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Title: *A STUDY ON THE INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF ENGLISH MAJORS IN CHINESE UNIVERSITIES*

Doctoral dissertation prepared under the supervision of **Dr hab. Dorota Misiejuk, Prof. UwB**

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Key Words: **intercultural competence, English majors, China, assessment, language proficiency, intercultural sensitivity, attitude of curiosity and openness, interaction skills, cultural knowledge**

ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

The aim of this dissertation is to assess the intercultural competence of English majors in Chinese universities by conducting an empirical research, meanwhile looking for the major factors that may constrain students from developing intercultural competence. The existing well-known literature is mainly Western-dominated, with obvious emphasis on the outcome afterwards instead of the process during the communication; thus in this study, by combining Oriental values, the importance of harmonious and lasting relationship is particularly pointed out in defining intercultural competence and moral ethics are added as one of key components. To be more specific, intercultural competence in this paper is defined as *'the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in an intercultural context , as well as to maintain a harmonious relationship during and after the communication'* which is largely borrowed from Fantini's elaboration on intercultural competence as well as by considering the cultural context of China.

By using two questionnaires respectively designed for English majors and college English teachers in China, students' intercultural competence including language proficiency, intercultural sensitivity, attitude of curiosity and openness, interaction skills, cultural knowledge, and intercultural experience, is assessed; and teachers' cognition in intercultural competence as well as teaching methods are investigated. It turns out that respondents' intercultural competence is in an intermediate level, with problems in language proficiency, the lack of regular assessment in interaction skills and cultural knowledge, along with the very limited intercultural experience and motivation in actively looking for such opportunities, plus a potential to become ethnocentric. The finding also shows teachers' incomplete or wrong interpretation of intercultural competence and its relation to English language teaching, and their ways of teaching are some of the exterior constraints in guiding young generation to develop intercultural competence.

Theoretically, the significance of this study is that it enriches the definition and theory of intercultural competence by combining both Western and Oriental perspectives; Practically, by positioning problems through data interpretation and analysis, the findings and discussions may provide some reference or guidance to students and teachers of concern; hopefully, it may also contribute to the improvement of foreign language-related policymaking. Besides, it may also be a window for my Polish peers, advisors and readers to get to know more about China and may promote further intercultural exchanges academically.