



Problems and Proposed Solutions for Communicative English of Chinese Students Learning in Intercultural Environment: A Case Study of Wuming High School in China

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Received: 21 September 2025; Revised: 05 November 2025; Accepted: 07 November 2025

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Abstract

This study aims to: 1) investigate problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School; 2) construct effective improvement strategies based on these problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School. The research respondents were 350 students and 140 teachers from Wuming High School, selected through the stratified random sampling method. The main research tools included: 1) a questionnaire for investigating the problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School, and 2) a set of questions employed for the focus group discussion meeting for the approval of the constructed strategies. The collected data and information were analyzed and presented through frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. In addition, the comments towards the correctness and suitability of the constructed strategies were collected and analyzed through the Content Analysis Method. The research results expressed: 1) The students and teachers rated the problems faced by Chinese students learning English in a cross-cultural environment was found at the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.66$, $SD = 0.22$); 2). Based on the research results, improvement strategies constructed, were divided into 5 chapters, namely: 1) learner level; 2) teacher level; 3) teaching materials level; 4) teaching facilities level; 5) teaching evaluation level. All the 5 chapters were evaluated and approved by the 3 specialists in terms of the correctness and suitability indicating that the constructed strategies are suitable as guidelines for the enhancement the effectiveness Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School

Keywords: Problems, Proposed Solutions, Communicative English, Intercultural Environment, Wuming High School in China

1. Introduction

With the in-depth advancement of the "Belt and Road Initiative", China and Thailand have increasingly close cooperation in the field of education, and cross-border educational exchanges have become an important pillar of regional cooperation. According to statistics from the Ministry of Education of Thailand, the number of Chinese students studying in primary and secondary schools in Thailand has grown at an average annual rate of 18% from

2020 to 2023. This trend not only reflects the continuous deepening of the strategic partnership between China and Thailand, but also highlights the complexity and urgency of language teaching in a cross-cultural educational environment. The dual cultural and linguistic challenges faced by Chinese students.

Chinese students face significant cross-cultural adaptation problems in Thai classrooms. The Chinese education system emphasizes collectivism and teacher authority (high power distance culture). Students are accustomed to passively accepting knowledge, resulting in relatively low classroom participation. In contrast, Thai classrooms advocate open discussion and critical thinking (low power distance culture). Teachers tend to adopt a guiding teaching approach. Therefore, the tendency of Chinese students to be "reticent" is often misunderstood as a lack of learning motivation. For a long time, English learning among Chinese students has been exam-oriented. They are good at grammar and reading comprehension, but their English for Academic Purposes (EAP) skills are weak. Especially in academic writing and speaking, their logical expression ability is insufficient. The local English teaching in Thailand focuses on Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS). Thai students are good at impromptu conversations, but lack training in academic writing. This leads to inconsistent goals among Chinese and Thai students in cooperative learning. The practical predicament of local teaching, taking Wuming High School as an example, is that its English curriculum design is under great pressure. The current teaching materials do not take into account the differentiated needs of Chinese and Thai students. For instance, Chinese students need to enhance their academic writing skills, while Thai students are more concerned about workplace English. Teachers are forced to adopt a "one-size-fits-all" teaching model, resulting in low efficiency. Although the school has introduced translation software and online learning platforms (such as Google Classroom), these tools have not been optimized for cultural differences. For example, artificial intelligence translation often overlooks the differences in high-context expressions in Chinese and Thai languages, exacerbating communication misunderstandings. Most of the existing literature focuses on English teaching for a single cultural group (such as the adaptation of Chinese students in European and American environments), while research on two-way cultural exchanges between China and Thailand is seriously lacking. Specifically, comparative analyses based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory are insufficient, failing to explain the fundamental reasons for the differences in classroom behaviors between China and Thailand. The practical exploration of technology-enabled cross-cultural teaching remains at the tool level and has not been deeply integrated with cultural sensitivity design (such as the context-adaptive function of artificial intelligence systems). In 2022, the Thai government issued the "National English Education Strategy", emphasizing the cultivation of "global talents", due to the necessity of synergy between policy and reality. However, during the implementation of the policy, the challenge of an imbalance in the demands of Chinese and Thai students emerged. For instance, Chinese international students expect to align with international higher education through English courses (such as applying to universities in Europe and America), and their demands are often more academic. In contrast, Thai students tend to view English as a tool for career development (such as in the tourism and cross-border e-commerce industries), and their demands are more practical. This difference in goals requires Wuming High School to reconstruct its English teaching model. This study aims to provide empirical evidence and solutions for this purpose.

Input	Process	Output
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- Concepts and theories of Teaching English as a Foreign Language	Problems of Communicative English refer to the language environment in which an individual is situated (including family language atmosphere, social language usage scenarios, educational language input, etc.) for the usage of and approach to teaching and learning English that focuses on enabling learners to communicate effectively and fluently in real-life situations.	effective improvement strategies based on these problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School.
- Related Studies on Reading Problems.		

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the research

2. Research Objectives

1) To investigate problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School

2) To construct effective improvement strategies based on these problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School

3. Research Methodology

Population and Samples groups

This research is considered the style of Research and Development which employed both qualitative and quantitative technics. In this research project, Wuming High School In China School was employed as a case study. The population in this research project were divided into 2 groups; namely, 3000 Chinese students and 240 teachers at Wuming high school in the academic year 2025, (Wuming High School, 2025).

The sample groups in this research project were divided into 2 groups; namely, 350 Chinese students and 140 Teachers at Wuming High School in the academic year 2025. The sample size (n) was obtained through the Yamane Formula. (Yamane, T. (1967)). In addition, the respondents were obtained through the stratified random sampling technique.

Research instrument

The two main research instruments were: 1) a questionnaire employed for the investigation problems of communicative English of Chinese Students Learning in Intercultural Environment- a Case Study of Wuming High School and 2) a set of questions for a focus group discussion meetings employed for the evaluation and approval of the strategies of communicative English of Chinese Students Learning in Intercultural Environment.

Data Collection

For the investigation of problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School, the researcher himself collected the data and information from the sample groups. The sample groups were informed of the purposes of the data collection, then made an appointment with the researcher. The

researcher submitted a letter of permission signed by the researcher's advisor to the school director in advance to ask for permission to collect the data.

In addition, the comments from the three specialists towards the correctness and suitability of the improvement strategies based on these problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School were collected from the focus group discussion meeting by the researcher himself.

Data Analysis

For the investigation of problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School, the data and information collected by the questionnaires were analyzed, interpreted and presented in terms of frequency count, percentage, mean($\bar{x}$), standard deviation (S.D.). The Likert rating scales are as follows:

4.21-5.00 = the highest level of problems

3.41-4.20 = the high level of problems

2.61-3.40 = the moderate level of problems

1.81-2.60 = the low level of problems

1.00-1.80 = the lowest level of problems

For the focus group meeting, the comments from the 3 specialists towards the correctness and suitability of the improvement strategies based on these problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School were analyzed through the content analysis technique.

4. Research Findings

Part 1: The investigation of problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School

Table 1: Problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School (Students)

Items	n=350		Level of problems
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	
1) Difficulty understanding diverse English accents.	4.30	0.20	Highest
2) Insufficient ability to recognize connected speech.	4.32	0.15	Highest
3) Overly advanced academic vocabulary in listening materials.	4.38	0.15	Highest
4) Lack of systematic listening strategies.	4.26	0.14	Highest
Cultural differences impeding comprehension of implied meanings, sarcasm, or contextual humor.	4.32	0.13	Highest
6) Inadequate classroom practice time for listening and interactive communication.	4.25	0.21	Highest
7 Mismatch between the speed/difficulty of listening materials and students' proficiency levels.	4.21	0.14	Highest
8) Low interest in English listening learning due to perceived lack of practicality in intercultural settings.	4.22	0.12	Highest
9) Insufficient targeted guidance from	4.26	0.17	Highest

teachers on common intercultural communication barriers			
10) Need for more authentic, real-life intercultural resources English while reading.	4.40	0.19	Highest
Total	4.25	0.17	Highest

According to table 1, it is indicated that the students rated the problems of English reading comprehension at the highest level at the range of $\bar{X}$ 4.21 (SD=0.14) – $\bar{X}$ 4.40 (0.19).

Table 2: Problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School (Teachers)

Items	n=140		Level of problems
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	
1) Insufficient access to diverse cultural teaching resources.	4.30	0.21	Highest
2) Lack of professional training in intercultural communication pedagogy.	4.31	0.13	Highest
3) Difficulty adapting listening materials to include diverse accents.	4.40	0.17	Highest
4) Inability to effectively address students' cultural stereotypes or biases during English instruction.	4.25	0.12	Highest
5) Limited time to integrate intercultural content into curriculum due to exam-oriented teaching pressures.	4.32	0.13	Highest
6) Mismatch between textbook cultural content and real-world intercultural communication needs.	4.25	0.21	Highest
7) Lack of guidelines for assessing students' intercultural communicative competence (beyond language skills).	4.20	0.18	Highest
8) Insufficient personal experience with cross-cultural interactions, reducing credibility in teaching cultural nuances.	4.22	0.12	Highest
9) Challenges in designing interactive activities that simulate real intercultural communication scenarios.	4.25	0.21	Highest
10) Students 'varying levels of cultural knowledge leading to uneven participation in intercultural activities.	4.20	0.16	Highest
Total	4.31	0.16	Highest

According to table 2, it is indicated that the teachers rated the problems of English communicative environment of Chinese high school students at the highest level at the range of $\bar{X}$ 4.20(SD=0.16) – $\bar{X}$ 4.40 (0.17).

Part 2: Improvement strategies based on these problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School

Table 3: The improvement strategies based on these problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School

Topics/Contents	
Chapter 1: About Learners	
1. How to get ready for English Communicative Environment practice.	2.
How to practice English Communicative Environment.	
Chapter 2: About Instructors	
1. How to get ready for teaching English Communicative Environment.	
2. How to apply teaching-learning materials for English Communicate into practice.	
Chapter 3: For Classroom Management	
1. Focus: Create a supportive, motivating, and interactive environment.	
2. How to apply facilitators for English Communicate practice.	
Chapter 4: For Teaching – Learning Material and Assessment	
1. Focus: Use authentic, digital, and structured resources for practice	
2. How to apply facilitators for English Communicate practice	
Chapter 5: About teaching-learning evaluation	

According to table 3, The improvement strategies based on these problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School is composed of 5 chapters ; namely, chapter 1: About Learners , chapter 2: About Instructors, Chapter 3: About teaching materials , chapter 4: About Teaching-learning Facilities, and chapter 5 About teaching-learning evaluation: All the 5 chapters were approved for their correctness and suitability by the three specialists (One Thai professors and two English native speakers) through the contents analysis method. improvement strategies based on these problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School could be used as guidelines for the enhancement of English Communicative skill of Chinese high school students at Wuming High School in China.

5. Discussion of the Findings

For the investigation of problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School, it could be concluded that the students and teachers rated the problems faced by Chinese students learning English in a cross-cultural environment was found at the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.66$, $SD = 0.22$). It is accepted that Chinese high school students possess: insufficient access to diverse cultural teaching resources, lack of professional training in intercultural communication pedagogy, 3) difficulty of adapting listening materials to include diverse accents, inability to effectively address students' cultural stereotypes or biases during English instruction, limited time to integrate intercultural content into curriculum due to exam-oriented teaching pressures, mismatch between textbook cultural content and real-world intercultural communication needs, lack of guidelines for assessing students' intercultural communicative competence (beyond language skills), insufficient personal experience with cross-cultural interactions, reducing credibility in teaching cultural nuances, lack of challenges in designing interactive activities that simulate real intercultural communication scenarios, and various levels of cultural knowledge leading to uneven participation in intercultural activities. The results were found correspondent with Futrakul, K. (2022) in that Cadets had problems with English listening, where the main causes of the problems were the speed of the listening text (when native speakers speak too fast) and unfamiliarity with the vocabulary used; and 2) The class of air cadets had varying levels of

English listening ability, according to the CEFR standards, although differences in the majors had no effect on English listening ability at the statistical significance level of .05. Most cadets were at the B1 level according to the CEFR standards, that is, they are able to listen and understand texts where the speaker speaks slowly and clearly, using everyday vocabulary about self, family, trading, and news events, as well as short sentences and basic vocabulary. In addition, the improvement strategies based on these problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School composed of 5 chapters ; namely, chapter 1: About Learners , chapter 2: About Instructors, Chapter 3: About teaching materials , chapter 4: About Teaching-learning Facilities, and chapter 5 About teaching-learning evaluation were constructed based on the findings from the investigation of problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School. The findings were found correspondent with Satharatthana, T. (2022) in that there were 4 strategies used by the undergraduate students including watching through digital media, listening through social media, using applications, and using their existing experience. The strategy used by all of the students was their existing experience. After English listening comprehension teaching strategies had been applied, it was found that the students' post-test scores were higher than their pre-test's with a statistical significance at the 0.05 level and their satisfaction toward the teaching strategies was also found at the highest level.

6. Recommendations

1.For the application of the findings into practice, the constructed The improvement strategies based on these problems faced by Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School was accepted and approved by the 3 specialists, then it could be used as a guideline for the enhancement of Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School 2. For further studies, research on the investigation of problems of English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of Chinese students learning communicative English in an intercultural environment at Wuming High School is suggested to be conducted.

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