

DEVELOPMENT OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING AND EXPERIENTIAL CULTURE LEARNING CYCLE INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL FOR ENHANCING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS



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Abstract

The Objective of this research were: 1) To examine the factors affecting intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at Guangxi University of Science and Technology (GXUST), 2) To develop the task-based language teaching and experiential culture learning cycle instructional model for enhancing intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at Guangxi University of Science and Technology (GXUST), and 3) To study the results of implementing the task-based language teaching and experiential culture learning cycle instructional model for enhancing intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at Guangxi University of Science and Technology (GXUST). The total of 68 freshmen from 2 classes of students with different levels of proficiency – beginner, intermediate, and advanced, who enroll in Integrated English course at GXUST in semester 1 academic year 2023. The instrument of the research used to collect data was the 5 rating-scale the questionnaire for students and the interview for the teachers. Research process to do the questionnaire for students. Data Analysis by Descriptive Statistics i.e., Frequency, mean, Standard Deviation, and KR-20.

The results of this research were found the factors effecting intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at Guangxi University of Science and Technology (GXUST). Internal factors, encompassing recognition of intercultural communication competence (ICC) importance, acknowledgment of inadequacy, confidence, cognitive style, personality, career considerations, and effort attribution, profoundly shape students' ICC development. Valence factors underscore emotional significance, while cognitive style and personality demand tailored teaching. Career considerations, as an extrinsic motivator, surpass intrinsic interest. Recognizing effort's impact on success and providing timely positive feedback enhance confidence and motivation. Addressing these internal factors optimizes student engagement and ICC development in an Intercultural Education course, and External factors influencing intercultural communication competence (ICC) in an Intercultural Education course were investigated, revealing five key groups: teacher role, student-teacher interaction, teaching materials, teaching methods, and teaching hours' limitation. Teacher qualifications and assistance significantly impact ICC development, with proficient and

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competent teachers fostering a conducive learning environment. Interaction and cooperation in class, prioritized over the physical environment, stimulate student enthusiasm. Effective teaching materials, like textbooks, bridge knowledge gaps and support autonomous study, while adapted materials influence ICC. Meaningful situations, created through teaching methods, are vital in an English as a Foreign Language environment, emphasizing the importance of meeting students' needs for ICC improvement.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Experiential Culture Learning Cycle, Instructional Model

Introduction

Integrated English Course is set as one of the compulsory core courses for undergraduate English majors in China (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2018). Different from language skill-training courses such as Extensive Reading Course and Oral English Course, Integrated English Course has been offered for English majors for four academic semesters successively in Guangxi University of Science and Technology (GXUST) with the aim to develop students' intercultural communication competence (ICC) and critical thinking ability in line with comprehensive development of language skills (Guangxi University of Science and Technology, 2021). Majority of teachers and students have already realized that the development of ICC is the ultimate goal of foreign language education (Jia Yuxin, 1997). From the perspective of Constructivism and Situational Theory, whether it is the development of language skills or the development of ICC, most knowledge an individual acquires in classroom is just superficial facts. Only by experiencing and practicing can real internalization take place. Since culture learning and language learning are interdependent, it is necessary and urgent to develop an instructional model which can make use of intercultural experience to integrate language learning and cultural learning so that to contribute to the development of learners' ICC at its proper stage. First of all, from the perspective of language learning, the most articulate application of experiential learning is task-based language teaching (TBLT) provided by Kohonen (1992). Learning is regarded as a collaborative and transformative rather than a transmissive process, in which self-direction and learning how to learn are seen as central to the mastery of content. Pedagogical tasks are what learners do in the classroom to activate and develop their language skills through information exchange, but there is a concrete outcome that goes beyond the manipulation of linguistic forms. That means the task has sense of completeness which takes sociolinguistic context into consideration, and learners are able to evaluate how well they have done at the end of the task in linguistic competence and communicative competence. Secondly, from the perspective of cultural learning, Moran's experiential culture learning cycle (ECLC) is one of the most feasible applications of experiential learning. Moran (2009) adapted the stages of Kolb's model to more directly incorporate the cultural knowing and the cultural experience. Content and process are joined, whether in a direct engagement in the culture itself or in a vicarious, indirect one, such as reading cultural notes in a language textbook, watching a film, or listening to a teacher's stories about a trip to a different culture. The nature of this encounter is played out in each of the four stages, namely, participation, description, interpretation and response. Over time, through repeated encounters and explicit reference to models of culture learning, learners would acquire more knowledge of the target culture, develop more appropriate linguistic and cultural behaviors at the same time.

To sum up, TBLT and ECLC could be theoretically integrated to improve learners' ICC as well as their language skills in some course which focuses on learners' learning by doing — experiential learning. Therefore, cultural experience based on language practice is the best way for English majors to develop their ICC. With intercultural experience, the language and pragmatic differences contained in cultural differences will not only be presented in the process of learners' cultural experience and communication, but also learners' gradual mastery of these language and pragmatic differences will enable learners to reflect and reconstruct at the level of self-awareness and realize the development of ICC.

As the rationale shown above, the author realizes the importance of studying “Development of Task-Based Language Teaching and Experiential Culture Learning Cycle Instructional Model for Enhancing Intercultural Communication Competence of Undergraduate Students”.

Objectives

1. To examine the factors affecting intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at Guangxi University of Science and Technology (GXUST).
2. To develop the task-based language teaching and experiential culture learning cycle instructional model for enhancing intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at Guangxi University of Science and Technology (GXUST).
3. To study the results of implementing the task-based language teaching and experiential culture learning cycle instructional model for enhancing intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at Guangxi University of Science and Technology (GXUST)

Material and Method

Literature review

In the study of “Development of Task-Based Language Teaching and Experiential Culture Learning Cycle Instructional Model for Enhancing Intercultural Communication Competence of Undergraduate Students”, the researcher studied the documents concerning the following.

Task-Based Language Teaching

Theoretical Background

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has its origin in a number of philosophical positions and empirical traditions in education, applied linguistics, and psychology. These include experiential learning and humanistic education, learner-centered instruction, and process-oriented and analytical approaches to syllabus design.

An important conceptual basis for task-based language teaching is experiential learning. This approach takes the learner’s immediate personal experience as the point of departure for the learning experience. Intellectual growth occurs when learners engage in and reflect on sequences of tasks. The active involvement of the learner is therefore central to the approach, and a rubric that conveniently captures the active, experiential nature of the process is ‘learning by doing’. In this, it contrasts with a ‘transmission’ approach to education in which the learner acquires knowledge passively from the teacher.

The most articulate application of experiential learning to language teaching is provided by Kohonen (1992). In many respects, his model can be seen as a theoretical blueprint for TBLT. The principles he proposed see learning as a collaborative and transformative rather than a transmissive process, one in which the teacher creates an environment within which the learners take control of their own learning processes. Self-direction and learning how to learn are seen as central to the mastery of content. For this reason, TBLT is believed to be effective in learning target language fluency and developing student confidence.

Concerns in empirical instruction

Pedagogical tasks are what learners do in the classroom to activate and develop their language skills. Creating an inventory of real-world tasks, that is, listing the actions that learners will actually or potentially need to perform outside the classroom, is a first step in the development of a TBLT curriculum. The next step is to turn these into pedagogical tasks. Such tasks involve learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language to achieve a nonlinguistic outcome. Task types include information-gap task, problem solving, opinion exchange, and values clarification. Although there is no explicit

focus on pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, students need to mobilize their linguistic resources to achieve the goal of the task. What is more, there is a concrete outcome that goes beyond the manipulation of linguistic forms. The task has sense of completeness, and at the end of the task, learners are able to evaluate how well they have done.

Method of teaching

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) refers to a type of instruction that relies on the use of authentic target language to do meaningful tasks. TBLT is also referred to as task-based instruction (TBI) and can be considered a branch of communicative language teaching (CLT). The notion of tasks is central to this type of instruction. The assessment of learning is mainly based on task outcome and not only on the accurate use of the target language. Generally speaking, there would be three main steps for one task to be completed. Reference

Step 1: Pre-task (students and teachers would brainstorm aspects of a topic they are interested in)

Step 2: Task cycle (students would be put into groups according to common interests)

Step 3: Language focus (students present the topic and evaluate the activity)

Experiential Culture Learning Cycle

Theoretical Background

Kolb (1984) published a model for learning from experience (derived from the work of Kurt Lewin, John Dewey, and Piaget) that proposes a cycle of four distinct stages, each with a different learning purpose. Learning occurs through experiences. Through a cycle of observation, theorizing, and strategizing, learners go from one experience to another and move toward mastery of the subject matter at hand. In this model, the stages occur in sequence: (1) concrete experience; (2) reflective observation; (3) abstract conceptualization; and (4) active experimentation.

In terms of the stages of the cycle, with learner appearing at the center, concrete experience becomes participation, where the task is direct or indirect engagement in the culture, with an emphasis on knowing how. Reflective observation becomes description, with a focus on knowing about. Abstract conceptualization becomes interpretation, where learners concentrate on knowing why. Active experimentation becomes response, with an emphasis on self-awareness, knowing oneself. Each of the stage provides a clear pedagogical focus. Content, activities, and outcomes merge in a distinct way for each stage.

Concerns in empirical instruction

Task-based language teaching and experiential cultural learning cycle refers to relatively stable teaching activities and procedures established under the guidance of the teaching ideas of task-based language teaching and experiential cultural learning cycle. After analyzing the advantages of the above-mentioned task-based language teaching and experiential cultural learning cycle modes, the researcher found that different modes have slightly different emphasis on the instructional design link, and the basic links of the new teaching mode that mixes the two modes also follow the principles of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. The new teaching model takes more account of the teaching content, resources and methods in the mixed teaching environment. According to the purpose of this study, 6 steps will be designed:

Step 1: Pre-task (students are asked to anticipate what they are about to encounter, using techniques of advance organizers or schema-activation)

Step 2: Participation of task cycle (direct or indirect engagement in the culture, with an emphasis on knowing how)

Step 3: Description of task cycle (reflective observation, with a focus on knowing about)

Step 4: Interpretation of task cycle (abstract conceptualization, with a focus on knowing why)

Step 5: Response of task cycle (active experimentation, with an emphasis on self-awareness, knowing oneself)

Step 6: Outcome presentation with language focus

The integration of TBLT and ECLC

The concept of the instructional model is proposed on the integration of TBLT and Experiential Culture Learning Cycle. Both are based on experiential learning, with the previous one focusing more on language teaching and the latter one focusing more on cultural learning.

The integration of TBLT and ECLC is theoretically an instructional model with good balance between language teaching and culture teaching. The teaching process should contain the four stages of "specific experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active practice". All the learning process has to consider the four stages, which help the students to learn by themselves and fix themselves to the lesson and get efficient feedback, and finally they can experience and gain cognition from their active learning. During different cultural experiential activities, task types of TBLT could be employed, so students can communicate with each other, they can make a conversation with foreign students, which can help them to improve their ways of organizing the language, provide them chances to use the language, and the activities can also help them to internalize their knowledge. A large number of cultural experience activities not only help improve students' passion of learning, but also can exercise students' ability of facing strain, ability to think critically, ability to fit into the conversation context and put themselves in a right position when they have a conversation. Learning through cultural experiential activities is a new teaching concept and teaching method.

Compared with the traditional class, it pays more attention to students' experience and let them join the class in an active way. It creates a free and harmonious learning environment for students and greatly enhances their enthusiasm for learning. Besides, it also ensures the teacher to teach students in accordance with their aptitude, allowing students to choose according to their own interests and hobbies, which can help them learning more effectively and scientifically. Besides, the characteristic of the cultural experiential activities is that the teaching environment has to be created by the teacher or the organizer according to the specific teaching content and the requirements of the target. And the cultural experiential activities will actively guide students to apply the knowledge they have learned in a specific environment. With their personal experience, the students can feel and understand the culture better. As an advanced teaching concept, learning through cultural experiential activities has been applied to many disciplines and fields of teaching. Since the concept of experiential teaching is in line with the particularity of the cultural teaching of foreign students, it is very meaningful to discuss the application of this teaching method in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language.

Intercultural Communication Competence

Definition of Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)

There are many scholars of intercultural communication defined Definition of Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) as follows:

Kim (1991), ICC is a kind of internal competence, with which a person can handle different intercultural communication appropriately and effectively no matter what kind of specific intercultural situation he is in.

Meyer (1991) defines ICC as a competence that when one encounters cultural behavior, attitudes and expectations from other cultures, one has the ability to deal with that situation.

Dodd (2006) regards ICC as a kind of competence that one has to achieve successful intercultural communication.

Components of intercultural communication competence

There are many scholars of intercultural communication defined Components of intercultural communication competence as follows:

Kim (2001) puts forward a new theoretical framework of ICC incorporating the research findings of many disciplines such as anthropology, social psychology, linguistics and

sociology. According to Kim, ICC comprises of 1) cognitive dimension, 2) affective dimension, and 3) behavioral dimension. Cognitive dimension involves the knowledge of target language and culture, cultural understanding and cognitive comprehensive ability. The cognitive dimension mainly includes the openness of mind, the understanding for the complexity and diversity of things, and the flexibility of vision and perspective. The affective dimension contains empathy ability, uncertainty tolerance, and ability to overcome prejudice and ethnocentrism. Behavioral dimension refers to the ability to deal with communication problems, the ability to establish and maintain relationship, and the ability to complete communicative tasks.

Chen (1996) put forward a three-dimension model of intercultural communication competence. The three levels could be represented by 1) Intercultural Effectiveness, 2) Intercultural Awareness and 3) Intercultural Sensitivity. Intercultural Effectiveness means behavioral skills that allow individuals to negotiate and manage complexity in the global context. Intercultural Awareness means understanding the conventions of the host culture that affect how people think and behave. Intercultural Sensitivity means abilities to promote positive emotions before, during and after the intercultural contact.

Material and Method

In the research entitled “Development of task-based language teaching and experiential culture learning cycle instructional model for enhancing intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students”, mixed research methods are used by the researcher. This research is divided into 3 phases.

Phase 1 was conducted to answer research objective 1: To examine the factors affecting intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at Guangxi University of Science and Technology (GXUST).

The population / Sample Group 1

The population

Group 1: The population consists of 188 former students of Integrated English Course in semester 1 of academic year 2022 from Guangxi University of Science and Technology. The students are all English majors but trained in three specialized orientations for future career development respectively. The population is comprised of as follows.

- 64 students from English Business Orientation
- 62 students from English Education Orientation
- 62 students from English Translation Orientation

Sample group

Group 1: The sample group is comprised of 128 former students of Integrated English Course in semester 1 of academic year 2022 from three specialized English orientations of Guangxi University of Science and Technology by simple random sampling.

Research instrument 1

A questionnaire for students on factors affecting intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at GXUST

Designing instrument 1

1. Study Integrated English course and factors affecting intercultural communication competence.
2. Design a questionnaire on 2 types of factors: 19 items about internal factors and 11 items about external factors to enhance intercultural communication competence for the students at GXUST.
3. Present the draft of the questionnaire to the advisors for checking correctness and completion.
4. Assess the validity of the questionnaire on factors to enhance intercultural communication competence for the students at GXUST by 5 experts
5. Design a Likert 5-point rating scale questionnaire with all items of internal and external factors

6. Conduct the questionnaire survey in Guangxi University of Science and Technology. The questionnaire can only be answered by students.

Quality validation

Using IOC by 5 experts to test the quality of the questionnaire.

Data collection

1. Obtain necessary permission for data collection.
2. Collect data from the students chosen by simple random sampling by way of the developed questionnaire.

Data analysis

The factors affecting intercultural communication competence obtained from the students are interpreted using MEAN interpretation criteria

The population consists of 12 lecturers who offer Integrated English Course in Guangxi University of Science and Technology.

- 4 English Business Orientation
- 4 English Education Orientation
- 4 English Translation Orientation

The sample groups

- 2 English Business Orientation
- 2 English Education Orientation
- 2 English Translation Orientation

The lecturers were obtained by the simple random sampling

Research instrument 2

Interview for the lecturers

Designing instrument 2 (Interview for the lecturers)

1. Study Integrated English course and factors affecting intercultural communication competence.
2. Design the draft of a structured interview with 10 questions on 2 types of factors (both internal and external factors) affecting intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at GXUST.
3. Present the draft of the structured interview to the advisors for checking correctness and completion.
4. Assess the validity of the structured interview on factors affecting intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at GXUST by 5 experts
6. Conduct the structured interview in Guangxi University of Science and Technology. The structured interview can only be answered by lecturers.

Quality validation

Using IOC by 5 experts to test the quality of the structured interview.

Data collection

1. Obtain necessary permission for data collection.
2. Collect data from the lecturers chosen by simple random sampling by way of the developed structured interview.

Data analysis

Content analysis

Output phase 1

Factors affecting intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at GXUST. Based on the investigation results of internal and external factors that affect undergraduates' intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at GXUST and the answers of interviews with professional lecturers, draw conclusions from students and lecturers to provide the task-based language teaching and experiential culture learning cycle instructional model that can enhance undergraduates' intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at GXUST.

Phase 2 was conducted to answer research objective 2: To develop the task-based language teaching and experiential culture learning cycle instructional model for enhancing intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at Guangxi University of Science and Technology (GXUST).

Research Instrument

Conformity Assessment Form of Task-Based Language Teaching and Experiential Culture Learning Cycle Instructional Model in terms of accuracy standards, propriety standards, feasibility standards, and utility standards

Designing Instrument

1. Study related concepts, principles, process about developing instructional model, including results in terms of factors affecting intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at GXUST from research objective 1.

2. Design the handout of Task-Based Language Teaching and Experiential Culture Learning Cycle Instructional Model.

3. Design a questionnaire on confirming the appropriateness of the instructional model in terms of accuracy standard, propriety standard, feasibility standard, and utility standard.

4. Present the draft of the open-ended interview? to the advisors for checking correctness and completion.

5. Assess the validity of the questionnaire on confirming the appropriateness of the instructional model by 5 experts

6. Design the conformity assessment form of Task-Based Language Teaching and Experiential Culture Learning Cycle Instructional Model.

Data Collection

1. Ask for permission of data collection

2. Collect appropriateness of the instructional model in terms of accuracy standard, propriety standard, feasibility standard, and utility standard from the 5 experts using the developed conformity assessment form of Task-Based Language Teaching and Experiential Culture Learning Cycle Instructional Model.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis i.e. frequency and percentage. The acceptable items must not be less than 100%.

Expected Output Phase 2

Task-Based Language Teaching and Experiential Culture Learning Cycle Instructional Model the appropriateness of which is confirmed by experts for further implementation

Phase 3 was conducted to answer research objective 3: To study the results of implementing the task-based language teaching and experiential culture learning cycle instructional model for enhancing intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at Guangxi University of Science and Technology (GXUST)

Population

The total of 68 freshmen from 2 classes of students with different levels of proficiency – beginner, intermediate, and advanced, who enroll in Integrated English course at GXUST in semester 1 academic year 2023. Those sections involve the following.

34 students in Class 1

34 students in Class 2

The Sample Group

The 34 freshmen who enroll in Integrated English course from Class 1 are obtained by simple random sampling

Research Instruments

1. Lesson plans using the Task-Based Language Teaching and Experiential Culture Learning Cycle Instructional Model

2. Pretest and Posttest

Designing Instrument 1 (Lesson plans)

1. Study contents, objectives, methods of teaching, materials, and evaluation of ICC in Integrated English course at GXUST.
2. Design lesson plans by format given.
3. Present the lesson plans to the advisors for checking correctness, completion and improvement.
4. Assess the validity of the designed lesson plans by 5 experts
5. Conduct a try-out of the developed lessons plans with another group of samples for further improvements and implementation with the sample group.

Designing Instrument 2

Pretest and Posttest

1. Study the testing objectives aligned with intercultural communication competence.
2. Design pretest and posttest.
3. Present the developed pretest and posttest to the advisors for checking correctness, completion and improvement.
4. Assess the validity of the designed pretest and posttest by 5 experts through Item-Objective Congruence (IOC)
5. Conduct a try-out of the developed pretest and posttest with another group of samples for analyzing difficulty value (p), discrimination power (r), and reliability (KR-20).
6. Took the pre and posttest to improve and experiment another group not sample group to find the quality of testing.
7. Conduct a try-out of the developed pre-test and post-test with another group of samples for analyzing difficulty value (p), discrimination power (r), and reliability (KR-20).
The calculated p values

Data Collection

1. Ask for permission of data collection.
2. Collect students' learning outcomes by using pretest before the experiment.
3. Carry out the experiment.
4. Collect students' learning outcomes by using posttest after the experiment.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics – MEAN and standard deviation

Inferential statistics – Paired t-test for dependent samples

Expected Output Phase 3 (Pretest-Posttest)

Results of implementing Task-Based Language Teaching and Experiential Culture Learning Cycle Instructional Model – students' learning outcomes according to the relative developmental scores obtained from the statistics of pretest and posttest.

Results

In the research entitled “Development of Task-Based Language Teaching and Experiential Culture Learning Cycle Instructional Model for Enhancing Intercultural Communication Competence of Undergraduate Students”, the result of data analysis can be presented as follows:

Part 1: Analysis results serving research objective 1 — To examine the factors affecting intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at GXUST.

This section presents the analysis results for Objective 1, utilizing tables and descriptions to illustrate the mean, standard deviation, interpretation (Level of Attitude), and ranking of all factors in an overview. Subsequently, items of factors are presented in a similar manner.

Research participants

Group 1: The study included 128 former students of Integrated English Course in semester 1 of academic year 2022 from three specialized English orientations of Guangxi

University of Science and Technology by simple random sampling. These students were divided into the following sections:

Group A: 44 students from Business English Orientation

Group B: 42 students from English Language Teaching Orientation

Group C: 42 students from English Interpretation and Translation Orientation

Group 2: The study also involved 6 lecturers who have been offering Integrated English course to English majors in three orientations at Guangxi University of Science and Technology by simple random sampling technique.

2 lecturers from faculty of Business English Orientation

2 lecturers from faculty of English Language Teaching Orientation

2 lecturers from faculty of English Interpretation and Translation Orientation

Results of the survey for students

Descriptive statistics of students' demographic information (n=128)

The overview picture of the demographic information of all student participants. Among the 128 participants, 19 (14.84%) were male and 109 (85.16%) were female. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to above 21 years old. Specifically, 7 participants (5.47%) were 18 years old, 40 participants (31.25%) were 19 years old, 59 participants (46.09%) were 20 years old, and 22 of them (17.19%) were above 21 years old. All the participants (100%) were recruited from Guangxi University of Science and Technology, with none from other universities. As for their major orientation in English, 44 (34.38%) were in Business English Orientation, 42 (32.81%) in English Language Teaching Orientation, and 42 (32.81%) in English Interpretation and Translation Orientation.

The Results of questionnaire for students in overview (n=128)

The findings on both internal and external influential factors of intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at Guangxi University of Science and Technology.

Concerning internal factors affecting intercultural communication competence, the overall level was observed to be high ($\bar{x}=3.920$). Examining each item individually, it was noted that the factor with the highest mean score was No.7 Students believe that language competence is as important as ICC for English majors ($\bar{x}=4.184$), followed by No.19 Students feel the importance of ICC development in IE course due to their ICC inadequacy ($\bar{x}=4.061$). In contrast, the factor with the lowest mean score was No.5 Students know that ICC is useful for their personal growth ($\bar{x}=3.579$).

Regarding external factors affecting the intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at GXUST, the overall level was identified to be high ($\bar{x}=3.932$). With each factor analyzed individually, it was found that No.20 Students' ICC development in IE course would be influenced by teachers' own English proficiency and ICC was allocated with the highest mean score ($\bar{x}=4.054$), followed by No.29 Students are satisfied with and inspired by the cooperation and interaction between students and teachers in IE class ($\bar{x}=4.029$). On the contrary, the factors with the lowest mean score were No.28 Classroom physical environment (computer, projector, air conditioner, etc.) affects students' learning enthusiasm ($\bar{x}=3.806$) and No.30 Students' ICC development in IE course is influenced by the adequacy of the course hour ($\bar{x}=3.806$).

Descriptive statistics of BE students' demographic information (n=44)

An overview picture of the demographic information of students in Business English Orientation at GXUST. Among the 44 participants, 10 (22.73%) were male and 34 (77.27%) were female. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to above 21 years old. Specifically, 3 participants (6.82%) were 18 years old, 13 participants (29.55%) were 19 years old, 18 participants (40.91%) were 20 years old, and 10 of them (22.73%) were above 21 years old. All the participants (100%) were recruited from Guangxi University of Science and Technology, with none from other universities.

Results of questionnaire for students in BE Orientation (n=44)

The findings on both internal and external factors affecting the intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students in Business English Orientation at GXUST.

Concerning internal factors affecting intercultural communication competence, the overall level was observed to be high ($\bar{x}=3.865$). Examining each item individually, it was noted that the factor with the highest mean score was No.7 Students believe that language competence is as important as ICC for English majors ($\bar{x}=4.101$), followed by No.17 Students feel that their personal character would affect their ICC development in IE course ($\bar{x}=4.023$) and No.18 Students feel that their personal learning style and cognitive style would affect their ICC development in IE course ($\bar{x}=4.023$). On the contrary, the factor with the lowest mean score was No.5 Students know that ICC is useful for their personal growth ($\bar{x}=3.596$).

Regarding external factors affecting the intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at GXUST, the overall level was identified to be high ($\bar{x}=3.886$). With each factor analyzed individually, it was found that No.20 Students' ICC development in IE course would be influenced by teachers' own English proficiency and ICC was allocated with the highest mean score ($\bar{x}=4.034$), followed by No.25 Students' ICC development in IE course depends on the effectiveness of teaching resources and materials ($\bar{x}=3.944$) and No.27 If the resources and teaching materials are maximally utilized for culture learning along with language proficiency training in IE course, students' ICC would get developed ($\bar{x}=3.944$). On the contrary, the factor with the lowest mean score was No.30 Students' ICC development in IE course is influenced by the adequacy of the course hour ($\bar{x}=3.719$).

Descriptive statistics of ELT students' demographic information (n=42)

An overview picture of the demographic information of students in English Language Teaching Orientation at GXUST. Among the 42 participants, 4 (9.52%) were male and 38 (90.48%) were female. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to above 21 years old. Specifically, 2 participants (4.76%) were 18 years old, 15 participants (35.71%) were 19 years old, 22 participants (52.38%) were 20 years old, and 3 of them (7.14%) were above 21 years old. All the participants (100%) were recruited from Guangxi University of Science and Technology, with none from other universities.

Results of questionnaire for students in ELT Orientation (n=42)

The findings on both internal and external factors affecting the intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students in English Language Teaching Orientation at GXUST.

Concerning internal factors affecting intercultural communication competence, the overall level was observed to be high ($\bar{x}=3.931$). Examining each item individually, it was found that the factor with the highest mean score was No.7 Students believe that language competence is as important as ICC for English majors ($\bar{x}=4.253$), followed by No.13 Students feel more confident when they are communicating with foreigners after taking IE course ($\bar{x}=4.114$). In contrast, the factors with the lowest mean score were No.1 Students find that it is valuable to take IE course ($\bar{x}=3.608$) and No.5 Students know that ICC is useful for their personal growth ($\bar{x}=3.608$).

Regarding external factors affecting the intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at GXUST, the overall level was identified to be high ($\bar{x}=3.930$). With each factor analyzed individually, it was found that factors receiving the highest mean score include No.20 Students' ICC development in IE course would be influenced by teachers' own English proficiency and ICC ($\bar{x}=4.076$) and No.21 Students' ICC development in IE course

would be influenced if they could get appropriate help from the teacher when they have difficulty in learning ($\bar{x}=4.076$), followed by No.29 Students are satisfied with and inspired by the cooperation and interaction between students and teachers in IE class ($\bar{x}=4.063$). On the contrary, the factors with the lowest mean score were No.28 Classroom physical environment (computer, projector, air conditioner, etc.) affects students' learning enthusiasm ($\bar{x}=3.772$) and No.30 Students' ICC development in IE course is influenced by the adequacy of the course hour ($\bar{x}=3.772$).

Results of questionnaire for students in EIT Orientation (n=42)

The findings on both internal and external factors affecting the intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students in English Interpretation and Translation Orientation at GXUST.

Concerning internal factors affecting intercultural communication competence, the overall level was observed to be high ($\bar{x}=3.944$). Examining each item individually, it was noted that the factor with the highest mean score was No.7 Students believe that language competence is as important as ICC for English majors ($\bar{x}=4.185$), followed by No.13 Students feel more confident when they are communicating with foreigners after taking IE course ($\bar{x}=4.092$) and No.17 Students feel that their personal character would affect their ICC development in IE course ($\bar{x}=4.092$). On the other hand, the factor with the lowest mean score was No.5 Students know that ICC is useful for their personal growth ($\bar{x}= 3.563$).

Regarding external factors affecting the development of intercultural communication competence of undergraduate students at GXUST, the overall level was identified to be high ($\bar{x}=3.957$). With each factor analyzed individually, it was found that factors with the highest mean score include No.27 If the resources and teaching materials are maximally utilized for culture learning along with language proficiency training in IE course, students' ICC would get developed ($\bar{x}=4.076$) and No.29 Students are satisfied with and inspired by the cooperation and interaction between students and teachers in IE class ($\bar{x}=4.076$), followed by No.20 Students' ICC development in IE course would be influenced by teachers' own English proficiency and ICC ($\bar{x}=4.034$) and No.21 Students' ICC development in IE course would be influenced if they could get appropriate help from the teacher when they have difficulty in learning ($\bar{x}=4.034$). On the contrary, the factor with the lowest mean score was No.28 Classroom physical environment (computer, projector, air conditioner, etc.) affects students' learning enthusiasm ($\bar{x}=3.815$).

Summary of the survey results

Factors impacting students' learning process and learning achievement can be divided into two categories, i.e. internal factors and external factors (Papanastasiou, 2000; Aspelin, 2012; Fitrianti& Nur, 2018). According to the data collected through survey, the influential factors in GXUST students' intercultural communication competence development are analyzed and summarized in the form of internal factors and external factors in the following.

Internal factors

Internal factors refer to factors within or dominated by a learner individually, such as intelligence, talents, personal perceptions, interests, confidence, attitude, motivation and etc. Internal factors are the driving force that arises from a learner to develop intercultural communication competence directly. On the basis of the students' self-reported data, the internal factors influencing the development of students' intercultural communication competence are concluded as follows.

Valence Factors: Students' recognition of the importance of intercultural communication competence (ICC), their acknowledgment of inadequacy in ICC, and the confidence they seek from ICC significantly impact their development in the IE course. These factors are categorized as valence factors, emphasizing the emotional value of achieving a goal.

Cognitive Style and Personality: Both cognitive style and personality heavily influence students' development of ICC. Cognitive style, the unique way individuals process information, and personality traits such as introversion or extroversion affect preferred learning strategies. Teachers should tailor their teaching styles to match students' learning styles and create an environment that motivates the use of suitable learning strategies.

Career Development (Extrinsic Motivation): Consideration for future career development is identified as a significant extrinsic motivator for students in developing ICC. This practical purpose is viewed as more influential than students' intrinsic interest in ICC or the IE course. Emphasizing the necessity of ICC for better job opportunities is suggested to engage students effectively.

Effort Attribution: Students' attribution of success to effort is crucial for the development of ICC. When students believe their outcomes are within their control through hard work, they become more diligent and exhibit prolonged learning engagement. Providing timely positive feedback for small progress and designing teaching activities from simple to challenging contribute to enhancing students' confidence and learning motivation.

In conclusion, understanding and addressing these internal factors can positively impact students' engagement and development of intercultural communication competence in an Intercultural Education course.

External factors

External factors in instructional context refer to factors coming from outside a learner, concerning a wide span of information or stimulus such as school environment, infrastructure facilities, curriculum, teachers, assessment, and etc. In present study, five major groups of external factors are under investigation. They are teacher role, teaching methods, teaching materials, classroom atmosphere, and the limitation of teaching hour. The important findings are as follow.

Teacher Role: The professional qualifications and assistance provided by teachers significantly impact students' development of intercultural communication competence. Qualified teachers act as role models, influencing students to work hard and helping when needed. Teachers with good English proficiency and intercultural communication competence contribute to the creation of a conducive learning environment.

Student-Teacher Interaction and Cooperation: Interaction and cooperation between students and teachers in class play a crucial role in improving students' intercultural communication competence. Classroom atmosphere, shaped by effective interaction, is considered more important than the physical learning environment. Respectful dialogues between teachers and students are highlighted to stimulate students' enthusiasm and initiative in learning.

Teaching Materials: The effectiveness and appropriateness of teaching materials for improving intercultural communication competence are significant. Textbooks, as major teaching materials, serve as a bridge between teachers and students, providing relevant knowledge and promoting autonomous study. Teachers adapting materials to meet students' ICC development needs also influence competence.

Teaching Methods: Creating meaningful situations for students to experience different cultures with the English language is crucial for developing intercultural communication competence. In an EFL environment with limited intercultural communication opportunities, teachers should use methods like role-playing and critical incidents to enhance learners' intercultural awareness and motivation. Meeting students' needs in learning activities is essential for ICC improvement.

In conclusion, these external factors, including the teacher's role, student-teacher interaction, teaching materials, and methods, significantly contribute to students' development of intercultural communication competence in an IE course.

Results of the interview for lecturers

The total population of this study is comprised of 12 lecturers who offer Integrated English course for English majors in Business English Orientation, English Language Teaching Orientation and English Interpretation and Translation Orientation at Guangxi University of Science and Technology. For interviews, a simple random sampling method was employed to select 6 lecturers (2 lecturers from each English orientation). This sampling technique avoids survey bias and ensures the validity and reliability of the research findings.

An overview of the demographic information of the interviewed lecturers from faculties of three English orientations at Guangxi University of Science and Technology. All the 6 interviewees (100%) were female, and no male lecturer was interviewed by simple random sampling technique. The ages of the interviewees ranged from 30 to 49 years old, with 5 (83.33%) between 40 to 49 years old and 1 (16.67%) between 30 to 39 years old. Among the 6 interviewees, 4 (66.67%) held the position of Assistant Professor and 2 (33.33%) held the position of associate professors, with no interviewees being professors or lecturers. In terms of teaching experience of Integrated English course, 4 (66.7%) had more than 10 years of experience while 2 (33.3%) had 7 to 9 years of teaching experience. As regards overseas working or studying experience, 4 (66.66%) had once worked abroad as visiting scholars, 1 (16.67%) had once been abroad for further study, and only 1 (16.67%) reported with no overseas experience.

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