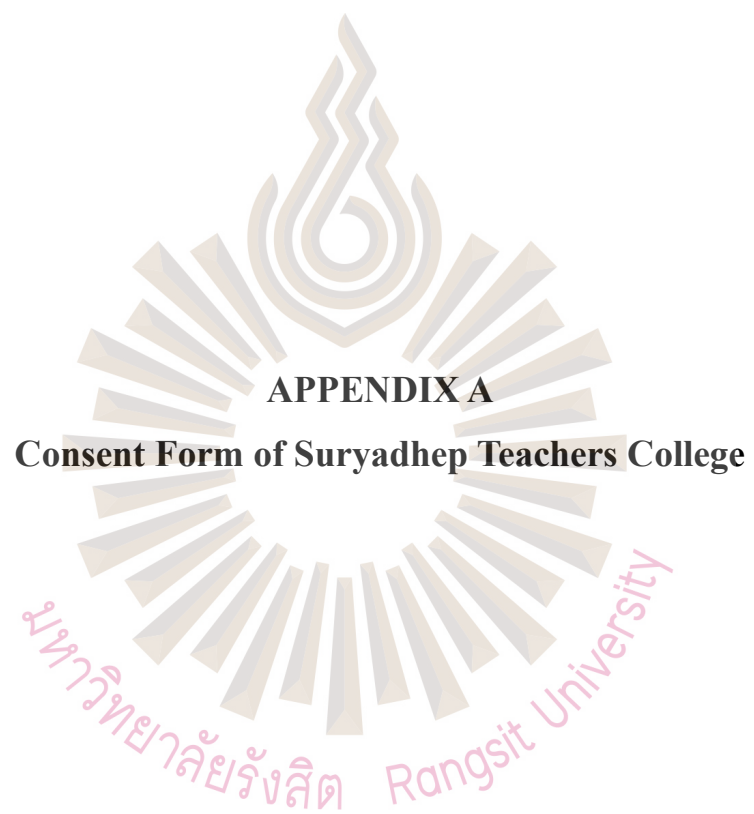
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APPENDIX A

Consent Form of Suryadhep Teachers College

มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University



Consent Form

Date: _____

Dear Administrators,
Chinese-Thai Institute, Rangsit University, Thailand

I am XIE XIANG ZHEN ID: 6105929, a Master's degree student in Suryadhep Teachers College at the Rangsit University. As part of my course, I am undertaking a research study entitled "A study of Chinese exchange students' attitudes toward Thai language learning and intercultural sensitivity at a private university in Thailand". The objectives of this study are to:

- investigate the attitudes of Chinese exchange students to Thai language learning in Thailand
- investigate the degree of Chinese exchange students' intercultural sensitivity when they enroll in the exchange program in Thailand

Prior to undertaking the study, I require your approval to approach all the Chinese exchange students in your department to take part in the questionnaire, which are aimed to take place within April 2020 through online platform. I can assure you that data collected will be kept confidential. Your help is highly appreciated.

My research is supervised by Asst.Prof.Dr. Ratchaporn Rattanaphumma, a lecturer in Graduate Program of Bilingual Education, Rangsit University.

For any further concerns or inquiries, please do not hesitate contact me at alyssashieh@gmail.com or 0660759168, or contact my supervisor at ratchporn.r@rsu.ac.th.

Yours sincerely,

XIE XIANG ZHEN

(Ms). XIE XIANG ZHEN(
Signature of Student

Ra

(Asst.Prof.Dr.Ratchaporn Rattanaphumma)
Signature of Supervisor

Usaporn Swekwi

(Assoc.Prof.Dr.Usaporn Swekwi)
Signature of Supervisor

The image features a large, faint watermark of the Rangsit University logo in the background. The logo consists of a central flame-like symbol above a semi-circular arrangement of radiating lines, with the university's name in Thai and English below it.

APPENDIX B

Permission Letter of Chinese -Thai Institute

มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University



มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University T. (66) 2997 2200-30
 เมืองเอก อ.พหลโยธิน Muang-Ake, Pathayothin Rd. F. (66) 2791 5757
 จ.ปทุมธานี 12000 Pathumthani 12000, Thailand E. info@rsu.ac.th

Permission Letter

8 June 2020

To: Ms. XIE XIANG ZHEN

This is to certify that you are allowed to collect research data from the Chinese exchange students who participated in the Thai language program during Academic Year 2019 - 2020 at Rangsit University.

For more information please contact Chinese-Thai Institute of Rangsit University by telephone No.: +66 2977 2200 Ext. 6515 during Monday to Friday from 09.00 A.M. - 16.00 P.M.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Pitchayaphant Charnbhumidol'.

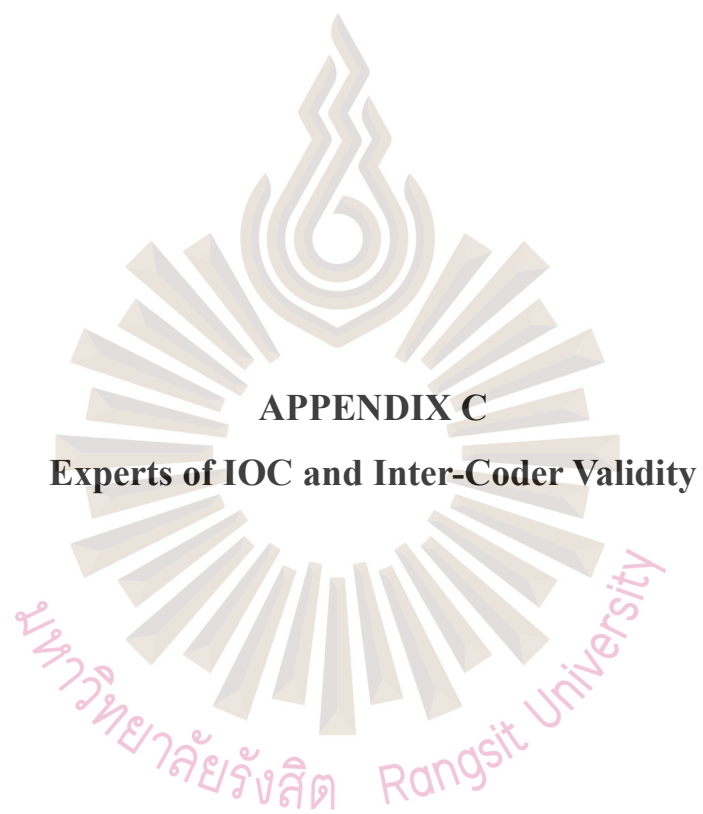
(Dr. Pitchayaphant Charnbhumidol)

Director of Chinese-Thai Institute

Rangsit University

มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต

Rangsit University



Experts of IOC and Inter-Coder Validity

Expert A (For IOC and Inter-Coder Validity)

Name: Asst. Prof. Dr. Noparat Tananuraksakul

Affiliation: Suryadhep Teachers College, Rangsit University, Thailand

Email: noparat.t@rsu.ac.th

Expert B (For IOC and Inter-Coder Validity)

Name: Dr. Suthee Khamkaew

Affiliation: Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Thailand

Email: ajansuthee@hotmail.com

Expert C (For IOC)

Name: Asst. Prof. Dr. Tanisaya Jiriyasin

Affiliation: University of the Thai Chamber, Thailand

Email: tanisaya@gmail.com





APPENDIX D

Item Objective Congruence Index (IOC) Form

มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University

Part II: Chinese Exchange Students' Intercultural Sensitivity

Objectives: To explore the degrees of Chinese exchange students' intercultural sensitivity. It includes five factors: interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness.

Response format: Five-Likert Scale

Adopted from: Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (2000).

Direction: Please rate the intercultural sensitivity scale items as below, tick (✓) that correspond to your opinion.

Rate +1, if the item matches the stated objectives.

Rate 0, if the item is unclear or unsure whether the measures meet the stated objectives.

Rate -1, if the item does not match the stated objectives.

What to be measured	Item Statements	Score of content validity		
		+1	0	-1
Interaction engagement	1. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.			
	2. I tend not to expose myself before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.			
	3. I am open-minded to people from different cultures.			
	4. I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterparts during our interactions.			
	5. I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct and talkers.			
	6. I avoid the situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct people.			

Respect for cultural differences	7. I think people who disrespect my culture are annoying.			
	8. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.			
	9. I respect the values of people from different cultures.			
	10. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.			
	11. I think my culture is better than other cultures.			
Interaction confidence	12. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.			
	13. I find it hard to start a conversation with people from different cultures.			
	14. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.			
	15. I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.			
	16. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.			
Interaction enjoyment	17. I get bored when interacting with people from different cultures.			
	18. I often feel excluded when I am with people from different cultures.			
	19. I often feel embarrassed when interacting with people from different cultures.			
Interaction attentiveness	20. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.			
	21. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.			
	22. I am sensitive to subtle meanings related to cultural differences during our interactions.			

PART III Attitude towards Thai language learning

Objectives: To explore Chinese exchange students' attitudes toward Thai language learning. It includes three factors: cognitive attitudes, affective attitudes, and behavioral attitudes.

Response format: Five-Likert Scale

Adopted and reversed from LAQ-LL ITEMS (Language Attitudes Questionnaire for Language Learners) of Artamonova (2017).

Direction: Please rate the intercultural sensitivity scale items as below, tick (✓) that correspond to your opinion.

Rate +1, if the item matches the stated objectives.

Rate 0, if the item is unclear or unsure whether the measures meet the stated objectives.

Rate -1, if the item does not match the stated objectives.

What to be measured	Item Statements	Score of content validity		
		+1	0	-1
Cognitive attitudes	1. Learning Thai language is important for college students in the south of China.			
	2. Learning Thai language is more useful than English.			
	3. The ways of formal Thai language learning are more useful than informal ways.			
	4. Thai language learning is easy.			
Affective attitudes	5. I like Thai language more than English.			
	6. I prefer to learn Thai language in Thailand.			
	7. I learn Thai for future work reasons.			
	8. I prefer to continue to study Thai (such as graduate programs).			
Behavioral attitudes	9. I learn Thai language by talking with natives.			
	10. I learn Thai language by learning Thai cultures.			
	11. I learn Thai language in the same ways in Thailand and China.			
	12. I learn Thai language through online courses or online materials.			

Thanks for your comments



**Chinese exchange students' intercultural sensitivity and attitudes toward Thai
language learning**

Dear Respondents,

I am XIE XIANG ZHEN ID:6105929, a graduate student from the College of Suryadhep Teachers, Rangsit University of Thailand. This questionnaire is for the requirement of a Master Degree in Education, the purpose of the questionnaire is to investigate Chinese exchange students' degree of intercultural sensitivity and attitudes toward Thai language learning when students study and live in Thailand.

This questionnaire may provide you insights into your attitude towards Thai language learning and your emotions and experience in interacting with native Thai speakers, and you will contribute to related research.

I would very much appreciate your participation in this research questionnaire. Please be assured that your responses will be treated confidentially. It will take you 10-15 minutes. There is no standard answer to this questionnaire, and there is no right or wrong. Please fill in truthfully, thank you very much for your participation.

Yours sincerely,
XIE XIANG ZHEN
Researcher

Chinese exchange students' intercultural sensitivity and attitudes toward Thai language learning

The construction of the questionnaire:

Part I Background information

Part II Intercultural Sensitivity

Part III Attitudes toward Thai language learning

PART I Background Information

Please answer the following questions and tick (✓) the item that corresponds to your opinion.:

1. Gender

Female Male

2. Have you ever been to Thailand before?

Yes No

3. How long have you stayed in Thailand?

Half a year One year Over one year Others:

4. How long have you learned Thai language?

One year Two years Over two years Others:

5. Your ethnic group:

Non-minority Minority

6. Does your local language help you learn Thai language?

Yes No

PART II Intercultural Sensitivity

Please answer the following questions and tick (✓) the item that corresponds to your opinion.

Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree

No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		5	4	3	2	1
Interaction engagement						
1	I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.					
2	I tend not to expose myself before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.					
3	I am open-minded to people from different cultures.					
4	I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterparts during our interactions.					
5	I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct with talkers.					
6	I avoid the situation where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct people.					
Respect for cultural differences						
7	I think people who disrespect my culture are annoying.					
8	I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.					
9	I respect the values of people from different cultures.					
10	I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.					
11	I think my culture is better than other cultures.					
Interaction confidence						
12	I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.					

No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		5	4	3	2	1
13	I find it hard to start a conversation with people from different cultures.					
14	I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.					
15	I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.					
16	I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.					
Interaction enjoyment						
17	I get bored when interacting with people from different cultures.					
18	I often feel excluded when I am with people from different cultures.					
19	I often feel embarrassed when interacting with people from different cultures.					
Interaction attentiveness						
20	I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.					
21	I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.					
22	I am sensitive to subtle meanings related to cultural differences during our interactions.					

Other comments:

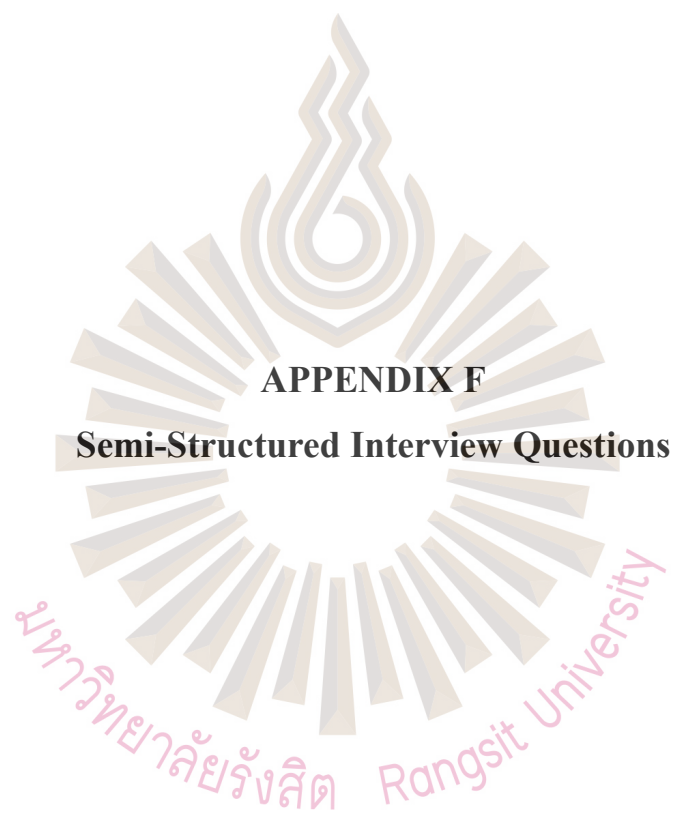
PART III Attitude towards Thai language learning

Please answer the following questions and tick (✓) the item that corresponds to your opinion.

Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree

No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		5	4	3	2	1
Cognitive attitudes						
1	Learning Thai language is important for college students in the south of China.					
2	Learning Thai language is more useful than English.					
3	Daily Thai language learning is more important than academic Thai language learning.					
4	Thai language learning is easier than English learning.					
Affective attitudes						
5	I like Thai language more than English.					
6	I prefer to learn Thai language in Thailand than in China.					
7	I learn Thai language for future work instead of interest.					
8	I prefer to continue studying Thai language (such as graduate programs).					
Behavioral attitudes						
9	I learn Thai language by talking with the natives.					
10	I learn Thai language by learning Thai cultures.					
11	I learn Thai language in a different way, no matter I am in Thailand or China.					
12	It is more useful for me to learn Thai language with online courses or online materials.					

Other comments:



APPENDIX F

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Semi-structured interview questions

1. Intercultural sensitivity

1.1 After studying and living in Thailand, what did you think were significant differences from your previous perceptions?

1.2 What were the most difficulties you met when you talked with natives?

2. Attitudes toward Thai language learning

2.1 Are you a minority group person, did your local dialect help with learning Thai language?

2.2 Why did you choose to learn Thai language instead of learning English or another language (Lao, Malaysian, Burmese)?

2.3 Did you want to study and work in Thailand in the future?

2.4 What were the most helpful ways for you to learn Thai language when you studied and lived in Thailand?



The logo of Rangsit University, featuring a stylized flame or sunburst design in the center, surrounded by a circular arrangement of radiating lines.

APPENDIX G

Evaluation Form of Inter-Coder Validity for Expert

มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University

Date: June 22, 2020

Instructions: Please analyze the following excerpts taken from the interview data and tick if each of them fits into the appropriate or correct themes/categorization. Please tick (✓) that corresponds to your opinion.

Note: N plus numbers mean pseudonyms of interviewees.

Structure of Inter-Coders of interviewees' excerpts

Research question 1: What were Chinese exchange students' degrees of intercultural sensitivity?

Theme	Sub-theme
1. Respect for cultural differences To <u>realize, accept, and respect</u> for others' cultural diversities.	1.1 Value 1.2 Life environment 1.3 Behaviors 1.4 Religion and customs
2. (Lack of) Interaction confidence <u>Reasons influencing the confidence</u> of the interlocutors performing	2.1 Knowledge of Thai language 2.2 Communication experience and skills 2.3 Common topics

Research question 2: What were Chinese exchange students' attitudes toward Thai language learning?

Theme	Sub-theme
3. Cognitive attitude The <u>knowledge, thoughts, or belief</u>	3.1 Dialect is helpful for Thai language learning 3.2 Dialect is not helpful for Thai language learning
4. Affective attitude The person's <u>feelings or emotions</u>	4.1 Prefer to Thai language 4.2 Prefer to improve Thai and work in Thailand
5. Behavioral attitudes The <u>intention or tendency to take a specific action</u>	5.1 Communicating with natives 5.2 Learning Thai cultures

Research question 1: What were Chinese exchange students' degrees of intercultural sensitivity?

Interview question:

(1) After studying and living in Thailand, what did you think were significant differences from your previous perceptions? Moreover, how had these new changes affected your cognition, behavior, or emotions in Thai people and Thai culture?

Theme 1: Respect for cultural differences To realize, accept, and respect for others' cultural diversities.	Agree	Dis-agree	Ques-tionable
Sub-theme 1.1 Value: a person's principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life 1) "Thailand was more tolerant than China in many ways, such as treating people who are different; in Thailand, there were many transgender students in schools, but no one laughed at and bullied them. When I met with transgender students, I felt that Ren Yao (shemale in Chinese) was an insulting word. I would not use this term to call them again. They made me think about respect and courage to be myself." (N8)			
Suggestions:			
2) "After I came to Thailand, some Thai classmates would ask me-did the Chinese like this, did the Chinese like that? I shared many Chinese things with them. From this matter, I learned that it was normal for people in any country not to understand the cultures of other countries, but we cannot disrespect cultures of other countries when we do not know it very much." (N1)			
Suggestions:			

<p>Sub-theme 1.2: Life context: supporting people's needs, spirits, abilities, and creations, etc.</p> <p>3) “After coming to university, I found that Rangsit was free and open; there were often open markets on campus for selling things, such as local food and clothes, everyone including the people around, could come into campus. Compared with it, the Chinese campus is very closed and strict.” (N5)</p>			
<p>Suggestions:</p>			
<p>4) “Thailand had a more open network environment. I liked to watch the news on YouTube. The open network channels allowed me to see more points of view and made me more aware that I should not judge things because of only one party's information.” (N2)</p>			
<p>Suggestions:</p>			
<p>Sub-theme 1.3: Behaviors: actions or reactions of persons in response to external or internal stimuli.</p> <p>5) “Thai students like to sit on the ground when studying in the study room or library. In China, many people think it inappropriate then prevent students from sitting on the ground. Thai universities treat students as adults, not like Chinese universities, are over-controlling of students.” (N6)</p>			
<p>Suggestions:</p>			

6) “Before there was a quarrel between Thais and Chinese on the Internet, after arriving in Thailand, I found that the real Thailand was very different from Thailand in the online world. Some Thai people even liked to speak some simple Chinese to us, like hello, thank you. They were favorable and friendly to us.” (N7)			
Suggestions:			
<p>Sub-theme 1.4: Religion and customs: a particular system of faith and worship, a widely accepted way of behaving that is specific to a particular society.</p> <p>7) “After coming to Thailand, the most obvious thing was that there were many things in Buddhist culture, and there were many Buddhas in the Rangsit campus. However, these Buddha statues and other things did not make me feel out of place with the university.” (N3)</p>			
Suggestions:			
8) “Teachers from Chinese schools used to introduce some of the customs of Thailand in the country. When I came to Thailand, I had a more authentic experience. For example, you cannot touch the head of a child casually. It is an act of expressing love in China, but this action is very impolite in Thailand. We should respect their custom, do in Rome as Rome does.” (N1, 4, 9)			

Overall suggestions:

Interview question:

(2) What were the most difficulties you met when you talked with natives?

Theme 2. Lack of Interaction confidence reasons influencing the confidence of the interlocutors performing	Agree	Dis-agree	Ques-tionable
<p>Sub-theme 2.1: Knowledge of Thai language: the theoretical or practical understanding of Thai language, such as grammar, pronunciation, words, etc.</p> <p>1) “Thai people stressed great importance to the use of polite language, including honorific words. Thai language words are also gender-specific and quite strict, and I did not pay special attention when studying in China, so when I came to Thailand, I felt the obvious difference. At first, I often forgot or made mistakes, but then I became naturally used to it.” (N3, 4)</p>			
<p>Suggestions:</p>			
<p>2) “There are a lot of foreign words in Thai language, especially English. For example, Thai people like to use brand names to refer to items, and I think young Thai people prefer to speak Thai and mixed with English; they think it is cool. Nevertheless, the pronounce is different from the original English, which makes me feel chaos; besides, Thai also contains a lot of Buddhist words, which undoubtedly makes it difficult for me to learn.” (N6)</p>			
<p>Suggestions:</p>			

<p>Sub-theme 2.2: Communication experience and skills: having experience or skills in using knowledge and know-how to explain and clarify thoughts and ideas.</p> <p>3) “Native Thai people speak Thai very quickly, and spoken language is very different from the written language we learn at school, which often makes me find it difficult to react.” (N1, 2, 7, 9)</p>			
<p>Suggestions:</p>			
<p>4) “Although, in the beginning, I was not used to communicating with Thai people. I was afraid of making mistakes. Therefore, mostly the time, I kept silent. Thanks to the Thai people were patient to me, helped me, and made me feel that living in a foreign country was not as frightening as I expected.” (N5, 6)</p>			
<p>Suggestions:</p>			
<p>Sub-theme 2.3: Common topics: contents of conversation interested in common</p> <p>5) “Because Thailand is a religious country and a monarchy, it is different from China; therefore, I did not understand what the taboo topics were and worried about offending or embarrassing each other.” (N5)</p>			
<p>Suggestions:</p>			

6) “Sometimes, what my Thai friends talked about, such as some Thai celebrities, somewhere in Thailand, or some traditional things, because I did not know, it was difficult to communicate, it was difficult to fit into.” (N1)			
Suggestions:			

Overall suggestions:

Research question 2: What were Chinese exchange students’ attitudes toward Thai language learning?

Interview question:

(3) Are you a minority group person? Does your local language help with Thai language learning?

Theme 3. Cognitive attitudes refers to the knowledge, thoughts, or belief of Thai language learning	Agree	Dis-agree	Questionable
Sub-theme 3.1: Dialect is helpful for Thai language learning: the local language of Ethnic groups is helpful for Thai language learning 1) “I am from a minority group (Zhuang). I cannot speak it, but I can understand it. I think it helps a little, mainly because there are some similarities in pronunciation with Thai language.” (N7)			
Suggestions:			

<p>2) “I am from a minority group (Zhuang), and I can speak my local dialect. My local dialect words like “dog and father” pronounce almost the same as Thai language. It made me felt much more comfortable learning Thai language. It found that among classmates in university, students from the north had some pronunciations that were difficult to speak because there was no such pronunciation in Mandarin.” (N5)</p>			
<p>Suggestions:</p>			
<p>Sub-theme 3.2: Dialect is not helpful for Thai language learning: the local language of Ethic groups is not helpful for Thai language learning</p> <p>3) “I am from a minority group (Miao). I can understand some dialects of the Miao, but I cannot speak. I do not think it is beneficial for learning Thai. (N2)</p>			
<p>Suggestions:</p>			
<p>4)“I am not from a minority group. Mandarin does not help Thai learning.” (N1,3,4,6,8,9)</p>			
<p>Suggestions:</p>			

Overall suggestions:

Interview question:

(4) Why did you choose to learn Thai language instead of learning English or another language (Lao, Malaysian, Burmese)? Did you want to study and work in Thailand in the future?

Theme 4. Affective attitudes the person's feelings or emotions to Thai language learning	Agree	Dis-agree	Questionable
<p>Sub-theme 4.1: Prefer to Thai language: tend to choose to Thai language</p> <p>1) “I am from a minority group (Miao). However, emotionally, I would prefer to learn languages, and Thai is not as extensive as English, so I finally chose to learn Thai.” (N2)</p>			
Suggestions:			
<p>2) “I chose Thai because my English is fine. If I learn Thai, it will increase my language advantage comparing with other people. Compared to Malaysia, Myanmar, and other Southeast Asian countries, I prefer Thailand.” (N1)</p>			
Suggestions:			
<p>3) “Yunnan is adjacent to Thailand. Universities in Yunnan encourage students to learn Thai language. The development of cooperation between China and Thailand requires more people who can speak Chinese and Thai bilingually. I chose to learn Thai because I thought Thai would be more useful than learning English.” (N1,8)</p>			
Suggestions:			

<p>Sub-theme 4.2: Prefer to improve Thai and work in Thailand: tend to choose to improve Thai in Thailand in the future</p> <p>4)“I am willing to work in Thailand for a few years and continue to improve my Thai language, but my family is all in China, and our living habits are different so that I will return to China in the end.” (N2,7,9)</p>			
Suggestions:			
<p>5) “I came to Thailand to study Thai language. I thought it was like planting a seed in my heart, which ties me with Thailand. I will come to Thailand again, and I hope to live in Thailand in the future.” (N5)</p>			
Suggestions:			
<p>6) “Because I have studied Thai, it would be a pity if I do not do Thai language-related work in the future, so if there is a chance, I would like to work in Thailand.” (N6)</p>			
Suggestions:			
<p>8) “Working and living in China is very stressful. If there is a chance, I am willing to work and live in Thailand.” (N3, 4)</p>			
Suggestions:			

Overall suggestions:

Interview question:

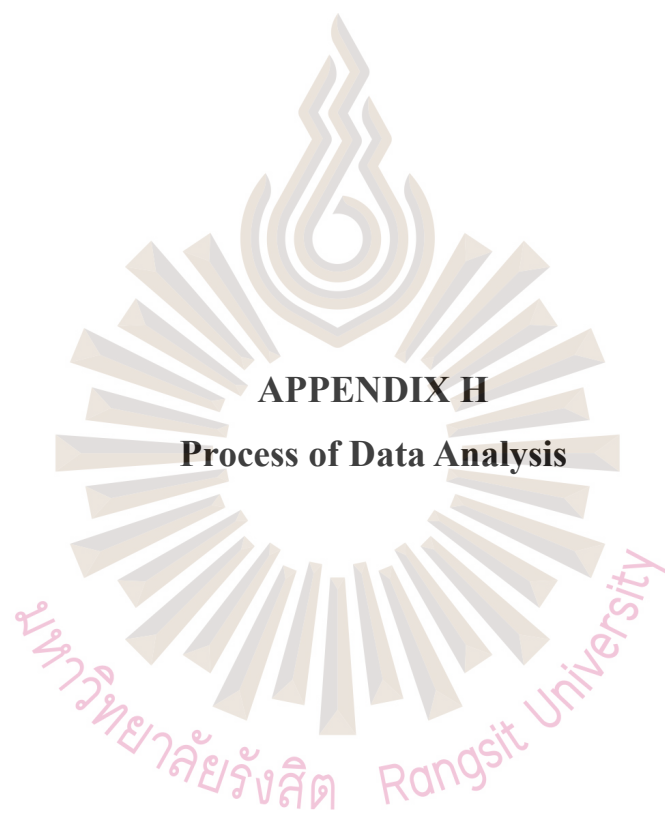
(5) What were the most helpful ways for you to learn Thai language when you studied and lived in Thailand?

Theme 5. Behavioral attitudes the intention or tendency to take a specific action on Thai language learning	Agree	Dis-agree	Ques-tionable
Sub-theme 5.1: Communicating with natives: learning Thai through Interacting with Thai native speakers 1) “Thai teachers liked to arrange some exciting homework to help us consolidate the knowledge we learn in the classroom. For example, let us shoot a video of buying daily necessities. In the video, we needed to talk to the salesperson. This kind of homework made me feel very interesting. Even it made me felt pressure, meanwhile trained me talked with Thai people with more courage and confidence one by one.” (N1)			
Suggestions:			
Sub-theme 5.1: Communicating with natives 2) “Communicated with local people, such as cleaners, the owners of the restaurant, sellers of fruits. They taught me so many Thai words.” (N3,4)			
Suggestions:			
3) “What was most useful to me was to study with Thai students who majored in Chinese. Because they learned a foreign language, therefore they understand my questions and problems easier, they helped me very patiently.” (N8)			
Suggestions:			

4) "I thought the most effective way was to communicate with local people. Communicating with them was very helpful for my listening and speaking." (N2,3,4,6,7)			
Suggestions:			
<p>Sub-theme 5.2: Learning Thai cultures: learning Thai through learning Thai cultures</p> <p>5) "When we traveled to attractions with Thai friends in Thailand, we talked about many broad topics. It inevitably involved questions about Thai cultures and Thai language. My Thai friends shared a lot with me." (N5)</p>			
Suggestions:			
6) "Thai teachers liked to let us learn Thai through interactive communication, music, and activities; There were activities such as learned Thai songs and dances; let us learn Thai language and Thai cultures in a relaxed atmosphere." (N1,9)			
Suggestions:			

Overall suggestions:

(Signature of expert)



APPENDIX H

Process of Data Analysis

มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University

GET DATA

```

/FILE='Intercultural Sensitivity .xlsx'
/CELLRANGE=FULL
/DATATYPEMIN PERCENTAGE=95.0

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EXECUTE.

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DATASET NAME DataSet1 WINDOW=FRONT.

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DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q5 Q6 Q7 Q8 Q9 Q10 Q11 Q12
Q13 Q14 Q15 Q16 Q17 Q18 Q19 Q20 Q21 Q22 /STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV

```

Notes

Input	Active Dataset	Dataset 1
Syntax		DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q5 Q6 Q7 Q8 Q9 Q10 Q11 Q12 Q13 Q14 Q15 Q16 Q17 Q18 Q19 Q20 Q21 Q22 /STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV.

Descriptive Statistics of Intercultural Sensitivity Data

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	63	4.16	.745
Q2	63	3.46	.800
Q3	63	4.40	.661
Q4	63	4.02	.729
Q5	63	3.57	.797
Q6	63	2.94	.931
Q7	63	4.29	.792
Q8	63	3.75	.915
Q9	63	4.40	.814
Q10	63	4.35	.652
Q11	63	3.08	1.067
Q12	63	3.75	.740

Q13	63	3.21	.765
Q14	63	3.10	.777
Q15	63	3.02	.793
Q16	63	3.17	.685
Q17	63	3.37	.747
Q18	63	3.37	.747
Q19	63	3.10	.893
Q20	63	3.67	.762
Q21	63	4.00	.596
Q22	63	3.63	.848
Valid N (listwise)	63		

GET DATA

/FILE='Attitudes toward Thai language learning .xlsx'

/CELLRANGE=FULL

/DATATYPEMIN PERCENTAGE=95.0

/HIDDEN IGNORE=YES.

EXECUTE.

DATASET NAME DataSet2 WINDOW=FRONT.

DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q5 Q6 Q7 Q8 Q9 Q10 Q11 Q12

/STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV.

Notes

Input	Active Dataset	DataSet2
Syntax		DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q5 Q6 Q7 Q8 Q9 Q10 Q11 Q12 /STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV.

Descriptive Statistics of Attitudes toward Thai language learning

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	63	3.17	.773
Q2	63	2.46	.820
Q3	63	3.95	.792
Q4	63	3.13	1.039
Q5	63	3.05	.974
Q6	63	4.03	.761
Q7	63	3.11	.918
Q8	63	3.49	.948
Q9	63	4.02	.635
Q10	63	4.10	.712
Q11	63	3.10	1.027
Q12	63	3.11	.918
Valid N (listwise)	63		

BIOGRAPHY

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