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# Chinese International Master's Students' Reticence in Engagement Within Business Classrooms

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**Chinese International Master's Students' Reticence in Engagement Within Business**

**Classrooms**

By

**Bohui Liu**

A Thesis
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# ABSTRACT

The current literature shows that a large number of Chinese international students (CISs) encounter challenges in academic learning, in which their participation in classroom communication is an outstanding problem for these international students. Zhou et al. (2021) demonstrate that many CISs learning in a master of education program at a comprehensive university in Ontario Canada did not actively engage in classroom interaction and communication, and the causes for their passive performance in classroom communication can be various. This study was built on their research to examine Chinese international master's business students' classroom learning experience at the same Ontario university to test whether CISs perform the same way in classroom communication in another academic program. This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews to collect data. Eight student participants and two instructor respondents were recruited via purposeful sampling and random sampling. Ultimately, this study discovered that although most business master's CISs confirm the value of in-class communication, their performance in classroom interactions was not active. The factors influencing their willingness to communicate (WTC) in class are various and mainly cover three aspects: classroom teaching, CISs' perception of learning and communication, and their satisfaction with Canadian education. Meanwhile, participants provided varying suggestions to increase the CISs' participation rate.

**Keywords:** Chinese international students, master's business program, classroom communication.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/SYMBOLS

CISs            Chinese International Students

EFL             English Foreign Language

ELIP            English Level Improvement Program

GPA             Grade Point Average

L2              Second Language Learner

M.Ed.           Master of Education

REB             Research Ethical Board

UWTC            Unwillingness to Communicate

WTC             Willingness to Communicate

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

This study examined CISs' classroom learning experience and focused on business students who enrolled in a master's business program at a comprehensive university in Ontario Canada. The research was inspired by current trends in international education and study results, such as Zhou et al.' (2021) findings on the situation of Chinese students learning in Canada. The existing literature shows that a large number of CISs encounter challenges in academic learning, in which their classroom communication participation is an serious problem for these international students. The rest contents of this chapter will introduce the background of the problem, the research topic, the research problem, justification for the research problem, the value of this research, deficiencies in evidence, the purpose of this research, the research questions, the theoretical framework, and the limitations of this study.

## Background of the Problem

Studying at a post-secondary education institution outside of students' home countries is a common practice, whether it is short-term, like a few month-long language training, or long-term for completing a degree (Andrade, 2006). Several English-speaking countries have created plans for international student recruitment. New Zealand developed comprehensive strategies, like providing excellent education and improving student experience, to thrive in its world-class international education (New Zealand Education, n.d.). U.S. Department of Education updated the American International Education Strategy based on its initial international strategy to promote the priorities of American international education (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). The Australian

Government plan to invest AUS $10 million to support the Australian International

Education Strategy 2021-2030 (Walton, 2022). In Canada, the Minister of International

Trade Diversification, James Gordon Carr (2020), indicated that international education

is essential for Canada as it is a significant pillar in maintaining Canada's long-term

competitiveness. Therefore, the Canadian international education strategy (2019-2024)

was created to guarantee that Canada is one of the most attractive countries for

international education. He explained that this strategy aims to diversify international

students' countries, their academic levels, and the location where they will study within

Canada. The above information indicates that many English-speaking countries are

stepping up their efforts to attract international students to pursue academic studies in

their countries.

These English-speaking countries value international education partly because the

arrival of international students boosts their economy, and partly because they can

achieve cultural export and import new ideas and cultures via exporting education. For

example, Carr (2020) described the significance of international education to Canada by

offering statistics to elaborate on this statement. In 2018, international students

contributed approximately $21.6 billion to Canada's GDP and provided almost 170,000

jobs to the Canadian middle class. Many educational institutions in Canada offer

curriculum licenses or skills training to attract international students who can learn

Canadian cultures and values in their learning process. After their graduation, they may

return to their home countries, thus spreading Canadian culture to their fellows. They

may also stay and work in Canada, which allows them to contribute to Canada's

development. For instance, according to Major (2021), many international students prefer

to live in Canada permanently after graduating from Canadian post-secondary institutions. Approximately 54,000 students who had learning experiences in Canada became permanent residents in 2018 (Carr, 2020). Those former students can provide services to Canada as they have learned in-demand skills in Canada and are accustomed to Canadian culture.

Meanwhile, the population of international students studying in English-speaking countries, including the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, is numerous, and the number of international students in these countries is on the rise. While international education has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to inconvenient travel, the population of international students studying in those English-speaking countries is still a large number. The number of international students in those countries varies. Over 914,000 international students were studying in the United States in 2021 (Moody, 2021), and more than 605,000 international students were studying in the UK in 2022 (UK International Student Statistics, 2022). The number of international students studying in Australia reached 440,129 in 2022 (Australian Government, n.d.). By late 2021, over 19,000 international students studied in New Zealand (Erudera College News, 2021). In recent years, Canada has outpaced other major Western countries in terms of growth in international students (Gent, 2022). The number of international students in Canada alone has increased by 66,816 from 2015/ 2016 to 2019/ 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2021). In addition, the number of CISs makes up a significant portion of those coming to Canada to study for a master's degree. Moreover, a large number of Chinese international students were interested in studying business. More than 388,000 international students were studying in Canadian higher educational schools at the end of 2021 (Admin, 2022). Of

these, over 45,000 students enrolled in master's degree programs (**Figure 1**). CISs accounted for 17% of the total number of international students in Canada, and 72.5% of them were postgraduate learners at the end of 2021 (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2016). Among these Chinese international students, over 112,000 students had registered in the business and administration program by 2022 (Admin, 2022). The above figures show the large number of Chinese students studying in the master's business program in Canada. Therefore, the learning experience and outcomes of this group of international students are critical to the reputation of Canadian higher education.

**Figure 1**

*International Students in Canada by Degree Level*



**International Students in Canada by Degree Level**

| Degree Level | Total International Students |
| --- | --- |
| Post-secondary non-tertiary education | 25,416 |
| Short-cycle tertiary education | 110,367 |
| Bachelor's | 160,842 |
| Master's | 45,438 |
| Doctoral | 20,871 |
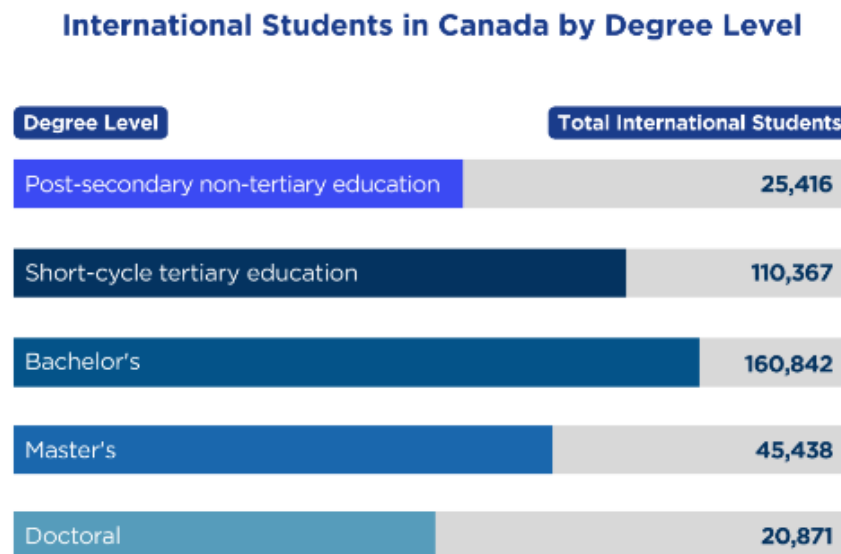
From "International Students in Canada by Degree Level", by Erudera 2022.

https://erudera.com/statistics/canada/canada-international-student-statistics/

Meanwhile, Ontario is the province that attracts the most international students in Canada (Admin, 2022). There were over 192,000 international students in Ontario in 2022, while about 70,000 foreign learners studied in British Columbia, 59,700 international students in Quebec, and 24,636 international students studied in Alberta (Admin, 2022). The number of international students in other Canadian provinces is as follows: Nova Scotia (12,939), Manitoba (10,617), Saskatchewan (6,909), New Brunswick (4,404), Newfoundland and Labrador (3,741), and Prince Edward Island (2,007). Since Ontario has the largest number of CISs, the study of Chinese international students in an Ontario university could provide insights on Chinese international students' learning conditions in Canada.

To sum up, the number of international students studying in Canadian higher education remains on the rise, and a large number of international students are interested in learning business and administration related master's programs in Ontario to achieve master's degrees. Moreover, Chinese international students accounted for a large proportion of total international students, and many of them registered in a business program. Consequently, Chinese international master's business students' learning experiences and satisfaction are meaningful to Ontario universities and Ontario's economy.

## Research Topic

International students' learning experiences are similar to those of local learners' but they are not the same. Both native students and international students need to complete academic tasks. This is commonplace between international students and local learners. However, during the overseas learning process, international students must cope

with other issues, including cultural adjustment, pedagogical acclimatization, integration into the local community (Baklashova & Kazakov, 2016), and social adjustment (Andrade, 2006). All the above matters can impact international students' academic learning and emotional condition.

As international students' learning experiences are important to Canada's economy, Canadian schools should attach importance to this group of learners' learning outcomes which may impact their satisfaction with Canadian higher education. In addition, international students' satisfaction with their learning experiences in Canada and their responses toward Canadian higher education will affect other potential learners' choices of international studies. For example, when potential learners receive a negative evaluation of Canadian education, they may decide not to come to Canada. Hence, it is necessary to fulfill international students' academic achievement to improve the reputation of Canadian international education while boosting Canada's GDP. Similarly, Peterson et al. (1999) warn that higher education institutions are at risk if they take international students as "cash cows". Martirosyan et al. (2019) also emphasized the value of support and services for international students to allow them to go through social adjustment and achieve academic improvement.

Because students' academic success is closely related to their classroom communication (Akpur, 2021), it is essential to improve international students' in-class interaction engagement. However, many international students are reticent in their classes rather than communicating with their teachers and peers. Hamouda (2012) demonstrates this with the finding that second language (L2) users do not take the initiative to offer

feedback to others' questions, ask questions, or respond to their peers' statements. This is exemplified by a quote from a student:

> *I'm kind of really reluctant to speak up in class because I get really nervous. I'd rather listen to others. But [the teacher] tries to call on me when he thinks I have something. I don't like to talk in front of the whole class; [...] [the teacher] knows he'll have to call on me if I'm going to talk* (Bernales，2016, p. 6).

Being reticent in English-speaking classes has been a significant problem among Asian students studying in English-speaking countries. The current literature indicates that a large number of international students consider classroom communication and interaction difficult (Baklashova & Kazakov, 2016). Among those learners, Asian, especially East Asian, scholars learning English tend to be reticent and passive scholars (Cheng, 2000). Besides, the population of CISs learning in Canada is much large than that in other East Asian countries (CBIE, 2016).

Overall, it can be concluded that international students encounter communication and interaction problems during their studies in English-speaking countries, especially those who are from East Asia, such as China. Many of them are reticent in class. Their reticence can be called unwillingness to communicate (UWTC). Because there have been a large number of Chinese international students learning in Ontario in 2022 (Admin, 2022), it is valuable to improve the educational quality of CISs and their academic learning experience. In this context, this research will study Chinese students learning at an Ontario comprehensive university because the large group of CISs is conducive to making the result of this study representative and credible.

## Research Problem

The problem addressed in this study is what makes CISs reticent in classroom communication (Kadi & Madini, 2019). Some English foreign language (EFL) users feel they are not able to fully express themselves correctly and clearly in a foreign language while another group of international students is afraid of being evaluated negatively or being laughed at due to their mistakes in verbal presentations in the second language. This is exemplified by a participant's statement in a previous study:

> *I knew the answer; I just wasn't sure how to start saying it. I knew what the verbs meant, sort of, and what to do with them; I just didn't know how to put them into the sentence correctly. It's frustrating sometimes because you want to speak in German but don't know how to say it* (Bernales, 2016, p. 6).

International students, regardless of their countries and regions, have similar obstacles to communicating in English because they must describe their minds and interact with others in a foreign language rather than their mother language. The barrier of speaking in English could inhibit international students' engagement in classroom interaction. Aksak and Cubukcu (2020) discovered that not all students like to actively engage in communication in their classes. For example, Japanese EFL learners are reluctant to speak English in task-based classes (Fukuta, 2017). In summary, many international students do not actively participate in classroom communication. The reason for their reticence could be various.

## The Causes for The Research Problem

To address the problem of international students' in-class reticence, the first thing to do is to explore the reasons why this group of learners avoids in-class communication and interaction.

Current studies reveal that anxiety is a cause that inhibits international students to take part in classroom interaction because second-language-using (L2 using) students' (such as international students) oral performance can be negatively affected by language anxiety (Woodrow, 2006), which cause them to worry about their performance in English-speaking and being mocked. As a result, international students are unwilling to communicate in English due to anxiety (Yaseen, 2018). This indicates that language anxiety created negative attitudes toward communication in English among international students, which contributes to these learners' avoidance of classroom communication (Aksak & Cubukcu, 2020) in English. Andrade (2006) testifies that international students' anxiety problems are based on a shortage of language skills and cultural knowledge. Kadi and Madini (2019) demonstrate that international students' anxiety also may be due to their lack of language confidence and fear of being criticized for making mistakes. However, L2 self-confidence is significant for international students because it is closely related to willingness to communicate (WTC) (Aoyama & Takahashi, 2020) in English.

Further, students' personality traits, such as self-esteem and shyness, have a strong influence on their communication behaviours (McCrockey & Richmond, 1982). Besides that, Aoyama, and Takahashi (2020) discovered that acculturation also aligns with students' WTC.

Meanwhile, the reasons for the in-class reticence of international students are related to their school educational background and other factors associated with teachers and their peers (Kadi & Madini, 2019). That is, students studied in schools that fail to value foreign languages, such as English, practices tend to be inexperienced in speaking that language (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). Consequently, students learning in that type of schools are not confident in presenting in a foreign language in class, which causes their communication reticence in L2-speaking classes.

Current literature also indicates that students attributed their refusal to communicate to their teachers' attitudes, teacher pressure, lack of teacher support, the shortage of opportunities to speak English, and using both their native language and the target language in classes (Aksak & Cubukcu, 2020).

## The Value of This Research

In the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language, the active participation of students in the classroom plays an important role in acquiring the target language (Husna, 2019). Simultaneously, communication skills play an integral role in people's lives and the process of learning as people need to convey information and express their emotions via communication. Humans can make their intentions and thoughts clear to the audience during the process of communication, while they also can understand the viewpoints held by other speakers accurately. Therefore, communication can be seen as a social tool that people use to sustain their daily lives (Aksak & Cubukcu, 2020).

Conversely, if international students do not interact with their instructors in classes, the instructors cannot know whether they completely understand what has been

discussed in classes. In this case, even if a student does not figure out the content introduced in class, the instructor cannot give this learner more explanation or offer support in other ways, including exhibiting the content via a video. Besides, if students do not participate in interactions with their peers in classes, they cannot successfully engage in brainstorming, idea sharing, and discussions because their silence may bring them others' reticence. As a result, they will lose the chance to learn more from their teachers and classmates or attain new perspectives and viewpoints, which is a unfortunate for international students. Additionally, in-class activities and communications can be precious opportunities for international students to improve their communication skills in English because when they communicate verbally, they must find ways to mobilize their knowledge of the language to articulate and clarify their intentions, opinions, and views (Husna, 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to find ways to facilitate international students' classroom WTC.

Meanwhile, classroom participation is crucial for international student's academic success. It impacts students' academic achievement and helps to promote learners' motivation and self-confidence (Akpur, 2021) because active participation enhances students' learning of course content and improves their problem-solving skills (Murray & Lang, 1997). When international students achieve academic success and become knowledgeable and confident during the process of learning in Canadian universities, they will have a positive attitude toward Canadian university education and be willing to recommend other students from their countries to come to Canada for higher education. The increase in the population of international students will contribute to Canadian

institutional revenues. Consequently, from an economic aspect, it is necessary to increase international students' classroom communication engagement.

Therefore, identifying the factors impacting international students' demands of engaging in classroom communication helps educators adopt accurate measures to increase students' in-class interaction participation. This can be beneficial to achieving their academic success and increasing their satisfaction with a Canadian education. As a result, many of them can contribute to Canada's economy if they stay in this province as qualified and knowledgeable residents after their graduation, and some of them may introduce potential learners to study in Canada, which can be a contribution to Canada's economy.

**Deficiencies in Evidence**

In current studies, researchers explored the factors affecting international students' participation in classroom communication. For instance, Zhou et al. (2021) researched Chinese international master's students who studied in the education program at a university in southern Ontario. From this research, the researchers highlight that language proficiency, students' mood, students' self-confidence, previous working experience, learners' interests, and classroom atmosphere are associated with CISs' classroom participation. In addition, Zhou et al. (2021) also recommend improvement measures for improving Chinese international students' classroom communication engagement according to both student and instructor participants' responses and expectations.

However, all of Zhou et al.'s (2021) participants are those Chinese students who studied in the master of education (M.Ed.) program, which cannot demonstrate that other

Chinese students studying in other programs are inhibited to engage in classroom communication by the same factors as those M.Ed. Chinese students. Meanwhile, their suggestions for motivating CISs to participate in classroom communication are based on M.Ed. learners' responses, which may not be conducive to reflecting the demands of other Chinese students learning in other programs. The above statement demonstrates that their findings cannot be representative of other Chinese international students studying in other programs, such as a business program. The reasons for studying business by CISs will be introduced in the subsequent section.

## The Purpose of This Research

The purpose of this research is to examine how Chinese international postgraduate students studying in a business program perform in classroom communication, discover what factors impact their classroom interaction engagement, and what improvements are helpful to motivate this group of learners to participate in classroom communication from both students' and instructors' perception. By finding the answers to these questions, it would be possible to compare the results of this study with the findings of Zhou et al. (2021). Thereby, it could demonstrate whether Chinese international learning in various programs have classroom communication problems at Ontario universities and whether their classroom participation is affected by the same or different factors, as well as finding ways to improve their classroom communication participation that are applicable to all CISs.

The reason for picking Chinese postgraduate learners in a business program as the target population is that a large number of Chinese master's students study business in Ontario (Admin, 2022), and the teaching approach in this program is different from the

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education program. By 2022, the business and administration program is one of the most prevalent ones for international students as there are 112, 911 international students enrolled in this program in Canada (Admin, 2022). If low participation in classroom communication is prevalent among these postgraduate students, the problem will be serious and need to be solved by educators. Besides, the common teaching methods in the business program and the M. Ed. program are different. The most frequently utilized teaching approaches in this program are case studies and lectures (Farashahi & Tajeddin, 2018), while students' presentation and seminar learning plays an important role in the M.Ed. program. Consequently, the comparison of Chinese international students studying in two different programs with two distinguishing teaching approaches can demonstrate whether all CISs are unwilling to communicate in class and whether they are influenced by the same factors.

## Research Questions

To identify the classroom learning challenges of CISs studying in the master's business program, this study was guided by the following questions:

1. How do Chinese international master's business students participate in classroom communication?

2. What factors impact Chinese international master's business students' participation in classroom communication from students' and teachers' perceptions?

3. What strategies help to increase Chinese international master's business students' classroom interaction from students' and teachers' perspectives?

## Theoretical Framework

This study is built on the concept that the most effective teaching practices should meet three requirements: promising, satisfying to international students, and consistent with these students' perceptions of learning (Smith & Zhou, 2022) (see Figure 2). In addition, this study follows several theories. The primary theory is Tran's (2020) framework which identifies the significant connection between the education of international students with international students' academic learning, social experiences, and well-being. Meanwhile, this research is also guided by two statements: 1) international students' academic learning can be affected by instructors, such as instructors' personalities (Darby & Lang, 2019), and 2) promising teaching practices of international education to align with international students' satisfaction and perceptions of learning (Smith et al., 2019).

**Figure 2**

*Effective Teaching Practices*
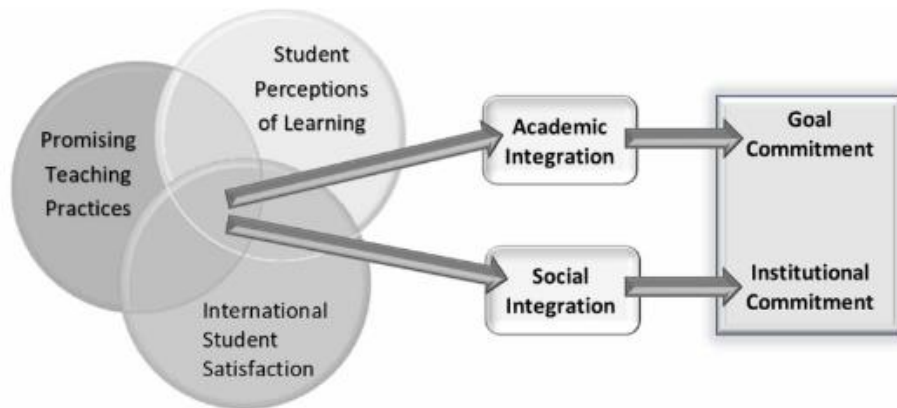
From "Handbook of research on teaching strategies for culturally and linguistically diverse international students", by C. Smith and G. Zhou. 2022. IGI Global. 1-16. 10.4018/978-1-7998-8921-2.ch001

## Limitations of This Study

This research adopted qualitative research to examine whether Chinese international master's students in a business program are reticent to communicate in class and check whether the influential factors of their reticence in classroom communication are the same as Zhou et al.'s (2021) findings. However, because this study was conducted in one Ontario comprehensive university and the sample size is small, findings are limited to this university. The findings of this research will need to be tested in other contexts before generalizations can be more broadly made.

**CHAPTER 2**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Despite the barrier to international travel created by the COVID-19 pandemic,
Canada was host to over 620,000 international students in 2021, many of whom are not
native English speakers (Crossman et al., 2022). Due to language barriers, it is difficult
for many international students to engage in classroom discussion; thus, they may
struggle to socially integrate into the local teaching environment (Gałajda, 2017). In
addition, some international students have been socialized to remain silent in class and do
not actively speak, ask questions, or respond to their classmates' points of view
(Hamouda, 2012). Consequently, engaging in English communication can be challenging
for this group of reticent international students.

This literature review examines the silent behaviour of students who attend
classes in a language other than their native language. More specifically, it recaps what
factors are the factors that facilitate students' UWTC. This includes the causes of these
learners' reluctance in classroom communication and the circumstances under which
students are more likely to engage in classroom interactions. Only by identifying the
factors influencing students' avoidance of classroom communication can educators adopt
targeted approaches to motivate and guide students to actively express their opinions and
give feedback to their peers and teachers in classes.

**The Meaning of UWTC**

Burgoon (1979) defines UWTC as a long-term tendency to avoid and/ or devalue
verbal communication (Kadi & Madini, 2019). In academics, this may refer to students
who are reluctant to communicate and tend to be silent. Liu and Jackson (2011) attribute

students' reticence to various factors, including fear of making mistakes, language proficiency, low self-confidence, and being devoid of oral practices. However, reticence is not exactly equivalent to UWTC because silence is perhaps caused by factors such as individual personality while UWTC focuses on the matter of avoiding the universality of communication (McCroskey, 1977). At the same time, WTC in English is defined as the readiness to engage in conversation with one or more specific people in a foreign language at a particular time (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Likewise, Kang (2005) argues that WTC refers to an individual's voluntary tendency to actively take part in communicative behaviour in each situation, which can vary depending on the interlocutor, topic, and conversation context, as well as other potential situational variables.

## The Factors Facilitating Students' UWTC

Based on a review of current study findings, the influential factors to CISs' WTC and UWTC in class could be three aspects according to the theory of this research (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Influential Factors to CISs' UWTC and WTC*

| Categories | Factors |
|---|---|
| Classroom Teaching | 1.Class-relative factors<br><br>(including class size, the classroom environment that aligns with the relationship with their teachers and peers, classmates' feedback, and engagement in classroom communication, and speaking opportunities.)<br><br>2. Teachers' relative features<br><br>(including teachers' attitude, support, in-class actions, and teaching approaches.)<br><br>3. Others<br><br>(including task type, topic, school teaching, grading, and language proficiency.) |
| CISs' Satisfaction | Students' personalities, anxiety, motivation, self-confidence, psychological condition, bias toward others, attitudes toward teachers, and acceptance by native learners. |
| CISs' Perception of Learning | Attitudes toward communication & culture. |

The above factors could be categorized in the subsequent ways: (1) students' intrinsic/internal factors and (2) extrinsic/ external influences. The intrinsic/ internal factors mainly include students' personalities, attitudes toward teachers/ communication, anxiety, motivation, self-confidence, psychological condition, and bias toward others. The external influencing factors consist of three segments: (1) class-relative factors,

including class size, the classroom environment that aligns with the relationship with their teachers and peers, classmates' feedback and engagement in classroom communication, and speaking opportunities; (2) teachers' relative features, which include teachers' attitude, support, in-class actions, teaching approach; and (3) other external influential features, such as task type, topic, culture, language, school education, grading, and acceptance by native learners. Furthermore, these intrinsic and extrinsic factors do not work separately but interact with each other. With respect to the factors that contribute to UWTC, the current literature outlines three key concerns: anxiety and relative factors, motivation and relative features, and classroom and teacher-relevant features.

**Anxiety and Related Factors**

Concerning anxiety that L2 learners experience, there are several factors that current literature has identified: concerns that limited English-speaking proficiency can inhibit clarity, fear of being humiliated, lack of self-confidence, anxiety over potential errors, and teachers' excessive emphasis on grammar. In addition to this, the place of origin can also influence students' anxiety.

*Limited English-Speaking Proficiency and Lack of Clarity*

The intrinsic factor that has been mentioned the most in previous findings is anxiety. Students are prone to anxiety when using a foreign language for verbal communication (Horwitz et al., 1986) because L2 learners feel anxious due to their unskilled language. For example, they worry about being judged negatively or ridiculed by others because they fail to express themselves accurately in a foreign language.

Woodrow (2006) reports that L2-using learners feel anxious about speaking up in front of their classes and communicating with native English speakers, which indicates that anxiety inhibits their in-class communication in English. With a quote from one of his participants, Woodrow demonstrates that this anxiety is sometimes related to concerns that one's poor speaking ability might cause confusion or fail to elicit the listener's interest:

> "I feel anxiety when I talk with native English speakers because I know my English...my speaking English...is not correct, so maybe it makes the native English speakers confused and maybe sometimes what I'm speaking...what I'm talking about is not interesting to native speakers. I think so these kinds of things." (p. 320).

Concerns about one's limited speaking ability are often due to a lack of vocabulary and poor grammar; thus, international students fail to express themselves quickly and precisely, which causes them to feel humiliated. This performance may also lead their teachers and classmates to develop misconceptions that international students tend to struggle academically. This misunderstanding of international students can, in turn, cause the L2-using to feel a sense of failure and low self-confidence, thereby exacerbating their fear of speaking in front of classmates.

### *Fear of Humiliation*

Once international students feel humiliated, they may keep silent rather than speak too much in English to protect their faces. In China, this practice is referred to as *miànzi* (面子), which roughly translates to 'save face.' This face-protecting behaviour is

related to social factors (Chichon, 2019). For instance, Chinese students' UWTC aligns

with Chinese philosophy and culture (Wen & Cle ́ment, 2010). Specifically, Wen &

Cle ́ment (2010) identified two distinct characteristics of Chinese learners: an other-

directed self and a submissive way of learning. Because of its Confucianist heritage,

Chinese culture is considered to be more inclined toward collectivism (Gudykunst, 1998,

as cited in Wen & Cle ́ment, 2010). Confucianism encourages people to consider how

their behaviours impact the collective; thus, Chinese people do not often separate their

lives from others (King & Bond, 1985, as cited in Wen & Cle ́ment, 2010). For example,

Chinese learners are cautious about their behaviours when they are performing in public

(Wen, 1999), which demonstrates Chinese people's excessive concern for others'

evaluations. In this case, many Chinese learners become accustomed to this habit, and the

other-directed self becomes a part of these learners' characteristics. Moreover, they

regard others' evaluations as a guide for their actions (Wen & Cle ́ment, 2010). Due to

immoderate attention to others' judgements, Chinese students are sensitive to their

teachers' and peers' feedback and responses on their language skills during their L2

learning (Wen & Cle ́ment, 2010). This puts excessive pressure on their studies and

contributes to their reluctance in socializing in L2 in class.

### *Lack of Self-Confidence*

Another factor associated with anxiety among students applying for L2 is the

deficiency of confidence (Kadi & Madini, 2019). L2 self-confidence influences L2 WTC

(Fallah, 2014). Khajavy et al. (2016) found that students' confidence in a foreign

language affects their English language proficiency and impacts their self-confidence in

communication. This is supported by a study on Iranian English foreign language (EFL)

Ph.D. students, which indicated that those participants had low L2 self-confidence before moving to Malaysia and they felt higher levels of anxiety and lower willingness to communicate in a foreign language at that time (Saadat & Mukundan, 2019). Hence, learners' self-confidence in L2 application is associated with their motivation and desire to communicate. Typically, people are more likely to become bold and willing to challenge themselves when they are certain and convinced; however, when learners feel insecure, they may shy away from speaking English, thus becoming silent (Tsui, 1996, as cited in Kadi & Madini, 2019).

### *Low Command of Foreign Language*

The reasoning behind the phenomenon of *miànzi* (面子), international students' lack of confidence may be due to perceived language deficiency. If students perceive that they have low command of the additional language, this can prevent them from expressing themselves, even in their native language. For example, many international students might fail to complete a sentence while speaking because of insufficient vocabulary, or they make an error related to verb tense that confuses their listeners. These experiences are considered failures by those students, which undermines students' confidence in conducting verbal communication in L2 and causes them to become shy when interacting with their peers in class. As a result, the sense of failure discourages them from actively participating in communication in English (Aksak & Cubukcu, 2020).

### *Anxiety Over Potential Error*

Low proficiency in a foreign language may also heighten students' fear of making mistakes. For example, Kang (2005) reports that it is also important that L2-applying

students' worries about making mistakes in speaking a foreign language can not only cause anxiety but also make them feel insecure. For instance, one participant described their experience: "I feel insecure and reluctant to speak English in front of people who do not know my English proficiency" (Kang, 2005, p. 282). Kang attributes this mentality to students' concern about being embarrassed in front of their peers, which the author proposed is due to two factors. First, these students believe that if their interlocutors know their language abilities, the interlocutors will not criticize or ridicule them when they misuse grammar or vocabulary. Second, the student's sense of security depended on the class or group size that they communicate with. That is, the more classmates involved in the communication, the less security these students have. This sentiment was outlined by one's of Kang's participants: "Usually, I am more nervous to speak English and make mistakes when there are more people, as compared to when there is only the tutor and me" (Kang, 2005, p. 283). This demonstrates that, when students study in an insecure learning environment, they will often avoid in-class communication and interaction to protect their faces.

### *Teachers' Excessive Emphasis on Grammar*

Additionally, students' anxiety about speaking in class may also be due to teachers' overzealous focus on grammar usage. That is, instructors judge their students based on whether learners can correctly apply grammar in their speech in L2 (Wen & Clément, 2010). In this context, those international students who are L2 speakers and who may not be proficient in grammar may feel anxious and hesitant before speaking because they worry that they will lose marks for making mistakes for this reason in their verbal expressions. In the end, they keep silent in class to ensure that they will not be

deducted points for making mistakes or be laughed at or criticized by their peers and teachers.

### *Place of Origin and Teaching Culture*

Students' anxiety about L2 communication also varies depending on their country and region of origin. Some studies have shown that Europeans and Vietnamese have lower anxiety when communicating in L2, while Japanese, Koreans, and Chinese show higher levels of anxiety (Woodrow, 2006). This could also be a piece of evidence demonstrating that students' anxiety is related to the culture of the countries where they were raised.

A teacher-centred learning environment can also contribute to students' in-class reticence (Cheng, 2000). To demonstrate, Kadi and Madini (2019) highlight that Chinese instructors are authoritative in the educational process while students follow their teachers. This traditional educational ideology can be traced back to Confucianism and classical Confucian teaching. Although this teaching approach is dying out in China, this tradition of over-reliance on teachers can still be found in English language teaching. In this context, both learners and teachers prefer to believe that students' English language skills rely on the teachers rather than the learners. As a result, instructors dominate class most of the time, while learners have few opportunities to present in English in class. As mentioned above, insufficient practicing opportunities for in-class oral English practice can contribute to unconfident and anxious students in L2 socialization. Ultimately, they keep silent in class. At the same time, the over-reliance on teachers in school education creates students' inertia. Namely, students depend on their teachers' lecturing and

become too lazy to conduct critical thinking, organize their languages and speak up in L2 logically. Even worse, some of them believe that it is easier to keep reticent in class than to present well in L2. In total, classroom teaching cultures play an important role in learners' in-class communication.

**Motivation and Relative Features**

Concerning students' motivation for classroom communication, several elements that inhibit L2-speaking learners to engage in classroom communication have been mentioned by current literature: (1) personality; (2) discussion topic; (3) Grade evaluation approach; (4) family support; and (5) socialization demands.

*Personality*

People with different personalities behave differently in social situations. Some people enjoy public speaking, while others are afraid of expressing themselves in public. Hz (2022) demonstrates that introverts are more likely to feel anxious in public speaking than extroverts. Their anxiety prevents them from engaging in public socialization. Besides, shy students also tend to be less motivated to participate in classroom discussions. Mohammadian (2013) demonstrates that non-shy students are more motivated to learn than shy students because timid students are more afraid of negative comments from teachers and classmates compared with non-shy students. This finding indicates that learners who are prone to shyness may lose motivation to communicate and not participate in classroom communication and discussion due to the fear of criticism.

*Discussion Topic*

The discussion topic is associated with L2-using students' U/ WTC because it impacts these learners' sense of security and is correlated with learners' interests.

First, unfamiliarity with the topic of discussion also reduces students' desire to express themselves in English because the background knowledge about the topic affects their sense of security (Kang, 2005). In general, when students talk about subjects that they are interested in, have experience with, and are knowledgeable of, they are more enthusiastic (Kang, 2005) and more willing to share their experiences and ideas with others. In contrast, Kang (2005) claims that students tend to feel insecure when they engage in discussions about topics that they have little knowledge about. He attributes students' insecurity to their concern about failing to offer insight into the topic and understand others' statements. Once students become anxious about classroom communication and protect themselves from criticism and evaluation by others, they keep reluctant to engage in classroom socialization. Moreover, students' working experience (Zhou et al., 2021) provides a knowledge background of classroom discussion topics for students, which enables students to have in-depth thinking on that topic and come up with thought-provoking questions so that students are confident in performing public speaking. Conversely, when students lack hands-on working experience on the discussion topic, they may be unconfident to express viewpoints in public as they may concern that they may fail to provide ideas on the topics.

Second, students' interests in the topics discussed in classes influence their motivation for classroom participation (Zhou et al., 2021). For example, if students are history people and the classroom communication topic is about history, the student will be likely to engage in classroom discussion and interaction in this class as they can

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provide many ideas due to their ample knowledge background and passion on the topic. Hence, it can be concluded that once classroom discussion topics meet learners' interests, learners will be more willing to participate in classroom communication and interaction.

### *Grade Evaluation Approach*

Teachers' evaluation approach influence students' participation in classroom communication. Zhou et al. (2021) indicate that if teachers highlight the importance of classroom participation, like taking classroom discussion into the final score's evaluation, students will be likely to engage in classroom communication. This demonstrates that teachers' guidance and preference correlated with students' motivation for classroom participation.

### *Family Support*

Learners' motivation to engage in classroom communication is also associated with external stimuli, such as family support. Aksak and Cubukcu (2020) state that few students received support in speaking English from their families and this makes them less eager to talk in English. Moreover, Aydin (2017) finds that students lose motivation to speak English because of an absence of support and pressure from their families. Accordingly, family support has a positive impact on students' language learning and encourages students to practice oral English.

### *Socialization Demands*

Learners' WTC is strongly related to their motivation (Hashimoto, 2002). For instance, when students demand to build relationships with others (their teachers or

peers) (Maclntyre et al., 1998), it will be possible for them to conduct initiate communication with others. Conversely, when they lack the motivation and desire to engage in classroom communication, they will be more likely to behave reticently.

**Classroom and Teacher-Relevant Features**

Student learning cannot be considered without their teachers and classroom-related factors. Many studies demonstrate that L2-using learners' reluctance in classroom communication aligns with the classroom atmosphere/ environment and teacher support, teaching approach, teacher's action, and insufficient opportunity for verbal presentation practice.

*Classroom Atmosphere/ Environment and Teachers' Support*

According to Riasati (2012), the classroom atmosphere/ environment affects students' willingness to speak up in class. Several respondents in his study indicate that they prefer to take part in communication in a stress-free environment that requires a friendly relationship between teachers and students because they feel safe and relaxed in that atmosphere. Moreover, the relaxed and safe atmosphere contributes to a sense of security, which helps to prevent students from having negative feelings, such as concerns about whether they will be ridiculed by others for making mistakes, in communication. Riasati (2012) also states that teachers' and classmates' positive feedback towards L2-using students' mistakes in their verbal presentation and encouragement make this group of learners feel that their imperfections are tolerated by their teachers and peers. As others in the classroom create a kind learning environment, L2-using learners may not be excessively afraid of socialization and presentation in class, which helps to let them find

classroom communication engaging because their teachers' and peers' support and affirmation fulfill their achievement in in-class communication (Kumar et al., 2018). As a result, they may have emotional satisfaction (Tan et al., 2021), which is beneficial to inspiring their demands of participating in classroom communication. Conversely, an unfriendly classroom environment inhibits L2-using learners from presenting in class. Zhou et al. (2021) demonstrate this point by quoting a participant's respondent: "If the atmosphere is friendly and relaxed, I always do this. For some serious teachers, actually we don't say anything." (p. 92). Hence, creating a friendly and relaxing learning atmosphere is essential to encourage L2-using learners to engage in classroom interaction.

Additionally, an amicable classroom atmosphere motivates students to have a sense of community and group cohesion (Tan et al., 2021). The cohesiveness leads to a greater sense of belonging to the class so that students feel no distance from their peers or teachers, and therefore construct trust among them, which contributes to pressure-free communication and interaction among L2-using learners and others in their classes. Ultimately, it is more possible to let them join in classroom conversations.

In contrast, the absence of teachers' support and encouragement can contribute to students' UWTC (Aksak & Cubukcu, 2020) because L2-using learners feel anxious and fearful about classroom communication when their teachers ignore their presenting barriers and classmates ridicule their oral performance.

### *Teaching Approach*

Kadi and Madini (2019) suggest that instructors' teaching approaches, including task type and student teaming arrangements, affect learners' classroom WTC. In Zhou et al.'s (2021) research, all their participants indicates that they love group work not only because this approach enables them to learn from each other but also because it provides more opportunities for each student to practice expressing themselves in English in a small number group, which makes them feel less anxious and fearful. Moreover, many student participants in Zhou et al.'s (2021) research prefer to join a mixed group that is consist of domestic and international students as they believe it helps them improve their English by communicating with local students. Additionally, some instructor participants in this research believe that assigning students into mixed groups improves international students' discussion participation.

### *Teacher's Action*

In addition, teachers' actions, like intolerance of reticence and excessive attention to grammar and frequent interruption, prevent L2-using learners' classroom communication engagement.

First, teachers' intolerance of in-class reticence causes students' refusal of classroom communication engagement as students may be forced to present when they are not ready if their teachers cannot accept a quiet classroom. When international students present in a hurry, they may fail to provide thought-provoking and logical presentations in English as they may forget many vocabularies or apply grammar inaccurately. Instead, if teachers can leave sufficient time to enable students to form points (Littlewood, 2004) via accomplishing brainstorming and organizing language,

learners would be possible to present well. Ultimately, learners will attain confidence in presenting in L2. Once the learners have a sense of self-fulfillment in speaking L2, they would be willing to conduct L2 communication in subsequent classes and be less likely to feel overly nervous and anxious.

Second, instructors' excessive attention to grammatical errors in their students' oral English performances, or their frequent interruptions and corrections of students' grammatical or pronunciation problems can make learners lose interest in expressing themselves in English (Aksak & Cubukcu, 2020). Furthermore, negative comments on students' oral performance rather than encouragement on it from teachers can make learners who are striving for excellence hesitant to conduct oral communication in class (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). For example, a participant complained that: "The teacher corrects my speaking mistakes all the time while I am speaking" (Aksak & Cubukcu, 2020, p. 165). Consequently, teachers' attitudes toward learners in class have an impact on learners' WTC (Kadi & Madini, 2019).

### *Insufficient Opportunity for Verbal Presentation Practice*

Some learners attribute their reluctance to participate in classroom communication to the fact that they do not have enough time and opportunities to practice oral performance (Aksak & Cubukcu, 2020) in class. Since there are not many chances to express themselves in a foreign language, it will take time to think about what sentence patterns to apply and what vocabulary to use when they are utilizing this language for oral expression. Likewise, they may forget some learned vocabulary during their oral presentation. Due to their disfluent and illogical expression, they suffer a sense of failure

and become unconfident. Additionally, lower confidence prevents students from engaging in classroom verbal interaction to protect their self-esteem. As a result, they refrain from in-class oral socialization because of their language deficiency.

## Suggestions for Improvement in Student's Classroom UWTC

The current literature offers suggestions for improving international students' in-class communication from both students' perspectives and instructors' perspectives.

### What Students Should Do?

Zhou et al. (2021) suggest that international students ought to accomplish cultural adjustment that requires them to be "academically extroverted" to fit into English-speaking countries' education (Zhou et al., 2021). They found that Chinese students were accustomed to being listeners in class because of the Chinese traditional education pattern, which makes them shy to speak in class. However, Canadian university instructors welcome and encourage students to present in class, thus they advise Chinese learners to be brave to speak up and interact with others in the class, which is beneficial to improving their English proficiency as they can practice their verbal presentation while learning from others.

### Strategies for Instructors

#### *Classroom Atmosphere and Relationships with Students*

The first suggestion for instructors is to shape a positive classroom climate that can relax international students and reduce international students' anxiety (Zhou et al., 2021). Zhou et al. (2021) believe teachers can accomplish that by constructing a relationship of

trust with those learners. Turner (2006) demonstrated this idea via his experience: his students are willing to talk about any aspect of their lives with him after attaining the students' trust, and those students become confident to communicate in academic workshops. The method for the author to achieve this relationship is socialization with those students.

### *Reading Workload and Difficulty*

Second, developing teaching difficulties and workloads appropriate for international students should be considered by teachers, especially in their first semester. As international students face cultural adjustment problems, they need time to be accustomed to the local education, such as teaching language, many international students claim that they struggled with overloaded reading tasks (Zhou et al., 2021). In Zhou et al.'s research, a few students responded that they are not able to finish the required readings before their classes, which makes classroom presentations hard. In this case, they insist that reducing the quantity and difficulty of the readings helps to diminish international students' anxiety and allows the students to get preparation for classroom communication.

### *Teaching Approaches*

It is highlighted that teachers should adopt teaching approaches, including mixed group/ pair work, offering enough discussion time, participating in discussion, and offering support, offering speaking opportunities for each student, writing tasks on the blackboard, avoiding applying slang, and adopting technology, to help international students fit into local education.

First, encouraging international students to do group work or pair work with domestic learners (Zhou et al., 2021) will be a practical method for achieving that goal as it contributes to international students' English improvement, which helps them build self-confidence, and thus be willing to socialize in class. Meanwhile, during students' group discussions, instructors should give enough time for their discussion and participate in their discussions to offer support and affirmation, which enables international students to come up with logical and reasonable presentations (Zhou et al., 2021).

It is essential that teachers should provide opportunities for each student to speak up in class (Saadat & Mukundan, 2019). In this process, teachers should minimize international students' anxiety about speaking English (Woodrow, 2006), which can be achieved by offering timely and positive feedback (Deng & Peng, 2021). As a result, their students will be likely to express their viewpoints in class. Besides, when international students are shy to answer questions, instructors can call their names to speak up (Zhou et al., 2021).

Besides, if teachers write tasks or key terms on the blackboard, slow down their speech, provide elaborations by offering examples, and avoid slang (Andrade, 2006), international students will be likely to figure out the class content, and thus post their understanding in class and communicate with their peers and instructors.

Adopting technology, like digital games and social media (Lee et al., 2019), to assist their teaching will be helpful to make international students clear about the content and interest them. When international students are puzzled about the content due to their language barriers, the application of videos, pictures, and 3D exhibitions are easy

approaches to help international students figure out the topic. Thus, students are likely to speak up about their points based on their understanding of the discussion topic.

### *Preparation Before Class*

Preparation before class should be done by teachers. First, teachers should expand their knowledge of international students' cultural backgrounds (Zhou et al., 2021), such as the teaching and learning traditions in their countries. By doing this, teachers will be aware of their students' learning habits and preferences and know the reason why their students' reticence in class, which allows them to build relationships with international students. Second, preparation for discussion topics (Riasati, 2012) to attract students is essential as well because international students may have many vocabularies on that topic to support their presentation, thus they will be likely to engage in classroom communication.

### *Warm-Up Activity*

In addition, warm-up activities, like random chatting, at the beginning of class also contribute to a pressure-free class (Mori, 2000), which is essential to motivate international students to join classroom interaction. If some students encountered troubles, like having a dispute with their landlord before class, they may not concentrate on their classes due to a terrible mood (Zhou et al., 2021). Hence, the warm-up activity is an emotional cushion to drag the students out of their negative emotions so that they may forget the fight for a while and devote themselves to class. During this activity, teachers can share their own or others' experiences of anxiety in speaking English (Deng & Peng, 2021) to relax their students.

**Suggestions for Post-secondary Institutions**

Educational institutions, including universities, colleges, and educational institutions, play important roles in international students' learning because school policies and activities influence these learners' behaviours, and are helpful to international students' language improvement.

First, international students' English proficiency can be improved by interacting with local learners in intercultural programs, like buddy programs, English corners, and cross-cultural off-campus activities, and language-improving programs, such as an English level improvement program  (Reid & Trofimovich, 2018, as cited in Lee et al., 2019). Besides, if school policies encourage the interaction between domestic students and international students (Reid & Trofimovich, 2018, as cited in Lee et al., 2029), native learners will be likely to accept international students without racism and biases. As a result, international students will achieve a sense of belonging as they can attain the native learners' acceptance, which leads to their WTC. Therefore, schools should create a positive educational environment that motivates the socialization between native learners and international students.

## Teaching Approaches Meeting Students' Satisfaction

The current literature highlights several teaching approaches that meet students' satisfaction. When students are satisfied with their classroom teaching, they will become more likely to take part in classroom socializations, like classroom discussions, presentations, and teamwork.

### *Positive Classroom Climate*

Past studies indicate that many international students prefer to study in a positive learning environment. Smith et al. (2019) also insist that creating an inclusive environment is crucial in international students' teaching practice. In their research, few postgraduate international students responded that they were satisfied with a relaxed learning environment that allows them to move around and decide to stand or sit in class. At the same time, another group of international students is fond of the supportive and pleasant learning classes where they can receive language support from others.

### Teaching Strategies

To create a positive and pleasant learning environment, Kinsella (1997) suggests instructors apply supportive practices, including providing more background information and language support, offering learning methods, and giving sufficient opportunities to students for engaging in classroom interactions (Kinsella, 1997). Other than these methods, the current research finds that teachers' specific and timely feedback and multi-modality teaching strategies, like the application of digital and visual materials, and classroom games, are affirmed by international students (Smith et al., 2019). International students in their research believe they are benefited from teachers' writing support, and their homework (Smith et al., 2019) as their linguistic skills can be improved, which is helpful to their academic success. Besides, the researchers believe that classroom games can lead to a relaxing learning environment as well because it allows students to interact freely.

### Teachers Characteristic

Chen et al. (2021) discovered that teachers' personality traits may significantly exert students' performance in classroom activities. This is supported by Smith et al.' (2019) study findings. They revealed that many international students prefer instructors who are humorous, patient, and supportive, value different cultures, encourage classroom interactions, affirm students' improvement, offer an enriched English environment, separate assignments into mini-ones, and teach in a student-centred method. Additionally, they observed that participants expected instructors who are approachable, adopt appropriate teaching based on students' academic and language levels, elaborate knowledge via real-world examples, and insist no phone policy in classes. Moreover, those participants emphasized that their teachers should understand their cultural backgrounds, offer support for them to overcome culture-related barriers, and listen to their stories.

To allow students to know their peers' cultural backgrounds, it is necessary to practice the culturally-responsive teaching in class (Smith et al., 2019) because this teaching method is beneficial to building a diverse cultural classroom, and thus helps international students to be accustomed to local education and construct relationships with their classmates (Gay, 2010). Gay (2010) suggests teachers design culturally-relevant curricula, organize learning communities, and encourage cross-cultural communication. Once students acknowledge others more, they would show respect and understanding to each other, which contributes to a positive learning environment.

## Conclusion

Current literature has shown the challenges for L2-using students to participate in classroom communication and this group of learners' reticence in classroom interaction. Researchers have explored the causes of those students' reluctance in classroom communication engagement worldwide. Thus, they categorize the reasons for the learners' silence as two features: (1) intrinsic features (including personality, attitude, psychological state, and motivation); and (2) external factors (consisting of classroom-relevant and teacher-related factors). Interestingly, these two influences are not completely independent but interact with each other.

## Needs for Additional Research

The latest publication on this issue is Zhou et al.'s (2021) findings. They conducted qualitative research on Chinese international postgraduate learners in the M.Ed. program at an Ontario comprehensive university. However, they did not explore whether Chinese students in other programs are affected by the same factors as their current findings. This gap in their literature was explored in this study.

**CHAPTER 3**

**METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES**

The purpose of this research is to examine whether Chinese international master's business learners have the same challenges in classroom communication as those learning in the M.Ed. program when they study at Ontario universities. Based on this purpose, this study aims to discover how this group of learners performs in classroom communication and the influential factors that inhibit their reticence in classroom interactions and to provide recommendations for improving this group of learners' in-class communication participation from both students' and instructors' perceptions.

This chapter reviews each methodological step, including research design, participant recruitment, data collection, and data analysis. Moreover, the reliability of research data, assumptions, and ethical considerations in the whole study are discussed.

**Research Design**

**Research Methods**

This research is a case study which adopts qualitative research to the whole process of study including participant recruiting, data collection, and data analysis. There are two reasons for selecting this research method.

First, qualitative research enables researchers to gather insight into a problem and helps to acknowledge concepts, viewpoints, and experiences from participants' responses (Bhandari, 2022). It can be conducted via several instruments, including observation, interview, focus group, survey, and secondary research, as the purpose of it is collecting and analyzing non-digital data, like text, video, or audio (Bhandari, 2022). Due to the

characteristic of qualitative research, it can be utilized to explore students' and teachers' opinions on the causes of international students' UWTC in class.

Second, because the purpose of this research is to test whether Zhou et al.'s (2021) findings can be generalized to CISs studying in business programs at the same university as the one that Zhou et al. had studied, this study adopted the same method as Zhou et al.'s (2021) study. In 2021, Zhou et al. implemented qualitative research as their research method, and thus this study took the same method as theirs. Only by studying in this way, could the comparison of the findings of this study and Zhou et al.' (2021) be meaningful.

Because this study must adopt the same research method and instrument as Zhou et al.' (2021), this study adopted semi-structured one-on-one interviews as the instrument. There are several reasons for adopting this type of instrument.

First, the semi-structured interview is a common method in field research because it allows different interviewers to conduct interviews according to the same theoretical frame and investigate various aspects of the research questions (George, 2022). According to George (2022), the semi-structured interview is a blended approach of a structured interview and an unstructured interview, which means that a part of the semi-structured interview questions is predetermined, while others are not planned. This approach enables interviewers to ask additional follow-up questions flexibly while keeping them in a fixed order. Hence, it is beneficial to attain more information from participants compared with the structured interview while avoiding being distracted by non-related information in two-way communication. Plus, this type of interview is less

demanding on the interviewer than an unstructured interview. The unstructured interview, normally, is better for an experienced interviewer who has a strong knowledge and experience background on the research topic (George, 2022b). Moreover, the data collection and analysis of the unstructured interview is more complex and challenging than the semi-structured interview. Consequently, the semi-structured interview is the best choice for this study.

Meanwhile, the one-on-one interview offers a safe environment for participants, which can inspire them to speak about their private feelings. Additionally, it allows the researcher to exchange experiences with respondents to attain the participants' trust during the conversations, which is also helpful to get private and detailed opinions and experiences from the interviewees. Consequently, the one-on-one interview enables the researcher to construct a trusting relationship with interviewees, which is beneficial to ensure that truthful and credible information is obtained through smooth interviews.

## Participants Recruitment

The number and categories of participants recruited for this study were the same as those recruited by Zhou et al. (2021). That is, there were 10 participants in total, which consists of eight students and two instructors. Student participants were recruited from the two instructors' classes according to the two criteria: 1) Chinese international students and 2) studied in the master's business program. Instructor participants were recruited based on these rules: 1) teaching in a master's program and 2) teaching CISs. Others who do not meet the above criteria were excluded.

Participant recruitment was implemented via purposeful sampling and random sampling and its procedures are as follows:

1. Contacting the dean of the Business School at a Ontario comprehensive university via email (see appendix M) to introduce this research and show Research Ethics Board (REB) clearance. After this, the dean forwarded the researcher's email to the associate dean of that school and invited him to assist in completing participant recruitment. The researcher had a conversation with the associate dean via phone call and invited him to recommend instructors who meet the recruitment criteria as prospective participants. In this way, the researcher attained two prospective instructor participants.

2. Sending emails (see Appendixes K & L) to the recommended instructors and attached consent forms (see Appendixes C & D) and interview question list (see Appendix G). These emails and attachments introduced the purpose of this research, how this research would be implemented, participants' rights and obligations, ethical considerations, and my contact information. The above information allowed them to freely decide whether to participate in this study or not and have conversations with me directly. In the end, both instructors indicated their willingness to take part in this study. By this step, instructor participants' recruitment was accomplished.

3. Student participants were selected from the confirmed instructor participants' classes. To motivate students to actively engage in this research, the researcher went to the two recruited instructors' classes to introduce this study and asked for all Chinese international students' email addresses aiming to

send recruitment letters (see Appendixes I & J), interview question lists (see

Appendixes E & F) and provide consent forms (see appendix A & B) which

allowed them to acknowledge more detail information about this study and

interviews. After communicating with prospective student participants via

email, eight in total (six students recruited from instructor J's classes while

two students were from the instructor I's classes) CISs showed their interest in

participating in this research as interviewees.

## Data Collection

Research data was collected via semi-structured interviews. Both participating

students and instructors volunteered for one-on-one interviews that consisted of online

interviews and in-person interviews. Meanwhile, participants were provided with

opportunities to decide which language (Mandarin or English) to conduct the interview

in. Each interview was 40-90 minutes in length.

The researcher communicated with each participant before the interviews to

schedule dates and places. All online interviews were conducted via the software

Microsoft Teams. In-person student interviews took place in discussion rooms in the

library while instructors' in-person interviews were implemented in their offices. The two

instructors accepted interviews in English, while all eight Chinese international students

chose to communicate in Mandarin.

At the beginning of the interviews, the researcher introduced the content in the

consent forms (see Appendixes A-D) which included the purpose of this study,

interviewees' rights, the confidentiality of research data, benefits to participants, risks of

participating in this study, suggestions on reducing risks, audio record interviews, and feedback on research results. The researcher emphasized their rights of withdrawing from interviews and this study. After attaining their confirmation of the consent forms, they were encouraged to sign the consent forms. All interviews started after the participants had signed the consent forms and were audio recorded by a recorder (iFLYTEK SR302 PRO).

Respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions and sub-questions according to their responses during their interviews. They were allowed to ask for elaborations on interview questions and answer them in their way. The specific interview protocol is as follows:

**Interview Protocol**

The interview protocols for student and instructor participants were borrowed from Zhou et al.'s (2021) research because the purpose of this study is to examine whether their findings can be generalized to CISs learning in the business program at the same Canadian university.

There are 24 open-ended questions in the student protocol (see Appendixes E & F). Five questions aim to collect participants' demographic information, including their family background, education background, previous work experience, the time that they have been in Canada, and the initial reasons for learning this program. One question is to acknowledge how they are doing in learning this program. One question is for discovering the differences between Chinese classes and Canadian classes from the participants' perceptions. Three questions collect information on participants' opinions

about classroom participation and the influential factors that encourage or inhibit their classroom interaction engagement from the participants' concepts. Eight questions identify participants' performance in classroom interaction. Five questions discover whether their instructors encourage CISs to engage in classroom participation and how the instructors improve their in-class interaction engagement. The last question aims to allow participants to provide further information.

The instructor protocol consists of 14 questions (see Appendixes G & H). These questions are designed to discover the following matters: 1) the differences between Chinese and Canadian classes from instructors' perceptions, 2) the influential factors to CISs' classroom communication engagement from instructors' observations, 3) CISs' performance in classroom interaction, such as their response to questions and peer's statements as well as group discussion engagement, and 4) the measures the instructors took to encourage Chinese international students to participate in classroom interaction. There is also an opportunity to allow the instructor participants to make further statements.

## Data Analysis

Following the data collection, the software Descript was used to transcribe all interview audio recordings. Participants' real names were also replaced with code names in all transcriptions. For instance, participating students were coded as A to H while instructor respondents were coded as I and J. Transcriptions were read many times and compared with audio recordings to check for mistakes or omissions in them. Following this step, those transcriptions were sent to each corresponding participant via email to invite them to double-check the transcriptions, which is called member checking. All

participants were offered two weeks to complete their member checking, and five of them

sent back their reviewed transcripts and confirmation to the researcher by the deadline.

Before analyzing the collected data, the researcher read confirmed transcriptions

several times and then the main points of the participants' perspectives on different

questions were extracted as the basis for coding. Based on the extracted information, the

researcher coded and categorized them according to the themes of the interview

questions. The codes of eight student participants and two teacher participants were

compared and summarized to identify similarities and differences. Finally, the researcher

summarized the above information and presented the results of the study using various

data analysis charts and tables for clear and concise presentations.

## Ethical Considerations

This study received clearance from the University of Windsor's Research Ethics

Board (REB) (see Appendix T) before participant recruitment. All study procedures were

conducted exactly according to the descriptions in the REB application form.

All prospective participants were offered consent forms (see Appendixes A-D)

and the interview question list (Appendixes E-H) when they received the first email that

introduced this study. The consent forms informed them of the purpose of this study, the

contact information of the principal researcher and her supervisor, the length and

procedures of interviews, their rights and obligations in interviews, potential risks and

discomforts in interviews, potential benefits to them, compensation for their participation,

the confidentiality of interview information, the time and procedures of withdrawal, and

research result feedback. Consent forms emphasized that their interviews, including in-

person and online interviews, would be audio recorded. They were allowed to turn off

their cameras in online interviews if they had concerns that their interviews might be

video recorded.

In addition, prospective participants were encouraged to contact the researcher

directly when they have questions about this study. Their interviews started after they

confirmed the content of the consent forms and signed the consent forms. Moreover, they

are promised that their identifiable information would be confidential because their real

names would be replaced by code names, the audio recordings of their interview would

only be available to the researcher and would not be shared with any other person or

organization, and their interview data would be completely destroyed after the thesis is

completed.

# CHAPTER 4

# RESULTS

This study aims to examine the classroom communication performances of CISs learning in the master's business programs at a Canadian comprehensive university in Ontario and compared them with the results from a prior study of M.Ed. students (Zhou et al., 2021). The results of this research are attained from semi-structured interviews and can be categorized into the following segments: Students' background, learning experiences in a Canadian university, and classroom participation.

## Students' Background

### Family Background

Interviews collected the data of student participants' families by asking about their parents' educational backgrounds and careers.

When the student respondents were asked about their parents' educational and work backgrounds, all eight students provided straightforward answers about their parents' educational backgrounds without showing any hesitation or reluctance while one participant showed reluctance to introduce his parents' career information. For instance, when student E was asked whether she could introduce her parents' educational and work background, she responded as follow:

> "Sure. My dad should have a master's degree, MBA. He works as a
> senior manager in a power company. My mom used to run her own
> business when I was young, but she stopped working afterwards and
> became a full-time caregiver for our family. Her educational background

is probably at the junior high school or senior high school level (Original transcription: 可以。我爸爸应该是硕士研究生、MBA。他的工作是在一家电力公司做高级管理。我妈妈在我小时候自己做一些生意，后面就没有再工作了，就变成全职的照顾我们的家庭。她的教育背景应该是初中还是高中。).”

Additionally, student G answered this question like this:

“They have already retired now. Because they are the generation that experienced the Cultural Revolution, their education level is at junior high school. My mom used to work at a state-owned textile factory, and my dad worked at a liquor factory. They both worked in state-owned enterprises (Original transcription: 他们现在已经退休了。因为他们是经历了文革的那一代，所以文化水平都是初中。我妈妈是在国棉纺织厂（工作）；我爸爸他是在酒厂（工作）。他们都是在企国企单位（上班）。).”

Moreover, student A replied in this way:

“I cannot be specific about their work units. They both have undergraduate degrees, and my parents were classmates.and both of them work in state-owned enterprises or public institutions. My dad's job may be more technical, as he graduated with an agricultural-related major and may go to the fields to check on crop growth, for example. My mom works at a bank, and she seems to handle deposit-related

tasks, but I am not very clear on the specifics of her job. She used to work in the customer service department and sometimes had to entertain clients in the evening. She has been in this department for about five years, but not recently (Original transcription: 他们的工作我不能具体到工作单位。他们都是本科毕业，我爸妈是同学。他们俩都在国企、事业单位。我爸的工作可能偏技术性一点，他是农业方面专业毕业的，可能会下田地去看作物长得怎么样的那种（工作）。我妈在银行（工作），她好像要（做）批存款（之类的工作），我不是很清楚（他们）的具体工作内容。她以前是客户部的，有时候晚上还要跟客户应酬。大概五年前基本上是（在）这个部门（工作），最近不是了。).”

Among the eight student participants, five students have both parents with education below college level, one student has both parents with undergraduate education, and the remaining two students have one parent with undergraduate or higher education and the other parent with high school education.

The work of the student participants' parents was various. Out of the total, three students have parents who jointly run a family business, two students have parents who are employed in government agencies, one student's father holds a managerial position in a corporate setting, while the mother is a full-time homemaker, and one student refused to disclose this information. In addition, the collected data does not show an obvious correlation between the study status of these eight student participants in Canada and the educational background as well as the occupation of their parents.

**Education Background**

  All student participants were asked to introduce their major in undergraduate learning. The undergraduate majors of the eight student participants are all different. Their undergraduate majors include international business, supply chain, business studies, human resource management, economics, journalism, applied psychology, and design. Among them, three students' undergraduate majors are related to their current majors, two students' undergraduate majors are consistent with their current majors, and three participants' undergraduate majors have no relevance to their current majors. (See Table 2）

**Table 2**

*Participating Students' Undergraduate Majors*

| Participants | Undergraduate Major | Relationship with Current Major | Overall Impression of Canadian Learning experience |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| A | International business | Related | not good |
| B | Supply chain | Consistent | not bad |
| C | Business studies | Related | adapted |
| D | Economics | Related | not bad |
| E | Journalism | Irrelevant | adapting |
| F | Human resource management | Consistent | feeling stressed |
| G | Applied psychology | Irrelevant | feeling stressed & anxious |
| H | Design | irrelevant | adapted |

The data set clearly indicates whether these CISs participants' undergraduate majors and current majors are related or not. There is no significant relationship between their previous majors and their adaption status during their studies in Canada.

**Work Experience**

The interview question allows student participants to introduce whether they have work experience and the length of their career before their arrival in Canada.

Almost all of the student participants had work experience prior to coming to Canada to study, although the length of time they worked varied. Only one of them pursued a master's learning directly after completing his undergraduate studies, so he did

not choose to work before his learning in Canada. Among the others, two respondents

had worked for one year or less, while the remaining students had more than three years

of work experience. (See Table 3)

**Table 3**

*Student Participants' Work Experiences*

| Participants | Work Experience | Overall Impression of Canadian Learning Experience |
|---|---|---|
| A | 2 summer internships | not good |
| B | More than 3 years | not bad |
| C | 6 years | adapted |
| D | No experience | not bad |
| E | 6 years | adapting |
| F | 5 years | feeling stressed |
| G | 5 years | feeling stressed & anxious |
| H | 1 year | adapted |

The data in the table above shows that both students with longer work experience

and those with shorter ones may adapt well to Canadian education. Similarly, students

without work experience may also adapt well. On the contrary, learners with longer work

background may also feel anxious and may not adapt well to Canadian education.

Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no correlation between the past work

experience of CISs and their adaptability to Canadian education.

**The Length of Living in English-speaking Countries**

Participating students were asked to describe their time living and studying in English-speaking countries. Most of the student participants (six of eight) are studying or living in an English-speaking country for the first time, with only two students indicating that they had previously completed high school and/ or undergraduate studies in the UK and U.S.A. The student who had a long-term overseas residency and study experience in the UK is student C. He said:

> "This month marks my 12th month in Canada, which means I have been
> here for a year already studying for my master's courses. Plus, I
> completed my high school and undergraduate studies in the UK
> (Original transcription: 这个月是我来加拿大的第 12 个月，也就是
> 来了一年了，来这边读硕士生的课程。我的高中还有本科是在英
> 国完成的。)."

At the same time, the length of time that students have lived in an English-speaking country varies. Among students who are living in an English-speaking country for the first time, three of them have been in Canada for less than a year, two of them have been here for over a year, and two of them have been settled in Canada for more than two years. The student who had completed his high school and undergraduate learning in the UK had been in Canada for over a year by the time of his interview. (See Table 4）

**Table 4**

*Length in English-Speaking Countries*

| Participants | Work Experience | Overall Impression of Canadian Learning Experience |
|---|---|---|
| A | More than 1 year | not good |
| B | 7 months | not bad |
| C | More than 6 years | adapted |
| D | More than 5 years | not bad |
| E | 2 years | adapting |
| F | 5 months | feeling stressed |
| G | 5 months | feeling stressed & anxious |
| H | More than 1 year | adapted |

The above table indicates that students who have lived and studied in English-speaking countries for a shorter period of time are more likely to feel stressed and anxious about studying in Canada, although some students feel that it is still manageable. However, there is no direct and significant correlation between the length of time that CISs have lived and studied in English-speaking countries and their impression of their learning experience in a Canadian university.

**Motivation for Picking This Program**

During the interviews, the researcher asked all participants about their motivations for choosing to pursue graduate studies in Canada and selecting a business-related major, including the factors that influenced their decision-making, such as who made the decision of studying abroad and their choice of major. (See Table 5)

In this group of student interviewees, the majority (five students) made it clear that their decision to study in Canada and learn in the business program was independent, and their parents did not intervene in their choices. Additionally, there were two students who made their decision in consultation with their families, and one student who completely followed the advice of the study abroad agency staff when applying for master's learning.

From the respondents' answers, it is clear that students have various reasons for learning in the business program in Canada. Some of them believe that business-related majors are practical and offer good job prospects. Some of them came to Canada to study for immigration purposes. Some selected learning in Canada because they have acquaintances here. One student chose this program for a very simple reason- he loves it.

"Student A responded: "Because I was not particularly sure about my own future plans, I might be influenced by others' ideas. Many of my classmates applied for graduate programs abroad, so I discussed with my parents about this. At that time, my dad had a friend living in Canada, and they recommended Canada to me as they thought the living was decent here, and if I had any immigration plans in the future, choosing Canada would be a better option than choosing other countries. Also, since there were acquaintances here, my parents felt that there would be someone to take care of me, so we decided to choose a Canadian university (Original transcription: 因为我自己对未来也不是特别有想法，可能（会）受别人的想法的影响。我的好

多同学都申请了国外的研究生，然后我就回家跟父母商量。当时我爸有朋友在加拿大生活，他们比较推荐这里。（他们）觉得这儿生活挺好，如果（我）以后有移民的想法，选择加拿大会比选择其他国家好一点。再加上有认识的人在这儿，我爸妈觉得有人照应（我），然后就（决定）选择加拿大（的大学）。）."

Student B stated: "This involved an oversea study agency staff. Because it is not easy to apply for graduate programs in Canada, and it is even harder to apply for programs in a major that is different from your undergraduate major, he suggested that I should stick with my undergraduate major. Plus, I did not resist his suggestion (Original transcription: 这个有中介老师的参合。因为加拿大的研究生不太好申，跨专业更难申，所以他建议我还（是）选本专业。我也不抗拒（他的建议）。)."

Student E answered: "It was my own decision. My current major is Human Resources (HR). It is good. When I applied for this program, I thought I could work in companies or factories after my graduation, and there would be a wide range of job opportunities. Hence, I picked up this major (Original transcription: 是我自己的决定。也还可以，这个专业。我是 HR 方向。当时觉得这个专业以后就业可以去公司，可以去工厂。就业面比较广。所以就来念（这个）专业。)."

Student G's response: "My husband and I made this decision together. When I applied for my master's program, I applied for two programs at the University of Windsor: one in education (Master of Education), and one in business. Perhaps the Admission Committee believed my work experience was closer to business and approved my application of studying in the Human Resources program (Original transcription: 我跟我老公一起商量之后决定的。当时申请（硕士）的时候，（在）温莎大学我申请了两个（专业）：一个是教育 （Master of Education），一个是商科。可能学校看我的工作经验跟商科（的学习内容）比较接近，（我）就（被）录取了人力（资源）的（专业）。)."

**Table 5**

*Participating Students' Motivation to Learning the Business Programs in Canada*

| Participants | Motivation to Learning Business Programs in Canada | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Who Decided | Influential Factors |
| A | self & parents | Many of my undergraduate classmates study abroad after graduation; There are friends of my parents in Canada |
| B | oversea study agency staff | Easy to get a job in Canada |
| C | self | For immigration |
| D | self | Practical major |
| E | self | Easy to get a job in Canada; Hard to get an admission in other programs |
| F | self | Hard to get an admission in other programs |
| G | self & family | Related to previous work experience |
| H | self | Interested in this program |

From the description provided by these eight student participants, no significant correlation was found between their motivation for studying business in Canada and their attitudes toward learning. For example, the table above shows that student A's decision to study in Canada was more influenced by external factors, including her parents. Student D's motivation, on the other hand, was completely different; studying business in Canada was entirely his own decision and inclination. However, these two students exhibited

similar attitudes during their studying in Canada. For instance, when student A was asked to describe her study condition in Canada, she responded as follows:

"I think maybe I am a bit lazy, and I did not create a very stressful study atmosphere for myself. I have always had a mindset of "Just pass the exam" during my study (Original transcription: 我觉得可能我本人有一点懒散，（我自己的）整个学习氛围也不是特别紧张的那一种，我一直抱着一种"能（考）过就行"的心里来学习。)."

Student D described his attitude to classroom interactions with other peers like this：

"I am basically not involved. Sometimes, if it is not something that is related to me, I may not care about it too much. This is my honest thought (Original transcription: 有些时候，不是自己的东西可能没那么在乎。这是真实想法。)."

Thus, it can be concluded that there is no obvious correlation between whether students choose their majors and study abroad autonomously and their attitudes toward studying in Canada.

## Differences between Chinese and Canadian Classes

In the interviews, the researcher asked all student participants about their learning experiences in Canada. All students provided their overall feedback on studying at a Canadian university. Of the eight students, three gave negative feedback, two gave positive feedback, two narrated their learning experience was not bad, and one student stated that they were still in the process of adapting to Canadian education. (See Table 6)

**Table 6**

*Student Participants' Overall Impression of The Learning Experience in A Canadian*

*University*

| Participants | Overall impression | Description |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| A | not good | Sluggish and perfunctory learning attitude |
| B | not bad | Intermittent adrenaline rushes, sustained passivity |
| C | adapted | Overall adaptation, but having difficulty communicating with students who have a heavy English accent. |
| D | not bad | It's a bit different than I imagined, but it's also good. |
| E | adapting | The experience of education in Canada is different from that in China. |
| F | feeling stressed | Have language barriers and are not accustomed to Canadian cultures. |
| G | feeling stressed & anxious | Fast teaching pace, many assignments and exams, and some teachers are unclear in their lectures. |
| H | adapted | Although my language skills are not good, I can use translation software for assistance. |

Students who feel they have not yet adapted to Canadian education described their

learning status as being under significant stress, anxiety, and not doing very well. The

main factors that contribute to these negative feelings include their own study habits and attitudes, language barriers, cultural adjustment, fast-paced teaching, heavy workload, frequent exams, and difficulty understanding instructors during lectures.

However, the two students who expressed that they have adapted to Canadian university education have different levels of English proficiency. From their narratives, it seems that language barriers have not had a negative impact on their overseas studies. For example, student H said:

"My English is not very good. At the beginning of classes, I could not understand some of the content, and even now, I still could not figure out the teaching content sometimes. However, there is various translation software available to help you understand the knowledge you need to learn. Then you just need to repeat it or express our own ideas. With the process of society and technology, language barriers are not a big problem anymore. You can still learn what foreign teachers want to convey to you, and you can express what you have learned to them in your way. (Original transcription: 我的英语并没有很好。我开始上课的时候有些内容会听不懂，哪怕到现在（也有不懂的时候）。但是现在的翻译软件很多，它能帮助你理解你所需要学的知识内容。然后你只需要去（把它）复述出来，或者说出你自己的想法就好了。随着社会的进步、技术的进步，语言的障碍其实已经不是很大了，你仍然可以学习到国外老师想传达给你的东西；你也可以向他们表达出你学到的东西，只是用你自己的方式（去达成的）。)."

In this study, each Chinese student participant was asked about their perspectives on Chinese education and Canadian education. All eight students expressed their different perceptions, which mainly focused on the following aspects: the classroom leader, teaching methods, the teacher's attitude towards classroom interaction, class size, the way students are assessed, and classroom atmosphere. Differences in classroom leadership and teaching methods were the most frequently mentioned, followed by the teacher's attitude toward classroom interaction and the way students are assessed. Only one participant mentioned the difference in class size and only one student mentioned the feature of the classroom atmosphere.

## Classroom Leadership

During the interviews, a total of four students mentioned this difference. The students mainly stated that teaching, normally, is teacher-centred in China, with the teacher giving lectures as the main mode of instruction, and the students' major task is to listen to their teachers' lectures. For example, student A shared her educational experience in China as this：

"It is likely everyone listens to teachers, and teachers lead you. They arrange and assign what you need to learn and do, tell you how much homework you need to complete and what will be assessed. Here (Canadian university), teachers give you an outline. Typically, you need to find and solve problems yourself (Original transcription： 是大家听老师说，老师在带着你走。他都给你安排好、布置好你要学什么和要做什么，（告诉学生要）完成多少作业（和会）考核什么。在这

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儿，老师是给你一个大纲，很多时候可能需要你自己去找问题、去

解决问题。)."

Regarding this point, student F also narrated similar views:

"In China, classroom teaching is mostly like this: most of the teachers

make you sit and listen while they are lecturing (Original transcription：

中国（课堂）就是：大部分的老师都是让你坐在下面听，他在上面

讲。)."

Regarding this difference, Student A expressed her preference for Canadian

classroom teaching and described her viewpoint as follows:

"I definitely think that the Canadian approach is more like that students

do devote themselves to learning. In China, take high school education

for example, it looks like teachers want to fill knowledge into learners'

heads. I believe that the Canadian educational approach is better, but it

requires that learners should be accompanied by good study habits

(Original transcription: 我肯定觉得加拿大这样的方式比较属于（这种

情况）：（学生们）真的是在学习。因为国内，像中学那种教育，

它就是在把知识填到学生的脑子里。我觉得（加拿大教育）这样更

好，但是它需要配合一个比较好的学习习惯"。)."

In addition, the dominance of teachers in Chinese education is also reflected in the

provision of teaching materials. Student E stated that Chinese teachers would provide all

materials related to teaching and learning.

"Student E's statement: In Chinese universities, the emphasis is more on teacher-led lectures. Teachers provide many materials for you: PowerPoint presentations, textbooks, and any materials that they can gather to help you with your studies (Original transcription: 国内的大学更多的是老师在讲。老师会给你很多的材料：ppt、教科书，所有他能网罗到的材料他都会给你，去帮助你进行学习。)."

However, Canadian classroom teaching does not revolve around teachers. Teachers interact with students in class. In terms of this point, student F's statement could be proof:

"The teachers here (Canada) pay more attention to students' classroom participation, and classroom teaching is not purely teacher-centered with lectures. What is interesting about the teachers here (Canada) is that sometimes when they talk about China-related or India-related topics, they ask the students from those countries. That is quite interesting (Original transcription： 这边的老师更注重学生的课堂参与度，（课堂）不是一直是以老师为中心的纯讲授式（的教学）。这边的老师比较有意思一点就是：有时老师讲到中国的问题或者关于印度的问题时，他会 cue 这个国家的学生。这还挺有意思的。)."

At the same time, students also expressed that they need to spend much time studying on their own and need to search for teaching materials themselves while studying in Canada. Student E showed clear dissatisfaction with this and believed that

these materials should be provided by teachers or institutes as the cost of materials should be included in her tuition. However, student F expressed satisfaction with Canadian teachers being able to provide teaching syllabuses which allow her to clearly understand learning objectives and assessment standards at the beginning of each semester. She said that when she was studying in China, teachers did not offer students syllabi.

> Student B: "In Canadian universities, teachers do not provide everything that students need to learn. Students are expected to search for learning resources on their own if they want to fully understand the subject. This includes textbooks, which are not always followed exactly by teachers. Sometimes teachers only extract the key points from the textbook and leave it up to students to read and figure out the content. Therefore, students are responsible for their own learning and need to actively seek out and utilize resources (Original transcription: 需要你自己看的东西老师不会给你提供，需要你自己找，如果你想把它学好的话。我的课本也是（自己找的）。老师不会照着课本讲，有时候，老师只会（把知识点）提炼出来。所以课本你就要自己去看。)."

**Teaching Methods**

Three student respondents mentioned this difference. This difference is mainly reflected in the importance Canadian teachers place on students' teamwork abilities, and they assign many group work assignments. Meanwhile, Canadian teachers emphasize the application of knowledge through their teaching. In contrast, Chinese education is called "cramming education". (Definition of cramming: Cramming is when someone repeatedly

reads or listens to a particular piece of information to memorize it exactly as it is presented, without necessarily trying to comprehend its meaning or connecting it to their existing knowledge (Edu, 2021)).

Student B narrated: "There are more group assignments and teamwork in Canadian university learning (Original transcription: 这边小组作业多一点；团队合作多一点。)."

Student F said: "One thing that I found different from Chinese educational approaches is that there are too many group assignments in Canadian studying (Original transcription: 一个让我觉得比较跟国内不一样（的地方）就是：我觉得这边的小组作业真的太多了。) ."

Student G responded: "Although they also focus on teaching the content in textbooks, overall, they place more emphasis on the application of the knowledge we learn, that is, how to apply textbook knowledge to future work or real-life situations. They also prioritize teamwork. After the midterm exam, all of my projects, including presentations and papers, were completed in groups (Original transcription: 他/ 她也注重团队合作。期中考试之后，（我）的所有的 project、presentation、论文都是 group 作战，都是小组完成的。)."

**Teacher's Attitude Towards Classroom Interaction**

According to two student participants' responses in this study, Canadian instructors have a different attitude toward classroom interactions and communication

compared to Chinese instructors. Canadian instructors have a more open attitude and welcome students to ask types of questions, even if the question is a personal question or is unrelated to the course content. The two participating students reported that Canadian instructors respond to all types of questions asked by students. In terms of this view, student C shared his experience like this:

"I feel that it is more open here (in Canada), and instructors are willing to accept open questions. Some of the questions even do not relate to our courses, and some students even ask such questions that are about instructors' personal information. Normally, instructors are willing to offer feedback (Original transcription: 我感觉这边比较开放，老师会接受你的一些比较 open 的问题。有一些（问题）甚至跟我们的课程都没有关系，（有些同学）甚至问一些老师私人的问题，有些老师也是愿意去回答的。)."

Additionally, Canadian instructors do not discourage communication among students in the classroom and may even join in their discussions. In contrast, Chinese instructors, generally, do not welcome students to communicate or interrupt their teaching in the classroom. Student F's description provides a detailed introduction to the attitude of Canadian instructors toward students' questions in the classroom:

"I feel like I can interrupt instructors at any time and ask my questions, and he/ she will give a serious response when I learn in Canada. This is very different in Chinese classroom learning. In China, I would not want to interrupt instructors to ask my questions. In Canadian classrooms, if

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you are not clear about something, you can discuss it with your peers

sitting next to you, and instructors do not mind. Sometimes, they even

participate in your discussion. But it may not be the same in China. I

think instructors here deliberately create an open and positive classroom

atmosphere for students, allowing you to feel that you can ask questions

anytime and that each of your questions will be valued (Original

transcription： 我觉得我可以随时打断老师（讲课），我可以提出我

的问题，并且他也会很认真的给我的问题作出回应。这一点是很不

一样的，在中国的课堂上我不会想要打断老师，去说我的问题。在

（加拿大的）课堂上如果你遇到问题，你跟旁边的人去交流，老师

也不会介意（这个事情），有时候他还会参与到你们的交流中去。

但是中国可能不会是这样子。这边的老师，我觉得他们会刻意营造

一种比较开放的、可以积极交流的课堂氛围给到学生，让你觉得随

时都可以问问题，（以及）我的每一个问题都会被重视。)."

**The Way Students Are Assessed**

Two of the eight interviewed students highlighted that the assessment methods for

students' grades are different between Canadian and Chinese schools. Student D believes

that Chinese schools attach more importance to students' exam scores than Canadian

ones. Likewise, student H also indicated that in China, students' grades mainly come

from exams and important assignments. However, both students stated that the grading

system in Canadian schools is diverse, including scores from examinations as well as

various performances in the process of learning.

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Student D responded: "In China, I feel that in the past, during my middle and high school, the focus was more on exam marks, pure score-oriented. As long as you did well on the exams, you are a good student. There were no other criteria for judging a student. Actually, it was mainly focused on grades, the final exam grades. But now, it is different in Canadian schools. Students' final grades come from the marks of mid-term, final exams, and assignments (Original transcription: 在中国感觉以前初高中的话，可能就比较追求的是结果，是个纯结果，结果导向。就是你只要考得好就 OK。其它其实也没有什么。而且，其实是以成绩为主，是以期末的成绩为主。这样子的话，现在是分开的。期中，期末， assignments,这些分开的。)."

Student H narrated: "For example, in China, how my score is evaluated is based on whether I did a good job in assignments or writing papers. If I achieve these, I can get a high mark. But in Canada, I have taken various courses, and even though mid-term and final exams may account for a maximum of 30% of my grade. There are still 40% of the final grade that may come from my performance in presentations, classroom participation, and other tasks. All of these are counted towards my final mark (Original transcription: 比如在国内上课，如何评判我的分数(的标准)就是（我是否）做出好的作业，或者是（否）写了一篇很好的论文，（达到这些）你就可以得高分。我在这边上了很多不同的课，期中、期末考试（的分数）最多可能也就占 30%，仍然有 40%

的分数可能来源于你平时（的表现），来源于你的 presentation、甚

至是课堂参与度，这些都算在你的分数里面。)."

**Class Size**

Interviewee student C mentioned the difference in class size between Canadian

and Chinese institutions when discussing the differences in education between the two

countries. He believed that the class sizes in Canadian universities were smaller than

Chinese class sizes, and small class sizes make students' engagement in classroom

interactions easier.

Student C responded: "The lectures here (Canada) are mostly in smaller

classes, but there are also some larger ones. Basically, there are around

30 to 40 students in a class. I think it is easier to participate in

interactions. If there are too many learners in class, it would be difficult

to engage in it (Original transcription: 这边的 lecture 都是比较小班

的，但也有一些大的（班级）。基本上（班级人数）都在三、四十

人左右。我觉得还是更容易让你能去参与到其中。人太多的话，你

很难参与进去。)."

Meanwhile, student A described her perception of classroom participation, stating

that she learns better and has higher classroom participation in classes in small size. She

said:

"I have taken courses with high classroom participation before, not here

(Canada), but during my undergraduate years (in Macao). First of all,

there were relatively fewer students in that class compared with Canadian

classes, probably less than 20, and we were all very familiar with each

other. In that class, we were like a family, so the participation was high. I

really feel that I made progress faster and remembered the teaching

content better in such classes (Original transcription: 我有（上）过课堂

参与度比较高的（课），不是在这里，是在本科的时候。第一是

（那个课堂上）学生相对来说少一点，大概 20 个不到的学生，（我

们）互相都非常熟悉。那个课堂（上）大家就很熟悉，像一家人一

样，所以参与度很高。我确实觉得在这样的课上进步的要快一点，

学到的内容也记得更深一点。).”

**Classroom Atmosphere**

Although only one participating student mentioned the feature – classroom

atmosphere - when discussing the differences between Canadian and Chinese education,

other participants, including students and instructors, also mentioned classroom

atmosphere when they were asked about the influential factors to CISs' classroom

communication engagement. As for the impact of classroom atmosphere on students'

classroom participation, it will be discussed in detail in the section on influential factors.

Here, the author mainly leads the viewers to understand the feelings of student F towards

the classroom atmosphere in the two countries.

During the interview, student F mentioned that the classroom atmosphere in

Canada is relaxed and not very serious. This relaxed classroom atmosphere is

demonstrated by the fact that students are allowed to interrupt their instructors to ask

questions at any time in class, and their instructors are not angry about this but willing to respond to them. In addition, instructors do not mind students whispering to classmates in class, and they may even take part in students' discussions.

> "Student F's response: The classroom atmosphere here (in Canada) is good. It is relaxed and not serious. I feel like I can interrupt instructors anytime and ask my questions, and instructors will respond seriously. In Canadian classrooms, if you have questions, you can discuss them with your classmates sitting next to you and you will not be blamed by instructors. Sometimes, instructors may engage in your discussions (Original transcription: 在（加拿大的）课堂上如果你遇到问题，你跟旁边的人去交流，老师也不会介意（这个事情），有时候他还会参与到你们的交流中去。)."

### Students' Perceptions of Classroom Participation

Participating students were asked whether they actively participate in classroom interaction and how they think about the value of in-class participation. These student participants responded that there are various classroom interactions, like group discussion, feedback to peers, responding to instructors' questions, etc. Among them, there are seven students who acknowledged classroom participation has a positive impact on academic learning. The student participants used the following words to describe their attitudes toward classroom interactions: important, very important, useful, and helpful.

Regarding the significance of classroom interactions to students, it varies among different learners. Some participating students believe that classroom interactions are

good opportunities to take a break, avoiding drifting away due to a long time of listening to a lecture. During the discussion process, students' brains could switch to another working mode, which helps to let their brain rest and allow them to pay more attention to the following lecture. For example, Student B shared her feeling like this:

"Because our brain cannot concentrate on listening for two hours or even one hour, at most for 20 minutes. You will get tired of listening if you listen to a lecture for hours. At this time, if the instructor says: "let us discuss this", your brain has a chance to switch modes. After discussion, you can listen to the lecture more attentively (Original transcription: 因为大脑是不可能连续集中精力（听课）两个小时的，或一个小时的，顶多 20 分钟，所以你会听累。（如果）老师说："你们讨论一下"，这个时候你脑子也等于（有机会）转换一下。讨论完之后，你可以更（精神）集中地听课。)."

Additionally, some student respondents insist that classroom interactions, such as group discussions, provide opportunities to assist to attain other's ideas and assist to deepen their understanding and memory of the knowledge introduced in class. At the same time, classroom interactions can also relieve the classroom atmosphere, making the class more active.

Student C said: "If you just listen to the lectures, I do not think it is enough to deepen your memory of the knowledge. That is one aspect, it can make your memory more profound. On the other hand, not only do you remember that knowledge, but sometimes when the instructor

explains it in more detail, you will have a better understanding of this

thing (Original transcription: 假如说你是光听（课）的话，我觉得不

足以加深（对知识点的）记忆。这是一个方面，它能让你更加的记

忆深刻。另外一方面，你不光记住了那个知识点，有些时候老师更

详细的阐述一下，就会更加理解这个东西。).”

Student D responded: “Firstly, students often come up with various

answers and views when talking about the same questions. Secondly, a

discussion may help to ease the classroom atmosphere and make it less

tedious (Original transcription： 第一，就是说大家面对同样的问题，

其实想到答案还蛮不同的。还有就是，稍微讨论一下可能会让你课

堂氛围更缓和一点，没那么枯燥。).”

In addition, some respondents believe that participation in classroom interactions

can increase their interest in the course that they are learning, which ultimately increases

their willingness to communicate with classmates. Student H also mentioned that he can

get help from other peers in group interactions. This assists him to solve problems more

quickly. He believes this is very helpful for his learning.

Student F narrated: “Classroom participation may bring me some positive

feelings towards the course, and then I will want to learn it. If I learn it

well, I would have more communication with others. I think it is

beneficial to my study (Original transcription: 课堂上的参与可能会让

我对这门课有一些好感，我就会想要去学习它。把它学懂了，我就可以跟大家有更多的交流了。我觉得是有好处。).”

Student H said: "Take my Marketing class as an example, we have a lot of group assignments. There is one team member whom I have a good relationship with, and he can help me a lot in practical ways, such as informing me of things that I missed during class learning. In group discussions, I think different team members could attain different points from the same lecture and have various understandings. It could find out answers to a specific question faster when all member of the team speaks out their understandings (Original transcription：以我的 Marketing 课程上课为例，我们会有很多小组作业。有一个小组的 team member 跟我关系非常好，他可以在实质上帮助你很多，比如你在课上漏听的东西（他会告知你）。在小组作业中，我觉得每个人听到的东西都不一样，每个人在这个环境下理解的东西也不同，当所有人把共同需要解决的问题说出来，反而可以更快的找到解决办法。).”

However, student G believes that various types of classroom interaction cannot be uniformly evaluated. She believes that answering questions and responding to peers' statements do not help to learn, but classroom discussions are useful.

Student G's response: "I think if classroom interaction is only defined as answering questions from instructors or commenting on other students' viewpoints, it is not helpful because even if I do not answer the

questions, instructors will explain it later. Hence, answering or not does not make any difference. However, classroom discussion is useful. Communicating with other peers who are from different cultural backgrounds helps to understand various cultural values and learn something new. (Original transcription: 我觉如果只是把课堂互动定义为上课回答一些老师的问题，或者是点评其他学生的作业情况（之类的），我觉得没有什么帮助。因为老师（提）了一个问题，就算我现在不回答他，一会他还会解释，（所以）我回答与不回答没有任何的意义。课堂沟讨论是有用的. 你与不同国家背景的学生交流可以了解到很多的文化价值观的不同，或者是学习到一些（新的东西）。).”

## CISs' Performance in Classroom Interactions

The responses from eight participating students in this study highlight that the overall level of classroom engagement by CISs in Canadian business schools is low. Of the eight student respondents, six students stated that compared to international students from other countries, such as India and Iran, CISs have less classroom interaction and participation. They respectively used the words "not high" and "less" to describe the performance of Chinese students in classroom communication. Similarly, one instructor participant also expressed the same conclusion. For instance, student C shared his observation like this:

"As far as my observation, the participation level of Chinese students in my classes is not particularly high. Apart from me, some students seem

sitting in the classroom and listening to lectures, but they may be watching Chinese dramas on their laptops instead of paying attention to classroom learning (Original transcription: 就我观察而言，我班上的中国学生参与度并不怎么高。除了我以外，有些学生，人是坐在那里，但是他可能电脑上看的是中国的电视剧。).”

Likewise, instructor I narrated his observation as follows:

“I'm, right now, teaching one section, (which) is about 60 students, and probably there are about 20 or 25 students who are Chinese. And then, probably about around 10 or maybe between five to 10 students, they've actively participated and then the rest, they don't.”

The performance of these eight interviewed students in classroom interactions is also different. Four of them said their participation was not high, while the rest four students believed that they actively communicated and interacted in classroom learning.

Student F: “I think I performed more actively in Canadian classroom learning than that in Chinese classes. However, I am not very active in classroom interactions even in Canadian classes (Original transcription：我觉得相比于在国内上学的时候，我是属于比较积极的，但也不能说非常积极吧。).”

Student B: “I am kind of an active student in classroom interactions. For some classes, I am quite active; for others, I performed not that well because I do not fully understand what the instructor introduced, I do not

know much knowledge about those courses sometimes, and those courses are not my major courses. However, I would like to actively engage in classroom interactions and have a seat that is close to the front (Original transcription: 我还比较积极。有的课，我是比较积极的；有的课，就一般。有的课，我听不太明白他（老师）在说什么。而且他的课，我学的不是特别扎实，很多他们讲的东西我也不知道，而且也不是我的专业课。但是我的专业课的话，我就坐的比较靠前，我坐第二排，回答的还挺积极的。).”

## Raising Questions

Regarding raising questions in class, student participants showed various performances. Two of the eight student interviewees said that they hardly ask questions in class, two students expressed that they never ask questions, and two of them said that they did not raise questions frequently. Of the remaining two students, one said that he only occasionally asks questions, and another one said that he actively participates in classroom interactions and raises questions.

The reasons why these students' reluctance and hesitance in raising questions in class vary, and can be mainly divided into the following aspects：

Firstly, the reason most mentioned by student participants is that they are not accustomed to interrupting others, and they believe that interrupting instructors' lectures is not good. For example, student A explained it this way: "That is out of habit. I feel like it is interrupting the instructor's teaching. I usually do not speak up my questions in class

(Original transcription: 出于习惯。我觉得（这样做）像是打断老师上课一样。我一般不会在课上讲（出来））".

Second, due to the language barrier, some students worry that their questions are caused by not understanding what the instructors said, so they worry about being ridiculed by their classmates. To illustrate, student A shared her thoughts:

"I, sometimes, feel that I have to make sure that I have 100% figured out what instructors are teaching so that the questions that I asked could be meaningful. In this case, I do not feel ashamed when others hear my questions. But if I do not understand what the instructor said, maybe the questions I ask have been introduced many times by them. In this case, I feel embarrassed (Original transcription: 我有时候觉得我得确保自己100%理解老师上课的内容，（这样）我提出的问题才是有意义的，（这样）这个问题被别人听到了才不会觉得羞耻。但如果没有理解老师（讲）的内容，（可能）我问的这个问题（会）是他刚刚重复（讲）过的，（这样的话）我就会觉得不好意思。）."

Some student respondents also indicated that they did not ask questions in class because they did not understand the instructors' lectures. To be an illustration, student G narrated：

"Because of the instructors' accents, some professional terminologies, or some topics that I did not acknowledge, I fail to figure out what the instructors taught in class. As a result, I cannot raise any questions.

(Original transcription: 因为（老师）口音的问题或者一些专业术语，我从来没有接触过的（话题）的原因，我都听不懂，我不可能提出问题。)."

Moreover, due to the language barriers, some students expressed concerns about not being able to understand instructors' responses and not being capable of providing feedback to the instructors after asking questions in class. Student H's response is the best example:

"You may not be able to express yourself well because of your immature language. In my case, before asking questions in class, I would consider: "If I speak up and the instructors respond, can I fully understand it? Can I offer the right feedback based on the instructors' answers? (Original transcription：你可能因为不太（能用）成熟的语言（表达）。我在这边（的课堂上），在没提问之前就会考虑到："如果我说了，老师做出反馈了，我真的能够完全听懂吗？我真的能够做出正确的反馈吗？)."

Third, some participating students believed that there is no need to ask questions in class. First, they think that the answers to instructors' questions can be solved through other means after class, such as searching the internet, discussing with classmates, or seeking help from a tutor. Second, some of them insisted that they can consult with the instructors individually during break or after class, such as during office hours. On the one hand, the interviewed students believe that this approach does not waste other

students' time (if the questions are not something other students are concerned about). To prove this, student G said:

"Because there are too many things that I did not understand from the instructors' lectures, I cannot raise questions in class. I have to seek help from the instructors, tutors, or other classmates after class. (Original transcription：因为我不懂的问题实在太多了，我不可能在课堂上提出，我只能课下要么去找老师，要么去找 tutor，要么找其他同学去问。)."

On the other hand, doing so can avoid expressing themselves in front of many people and not feeling embarrassed. Student A's opinion is the best example of this:

"Sometimes, I feel like I have to make sure that I 100% understand what the instructors taught in class so that my questions could be meaningful and not embarrassing when others hear them. But if I do not understand the instructors' lectures, I may encounter embarrassment when I raise questions that they just repeatedly explained. I am self-conscious about asking questions when many people are listening (Original transcription：我有时候觉得我得确保自己 100% 理解老师上课的内容，（这样）我提出的问题才是有意义的，（这样）这个问题被别人听到了才不会觉得羞耻。但如果没有理解老师（讲）的内容，（可能）我问的这个问题（会）是他刚刚重复（讲）过的，（这样

的话）我就会觉得不好意思。我就觉得我现在提出问题会有别人听

到，我比较介意好多人一起听到我的想法。)."

Interestingly, the instructor I also mentioned that CISs tend to approach him after class to discuss their questions individually. He said:

"But if they don't understand, they know what they do here is, and then in the class, they may not ask. But once the class is over, and if they have some questions, they'll follow me and ask questions there on a one-on-one basis. If they don't understand, they come to the office hour and try to get the answer from me."

Fourth, CISs do not have the habit of asking questions in class, which is also influenced by Chinese educational culture. Student H offered a decent explanation：

"I think it is a herd mentality, or not wanting to stand out (Original transcription： 我觉得算是从众心理，或者是不想让自己变得那么标新立异)."

In his perception, Chinese education does not encourage students to be" special". This view was also supported by instructor J. Instructor J believes that learners who grow up in an environment that welcomes and encourages asking questions feel more comfortable in the classroom questioning section. He said:

"Students who stem from a more free society tend to be more comfortable in the process of inquiry, of asking questions, than those

people who weren't raised in an environment that encouraged, freedom of speech, and freedom of expression."

The fifth reason is that the quality of teaching in class can also affect learners' participation in asking questions. First, it depends on whether the topics discussed in class are interesting to the learners. Student D said that he would only ask questions if the discussion topics interested him. Additionally, the quality of teaching, such as teaching methods, can affect students' attention in class, thereby affecting their participation in the questioning process. For example, student G complained:

"Because the instructor's lectures were too tedious, I did not participate in listening, and I do not know what he talked about. So, I cannot ask questions either (Original transcription: 因为老师讲的太无聊了，所以我就没有参与（听讲），我也不知道他到底讲到了哪里，所以我也提不出问题。)."

The two participating instructors had different observations on the performance of CISs in this aspect. Instructor I observed that CISs tend to hesitate to ask questions in the classroom during the first few weeks of a semester. However, after a few weeks, they start to ask questions when they are accustomed to the local learning environment and their teachers. This is what he said：

"In the first couple of weeks, they feel hesitant, but gradually they develop the relationship rapidly and they feel very comfortable asking questions. In the first couple of weeks, there is a difference. But, after

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that, like right now, this is March, then there is no difference now. Like everybody is participating, everybody's relaxed."

"Suddenly they are in Canada, a different place, with a lot of adjustments to be made and there are courses there and the classes are going very fast and to be able to ask questions, you have to understand the material first. And they are even struggling to adjust. But once they understand the material, and get settled in, then they start asking questions just like that. There is good participation since then."

Instructor J stated that CISs, mainly referring to those from mainland China rather than Chinese from Hong Kong, Macao, or other regions, are usually quiet in class but more active and engaged when asking process questions. For example, they would like to actively inquire about the due date for assignments. The following is the description from instructor J:

"Chinese students are more reluctant, comparatively speaking, than fellow classmates to ask questions.  However, where the questions are 'process oriented', Chinese students are slightly more active. Examples of 'process questions' could be:  When is the assignment, or report due? How many pages? Could you further elaborate on the guidelines?  Questions of clarification are often related to a weighted assignment. Rarely will a Chinese student ask a follow-up learning question:  Example: "Professor, could you elaborate further on the theory behind action learning?"

Meanwhile, instructor J believes CISs from China mainland are influenced by the Chinese traditional culture as he mentioned that CISs care about "Mianzi (面子)" too much. That is CISs have a concern about losing face when they raise questions as they do not want to look like a fool and make mistakes in front of other peers. Hence, CISs prefer not to speak up about their questions in class to save their faces. The following is instructor J's statement：

> "Loss of face. This is a key totem of Chinese culture. When you direct your question to a Chinese student spontaneously, the student more often than not, freezes up. They feel trapped. They show fear in their facial expression. They don't want to make a mistake in front of others. They weren't prepared for spontaneous questions. Saving face "Mianzi (面子)", more often than not, takes precedence over the uncertainty surrounding the possibility of losing face. This cultural trait is overbearing within the mindset of many Chinese students. It is my personal belief that "Mianzi (面子)" is a key catalyst of fostering a student's inhibition to ask or answer questions in the classroom environment."

**Feedback to Peers**

Regarding feedback from other classmates, these eight student participants gave varying answers. Only one student firmly stated that he would actively interact with his peers. This is what he said:

"For instance, I would ask some relevant questions based on what they talked about after my classmates completed a presentation. If other classmates ask some questions and I have deeper and more relevant questions, I may continue to ask them (Original transcription：比如在同学做 presentation 之后，我会根据他们所讲的内容进行一些相关性的提问。包括其他同学问了一些问题之后，（如果）我有更深层次的问题，也是相关的，我可能会继续接着问。)."

Additionally, three students offered clear negative responses, using phrases like "almost never", "hardly", and "never" to express their shortage of participation in peer feedback. The main reasons for their behaviours can be categorized as follows: 1. Lack of confidence in their language proficiency, fearing that they may not understand what their classmates said. 2. Regarding asking questions as challenges to their peers, which may embarrass them. 3. Not being interested in what others talked about. 4. The habit of not responding, influenced by Chinese culture. These factors can be deduced from the responses of the following students.

Student A: "Almost never. First, it is because I am worried that I may not have understood what they said, and my feedback would not be entirely accurate. Secondly, I feel that pointing out what my peers fell short of is a bit like embarrassing them in public. If I were to express my opinion, I would probably lean towards saying positive things in their statements. If I do notice any shortcomings, I might express them in a very tactful way (Original transcription: 几乎没有。第一，是出于我担心我没有听懂他

们说的内容，没有完全理解，我的反馈对他来说不是完全正确的。第二点，我觉得指出对方哪里不太好有点像在当众给他难堪的感觉。如果让我发表意见，我可能也倾向于往好的地方说。如果我发现（他讲的内容）有不足，可能也会很委婉的说一下。)."

Student D: "Hardly. Sometimes, if something does not concern me, I may not care as much (Original transcription: 那基本不会。有些时候，不是自己的东西可能没那么在乎。)."

Student F: "Never. It could be partly due to my personality, and partly due to the influence of Chinese culture. We are not used to being critical, and our critical thinking skills may not be as active. We were not taught to have critical thinking skills since we were young, so I am not used to challenging other people's opinions (Original transcription: 不会，从来没有。可能一部分是性格原因，还有一部分是不是（受）我们中国的文化（影响）的原因，就是不太习惯，可能我们的批判性思维没有那么的（活跃）。我们从小也没有被教育"你要有批判性思维"，我本人也就不太习惯于反驳别人的意见。)."

The remaining interviewed students reported the scoring of their feedback responses. For example, if the topic discussed by their classmates is interesting and they have ideas about it, there would be a high probability that they will respond; if no other classmates respond in class, some students would like to respond to their peers to avoid an awkward classroom atmosphere; if there are only a few team members in the group,

some students said that they are willing to offer feedback to their classmates. To illustrate, student B responded in this way:

"Depends on the quality of their presentations. If their presentations are not interesting and clear, I might not even listen to them from the beginning of their statements. Therefore, I would not know what to say. But if their presentations grabbed my attention, I would like to ask some questions (Original transcription: 取决于他 presentation 的质量。如果质量一般，可能我从头（开始）都没有听，所以我也不知道问啥。但是（如果）他讲的很好，把我吸引过去了，有问题我就会问。)."

Likewise, student H said: "Normally, I respond to viewpoints that I am interested in, and if I am not interested in it, I do not respond to it (Original transcription: 一般来说我回应的都是我自己感兴趣的观点，不感兴趣（的）就不会去回应了。)."

Student E replied: "I just do not want there to be an awkward silence in class. I feel like if I do not respond to my teammates, the atmosphere will be awkward if nobody speaks up in a small discussion group. But if it is a class of 50 people, for instance, then I know there will be someone who responds to others, and I do not feel like it is necessary for me to do so (Original transcription: 我就是不想冷场。如果小的场合我觉得如果我不接，大家也不接，就会冷场了。我就不想要冷场，我就会接。但

是如果是 50 个人的课堂的话，肯定会有人来接，我就觉得不用轮到

我了。)."

Student H answered: "I prefer speaking in small groups, with three to

four people. I feel that everyone in small groups has ample opportunity to

express their ideas and there is less pressure to describe myself in such

groups. There are two reasons for this: time and group pressure, the

intangible pressure from being in a larger group. (Original transcription:

我更愿意在人数少一点的（组里发言），也就是控制在三四个

（人）以内的这种（组里）。我觉得人数不太多的时候，每个人都

可以有充分的机会来表达自己的想法，也不用顾着那么多人。 一个

是时间，一个是群体压力，那种无形的群体压力。)."

Both instructor participants stated that they require every student to respond to the

viewpoints of their classmates, such as replying to the opinions of other members in

group work. Instructor I stated that all students should contribute to group assignments,

and they can anonymously evaluate their peers' opinions online, so they do not have to

worry about being identified. Instructor J also expressed that he requires every learner to

provide feedback, especially in group work, where each student should make a

contribution.

**Respond to Instructors' Questions**

There are two questions asking participants who would like to respond to

questions posted by instructors, how often students respond to the questions, students'

intention to respond to the questions, and whether CISs got the opportunity to answer

instructors' questions. In general, participating students and instructors agreed that CISs tend to be more hesitant and reticent in classroom communication, especially at the beginning of a semester when they are learning in multinational classes.

The two participating instructors clearly stated that they give every student an equal opportunity to respond to questions in class. All student participants agreed with this statement, stating that their instructors' questions are directed toward all students in the class, and any student is allowed to answer.

Only two out of the eight interviewed student participants explicitly stated that they would not answer questions in class. One of the two respondents believed that this was due to her personality, learning habits, and English proficiency, while another one insisted responding to questions in class was meaningless. The following are statements from Student A and Student D:

> Student A: "I do not answer questions proactively. First of all, it is due to language proficiency. I do not think I describe my views clearly. Secondly, I am short of the initiative to do that. My first reaction is not to speak in front of many people. I believe that it is also related to my personality (Original transcription: 我不会主动回答。第一是语言的问题，我觉得我不一定能表达清楚我的观点。第二就是没有主动性。第一反应就不习惯在好多人面前说话。我觉得跟我个人性格也是很有关系。)."

> Student D: "I do not respond to classroom questions because of my personality. In my opinion, it does not matter whether to answer some

questions or not because everybody knows the answers (Original

transcription： 不会。性格原因吧。其实在我看来有些问题答不答

其实没差，因为大家都会吧。).”

The other six student participants did not give absolute answers regarding whether they would respond to questions in class, and it usually depends on the situation. For example, some of them believe that they would only answer questions if they knew the answers to the questions and are sure that their answers are certainly correct; some would respond as long as they have ideas about the questions, regardless of whether their answers are correct or not; and some students said they were willing to respond to questions in class when the questions relate to their experiences. The following are some respondents:

Student E: "If the question that the instructor asked was something I

knew, I would like to give my answers in class. Likewise, if it is

something that I am confident about and know well, I would be happy to

respond to it as well. But if I cannot decide whether my answer is right or

wrong, I would not answer it. If I believe that my answer could be only

50% correct, then I will not offer any response. Maybe I am afraid of

feeling embarrassed if I give a wrong answer. It is due to the feeling of

shame (Original transcription: 如果他问的问题是我会的，我就会回

答。而且是那种我很有把握的、会的，我就会回答。但如果也拿捏

不好答案是对还是错，我就不会回答。如果我觉得我这个答案只有

50%是对的，我就不太会想回答。可能担心答错了会有点尴尬。我觉得更多的是自己心里的尴尬，是羞耻感。）"

Student G: "I would answer if I am interested and if I know the answer. If not, I would not say anything (Original transcription: 我感兴趣的话，（且）如果我自己也知道答案的话，我会说。如果没有这种情况的话，我就不会说。)."

Student H: "If the instructor talks about something I have experienced before or something I agree or disagree with, I would like to respond to it (Original transcription: 如果老师说的是我经历过的（事情），或者是我有赞同或者不赞同的看法的时候，我会做出回应。)."

Additionally, the two instructor respondents had different conclusions about the responses of CISs to classroom questions. Instructor I believe that the performance of CISs is no different from that of students from other countries and that differences were reflected in specific individuals, possibly due to students' personalities. Instructor I responded like this:

"I think they're likely equal. Both of them, like if someone knows the material. As I've said, after a while, the distinction between local and Chinese disappears. It comes to the individual personality only."

Instructor J did not express a clear view on the performance of CISs in answering questions but believes that students from Iran are more proactive than those from other countries, including China, possibly because Iranian students are more outgoing.

**Students' Perception of Group Work**

Student participants were asked to describe their experience and feeling about classroom group work.  Most participating students gave positive feedback on classroom group work. They generally believe that this interactive teaching approach is useful, important, and very necessary, and express their enjoyment of this type of classroom interaction. Student B said that classroom group discussions are good opportunities to get recharged and rest the brain, as it is difficult for people to focus on listening to lectures for hours. She explained like this:

> "Classroom group work is a kind of chance to change the mode of our
> brain work because it is impossible to concentrate on listening to lectures
> for two hours, or one hour, at most 20 minutes, otherwise, you would be
> exhausted. Therefore, if instructors say: "let us discuss this in groups",
> your brain will have the opportunity to shift its working mode. After the
> discussion, you can listen more attentively (Original transcription: （小
> 组作业）等于是在思想当中的转变，因为大脑是不可能连续集中精
> 力（听课）两个小时的，或一个小时的，顶多 20 分钟，所以你会听
> 累。（如果）老师说："你们讨论一下"，这个时候你脑子也等于
> （有机会）转换一下。讨论完之后，你可以更（精神）集中地听
> 课。)."

Moreover, some student participants also believe that group work, such as group discussions, provides an opportunity to get to know other group members and their ideas, as well as learn from and grow with each other, while also practicing English expression skills. For instance, student F evaluated classroom group work in this way:

"I actually enjoy having the chance to communicate with other peers. First, I feel that it helps me improve my English communication skills. Second, it is interesting to hear other members' thoughts. We all come from various countries and cultural backgrounds, so we have different perspectives on the same topic. Having discussions is a way for me to be more knowledgeable. I think this kind of interaction is valuable (Original transcription: 我还是比较喜欢有这种机会去跟其他人交流的。第一，我觉得可以锻炼我的英语交流能力。第二，听一下（别人的想法）比较有意思。大家都是从各个国家来的，我们的文化背景都不一样，大家会有不同的看法。交流一下，对我个人来说是一种成长，这种互动还挺好的。)."

However, there are still three student respondents who hold a negative attitude toward this classroom interaction. They expressed that they did not like this type of classroom interaction and believed that it was not effective or useful to their academic learning. Firstly, student A stated that she did not like this interaction because she did not feel secure during group discussions, which may be associated with language barriers. She believes that if there are more Chinese learners in the group, this sense of insecurity would be reduced. She said:

"This makes me feel very insecure before doing it. You do not know what kind of people your team members are. Plus, I have language barriers, so I have various concerns before doing group work. When there are more Chinese students in the group, the burden will be much less. I feel that communication with others should be easier in this kind of group. maybe because we all have similar backgrounds, I feel more comfortable talking with them, even if we communicate in English. It feels safer. And I feel that other Chinese members can understand my difficulties better. They will listen to you more patiently when they know that we all describe ourselves in second language (Original transcription：这个事情让我在做（这件事）之前就有很多不安全感。你不知道对方是个什么样的人，再加上我有语言的障碍，所以（我）在做小组作业之前都会有各种各样的顾虑。小组里的中国人多的时候负担就要小很多。（这样我）感觉跟大家沟通应该能更畅通一点。可能因为彼此都是同样的、相似的背景，我觉得更舒服，即便是用英语沟通也更有安全感。而且，（我）会觉得对方更能理解你的难处。大家都知道不是用母语在讨论的时候，（他们）会更耐心听你说。)."

Furthermore, student E complained that classroom group work is not valuable for her learning. She said that what she could learn from this type of teaching approach is limited, so she firmly insisted that it is just a formality of teaching. The following is her response:

"I do not think there is much value in learning from classroom group work. It often feels like a formality to me, like we just have to complete it to earn some points. Can I really learn much from it? I do not think so (Original transcription: 我觉得能从小组作业当中学到的东西其实很有限。它很多时候像是一个形式。就是说我们要去完成这个东西，它是占分多少的一个东西。你说我真的能从小组作业当中学到一些东西吗？我觉得不一定。)."

Moreover, student G expressed clear dissatisfaction with this type of classroom interaction. She argued that this classroom activity is a way for instructors to pass the time in class. Her feedback is as follows:

"I do not think it is very effective. I think classroom time is limited; instructors should use it to introduce what students cannot learn by themselves, or provide guidance to learners. If these kinds of activities that should be discussed outside of class are brought into class, I feel like the instructors are wasting time. It is like they do not have anything to teach, so they let us do this so-called classroom activity (Original transcription: 我觉得不是很有效。因为我觉得课堂的时间是有限的，老师应该把学生在课下通过搜资料学不到的内容放在课堂上去讲，或者在课堂上老师应该讲的是一些为学生指点方向的东西。如果把这种本应该可以放在课下讨论的活动放在课上来讨论，我觉得老师就有一点点消磨时间的嫌疑。就好像他自己没有什么要讲的，所以（才）通过这种所谓的课堂形式来表现。)."

**The Way to Form Groups**

Instructor respondents were asked whether they offered opportunities to allow students to form groups by themselves and student respondents were asked how their classroom groups were typically formed.

Two instructor participants clearly have different views on assigning classroom groups. Instructor I usually takes the initiative to arrange students into groups. He believes that this helps ensure the diversity of group members and promote unfamiliar students to get to know each other. In addition, he does not want students to spend valuable class time looking for group members, which would delay the time for discussion and completing tasks.

> Instructor I stated: "I want everybody to know each other. So, I don't allow them to create their own groups because what happens here is that if I allow them, then they will only find people whom they feel comfortable with. That way, they'll be limited in terms of their interaction and knowledge of culture. I assign a group because if I don't assign, then they take a lot of time to create a group and then they will be delaying their project work. I want to make the group very heterogeneous. I do not want to have a homogeneous group of people in one group".

However, instructor J is happy to allow his students to form their own groups, as long as they can ensure diversity among group members. He even insists that it is acceptable and permissible for students to communicate in their native language during

group discussions in the first few weeks of a semester because this can help students with language barriers adapt to Canadian classroom education and achieve the instructional goals of group discussions.

> Instructor J said: "I always make them form their own groups. However, I place a qualifier in the formation of the groups. The objective is to create a team working environment with team members being from different countries, different genders, and making it as much of the real workplace as possible. They can be with anybody they want. But it has to be a diverse group. You can't have all four or five students being Chinese."

> "The formation of these diverse groups forces students to get to know classmates with whom they are not familiar. This group formation takes place at the beginning of the semester and the groups remain fixed throughout the duration of the semester. With the exception of a few exercises where groups of five students are required, i.e., an action learning intervention; within that exercise, if the students want to form a group of all five participants who are Chinese, that's acceptable. If they want to do that exercise in Mandarin, or Persian, that's fine. because I have my learning philosophy all in one mantra: (one statement): Every decision I make is based on "what is in the best interest of the learning experience of the student or the class at large".

Among the student participants, three of them indicated that their classroom group members were assigned by their instructors, while two students said that most of their instructors allowed students to form their own groups. The remaining three student respondents reported experiencing both of these group formations approaches in their classroom learning. Among the interviewed students, three students specifically expressed a preference for discussing in groups that they formed themselves because they enjoy communicating with familiar peers, which increases their sense of security, and they believe that working with classmates who have similar personalities and learning styles is efficient. For instance, student A said in the interview：

"Because the group member I chose is familiar classmates, I feel more secure in this group environment, which makes me willing to speak up and participate in group discussions (Original transcription: 因为自己找的组员都是相对来说熟悉的同学。我觉得在这个环境里比较有安全感，可能就更愿意发言、参与。)."

Student G narrated: "I prefer to form my own groups. People with similar personalities or learning habits may seek out each other to form a group. When these students form a group, their learning efficiency or group work effectiveness will be the best and maximized (Original transcription： 我更倾向于自己组建小组。性格或者学习方式相同的人可能会去找相同的人来组建。当这些人组建成一个小组的时候，他们的学习效率或者 group work 的效果是最好的、最大化的。)."

Three student participants said that they did not have a preference for the way groups were formed and that their participation in group discussions was not associated with it. Besides, student F said that she preferred to team up and communicate with classmates whom she was not familiar with. She said:

> "I actually prefer to communicate with classmates whom I haven't talked to before. So, I usually don't team up with classmates whom I already know well when it comes to group discussions (Original transcription: 我其实是倾向于跟我以前没有交流过的同学交流的。所以一般（组队）讨论的时候我就不太会找之前比较熟的同学。（我）会看身边哪些人不是那么熟悉的，然后去找人家聊一聊。)."

The remaining students did not show their preference.

**Contribution to Group Work**

During the interviews, two instructors were asked about the performance and contribution of CISs in classroom group assignments, while student participants were asked about their own engagement in this classroom interaction for participating.

All student participants stated that they have taken part in group work, such as describing their opinions in group discussions, responding to team members, and assisting other group members within their abilities. Even three of them expressed their willingness to be leaders of the groups to control the process and pace of group assignment complement, although one of them preferred to take on this responsibility only when there is no one else claimed the leadership role. To prove that, student G said:

"If there is already a leader in the group, I won't take the initiative to be the group leader. But if I observe that no one else wants to take on this role, I'll step up and become the leader to get the job done (Original transcription: 如果组里本来就有 leader 的话，我不会主动去当这个 leader,但如果观察了一番之后，我发现所有人都不愿意去当这个 leader 的时候，我会去当这个 leader，把这个事情给它完成掉。)."

Both participating instructors affirmed the contribution of CISs in group work. Instructor J believed that the contribution of students in group work varied from person to person and was not related to nationality.

Instructor J responded: "I believe that most Chinese in a group environment will live up to, rise up to their responsibilities. Some, have an English language deficiency that could result in frustration of other team member having to edit considerable revisions. That could create a sense of frustration among group members, however in most cases, group members are relatively understanding. Where there is a problem, it is more often than not when the respective student demonstrates a lack of motivation in combination with minimal dialogue".

**Influential Factors to Classroom Participation**

Participating students were asked what factors can improve or inhibit their classroom communication. Their replies demonstrate that various influential factors can be categorized as follows: previous education, language, personality, educational environment, instructor-relative factors, classmate-relative factors, discussion topic, and

students' perception of classroom interactions. The three most frequently mentioned by

participants among these categories are previous education, educational environment, and

instructor-relative factors. (See Figure 3)

**Figure 3**

*Influential Factors to Classroom Participation*



'Factors': previous education has noticeably higher 'Frequency'.
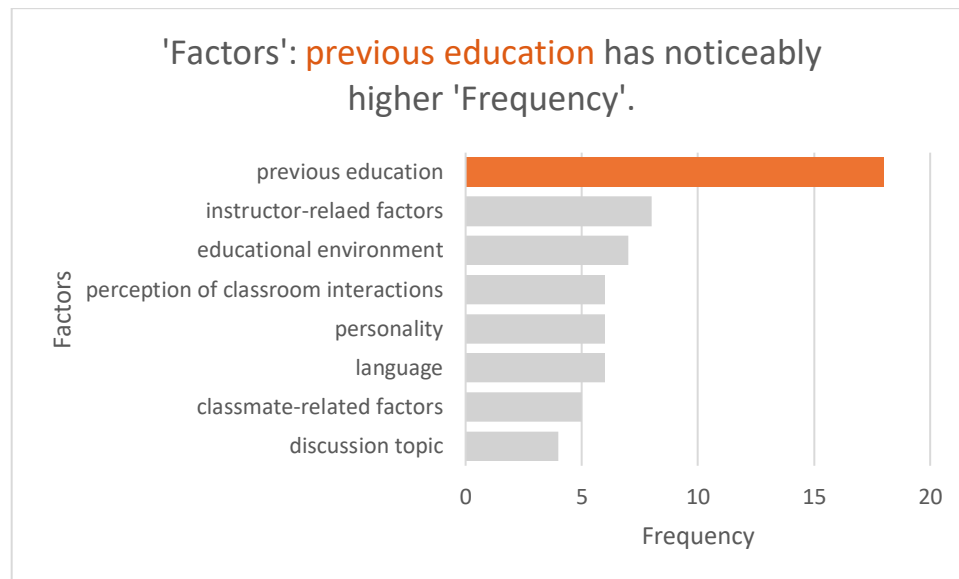
**Previous Education**

This section can be categorized into the following aspects: learning habits,

educational experiences, work experience and knowledge background, Chinese

traditional educational culture, and "Mianzi (面子). (See Table 7)

**Table 7**

*Previous Education*

| Items | Sum of frequency |
|---|---|
| work experience and knowledge background | 4 |
| Mianzi (面子) | 4 |
| Chinese traditional educational culture | 4 |
| learning habits | 4 |
| educational experience | 2 |
| **Grand Total** | **18** |

### *Work Experience and Knowledge Background*

Four of the student participants mentioned that they are more likely to engage in classroom communication if the content taught in class is associated with their familiar fields or past work experience. Student C observed that older students with work experience in the class tended to participate in classroom interactions more actively compared to those who directly entered graduate school after completing their undergraduate studies. She believes that prior work experience helps students understand the content taught in class, and only when they figure out it, can they generate their critical thinking and communicate with others, including their instructors and peers. She stated in the interview：

> "In my program, among the Chinese students I know, several older
> Chinese students tend to participate actively in classroom discussions,
> while some younger students who have just finished their undergraduate
> studies and entered graduate school directly without work experience, not
> all of them, tend to participate in interactions less (Original transcription:
> 在我这个 program 里面，我认识的几个中国的同学里面，年龄比较

大的几个中国学生偏向于会积极参与（课堂交流）；一些年龄比较

小的，就是刚上完本科直接进入研究生（学习）的（学生），就是

没有工作经历的，也不是说所有，他们会比较少参与。)."

"I think having some work experience may have an impact on both

understanding the content taught in class and the level of participation in

classroom communication. When the instructor discusses specific topics,

without relative work experience, it can be hard to get involved.

Sometimes, I feel that it may not be that they do not want to engage in

classroom interactions, but rather that they do not have the information

and knowledge to support their participation (Original transcription: 我觉

得可能有一定的工作经历对于不管是理解(课堂上的内容)，还有参

与程度（有影响）。（如果）老师讲到一些话题的时候，没有那些

工作经历，你就很难参与到其中。有些时候我觉得可能是并不是他

们不想参与，而是他们没有信息的储备来支持他们参与。)."

This view is also supported by student G. Besides, student C also stated that if the

content introduced in class happens to be related to his personal experience, he would

figure out what his instructors lectured and make his judgments on the accuracy of the

teaching content. In this case, he could respond with agreement or disagreement.

Moreover, the knowledge reserve of the course content also has an impact on the

level of participation of CISs in classroom communication. This factor is similar to past

work experience, as it can help students understand and digest what they have learned in

class, and generate diverse deep thinking about it. In the end, they could come up with thought-provoking viewpoints and questions.

> Student F narrated: "Take my finance class for example, I have limited knowledge about finance. Even if I want to take part in classroom communication, I can't respond to instructors' questions, so I don't participate in classroom interactions. (Original transcription: 比如我的金融课，这个领域我是真的不了解，就算我想参与，老师提的问题我也回答不了，我也没办法参与。)

Similarly, Student G also expressed that it is a challenge for her to learn finance without relevant knowledge in business. She claimed that all she could do in class is to listen in this context.

> Student G responded: "I used to study psychology and education, but now I've switched to business. I have a course called finance. A lot of finance knowledge and terms are strange for me even in Chinese. Now, I'm taking this course in English and learning knowledge that I haven't been exposed to, so I have no idea how to respond to instructors' and other classmates' questions as I didn't understand what they talked about. I have to be silent and listen to them rather than communicate with them (Original transcription：我以前是学心理学跟教育学的，我现在转到商科。（我）有一门课叫金融，对于我来讲，很多中文的金融方面的知识跟词汇我都没有怎么接触过，现在突然上了英文的（金融

课），是我基本上没有接触过的领域，（所以）他讲的很多问题我

根本就不知道（如何）回答，我只能听。).”

On the contrary, when students have knowledge background in the field that they
are studying, they are more likely to have a better understanding of the course content
and a greater interest in it. In this case, it is more possible to let them participate in
classroom communication than students without relevant background knowledge. To
prove that, student E shared her observation:

"In my statistics class, my instructor does data research, and there are several
classmates who are studying something about data and data analysis. Those
students are willing to answer the instructors' questions. I believe the reason for
this is due to the professional connection between what they are studying and
what they have learnt, and due to their interest in data. Hence, they would respond
to questions as they do understand what the instructors introduced (Original
transcription: 像我们统计的课上，我们老师是做 data 研究的，我们也有几个
是 data 方向、data analysis 方向的同学，他们就特别愿意回答老师的问题。
我觉得也是因为他们专业上面有连接，他们是真的感兴趣或者是真的懂，他
（们）会回答。).”

### Mianzi (*面子*) (Being Afraid of Losing Face)

"Mianzi (*面子*)" was defined as a wonderful Chinese invention by participating
instructor J. He insisted that Chinese students were impacted by the sense of saving face
as this perception permeated within the Chinese culture. As far as his observations, CISs

were not prepared for spontaneous questions and respond to others in class as this group of learners did not want to make mistakes and take a risk on what they do not know in front of others, which may bring them into an embarrassing situation from some CISs' perspectives. He believes that "Mianzi (面子)" is a key catalyst for fostering CISs' inhibition to ask or answer questions in the classroom environment.

Likewise, instructor I narrated the view to instructor J's. He believes that CISs are afraid of being judged as foolish or unintelligent by others, so they remain silent in class and are reluctant to participate in discussions and raise questions to avoid such situations. He put it this way:

"They may be thinking this is a simple question and probably they think everyone understands it and they don't want to raise and look stupid. "

"Sometimes, they are too humble and I'm probably also less confident because they may think that the question that they are asking is probably not too smart."

Similarly, two student participants described their fear of being laughed at or losing face. Student B believed this was a characteristic of Chinese students. Student A shared that she would consider whether her expression would invite negative evaluations and unkind looks from others before speaking up. These negative emotions made her uncomfortable and let her give up exposing her viewpoints in public. She said:

"I do not feel very comfortable expressing myself in a public setting, and I have psychological burdens to do that (Original transcription: 对于在一

个公开场合发表自己的观点（我感觉）不是很舒服，（我）有心理

负担。).”

"Perhaps it is due to the fear of being wrong, the fear of saying

something incorrect, and the fear of being laughed at by others (Original

transcription: 可能怕自己说的是错的，怕自己说的不对，（怕）别

人在内心嘲笑你。).”

"Indeed, I do care about others' evaluations and judgments about me. I

feel that if I speak up, others might negatively judge me, so I am less

inclined to describe myself in public (Original transcription: 确实还是比

较在意别人的眼光和看法。我觉得我说的东西，（如果）别人听到

了以后会去 judge 我，所以我比较不倾向于公开说自己的观点。).”

### *Chinese Traditional Educational Culture*

Two participating students explicitly stated that their participation in classroom

interactions is deeply influenced by Chinese traditional educational culture. For example,

student E mentioned that the education she received since childhood made her understand

not being the center of attention and not standing out too much. In her understanding, the

doctrine of the mean （中庸之道）is an advocated way of life. Student H believes that

such habits are related to Confucianism in China. Their responses are as follows:

Student E responded: "I think it might be related to Chinese culture. We

are educated from a young age to not be the center of attention, to not be

too flashy, and to follow the rule of the golden mean. We are taught not

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to be too eager to express ourselves. (Original transcription: 我觉得是不是跟中国的文化有点关系。我们从小就被教育：不要做出头鸟，不要太抢眼，要中庸一点，你不要抢着去表达自己的建议。)

Student H said: "Chinese students' educational philosophy from childhood to adulthood and the Confucian education they received in China cultivated such learners who are unwilling to raise questions, communicate with others, but prefer to be listeners in class. (Original transcription: 中国学生从小到大的教学理念，或者所接受的国内的儒家思想教育（培养了一种习惯）：大多数中国学生不愿意去提问、去交流，大家更愿意去当一个倾听者。)

Interestingly, instructor J also mentioned the Chinese Confucian educational environment. He said: "I believe there's a difference between being raised in a Socratic environment and being raised in a Confucian environment. The Socratic environment encourages inquiry. The Confucian environment or at least the Confucian environment within a Marxist-Leninist Chinese communist government regime does not encourage inquiry". He shared a story about how Jewish families encourage their children to ask questions as an example. In this story, Jewish children are rewarded by adults for daring to ask questions. However, he insists that Chinese mainland students lack this kind of training, which is why CISs tend to be relatively quiet in class.

Moreover, instructor I also believes that Chinese educational culture does not encourage students to ask questions. On the contrary, Chinese education advocates for students to digest the content they have learned on their own first. He said：

"The culture in China is probably that you should not ask. You should understand yourself. And only if you really do not understand, then you should go and ask the instructor."

Additionally, he discovered that CISs show too much respect for authorities, such as their instructors. This excessive respect restricts their determination to ask questions bravely and freely.

Instructor I said: "But on average, Chinese culture is a humble culture. They tend to respect authority. They give me a lot of respect. They're always very, very respectful. When that comes, there is a barrier. And then they feel afraid."

***Learning Habits***

Three student and one instructor participants mentioned the impact of fixed learning habits on the classroom interaction participation of CISs. Among them, students A and B said that they do not have the habit of interrupting instructors' lectures and they believe that interrupting instructors' introductions is impolite. For example, student B replied: "It is my habit not to interrupt others. I feel awkward interrupting others unless the instructors ask me: 'Do you have any questions?' (Original transcription：我的习惯就是不想打断别人。（打断别人说话我会）觉得很尴尬，除非老师问"你有什么问题？").

Furthermore, student F stated that he is not accustomed to rebutting others, and he did not have a strong critical thinking ability. In his interview, he replied:

"Part of it might be influenced by Chinese culture. Maybe we are not

used to it, and our critical thinking is not as active. We were not taught to

have that skill from an early age. Personally, I am not used to rebutting

others' opinions (Original transcription：还有一部分是不是（受）我

们中国的文化（影响）的原因，就是不太习惯，可能我们的批判性

思维没有那么的（活跃）。我们从小也没有被教育"你要有批判性思

维"，我本人也就不太习惯于反驳别人的意见。)."

Therefore, student F considers presenting different viewpoints as challenging for her

classmates and instructors.

Instructor J pointed out that the habit of expressing opinions among Chinese

students is different from what is expected in the West classroom education, which can

result in discomfort and silence in Canadian classrooms. According to his understanding,

Chinese people tend to be minimalistic when describing themselves, while Western

classrooms require students to elaborate on details. This transition from minimalism to

detailed expression can be challenging for some CISs, and they need time to adapt to the

classroom demands in Canada.

Instructor I responded: "The Chinese people, for the most part, their style

of communication and divulging information is minimalist. It is

challenging to convert many students to grow from minimalists to

expansionists."

***Educational Experience***

From the interview records of student participant C and instructor J, students who have studied in English-speaking countries tend to participate more actively in classroom interactions compared to mainland Chinese students who have not had such learning experiences. Student C completed his high school and undergraduate studies in the UK. He believes that this learning experience made him accustomed to classroom interactions, so he can adapt to the learning mode of classroom interactions in Canada. He shared his insights by saying this：

> "Personally, I had experienced both Chinese (although only elementary and junior high) and British learning environments before I came to do this study in Canada. Especially the latter part, which provided me the chance to meet, talk, and collaborate with people from different backgrounds."

Instructor J noticed that the performance of mainland CISs in classroom interactions is different from that of other Chinese students from other places, like Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, etc. He said that mainland Chinese students lack the experience of working and learning together with students from other regions, which makes them feel uncomfortable in the diverse classroom environment in Canada. He expressed this view by saying：

> "Chinese students probably may not have grown up with a near sense of this level of multiculturalism, (unless they attended an international school) and lack this template of exposure and related affinity to diversity."

**Educational Environment**

The interview records indicate that the educational environment has an impact on the CISs' classroom participation, mainly in the subsequent three aspects: classroom environment and class size. (See Figure 4)

**Figure 4**

*Educational Environment*
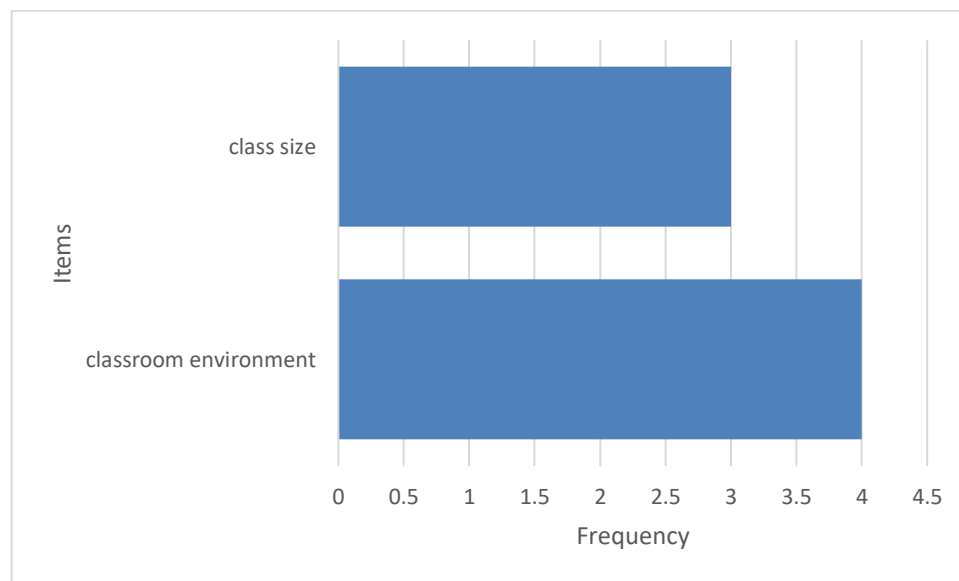


*Classroom Environment*

Two participating students indicated that classroom atmosphere can affect their engagement in classroom interactions. Student F stated that she was not willing to express herself in such classrooms that are too serious and not dynamic. In her view, classrooms, where instructors do not joke or interact with students and are not actively responsive to students' questions, can be referred to as serious classrooms. She described it as follows:

"For instance, the instructor keeps talking on stage without making any jokes or even smiling. He does not care much about interacting with learners but rather focuses on delivering the teaching content and knowledge to them. Besides, he might say "Let's discuss it after class" when some students ask questions. He does not respond promptly to learners' questions. I think this type of classroom atmosphere could be called a serious classroom (Original transcription: 比如老师在台上一直在讲，他不会跟你开一些玩笑，他自己也不太笑；他不在意跟学生的互动，他只在意他要把今天要讲的内容讲完，要把这些知识给到学生。（当）有的同学提问题时，他可能会说："我们下课再来讨论"。学生的问题他不会去及时的回应。我觉得这种属于比较严肃的课堂氛围。)."

She shared a comparison of her attitude towards the classroom atmosphere of a Korean instructor and that of other instructors. She claimed that the classroom atmosphere of the Korean instructor is less dynamic, which may be influenced by Asian culture. In contrast, instructors from Egypt and India could create dynamic classrooms. Her personal preference for the Korean instructor's classes is not as high as that for instructors from other countries, thus resulting in less engagement in the Korean instructor's classes. The following is her statement:

"There are instructors from Korea, India, and Egypt in our program. I discovered that the Korean instructor created a slightly less dynamic classroom atmosphere compared to instructors from other countries, which might be due to Asian culture. Personally, I do not like this type of

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classroom teaching, thereby my participation in classroom interactions could not be much (Original transcription: 因为我们（专业）这边有韩国老师，有印度老师，还有埃及的老师，我发现韩国老师，他也是从亚洲这种教育体系出来的，他相对于其他国家来的老师来说，（他的）课堂气氛稍微没有那么活跃。我本人也不是特别喜欢这种感觉的老师，所以我在他的课堂上可能参与度就没有那么高。）."

At the same time, student B said that she is more willing to engage in interactions and communication in a dynamic classroom atmosphere. Plus, instructor I observed that the participation of CISs in classroom interactions, such as raising questions, increases when they became familiar with their instructors and feel relaxed in class. When discussing the questions of group work, instructor J found that CISs are very capable of performing well in a diverse environment if they are provided a safe environment.

*Class Size*

According to instructor J, CISs tend to avoid expressing their views and engaging in interactions in large class settings. Two student respondents provided explanations for this phenomenon. They believed that class size has an impact on the participation rate of CISs in classroom communication, partly because of the pressure brought by the number of students in the class. For example, student G prefers to speak in smaller groups. She calls this psychological effect "group pressure", which means that a larger number of students brings her invisible pressure and a sense of fear. On the other hand, students believe that learning in smaller classes can attain ample attention from their instructors and have sufficient opportunities for interactions and describing themselves. Moreover,

there would be no need to worry about occupying other classmates' chances and time for participation while fully expressing their critical thinking. Student C's and G's descriptions are used as examples here：

Student C: Personally, I prefer to engage in classroom communication in smaller classes as it allows for ample attention from the instructors and great participation in discussions. If the class size is large, you may only be a bystander and are unable to take part in interactions, which reduces the opportunities for classroom engagement. (Original transcription: 我个人是更倾向于那种人数比较少的课堂，这样更有利于老师关注到你，你可以更（多）的参与到讨论当中。如果（班级）人数过多的话，很多时候你只能作为一个旁听者，你不能参与到其中，就少了很多参与的机会。)

Student G: "I prefer to speak in groups with fewer people, usually around three or four. I think everyone in the group would have enough chances to introduce their thoughts without worrying about taking up too much time or being intimidated by the pressure of a large number of audiences when there are not too many people in the group. This is partly because of the factor of time and partly due to the pressure of the number of audiences, which is an invisible force for me (Original transcription: 我更愿意在人数少一点的（组里发言），也就是控制在三四个（人）以内的这种（组里）。我觉得人数不太多的时候，每个人都可以有

充分的机会来表达自己的想法，也不用顾着那么多人。 一个是时

间，一个是群体压力，那种无形的群体压力。 )."

**Instructor-related Factors**

This factor was mentioned as the second most influential factor affecting the

classroom participation of CISs by the participants. It includes the instructors' classroom

teaching, their personal characteristics, their bias toward students, their language in class,

and their accents. (See Table 8)

**Table 8**

*Instructor-relative Factors*

| Items | Sum of Frequency |
|---|---|
| Teaching | 3 |
| Accent | 1 |
| Language | 1 |
| Bias to Students | 1 |
| Characteristics | 1 |
| **Grand Total** | **7** |

### *Classroom Teaching*

Four student participants believed that the instructors' classroom teaching would

affect their willingness and level of participation in classroom interactions. Students E

and G stated that whether classroom introduction is dynamic and interesting would have

different results on CISs' classroom communication engagement. They said that their

inclination to take part in classroom interactions would increase in interesting classes,

whereas if the instructor's teaching made them feel tedious, their motivation to engage in interactions would decrease. Student E responded as follows:

I think the instructors' teaching approach and attitude have a significant impact on my motivation of participating in classroom interactions. If they are skilled at teaching, use flexible teaching methods, and make the class interesting, I am more likely to engage in interactions in class. However, there are some instructors, as I mentioned before, who are sophisticated in researching but may not be good at introducing knowledge. His teaching method is reading off the content in his PowerPoint slides in class. In this kind of class, I am less inclined to participate and find it quite boring. (Original transcription: 我觉得教授的讲课方式、态度挺会影响我想不想要参与的。如果他很会讲课，方式很很灵活，授课的形式挺有趣的，我就会比较想参与到上课跟教授的互动当中去。但是有些教授，就像我之前说的，他很会做研究，但他可能表达不是那么的好，或者他上课就是念 ppt。这种的话，我就不太会想参与进去，我觉得挺无聊的。）

Student G also shared the same viewpoint: "For the courses that I am currently taking, I am not proactive in participating. There are many reasons, one of which is that some instructors' teaching is tedious. I do not want to and do not believe it is necessary to take part in interactions when the instructor only read his PowerPoint slides in class. I do not need him to read that, I can read it myself. I feel like I am wasting my

time in such classes. So, I did other things instead, like searching for other materials or completing assignments for other classes, when I am in such classes. This kind of class is not what I hope to engage in, even if I know the answers, I do not want to participate in it (Original transcription: 就目前上的这几门课来讲，我不太会踊跃参加。有很多种原因，其中一个就是有的老师上课太无聊了，我实在是不想参与，我懒得参与。比如他（讲的）所有内容都在 ppt 上，他只（是）照着 ppt 念的这种（方式）。我不需要他念（PPT），我自己也能看。上这样的课我就觉得是在浪费时间。所以上这样的课的时候，我会去做别的事情：我可能在查其他的资料，完成其他课的作业。这种（课堂）就是我不想参与的，即使我知道答案我也不想参与。)."

It can be concluded that a dull and monotonous teaching style not only fails to attract students' attention, but also leads to a loss of interest in the course, resulting in students' silence in classroom interactions.

Furthermore, whether the instructor's teaching logic is clear has an impact on CISs' classroom participation as well. Specifically, if students feel that the instructor's logic is unclear, they will be unable to understand the knowledge points discussed in class. In this context, it is difficult for learners to generate relevant ideas and exchange their thoughts with other peers and instructors. For instance, student G shared her difficulties in learning statistics：

"The major difficulty in learning Statistics is that I could not figure out what the instructor introduced. Then, I have to seek help from tutors. Tutors can tell us the key points of a chapter and elaborate all the calculations clearly in a short time. But we could not understand what the instructor of this course taught even though he had described and elaborated the teaching content for one or two classes. Even those classmates who speak English-speaking, like Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, cannot understand what the instructor said. We all use the word "disaster" to describe this course (Original transcription：比如统计（学）这种（课），主要是（因为）这个老师讲的我们听不懂。(下课后我只能去找 tutor)。Tutor 可以在一个极短的时间把一章的重点（告诉）我们要怎么理解，（还有把）所有的计算过程都给我们讲清楚。但是这个老师可能一节课、两节课、讲了半天，我们都不知道他在讲什么。包括那些说英语的学生，像一些印度学生、或者巴基斯坦、孟加拉这些地方（的学生），可能（老师的）口音对他们没有问题，但他们也听不太懂（老师讲的内容）。。（大家）都是用 disaster 这个词来形容这一门课。（大家）都是用 disaster 这个词来形容这一门课。)."

*Accent*

Several student participants expressed the diversity of instructors in the business school, including those from East Asia, India, Bangladesh, and other countries and

regions. Student G candidly narrated her difficulties in understanding classroom lectures in various English accents. During her studies in Canada, she had trouble comprehending the content of lectures due to instructors' heavy accents, which prevented her from participating in classroom interactions. This is what she said:

> "Another reason for my silence is that I cannot understand what the instructors said because of their heavy accents. So, I do not know how to respond to them (Original transcription: 还有一种（原因）就是老师讲的（话）我听不懂，因为他的口音很重，我听不懂，不知道怎么回答。)."

### Instructor's Language

Student A specifically raised this point when reflecting on her study experience in Canada: the words spoken by the instructors in class can have an impact beyond what they imagine on learners. According to her experience, an instructor's offhand comment made her feel ridiculed, and she felt that the instructor did not consider her feelings. Here is what she narrated:

> Instructors are those who do not take students' situations and difficulties into consideration but only have their own interests in mind. I have met an instructor who made fun of students in class. My experience is: My voice was not very loud when I was doing a presentation, so the instructor said: "You sound like a mouse". His language made me very uncomfortable and let me feel that he was a teacher who shows a shortage of respect for his students. (Original

transcription: 比较不会为学生考虑的老师，就是感觉他的出发点只

有他自己，他不考虑学生的难处。（我）碰到过在课上有点嘲笑

学生的那种（老师）。我有过（这样的经历）：我做 presentation

的时候，我的声音不是特别大，他就说："你说话像老鼠一样"。

这个让我非常不舒服。像这种（事情），让我很不舒服，我觉得

（他是）不太尊重学生的老师。)

This example illustrates that inappropriate language expressions by instructors may cause students to feel embarrassed and insulted as well as even become emotionally traumatized. When learners develop feelings of resistance or fear toward their instructors, they may experience negative emotions toward classroom teaching and interactions, ultimately leading to their reluctance to participate in interactive classroom activities.

### *Bias to students*

The bias reported here can also be understood as stereotype of CISs. Some participants believe that a group of Canadian professors assume that all CISs are reticent and not good at communication. They may even mention this stereotype in class or deal with requests from CISs with this bias, which has caused discomfort for some CISs. Student C shared his view on this, stating that he felt it was inappropriate when his instructor said: "I know some of Chinese culture" in class and specifically linked it to the classroom participation of CISs. These students claimed that this instructor's behavior is unacceptable regardless of the intentions of him. For example, student A narrated her experience：

I had a group assignment after class, my team hoped to talk about a topic that we were not sure if it had been taken by other groups. So, we went to ask our instructor like this: "Is this topic available for us?" The instructor responded: "Didn't I tell you that should be more direct? You should have come to me earlier to tell me that you want this topic. This topic has been taken by another group." His response made me uncomfortable because I felt that he was biased, and his words made me feel embarrassed. From my perspective, this matter did not need to be escalated to such a high level he mentioned. We just wanted to confirm with him, but he seemed to have gone beyond that and criticized us unnecessarily. (Original transcription: 课下的时候，我们的小组想做某一个 topic，但我们不确定 这个 topic 是不是被别的组选走了，我们就去问老师："这个 topic 还能做吗？" 这个老师的第一反应就是说："我不是说了你们应该要更直接一点，你们应该更早一点来跟我说你们想要 这个 topic。这个 topic 现在已经给别人了"。这事让我不是特别舒服，因为我觉得他有一点偏见，他这么说会让我有点不舒服。（我觉得）这个事没有上升到他说的那么高的高度吧。我们只是去找他确认一下，但是他就好像借题发挥（批评我们）。)

In addition, student A explicitly stated that if an instructor made fer feel uncomfortable, she would be unwilling to engage in any classroom interactions in that instructor's classes.

*Characteristics*

Apart from the factors related to instructors introduced above, instructors' characteristics can affect CISs' classroom engagement. Some instructors are naturally more sociable and are willing to interact with their students in class. In contrast, some instructors are naturally quiet and not accustomed to communicating with others. When they bring this habit to their classes, their students may perceive a signal – my instructor is not willing to communicate with learners. In this context, students may dismiss the idea of asking questions or participating in other discussions and communication in class.

> Student C explained: "There is another factor influencing my
>
> classroom engagement, which is the instructors' characteristics. When
>
> I feel that the instructor is willing to communicate and interact with
>
> students, I will participate in classroom interactions more. On the
>
> contrary, if I found that the instructor did not want to communicate
>
> with learners, then I would participate less. (Original transcription: 还
>
> 有另外一个因素就是老师个人的 characteristics。我有时候觉得这
>
> 个老师可能更愿意（与学生）接触交流，我就会多参与；如果我
>
> 感觉这个老师不太愿意跟学生交流，我就会少参与一点。）

## Language Proficiency

English proficiency seems to be a barrier for most CISs studying in Canada, as six out of eight student participants highlighted this factor. Students A and H admitted that their speaking English has caused them stress and a shortage of confidence. Participant A

acknowledged that language was the biggest problem that affected her classroom participation. This is what she said：

> I think the biggest obstacle for is language. I am not confident in my English skills. I worried about not understanding what others were saying and also about not making me understood by others. (Original transcription: 我觉得最大的障碍对我来说是语言。我）对（我的）语言（能力）还不太自信。我的担心听没听懂别人说的（内容）、也担心自己说的（内容）不清楚。）

Student F felt pity for missing out on opportunities to participate in classroom communication and interactions because she needs more time to figure out what instructors and classmates talked about and to prepare her responses. Additionally, another three students expressed that they were unable to elaborate their opinions and thoughts in English effectively, which caused them to miss the chances for classroom engagement in discussions and communication. Student H also mentioned that he was more willing to engage in group interactions where there are Chinese students. He responded:

> If there are more Chinese students in the classroom discussion, for instance, there are five people in my group, and two or three of them are Chinese, out communication will be easier as we could communicate in Chinese. In this context, I feel more willing to describe myself in that group. (Original transcription: 如果我的课堂讨论的对象（中国人多一些），比如我这个小组里面（共）有五

个人，其中有两个或者三个是中国人，（这样）大家可以更通畅

的交流，（这种情况下）我觉得我是一个很乐于说出自己的观点

和看法的。)

Another student who holds a similar view to student F is student A. She attributes this preference to feeling less pressure to communicate with Chinese students in groups. She emphasized that CISs could understand her difficulties in speaking English and they could empathize with each other, and would not mock each other's English expressions.

**Personality**

The personality of CISs is also an important factor that affects these learners' classroom communication engagement. In this study, five student respondents and one instructor participant narrated this feature. Student D explicitly stated that she was introverted and did not like to actively interact with others, preferring to passively accept questions. Similarly, student E also believed that she did not excel at initiating interaction. Besides, student F explained that one reason for introverted people's passive social habits was that they were not naturally talkative.

On the contrary, student G and instructor I discovered that extroverted students are more willing to express themselves in class. Instructor I insisted that learners' classroom participation is associated with their personalities, and not necessarily related to their nationalities. He also found that extroverted students tend to demonstrate more leadership skills and more confidence than introverted learners. Perhaps for this reason, extroverted learners, typically, raise questions in class immediately when they have

questions, while introverted students hesitate in the same situation. Student G shared his findings as follows:

> When you raised this question, several faces of my classmates who always actively participate in every class came to my mind. These students are very outgoing, active, and willing to speak up in class, which is highly related to their personality, I believe. (Original transcription: 在你说出这个问题的时候，我脑海里立刻就弹出了几个我们专业基本上每堂课，不管什么课，都会去积极的互动的学生的脸。他们这些学生在生活中也是非常外向、积极、愿意去主动表达的人，这是跟性格非常相关的。)

**Perception of Classroom Interactions**

In interviews, five of the student participants (eight in total) indicated a negative attitude toward classroom interaction. On one hand, some students' attitude toward academic learning directly affects their performance in classroom interaction. For example, student B shared his observation that some students did not pay attention in class, so when it came to interactive activities, such as group discussions and responding to questions, these students had no idea what was discussing and were unable to achieve effective participation. On the other hand, learners who take their learning seriously, usually, have seats in the front row of the classroom and actively engage in classroom communication. Student C even noticed that some CISs watched TV shows on their laptops during class.

Secondly, students' understanding of the significance of classroom interaction can influence their performance in classroom communication as well. A group of CISs complained that classroom interactions, such as raising and responding to questions, were unnecessary. They think that it does not affect their learning effectiveness even if they do not take part in such interactions in class because answers to classroom questions can be obtained through multiple channels, such as searching them online. To illustrate, student B said that she could find the answers to her instructors' questions online or ask for help from her classmates after class. Additionally, student D bluntly stated that, in his view, it does not really matter whether to answer or not answer questions in class.

Furthermore, student C suggested that CISs may not actively engage in classroom communication due to their lack of awareness of the importance of communication skill in their learning and future careers and the shortage of emphasis on self-training about this skill during their school years. Besides, student H reported that the significance placed on grades among CISs was also a factor in their reluctance to participate in class. He felt that their obsession with grades made them cautious in their classroom behaviours and feared mistakes that could negatively affect their grades. Ultimately, they tend to remain reticent in communication in class to avoid making mistakes that could result in grades decrease. Student H provided the following feedback:

> I felt that CISs have a very serious mindset about scores. From their
> point of view, marks are paramount and crucial in their school
> learning, and everyone wants to attain decent final scores. In this case,
> they become cautious, thinking "It is better not to describe myself if I
> do not fully understand what are discussing". What these learners

pursue are high marks. This perception of learning makes them feel afraid to speak up frankly in class even if they know it may not have any impact on their final grades. (Original transcription: 我觉得中国学生会有一个很严重的思想：对于分数的概念。在中国学生的想法里面分数是一个很重要的东西，大家很想要拿到好的分数。在这种情况下大家会变得更加小心翼翼，"我不懂的东西我就不想说，我说不好的东西我就不想让你知道"，我只是想拿好的分数而已。我只想拿高分，我不想犯错"的思想会（导致）你不敢开口，哪怕你知道这件事可能最后对你并没有什么影响。)

**Classmate-relative Factors**

This study discovered that the performance of classmates in class is an influential factor in the classroom participation of CISs. The specific influencing features can be divided into the subsequent three categories: classmates' participation, peers' attitude to classroom learning, and CISs' bias toward peers.

### *Classmates' Participation*

Four participating students explicitly stated that the performance of their classmates in class would affect their willingness to engage in classroom interactions. First, the classroom atmosphere tends to be dynamic when most classmates actively participate in classroom communication. Student B said that she would be affected by this active atmosphere and would also like to participate in exchanging ideas. On the

other hand, if most classmates remain reticent in classroom interactions, there would be a dull atmosphere, which inhibits her from communicating with instructors and peers.

Student B responded: "I feel embarrassed to be the only one speaking up in class if other peers are not active in communication. However, if two or three classmates are active at the beginning of discussions, then you will find that there will be other peers following them to describe themselves. As a result, the classroom becomes dynamic. So, everyone could be influenced by others' behaviours." (Original transcription: 如果旁边的人都不太积极，我觉得（只有）我一个人说很尴尬，那我也不太积极。如果大家都很积极，或者刚开始有两三个人积极，你会发现，很明显，课堂会忽然变得很积极。大家都会受到别人的影响。)

Secondly, the content of classmates' presentations or the questions they raise influences CISs' motivation for classroom communication participation. Student B responded that it is likely for her to follow her classmates' narratives when the content that they introduce interests her. In this case, there would be a possibility to let her spontaneously take part in classroom communication. Otherwise, she would not communicate with others in class after her peers' lectures as she may be distracted in class if her peer's presentation is tedious for her.

Thirdly, the assistance from classmates reduces CISs' concerns about expressing themselves in English, thereby increasing the possibility of CISs' classroom participation. Student H shared his experience of being assisted by his groupmates in elaborating and

improving his expression when he encountered obstacles in group discussions. He felt this assistance increase his sense of security and decrease his concern about being unable to complete dialogue in English. This is how he described his experience:

> I fail to make my groupmates understood my points when I tried to convey my views to them at the first time. At that time, one of my groupmates assisted me to elaborate my thoughts and make others understood. This inspire me to have a psychological cue that I do not need to worry about expressing my points in English even if I could not describe them well as I could get help from my groupmates. From then on, I do not have that worry anymore. (Original transcription: 当我第一次向我的外国组员传达我的观点的时候，没有传达清楚，而他帮助了我，就是两个人一起解释，把它解释清楚了。（那种情况）你会得到一个心理暗示：你可以尽情的去说你的观点，哪怕你真的说不好，有人能够帮助你去进一步解释。你就不会有担心。）

### *Classmates' Attitude to Classroom Learning*

At the same time, the attitude of classmates toward classroom learning and interaction affects some CISs' motivation for classroom communication participation. For instance, student E stated that if her classmates treat classroom learning and interaction seriously and actively express their critical thinking in class, she will be willing to take part in discussions and communication in class to exchange ideas. On the contrary, if her classmates hold negative or indifferent attitudes toward learning and

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communication, she will have a perfunctory attitude toward classroom interaction and be unwilling to engage in communication.

### *Bias toward Peers*

Student C observed that some CISs hold prejudices against certain groups of classmates and are willing to cooperate and communicate with them. This attitude has created a sense of aversion among CISs toward communicating and cooperating with certain classmates, and it has also affected their willingness to interact with them in class. The following is Student C's response:

> Some make prejudices against certain groups of people. For example,
>
> some tend to regard a certain group of people as slackers, without
>
> having thorough interactions.

## Discussion Topic

The impact of classroom discussion topics on the participation of CISs in communication can be found in three aspects. Firstly, CISs are not willing to engage in communication when they lose interest in the topics. Three student participants mentioned that they would have a higher participation rate in discussions that they are interested in. Secondly, when CISs are unfamiliar with the discussion topics and have an absence of relevant experience and knowledge to support their understanding, they may not be able to comprehend what their instructors and classmates introduced or come up with concrete thoughts in class. As a result, they perform reticently in classroom interactions. However, when CISs have some knowledge background about the discussion topics, the possibility of their participation in exchanging ideas in class will

increase. Thirdly, when their classmates discuss irrelevant or fundamental topics, some CISs believe that it is not necessary to take part in this communication and hope to end this section quickly. To illustrate, student C responded: "If I found my classmates' questions were about basic knowledge, I will not ask future questions after their presentations (Original transcription: 如果我觉得他的问题纯粹是非常基础的，我就不会跟着问了。) Besides, student G said: "I only want to engage in communication when I am interested in the discussion topics (Original transcription: 我要对这个话题感兴趣，我才会想去互动。)

## What Improvements Have Been Accomplished

All student participants stated that their instructors encouraged all students, including CISs and other international students, to actively engage in classroom communication and interactions. However, there was no special prompting specifically targeted toward CISs. Both instructor respondents also highlighted that they utilized various methods to motivate learners to take part in classroom communication.

The participants' statements revealed that instructors mainly used the following approaches to prompt CISs to participate in classroom communication actively: creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere, providing learners opportunities to express themselves and respond to their presentations and questions, offering rewards, picking them up to describe themselves, using flexible teaching approaches, and emphasizing the significance and value of communication skills in Western culture.

Both instructors I and J emphasized the value of creating a relaxed classroom environment, and they both achieved this by establishing good relationships with their

students. For instance, instructor I shared his experiences in China with CISs in class to shorten the distance between him and the CISs in his classes and made those learners relaxed. Besides, instructor J attempted to remember and address his students' names in class. He believes this contributes to close relationships with his students. He narrated like this：

> I start to gain familiarity with their names and attempt to draw them
>
> out into a contribution to class learning.  I'm also trying to respond to
>
> my students by name.

In addition, instructor J believed that CISs were still adapting to the Canadian environment in the first weeks of the semester and facing various challenges, including adapting to Western cultures, and communicating in English. Therefore, he allowed CISs to communicate with each other in their mother tongue in group discussions in the first weeks of the semester and did not push them to engage in classroom interactions or score their speeches in classes. Moreover, he asked other students to slow down their speech to accommodate those CISs who could not catch up. He replied as follows：

> When I'm firm with students from select cultures that run their words
>
> together and speak very quickly, and it's hard to understand them. I
>
> will slow them down to one word at a time.

The purpose of this was to reduce the pressure on CISs to communicate in English and to provide them time to gradually adapt to classroom learning in Canada. At the same time, students B and H also highlighted that their instructors did not negate their opinions and

did not correct their expressions, which decreased their concerns about expressing themselves in a second language. To illustrate, student B shared her point of view：

> Most instructors are pretty good. They do not negate what you said. I feel that there is not much pressure when I answer questions. Even if my answers were not correct, my instructors did not blame and criticize me. Even if each of my replies was wrong, the instructors also like me as long as I respond to their questions in class. (Original transcription: 大部分教授还是蛮好的，他不会去否定你。我觉得回答问题压力蛮小的，你说错了，老师真的不会把你怎么样。哪怕你每一条回答都是错的，但是你每天都回答，他也会很喜欢你。)

Similarly, instructor J emphasized the importance of not increasing CISs' pressure of speaking English in class and insisted that he did not grade on his students' articulation.

Meanwhile, student F and H appreciated the equal opportunities offered by their instructors to describe themselves in class, as well as the instructors' confirmation and attention to their questions. For example, student F narrated that her instructors tend to say "good question" after she raised questions, which inspires her to feel that her questions were welcomed and valued by the instructors. Additionally, instructors usually respond to her questions in class, which motivates her to express her views more and more in class. She said:

The instructor would say 'good question' when you raised a question. Then, he would value your question very much and answer your question seriously. This can make you feel that your instructor welcomes you to ask questions no matter what question you would like to raise. In this context, you will become more and more confident to describe your thoughts and raise questions in class. (Original transcription: 最开始你提什么问题他都会说："good question"，然后他会非常重视你的问题，（并且）很认真的给你解答。这会让你觉得不管你问什么（问题）他都是认可的，他都当回事。所以你就会越来越敢于发表自己的看法，提出自己的问题。)

Providing incentives, such as bonus points, participation marks, and small prizes, is a common motivational method used by instructors to prompt CISs to actively engage in classroom communication. The instructors of participating students D and G, as well as instructor participant J, have all used this type of approach in their classes. For example, student G shared her experience like this：

There are several forms: one is that instructors provide extra marks to those who actively respond to questions and offer correct answers. This could be called the participation mark. Besides, some instructors also use treats, such as candies, chocolates, and other small prizes, to encourage students' participation. (Original transcription：有几种形式：一种就是你主动回答一个问题，如果你还回答对的情况下，

他可能会给你一点点额外的加分，就是课堂参与分 participation

mark。也有一些老师通过带一些 treat，比如一些糖果、巧克力，

那种小奖品。

However, instructor J concluded in the experiment that bonus points are not an effective

way to stimulate CISs to participate in classroom communication. He said：

Chinese students, for the most part, from my recollection, even with

this more than fair incentive, you still don't get an appreciated amount

of participation. Incorporating an incentive method doesn't seem to

have a motivating effect on many of my Chinese students.

Another approach used by many instructors is to pick students up or specifically

ask some CISs for their views on discussion topics. This method has been utilized in the

classroom learning of student participants B, D, and F. Student F shared that his

instructors would invite Chinese learners to share their thoughts on discussion topics

when they introduced some content related to China. In addition, instructors I and J

require every student in their classes to participate in classroom interactions, such as

group discussions and peer reviews. Sometimes, instructor I would like to pick up some

CISs to ask for their views.

Furthermore, using flexible teaching approaches is one of the common ways for

instructors to attract students to actively participate in classroom communication. As an

illustration, one of student G's instructors set up game sessions during classroom teaching

to attract students' attention. Some instructors prepare teaching props to assist teaching or

use real cases to introduce and elaborate theories, which helps learners fathom the content taught in class. Student E narrated her interesting classroom learning experience:

> We had an instructor who taught marketing. He would like to take all kinds of props to help us comprehend what he was introducing. For instance, he brought a can of Coke for introducing how pricing works. He said: "How much would this can of Coke cost when it was in a supermarket? Now, if I say this can of Coke is $ 10, I assume that some of you might be willing to pay for it when everyone in the classroom is thirsty and eager to get this Coke". Besides, once he brought a can of air that was from Finland to our class for his teaching. I feel that using props in classroom teaching is interesting. (Original transcription: 我们之前有一个教授，教 marketing 的时候，他会带各种各样的道具来教室帮助我们理解。比如说，他会带一听可乐，然后解释价格怎么定价的这个环节："如果说你们在超市，这一听可能是多少钱。但是现在是在上课，如果大家都非常的渴，你们都很想喝这个可乐。如果我把它定成十块钱，也是会有人是愿意接受"。我觉得有些教授很愿意用这种小道具，包括（他）之前（给）大家带（了）一罐空气，来自芬兰的一罐空气，帮助你能更好的理解学术上面的一些概念。我觉得还挺好玩的。)

Finally, instructors I and J also emphasized the significance of communication and expression skills, as well as the inclusivity of Western culture, to raise CISs'

awareness of classroom communication. Instructor I believes that once student accustom to the transparency and openness in Western culture, CISs will feel relaxed and willing to ask questions and interact in class, although it may take time. Likewise, instructor J told his students that communication with others would be a challenge in their future careers, and they need to train themselves in advance to develop their communication skills in school period. He put it this way：

> Chinese students, for the most part, from my recollection, even with
> this more than fair incentive, you still don't get an appreciated amount
> of participation. Incorporating an incentive method doesn't seem to
> have a motivating effect on many of my Chinese students.

### Suggestions to Instructors

When it comes to what instructors should do to improve CISs' classroom communication engagement, the eight participating students and instructors shared various suggestions. These recommendations mainly consist of five aspects: teaching approaches, the composition of grades, after-class tutoring, and understanding CISs.

**Teaching Approaches**

The most frequently mentioned suggestions are about teaching approaches, with five participants proposing various aspects of improvement.

First, four student participants expressed their hope that instructors could use a variety of teaching methods and avoid just reading off the content in their PowerPoint slides in class. They wish that the teaching could be interesting and that they could enjoy learning. Student B believed that decent classroom teaching should have a logical design.

For example, at the beginning of a class, students should be interested, and the introduction of the teaching content could be through real case studies. This way allows learners to acknowledge what the instructor is going to introduce after having a basic knowledge background. She insisted that if the instructor's tedious explanation of theoretical concepts and formulas in class attracts learners' attention, students are easily distracted. In this case, it is less likely to motivate learners to participate in classroom interactions.

Secondly, participating students suggested that instructors could improve the logicality of their teaching and use examples and real cases to elaborate teaching content. They hope to learn from instructors how to connect the knowledge they have learned with practical applications. Student E's statement can well present this point：

"For example, if instructors taught a theory or business strategies, I hope to know their application scenarios, and I hope to know more about how they can be connected to the work environment. I do not just want to know their academic definitions. I would like to know how I can integrate it with my job and apply it to my work in the future (Original transcription: 比如说你告诉我一个理论，商科一个理论、或者 business 的一个策略，我想要知道它的应用场景，我想要知道更多的它可以跟工作场景联系在一起的东西。我并不只想要知道学术的这个定义。比如说，我更想知道以后我工作了如何把它跟我的工作内容结合在一起，如何运用到工作场景当中。)."

When the content presented by the instructor successfully arouses the learners' interest, the probability of their engagement in classroom communication may increase.

Meanwhile, students recommended that instructors could create a relaxed learning atmosphere that offers equal opportunities and do not emphasize the power of authority. Specifically, this means learning in a classroom environment without authority, where students are allowed to speak up freely. Even the arrangement of classroom desks and chairs can be made more casual, not too much like a lecture format. Student F explicitly stated that if the classroom atmosphere is open and makes her feel comfortable, her willingness to engage in classroom discussions will be higher. Student E expressed envy for the classrooms in the MBA program, feeling that some classes were equal. She found that there was no highlighting of the instructor's authority and special status in classroom communication and instructors allowed their students to address their names directly. Moreover, she described her preference for the classroom setting in the MBA program as the classroom desks and chairs were set in various ways to allow learners to sit in large or small circles to conduct discussions. She described this format of the classroom setting as "forums". However, she complained the classrooms in her program were just regular classroom settings with podiums and rows of chairs and desks. This type of layout made her feel that instructors and students were naturally separated.

Participating students also hope to have more eye contact with their instructors in creating a relaxed teaching atmosphere. The instructor's eye contact conveys encouraging messages to learners. When learners receive signals of encouragement and invitation from the instructors, they are more willing to participate in classroom communication. Student E reported:

"I think maybe instructors could make more eye contact with CISs in class. If I got eye contact with instructors, I will feel that they are encouraging me to participate in their teaching. Sometimes it may be unintentional, but I feel like it is a kind of motivation (Original transcription: 我觉得是不是可以（在）上课的时候跟中国学生多一点眼神的接触。如果上课的时候教授跟我有眼神的接触，会让我觉得他在鼓励我要参与到他（的）课堂中来。可能他（老师）有时候也是一些无意的眼神的接触，但我觉得会鼓励我。)"

The participating students' responses revealed that many of them have not entirely adapted to the English teaching and learning environment. Therefore, some of them expressed the hope that instructors could slow down their speaking so that they can comprehend what they are introducing better. Student F said: "I think our participation rate will be higher if we can understand the teaching content more in class. The more I can master, the more feedback I will provide to instructors. (Original transcription: （我）希望他讲课的时候语速稍微慢一点，我觉得（这样）我们的参与度会更高一点。我能在课堂上听懂东西越多，我就会越有东西去反馈给他。)

**The Composition of Grades**

Two participating students advised instructors to change the proportion of various indicators that make up students' final grades, such as increasing the weight of class participation. As student H mentioned, many CISs pay much attention to their grades. This view was echoed by students C and G, who believed that helping CISs understand

the benefits of actively participating in class would improve their final marks and increase the possibility of their classroom engagement. In addition, instructor J insisted that it was necessary to emphasize the significance of communication skills for setting and working in Canada. By changing CISs' perception of learning goals, their participation in classroom communication could be improved.

**After-class Tutoring**

When discussing the factors that prevent CISs from participating in classroom interactions, some student respondents described that they could not comprehend what their instructors taught in class, either because they were not familiar with the instructors' accents or lost in the instructors' logic. They admitted that they would seek help from tutors or consult with instructors after class. Likewise, instructor J suggested increasing the frequency of office-hours or holding mini workshops after class to assist CISs in better grasping the knowledge introduced in class. Only when CISs attain a sense of achievement in academic learning can they have the confidence to express themselves in front of their peers.

**Understanding CISs**

Although classroom participation has been shown to have a positive effect on learners' learning (Akpur, 2021), some CISs are not accustomed to engaging in classroom communication. They believe that this may be due to personality reasons or not having developed a habit of taking part in classroom interactions. Student A reported the hope that instructors could understand and respect students, and not push all learners to participate in interactions. Student D also stated that it was not necessary to let him

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make any changes even though he did not participate in classroom communication much. He said he enjoyed the current state of learning.

Student A responded: "I think some people are naturally introverted and less willing to express themselves, while others are born with extroverted personalities and are fond of describing their thoughts to others. I believe it is better to respect all students who are introverted and extroverted and communicate in a way that everyone feels comfortable with. I do not think it is necessary to force introverted people to communicate in the way that extroverted people are used to (Original transcription: 我觉得有的人生来就是比较内向，比较不愿意表达想法；有人生来就是较外向，比较愿意表达想法。我是觉得最好大家能互相尊重，以大家都舒服的方式沟通会比较好。我不觉得必须要逼内向的人用一种外向的方式进行沟通。)"

**Suggestions to CISs**

Both participating instructors emphasized the importance of students' adjustment and changes in academic learning. They advised that CISs should change their mindsets in learning format from listening to listening plus communication even though those who are introverted should try to value classroom interactions and be accustomed to expressing themselves in classes.

Moreover, instructor I suggested CISs show "less" respect to instructors. He discovered that CISs tend to respect authorities too much, which makes some CISs feel

anxious and nervous to communicate with instructors, and thereby inhibits those learners from engaging in classroom communication.

Instructor I reported: "They're always very, very respectful. And when that comes, there is a barrier and then they feel afraid".

## Suggestions to Institution

Both instructor and student participants proposed various pieces of advice to university leaders. Suggestions consist of activities and training, class setting, and student recruitment.

### Activities and Training

The suggestions in this area mainly involve three aspects. First, students C and G suggested the school provide courses on communication and English improvement for international students. For example, student C said: "School could put more effort in teaching more advanced communication lessons and in making sure that everyone is well exposed to different group work conditions". Meanwhile, student G hopes to improve her ability to adapt to different accents through English improving groups. Additionally, she advised school leaders to schedule these courses and activities at a time that is convenient for all students to participate. She complained: "The university could hold some English improvement groups. But this is not just about improving our adaption to local English, but also to various accents. Our school currently offers this kind of group, but the timing does not work for me. So, even if I want to attend it, I am not available to take part in it. (Original transcription: 学校可以举办一些英语提升方面的小组。但是这个不只是（提高适应）local 方面的英语，还有（提高适应）各种口音的英语。我们学院目

前是有安排一些这样的英语小组学习的，但是时间都很尴尬。即使我们很想参加，我们也参加不了。)

Moreover, instructor I proposed that the university should organize more cultural activities related to Chinese cultures, such as the Chinese New Year gala, to make CISs feel accepted by the local communities. Plus, student C believes that it is also crucial for CISs to familiarize themselves with and engage in Canadian cultures and values, as this assists them in better integrating into the local society, thus generating a sense of belonging.

Finally, student G recommended that the matter of instructors' unformal English accents should be paid attention to. For example, the school could solve it by hiring more instructors with clear English pronunciation. Some student respondents reported their challenges in understanding classroom content due to their instructors' accents and complained this created obstacles and burdens for their classroom engagement.

Student G suggested: "If the school could provide us with local instructors, we CISs would be able to comprehend what is taught in class, which may lead to a great improvement in our self-confidence. As a result, our willingness to participate in classroom teaching may also increase (Original transcription: 如果学校可以给我们安排一些 local 的老师，（这样的话），我们中国留学生就能听懂了，可能在提高自信心方面会有很大的提高，（于是）可能我们的课堂参与度的意愿也就提高了。)."

**Class Setting**

The participants who volunteered to this study described their school as having only international-cohort classes, which disappointed the student participants. They felt that such a learning environment did not allow them to experience the Canadian educational atmosphere and was not conductive to their integration into local culture and society. Student D complained: "Y come to Canada for studying, but you are arranged in such classes where most students are Indian peers. It is no different from learning in India. Learning in this environment is hard for us to make local friends as everyone in classes is an international student. This is a bit regrettable. (Original transcription: 你来加拿大读书，然后你进班里全都是印度哥们儿，那跟去印度没差别。就是可能会没有本地的朋友吧，大家都是留学生。这一点就是感觉比较可惜的。) Therefore, students suggested the school offer blended-cohort classes to allow CISs to learn with domestic learners and fully experience Canadian culture and get accustomed to local life and learning, thereby increasing their sense of belonging. Such a positive feeling may help to reduce international students' discomfort and anxiety in classroom communication and ultimately increase their classroom communication engagement.

**Student Recruitment**

Many CISs face challenges in adapting to English teaching and learning environment, so student C believes that the requirements for international students' English proficiency are not accurate enough in the admissions process. He argued that the school should raise the standards for English proficiency of international students so that they could be able to comprehend English teaching content and communicate with instructors and classmates freely in English. He mentioned that the university provides a

pre-entry language improvement course (ELIP: English Language Improvement

Program). However, he discovered that many CISs who successfully passed the ELIP

assessment still could not meet the requirements for learning and interacting in English.

Hence, he insisted that ELIP's assessment standards are not strict enough, which has

caused many international students to encounter challenges during their studies in

Canada, including spending much time reading articles and not understanding the

statements of their instructors and peers. In this case, he claimed that it is necessary to

rigorously evaluate the language proficiency of applicants during the admissions process.

Furthermore, the interview records of student participants reveal that many CISs

prefer to participate in communication that is associated with their work experience or

undergraduate majors as their background knowledge assists them to comprehend others'

statements. Only in this context can they provide critical thinking and be brave to express

their views in class. Therefore, student C suggested that the school should target

recruitment for specific groups of applicants. He said:

> "I believe the school needs to consider which group of learners the
>
> program is suitable for when recruiting students, and specifically
>
> target that group. It may need to make a detailed distinction about
>
> which group of students this course is designed for. It does not have to
>
> be precise for each individual, but can roughly classify them, such as
>
> classified into two groups: learners with work experience and those
>
> who are not having work experience (Original transcription: 我觉得学
>
> 校在招收学生的时候得考虑到这个 program 适合哪一类人，然后

专门指定的向某一类人招生。可能得做一个细致的区分，这个课程是专门针对哪一类人群设计的。也并不是说要精细到每个人，但可以大致的分类，比如有工作经验和没有工作经验就是两个完全不一样的状态。)."

**CHAPTER 5**

**DISCUSSION**

Due to the tremendous CISs studying business in Canada (Erudera, 2022), and many CISs consider classroom communication challenging, particularly Asian students (Baklashova & Kazakov, 2016) including Chinese learners, this study aims to explore the performance of CISs in classroom communication and interaction in business schools, factors that influence their classroom communication engagement, and to identify improvement measures that can effectively encourage them to participate in communication in class.

This study is a replicated study based on Zhou et al. 's (2019) research findings that are concluded from the responses of CISs learning in the Faculty of Education at a comprehensive university in Ontario. The purpose of this study is to test whether the conclusion of Zhou et al. (2021) can be generalized in business schools. By investigating the classroom performance and challenges encountered by CISs outside of the education programs in Canadian universities, educators would be able to have a more comprehensive understanding of what measures could be taken to assist CISs adapt to Canadian classroom education and ultimately achieve academic success.

This study is qualitative research and uses semi-structured interviews to collect data. The entire research revolves around the following research questions:

1. How do Chinese international master's business students participate in classroom communication?

2. What factors impact Chinese international master's business students' participation in classroom communication from students' and teachers' perceptions?

3. What strategies help to increase Chinese international master's business students' classroom interaction from students' and teachers' perspectives?

This chapter will mainly discuss the findings from collected data corresponding to the three research questions mentioned above one by one. Moreover, these findings will be compared with the results of Zhou et al.'s (2021).

## CISs' Classroom Communication Participation

The responses of participating students and instructors reveal that classroom communication is a challenge for a group of CISs learning in the master's business program. Although the majority of student participants believe that classroom communication and interaction are significant for their academic learning and integration into local communities, only a part of CIS respondents actively engage in these classroom activities. This finding is consistent with the findings of Zhou et al.'s (2021) study. This phenomenon leads the researcher to speculate that most CISs learning in various programs may face challenges in classroom communication.

However, two faculty participants provided more positive evaluations of CISs' classroom participation. Instructor I in this study discovered that CISs would perform as actively as other students who are from other countries once they have adapted to the Canadian educational environment. This finding differs slightly from the conclusion of Zhou et al. (2021). To illustrate, both instructor participants in their study reported

negative evaluations of CISs' engagement in the segment of classroom raising questions. They noticed that CISs rarely ask questions in class, possibly to avoid embarrassment or being mocked. Additionally, instructor I in this study align remarkably with the findings of instructor Participant B in Zhou et al. 's (2019) research. They both discovered that CISs tend to actively inquire about process questions, such as assessment criteria or assignment deadlines, while they may not excel in asking critical questions. In conclusion, it can be inferred that the business CISs' classroom communication participation gradually improves after an adaptation period, while there is no significant change in CISs learning education over time. However, both groups of CISs are highly concerned about assignment completion, which may be associated with their focus on grades.

Based on the responses of the eight student participants, it appears that CISs' performance in raising questions, responding to questions, providing feedback to peers, and participating in group work may not be consistent. Some learners may be willing to engage in discussions and express their thoughts in group work, but may not perform the same in other classroom interactions. However, students who are willing to actively participate in a specific classroom interaction are more possible to engage in other classroom communication activities. (See Table 9)

**Table 9**

*CISs' Classroom Participation*

| Participants | Raising Qs | Respond to Qs | Feedback to Peers | Group Work |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| A | Hardly ever | Not volunteering to | Hardly ever | Not volunteering to |
| B | Never asked | Conditionally participate | Sometimes | Conditionally participate |
| C | Proactive questioning | Conditionally participate | Actively participate | Actively participate |
| D | Not many | Never responded | Rarely | Hardly ever |
| E | Occasionally | Conditionally participate | Conditionally participate | Participate |
| F | Never asked | Conditionally participate | Never | Participate |
| G | Not many | Conditionally participate | Conditionally participate | Participate |
| H | Hardly ever | Conditionally participate | Conditionally participate | Actively participate |

The data in the above table demonstrates that some CISs perform reticently in raising questions and responding to teachers' questions and peers' statements, while some have concerns in classroom group work. Student respondents described that social engagement in classroom communication makes them anxious and stressed. The causes of their pressure are various.

**Influential Factors**

Instructor participants highlighted the value of classroom communication and narrated their wishes to motivate CISs to participate in classroom interactions. Although they have tried hard to achieve this goal, they fail to significantly increase their CISs' classroom activities engagement. At the same time, most student respondents affirmed the positive effect of classroom communication on academic learning outcomes, some of them believed that many factors could inhibit them from performing actively in classroom communication.

As one of the purposes of this study is to validate the findings of Zhou et al. (2021) on CISs in Business Schools, the researcher compared the factors that they identified in a faculty of education with those observed in this research in a business school. The common factors and differences in influencing classroom participation among CISs are outlined in the table below (see Table 10):

**Table 10**

*The Comparison of Influential Factors in Two Studies*

|  | Zhou et al. (2021) | This study |
|---|---|---|
| Similarities | language proficiency | language proficiency (including self-confidence) |
|  | self-confidence |  |
|  | work experience | previous education (including work experience) |
|  | interest | interest to discussion topic |
|  | classroom atmosphere | educational environment (classroom atmosphere) |
| Differences | mood | personality |
|  |  | instructor-related factors |
|  |  | classmate-related factors |
|  |  | perception of classroom interactions |

**Language Proficiency and Self-confidence**

Language proficiency as an influential factor of CISs' communication reticence was mentioned by six student participants (eight student participants in total). This finding was echoed by Galajda (2017) who reports that in-class communication is tough work for many international students due to language barriers, which is a reason why international students struggle to socially integrate into the native teaching environment. The influences of this factor are reflected on various aspects of CISs' overseas learning.

Firstly, language proficiency impact CISs' self-confidence, indirectly affecting their classroom communication engagement. From the responses of student participants in this study, it is evident that expressing themselves in English poses the biggest barrier to classroom participation for non-native English speakers. Some student respondents mentioned that they would be willing to engage in communication with instructors and classmates if they were allowed to describe themselves in their native language, Mandarin. In contrast, they may struggle to articulate their ideas clearly or accurately when they speak up in less proficient English, they may struggle to articulate their ideas clearly or accurately, leading others to perceive them as unintelligent and causing self-doubt. Moreover, some CISs have concerns that they may not figure out others' responses and respond to others after they raise questions or make statements due to their classmates' and instructors' accents. Several participating students consider this situation an embarrassment and losing face. As a result, they experience psychological pressure and fear of being mocked by their classmates, doubting their ability to engage in classroom interactions. Similarly, Zhou et al. (2021) found that the confidence of CISs is influenced by their language proficiency, which is closely linked to their classroom participation. Their conclusion is as follows：

"If they were self-confident, they would participate more in the classroom, and if they were not self-confident, they would keep silent and seldom involve themselves in the class." （p.93）.

Additionally, the language barrier makes CISs' academic learning challenging, particularly in terms of the overwhelming workload that results in stress and fatigue. As

stated by the interviewed student respondents in this study, many CISs require more time to read materials and complete assignments compared to students from English-speaking countries because they need to spend additional time look up words and grammar to comprehend required readings. Likewise, the student participants learning education interviewed by Zhou et al. (2021) also highlighted similar complaints.

The heavy academic workload exhausts part of CISs. Many CISs may even be unable to complete the assigned reading before class. In such cases, these learners are likely to struggle to master the content being discussed in their classes, which hinders them from actively participating in interactions, such as classroom discussions or contributing their viewpoints and raising questions. Moreover, they require more time to comprehend what the teacher and classmates are expressing and translate their own thoughts and questions from Chinese to English in their classroom learning. In this process, they may spend time thinking about precise words and sentence structures to articulate their views instead of fully concentrating on listening to their peers and instructors. Consequently, these CISs are unable to provide corresponding feedback when others finish their statements. Besides, while these learners are organizing their thoughts in English, the discussion about the topic that they are contemplating may have already concluded, causing them to miss opportunities to exchange viewpoints with other peers and instructors. In this context, the performance of CISs can easily be misconstrued as avoiding classroom communication.

Furthermore, CISs who spend more time completing pre-readings and post-assignment tasks are likely to experience burnout due to the constant pressure of meeting deadlines. Valcour (2016) describes exhaustion as a crucial component of burnout, which

encompasses physical, cognitive, and emotional exhaustion. This fatigue results from various factors, including intense time pressure and an overwhelming number of tasks. Individuals in this state find it difficult to concentrate and derive satisfaction from their work, leading to decreases efficiency. Therefore, CISs who face prolonged periods of intense time and task pressure are highly susceptible to feeling exhausted. Additionally, their shortage of confidence in English communication further contributes to a diminished sense of accomplishment and potential feelings of frustration. These negative emotions are likely to trigger anxiety and resistance toward overseas learning, ultimately, resulting in passive engagement and lack of focus during classroom learning in Canada. As mentioned by student participant A in this study, if she attends class with a sense of resistance, she would be reluctant to participate in any classroom interaction and may even resist attending class altogether. It is evident that language barriers finally impact students' emotions and contribute to their reticent and resistant behaviours in classroom communication.

**Previous Educational Cultures and Learning Habits**

More than half of the interviewed student participants reported that their reticence in classroom interactions was influenced by traditional Chinese educational culture and learning habits. For example, the emphasis on the doctrine of the mean in Chinese culture and the discouragement of divergent thinking leads many CISs to view expressing their opinions boldly in class as frivolous and immature behaviour. Student participants insisted that the doctrine of the mean is the value of Confucianism.

However, both this study and previous research, such as Zhou et al. (2021), have observed that Chinese students hold a reverential and respectful attitude toward instructors, to the extent that they perceive asking questions in class as an act of interrupting the instructors teaching and challenging their authorities. Kadi and Madini (2019) have also stated a similar view, noting that in China, instructors play an authoritative role in the educational process. According to instructors I's and J's reflections, although they are aware of this mindset among CISs and frequently encourage them to confidently ask questions and describe themselves, the results have not shown significant changes. Therefore, it can be observed that the fear of challenging instructors is deeply ingrained in the minds of many Chinese learners, and more efforts are demanded to assist this group of learners to adapt to the teaching philosophy in Canada.

Meanwhile, the concern about "face (面子)" or avoiding loss of face was mentioned by nearly half of the participants. This influence was also found in Zhou et al.'s (2021) study. In their study, students from the Faculty of Education expressed a tendency to consult instructors or discuss with other peers after class if they have questions to avoid embarrassment or losing face. Similarly, this study discovered that some CISs prefer to address questions after class, and, normally, in one-on-one interactions with instructors. This face-protecting behaviour is mentioned in Chichon's (2019) article which defines the underlying reason for such behaviour as the fear of humiliation. However, as the instructor I said, nobody likes making mistakes or receiving negative evaluations no matter where they group up, and the fear of losing face is not exclusive to Chinese learners. However, it appears to be particularly prominent among

the group of CISs. This phenomenon leads the researcher to speculate that the behavior of CISs in protecting their faces align with traditional Chinese culture and education.

Furthermore, both student participants and instructor respondents in this study emphasized an important difference between Chinese and Canadian classroom education: the Chinese classroom is primarily teacher-centered, with an instructor-based teaching style where students' main responsibilities are note-taking and listening. This teaching style is described as authoritarian and influenced by Confucian culture (Gudykunst, 1998, as cited in Wen & Clément, 2010). In contrast, Canadian classrooms prioritize student engagement and interaction. Instructor respondents emphasized their expectations for students to actively participate in classroom interactions, engage in critical thinking, and express their thoughts. Due to the differences in educational practices between the two countries, CISs may struggle to adapt to the Canadian classroom teaching, especially during their early stages of studying in Canada. Instructor J also highlighted that Chinese learners did not grow up in an environment that encourages raising questions and self-expression. Therefore, Chinese learners may feel uncomfortable when they are demanded to thoroughly articulate their viewpoints and provide theoretical justifications in class. To sum up, it is important for both instructors and Chinese students themselves to allow CISs to have an adjustment period rather than hastily pushing them to actively participate in classroom communication.

In addition, in this study, some participants refrained from responding to their classmates' viewpoints because they perceived expressing dissenting opinions as criticism toward their peers, and they preferred to avoid such conflicts. For instance, when student F was asked if she responded to her peers' statements in class, she replied:

"We were never taught to have critical thinking from a young age. Personally, I am not accustomed to contradicting others' views (Original transcription: 我们从小也没有被教育"你要有批判性思维"，我本人也就不太习惯于反驳别人的意见。)". Moreover, CISs often avoid conflict and typically only highlight the positive aspects of their peers' thoughts, rarely presenting their own relevant perspectives or pointing out deficiencies in others' arguments. To illustrate, student A stated: "I feel like pointing out others' flaws in public can be embarrassing for them. If I were asked to say something, I would probably describe the positive aspects of their presentations (Original transcription：我觉得指出对方哪里不太好有点像在当众给他难堪的感觉。如果让我发表意见，我可能也倾向于往好的地方说。)". Carson and Nelson's (1996) study has already found that Chinese learners are reluctant to actively express their thoughts in group discussions. When they do express their views, they cautiously monitor themselves to avoid criticizing or contradicting others' views, to prevent conflicts with other team members. Chinese students fear conflict, even reasonable conflict. This phenomenon alerts educators to the realization that CISs seem to lack education in facing and resolving conflicts. As a result, even adult master's students are still unable to confront the expression of different opinions within a reasonable social context, and they do not know how to handle the challenges brought about by conflicting viewpoints.

**Educational Environment**

The educational environment was mentioned as a significant factor influencing classroom participation among CISs in this study, including classroom atmosphere and class size. Participants provided more descriptions of the classroom atmosphere than

class size. Specifically, CISs showed a lower level of participation in classrooms that were overly serious or had an inactive atmosphere. Conversely, in a relaxed learning environment, they were more willing to engage in classroom communication and interaction. Riasati (2012) also discovered that classroom atmosphere impact students' willingness to speak up in class, and students were more inclined to take part in a stress-free classroom. Likewise, Zhou et al. (2021) interviewed CISs learning education who reported the same influential factor. One student in their study stated:

> "If I felt there is a relaxing classroom climate and other students are positive in terms of involving themselves, I am far more likely to participate." (p.94).

In addition, when CISs become familiar with their classmates and instructors or establish trust relationships, they are more likely to engage in classroom communication. Some student participants explicitly stated their willingness to take on the role of organizers in classroom group work and were happy to assist other peers to the best of their abilities. Thus, the relationships between instructors and CISs as well as between CISs and their classmates influence the motivation and willingness of CISs to participate in classroom interactions. This conclusion is mentioned in both Riasati (2012) and Zhou et al. (2021). For example, student participant G in Zhou et al. (2021) stated that friendly classmates can motivate her to ask questions, share opinions, and respond to classmates' statements.

Therefore, an active and dynamic classroom atmosphere, friendly instructor-student relationships and relationships among students may be the desired teaching and

learning environment and interpersonal relationship for CISs across different programs. If instructors aim to enhance the classroom engagement of CISs, it is essential for them to create a relaxed and dynamic classroom atmosphere, establish familiarity and trust with students, and find ways to foster familiarity and friendly interactions among learners.

Unlike the conclusion of Zhou et al. (2021), this study observed that class size also impacts the willingness of CISs to engage in classroom communication. One-third of the participants highlighted a preference to express their opinions in smaller classes or groups. Some student respondents attributed this phenomenon to "group pressure".

Here, it is necessary to elaborate on the concept of group pressure. According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology (n.d.), group pressure refers to the direct or indirect social pressure exerted by a group on its individual members to influence their choices. This pressure can take the form of rational argument and persuasion (informational influence), calls for conformity to group norms (normative influence), or more direct forms of influence, such as demands, threats, personal attacks, and promises of rewards or social approval (interpersonal influence).

In this study, the group pressure that students perceive in social verbal communication in class is likely the result of expectations from the instructors and other peers, which some learners perceive as norms. For example, expressing logically and thoroughly articulated viewpoints in English or fluency in expression creates an unknown pressure for CISs, leading them to fear expressing themselves in larger classes. Kang (2005) similarly found that some learners feel more nervous and prone to making mistakes in crowded classrooms compared to one-on-one communication with

instructors. This phenomenon indirectly suggests that educators should not excessively demand active classroom participation and interaction from CISs. Instead, it is important to respect their adaption process to Canadian classroom education, allowing them time and space to voluntarily take part in classroom interactions.

However, according to the report by Zhou et al. (2021), class size did not emerge as a factor influencing the classroom interaction participation of master's students in the Faculty of Education. The reason for this discrepancy is likely related to the class size setting in the two programs. Additionally, students' concern about class size may stem from their belief that in smaller-sized classes, they receive more attention and assistance from their instructors. As suggested by student E in this study, she hopes to have more eye contact with her instructors, and she perceives that instructors' eye contact as an encouragement that motivates her to engage in classroom communication.

**Discussion Topic and Work Experience**

The interview records of this study reflect that the content and topics discussed in class also impact the willingness of CISs to engage in classroom communication. For instance, if students are familiar with the topics being discussed, they are more likely to communicate with others in class. Conversely, their willingness to engage in communication is less when they are not interested in the topics. Similarly, if the topic discussed in class pertains to basic knowledge, some learners consider it unnecessary to participate in the conversation and hope that the discussion on such topics could be completed quickly. Zhou et al. (2021) also mentioned in their article that students'

interest in the discussion topic directly affects the willingness of learners learning education to join in classroom conversations. In their study, student B reported:

> "If I'm interested in it [the discussion topic] I will participate more. But if it is not my interest, like a very specific theory, I don't want to participate." (p.94).

The feedback from CIS participants in the two studies indicates that the classroom discussion topics have an impact on verbal presentation and exchanging thoughts of CISs in the two programs.

Furthermore, the attitude toward classroom discussion topics is associated with learners' prior work experience and knowledge background. Students who have relevant work experience or possess knowledge in the field of the discussion topics find it easier to grasp the key concepts taught by instructors in class. Their work experience enables them to link the learned knowledge to its practical application in their careers and come up with feasible ideas or solutions to specific problems. This allows them to engage in exchanges of critical thinking with their peers and instructors. Participants learning education expressed in Zhou et al. 's (2019) study that hands-on experience increases their likelihood of participating in classroom communication.

To sum up, learners' work experience not only contributes to their accumulation of subject-related knowledge but also influences their preferences toward classroom discussion topics. Ultimately, it affects the learners' willingness to join in classroom conversations.

**Classroom Teaching**

The impact of classroom teaching on CISs is mainly attributed to the inability of instructors to engage students or present their ideas in a clear and comprehensible manner. For example, most student participants indicated that many instructors follow a conventional approach of reading the content in their PowerPoint slides directly, without incorporating real-life examples to elaborate complex concepts or linking theoretical knowledge with practical applications in work. These factors contribute to learners losing their focus and concentration in classroom learning. Some students even become distracted and engage in other activities, such as watching TV on a computer, to pass the time. In such situations, students' attention is not directed toward the classroom content, and their participation in classroom interactions is minimal.

It is interesting that this factor was not mentioned in the study conducted by Zhou et al. (2021) in the Faculty of Education. There may be several reasons contributing to this difference; however, the researcher believes that the fundamental reason for this disparity lies in the varying level of mastery and application of classroom teaching techniques among the instructors in the two programs, as well as the differing expectations of learners regarding teaching outcomes.

What comes first is that instructors in the Faculty of Education primarily have educational backgrounds. Researching teaching methods and being proficient in various pedagogical approaches is one of their primary responsibilities or important assessment criteria set by the institution. This directly or indirectly encourages the instructors to focus on and delve into classroom teaching approaches, ultimately aiming to assist their students in easily comprehending the course materials. In contrast, instructors in the Business School come from relatively diverse backgrounds. Namely, some instructors are

full-time education professionals who, typically, have undergone training and learning the skills of classroom teaching. Additionally, there are instructors who are externally recruited experts in specific fields, such as accounting. This group of instructors may not have undergone pre-service training as educators or may not have fully mastered various teaching methods, thus lacking the flexibility to apply known pedagogical approaches. As a result, some learners in the Business School may feel pressure when it comes to understanding business-related content.

Meanwhile, the expectation of students from the two programs regarding classroom teaching content may differ, leading to divergent views on instructors' teaching methods and content. Generally, the content of an education master's program is more theoretical and inclined toward academic research. On the other hand, business studies are more application-oriented, with the disciplines' value emphasizing the practical application of theoretical knowledge. Therefore, when delivering instructions on theoretical knowledge, master's learners in the Faculty of Education may have a higher acceptance rate compared to those in the Business School. This is because business learners expect instructors to teach them more experiential and applied skills that go beyond what is covered in textbooks. Due to the differing expectations of students learning in the two programs regarding classroom teaching, the same type of classroom teaching may elicit drastically different emotions and lead to varying attitudes toward interaction and communication in class.

**Classmates' Participation**

The impact of classmates' engagement on the willingness of CISs to participate in classroom interactions primarily manifests in two aspects. Firstly, classmates' active participation creates a dynamic classroom atmosphere, which inspires CISs to generate a desire to join the in-class discussions. This point has been specifically analyzed in previous sections about classroom atmosphere and will not be reiterated here. On the other hand, classmates who are overly dominant or speak excessively can diminish the willingness of other learners to engage in conversations. In this study, student E narrated her relief at not encountering group members who were overly dominant, dismissive of others' viewpoints, or deprived other group members of the opportunities to express themselves. Student E's sharing implies her dislike of dominant peers and the possibility that such individuals negatively affect her willingness to participate in verbal conversations in class.

However, this factor is not introduced in the report by Zhou et al. (2021). The first possible reason for this inconsistency may be the small sample size. Due to the limited number of participants, the results may not comprehensively cover the actual situation. The second reason could be the differences in how instructors from the two programs organize classroom interactions. Although participants in both two studies indicated that instructors value student engagement and provide equal opportunities for all learners to participate in interactions, there may be variations in the specific implementation of classroom interaction assignments. For instance, if instructors require each student to describe their viewpoints in class and set a maximum presenting time for each presenter, it helps to ensure that all learners have chances to participate in classroom activities within the limited class time. Nevertheless, if instructors leave the decision of

participation or not in classroom communication to learners, it is likely that articulate and talkative students may occupy more of the class time than others, resulting in other students regretfully missing out on opportunities for classroom engagement.

**Perception of Classroom Communication**

The interview records of the students revealed that CISs have different behaviours in classroom interaction and communication due to their varying perceptions and attitudes toward in-class conversations. Students who believe that classroom communication is an integral part of classroom learning and a necessary component of instructional activities are likely to engage in in-class discussions. Some student participants interviewed by Zhou et al. (2021) also acknowledged the necessity of participating in classroom communication as a means of acquiring knowledge.

Nonetheless, there are still some student participants who view classroom interaction and communication as merely an instruction approach to classroom teaching, lacking practical significance for their learning and skill development. Instructor J emphasized that some students have not yet realized the value of acquiring the skills and abilities of communication for their careers in the future. Therefore, these learners have limited expectations of classroom learning, focusing primarily on obtaining the correct answers to ensure that they can attain decent grades in exams. With this mindset, they perceive that there is little difference in participating or not participating in classroom communication to their academic learning outcomes as they believe that they can find the correct answers through alternative means, such as online searches or consulting other classmates after class.

It is evident that CISs lack a proper comprehension of the meaning and value of education and learning. As reflected by student H, many CISs are overly concerned about their final grades, seemingly making exam passing and achieving high scores their main objective of learning. This clearly does not capture the true purpose of education for learners. Biesta (2015) elaborates on three aspects involved in education: qualification, socialization, and subjectification (see Figure 5). Education aims not only to transmit knowledge and skills but also to guide young individuals into traditional ways of life, such as professions, integrity, culture, and religion. Unfortunately, based on the attitude of some CISs toward learning, they have not been exposed to the real meaning of education for them.

**Figure 5**

*The Three Functions of Education and Three Domains of Educational Purpose*



From "What is education for? on good education, teacher judgement, and educational professionalism", by G. Biesta. 2015. *European Journal of Education*, 50(1), 75–87. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12109

**Personality**

More than half of the student participants in this study indicated that one of the reasons for their shortage of active engagement in classroom communication is their introverted personality. Furthermore, these learners provide insight into the passive and non-initiative nature of introverts in social interactions, including in-class interactions; their tendency to be less talkative extends beyond classroom activities; and introverted individuals often experience a lack of security in socializing with others. Hz (2022) also revealed that introverted individuals tend to feel more anxious when speaking in public compared to extroverts. When students fear and are concerned about classroom interactions, excessive encouragement to participate in such interactions may exacerbate their anxiety and even lead to aversion toward classroom learning. Therefore, educators are advised to refrain from using overly aggressive methods to motivate introverted students to engage in social activities in class. In other words, employing a singular approach to encourage all learners to take part in classroom communication may not be entirely appropriate, as it may make introverted learners feel uncomfortable.

<center>**Strategies for Improvement of Classroom Engagement**</center>

The research data in this study provides suggestions for improving the classroom participation of CISs in three aspects: instructors, students (CISs), and universities.

**To Instructors**

The suggestions provided by student participants mainly focus on classroom teaching when it comes to instructors. Firstly, CISs expect instructors to employ various

teaching approaches, such as case-based teaching, to explain the course material, thus avoiding dull and monotonous classroom instruction. This method not only helps students better understand taught knowledge but also captures their attention through lively and engaging teaching activities, keeping their focus on the instructional content. Only in this way can CISs develop an interest in classroom interactions. Otherwise, they may tend to remain silent during classroom communication due to distraction and the desire not to be noticed by their instructors. Considering the practical nature of business education, it is possible that instructors can even arrange "teaching" activities outside the campus, such as in the office building of a company. Allowing students to experience the working atmosphere firsthand and simultaneously listen to professionals' understanding and application of theoretical knowledge may inspire business learners to have a greater interest in that course, thereby increasing their willingness to participate in communication.

Furthermore, creating a relaxed and dynamic classroom climate is one of the most suggested measures by student participants. Plus, the classroom atmosphere affects students' willingness to express their opinions in class (Riasati, 2012). Therefore, instructors should employ various methods to create a classroom environment that is well-received by CISs and encourages their participation in classroom communication. Similarly, Zhou et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of an encouraging, considerate, and relaxing classroom environment, which is highly expected and welcomed by learners. This common point indicates that the teaching atmosphere and environment have an impact on the performance of Chinese master's learners in education and business programs in classroom conversations.

Creating a relaxed and friendly classroom learning environment can be achieved through various means. For example, it is achievable for instructors to reduce students' stress by building trusting relationships with them, which is supported by Zhou et al. (2021). To accomplish this, instructors need to familiarize themselves with their students, such as memorizing the students' names and addressing the learners' names in classes. As Student A mentioned that she would be happy and have a sense of connection with instructors when they call her name, which would encourage her participation in classroom interactions as well. Additionally, instructors can facilitate mutual acquaintance among students through classroom activities, thus reducing the sense of unfamiliarity and the fear of expressing opinions in front of strangers, particularly for CISs. Warm-up activities, as suggested by Zhou et al. (2021), could be an effective way to assist students to get to know each other. Moreover, CISs developing familiarity and trust with instructors may contribute to their better adaptation to Canadian life and easier integration into local communities as they are able to make friends with other peers in classroom activities.

Moreover, the two instructor participants and some student respondents notice that one reason why some CISs are reluctant to engage in classroom communication is their insufficient proper comprehension of the value of communication skills. As instructor J stated, some CISs have not yet realized how important communication skills will be for their careers in the future. Therefore, instructors need to help CISs recognize the significance of communication practices to increase their willingness to engage in classroom discourse. To achieve this goal, using specific examples in class by instructors could be a decent choice to allow students to understand how crucial communication

ability is for them. Also, conducting scenario simulations in class could be a practical means to demonstrate the significant contrast in outcomes between strong and weak communication skills in specific cases.

**To CISs**

The suggestions from the two instructor respondents reflect a demand to change the perception of learning among CISs. For instance, as student H complained that some CISs excessively focus on grades as if they were the ultimate purpose of learning. As explained in detail earlier in this article, this mindset is incorrect. The true purpose of education and learning goes beyond achieving decent marks and obtaining diplomas. Its significance lies in the transmission of knowledge and assisting young people in integrating into traditional ways of life, including professions, integrity, culture, and religion (Biesta, 2015). Hence, it is imperative to change the inherent perception of learning for those CISs who solely prioritize high scores. Only when these learners understand the meaning of classroom learning will they be willing to participate in classroom interactions. Otherwise, it may be challenging to persuade them to actively engage in classroom activities. Student D's narrative could be proof of this statement as he questioned the demand for participating in classroom discussions when answers can be found online or through other means.

**To Universities**

The recommendations for universities or institutions primarily focus on four aspects: improving students' language proficiency, class composition, teacher training, and cultural adaptation.

The language barrier is one of the significant factors that affect the in-class WTC of CISs. It not only impacts their comprehension of instructional content and makes learning tasks seem more challenging but also undermines their confidence in academic pursuits. Moreover, it may affect CISs' social interactions in Canada. Hence, it is crucial to enhance the language proficiency of CISs. Zhou et al. (2021) also emphasized the need for Chinese learners to continuously improve their English language skills to become "academically extroverted".

Improving the CISs' language proficiency can be achieved through training programs. Student participants have reflected that there are language developing programs, such as ELIP (pre-enrollment training), in the university and other training. However, some students insist that the assessment standards of ELIP are not strict enough, resulting in many CISs passing the ELIP assessment but still struggling to comprehend the content presented by instructors and other classmates in class. From this phenomenon, it can be concluded that there are still some problems that need to be addressed in the ELIP program. For instance, does the content of ELIP training contribute to the course learning of students from different programs? Are the assessment standards of ELIP suitable for today's teaching requirements in various programs? Additionally, some student respondents provided feedback that the timing and location of some language training classes are not convenient for all students, sometimes conflicting with their compulsory classes. To address this problem, the university could adopt multiple modes of instruction to resolve the timing conflicts. For example, these courses can be provided in three different formats simultaneously: in-person, online synchronous, and

asynchronous classes. Meanwhile, office hours should be provided for consultation services for learners.

Other than that, based on the reply from participants, there is only one type of class, international-cohort class, in business programs (except MBA). Student respondents regret that this is a missed opportunity for their Canadian learning experience because they do not have the chance to engage in English communication with domestic learners or learn about Canadian culture and customs. Additionally, not being able to meet and interact with local learner deprive CISs of the opportunities to make friends in the classroom, which is not conducive to their intergradation into Canadian communities and may affect their sense of belonging and security in Canada. The Business School's decision to offer only international-cohort classes for business programs (non-MBA) may be driven by concerns about the potential difference in language proficiency between international and domestic learners, which could make international students struggle to follow the pace of classroom teaching. While such considerations may reduce the pressure on international students' academic learning, it also means that international students miss out on experiencing Canada's inclusive and open culture, as well as understanding the importance of communication skills in Canadian education and culture. Considering this, introducing blended-cohort classes may be beneficial in promoting the CISs' classroom participation.

In addition to the methods of enhancing the sense of belonging for CISs, there are some other means that could be helpful to improve these learners' sense of acceptance and belonging.  For instance, instructor I suggests that universities should hold activities related to China or Chinese culture, such as a Chinese New Year celebration, to convey

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care and value from the Canadian university toward Chinese international students. These activities not only allow Canadian society and students from other countries to learn about Chinese culture but also help reduce biases and discrimination against Chinese individuals. This contributes to establishing a harmonious learning environment where CISs could feel secure and be more willing to engage in communication with students from other countries.

Lastly, it is recommended to provide training for instructors as many student participants have expressed difficulties in understanding the logic of their lectures, finding their teaching methods boring, and some have mentioned the problem of their accents. Therefore, it is necessary to provide relevant training for instructors before they start teaching, covering teaching methods, classroom management, student motivation, etc. Additionally, instructors should undergo periodic assessments to ensure teaching quality. For example, these assessments could take place every two years (just an example) for refreshing instructors' knowledge of teaching and assist them solidify their theoretical understanding of teaching. Furthermore, universities should offer English training for instructors who are from non-English-speaking countries to ensure that each instructor is able to effectively convey their teaching knowledge in English and make learners clearly master what they taught.

Based on the content of this chapter, both the factors influencing CISs' WTC and the suggested measures to improve their classroom communication engagement cover three aspects: teaching practices, student perception of learning, and CISs' satisfaction with classroom teaching and learning. These features align with the theoretical framework guiding this study.

# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSIONS

This chapter aims to conclude the results of this study to discover the value and shortage of this study and offer suggestions for future research. Therefore, there are three sections in this chapter: summary of findings, implications, and future research.

## Summary of Findings

### For Research Question One

The first research question is: How do Chinese international master's business students participate in classroom communication?

The research data indicates that almost all student participants confirm the significance and value of classroom communication. However, the majority of students do not demonstrate proactive engagement in classroom interactions. Besides, their performance in raising questions, responding to questions, providing feedback to peers, and participating in group work lacks consistency. In other words, students' behaviours in these various forms of classroom interactions are not entirely consistent. Some CISs may remain silent in raising questions sessions but actively contribute to group work. However, CISs who maintain a positive attitude toward classroom participation tend to exhibit proactive engagement in all these forms of classroom interactions.

### For Research Question Two

The second research question is: What factors impact Chinese international master's business students' participation in classroom communication from students' and teachers' perceptions?

The factors that impact business master's CISs' WTC mainly consist of the following aspects: previous education, language proficiency, personality, educational environment, instructor-relative factors, classmate-relative factors, discussion topic, and perception of classroom interaction. Among these factors, the three factors which were highlighted the most by participants are previous education, including learning habits, education experience, work experience and knowledge background, Chinese traditional educational culture, and Mianzi (面子)，instructor-related factors, including classroom teaching, characteristics, attitude to students, lecturing language, and accent, and language proficiency.

Compared with Zhou et al.'s (2021) findings, it can be discovered that language proficiency influences students' self-confidence, CISs' work experience, their interest in discussion topics, and classroom atmosphere are the commonalities in participants' responses in the two studies.

**For Research Question Three**

The last research question is: What strategies help to increase Chinese international master's business students' classroom interaction from students' and teachers' perspectives?

From the participants' perspective, measures to motivate CISs to participate in classroom interactions mainly include teaching practices, changing CISs' perception of learning, and meeting international students' satisfaction. Students' expectations of instructors' teaching include flexible use of various teaching methods and the hope the instructors can use examples to elaborate teaching knowledge. In addition, creating a relaxed and dynamic classroom atmosphere is also one of the most frequently mentioned

expectations of student participants. Students stated that an equal and stress-free learning environment is conducive to reducing their stress, making them more willing to engage in classroom interactions. The active atmosphere also influences their willingness to classroom participation because they are easily impacted by the classroom atmosphere, or infected by other learners, to take part in classroom communication. At the same time, instructor respondents believe that CISs should change their perception of learning goals and hope that they can realize the importance of communication skills for their learning and future work. Only when they understand the significance of communication can they be willing to join in communication in class. Additionally, participants suggest that universities organize activities with Chinese culture to increase the sense of belonging of CISs, while giving them opportunities to make friends and assist them integrate into the local community. These activities can also help students and instructors from other countries acknowledge and understand Chinese culture, thus reducing discrimination and prejudice in the classroom. This is the key to creating a friendly learning atmosphere.

## Implications and Future Research

The study examined the performance of Chinese master's students learning in the Business School, factors influencing their classroom communication engagement, and measures to enhance their WTC in class. Moreover, the researcher compared the findings of this study with those of Zhou et al. (2021) to verify if their results could be applicable to business master's CISs.

Because this is a replicated study, the same research method, qualitative research, as Zhou et al.'s (2021) was employed, specifically using semi-structured interviews as the data collection tool. Besides, a total of eight student participants and two instructor

participants were interviewed. Therefore, it can be recognized that the application of a single research method and a relatively small sample size may introduce bias into the research conclusions. Consequently, the findings of this study may be insufficient to generalize the experiences and challenges of all Chinese master's learners studying in Canada during classroom communication. Additionally, the participants in both studies were not recruited in proportion to factors such as age, gender, and the place where they grow up and were educated (e.g., northern, and southern regions of China), which means the research results cannot demonstrate the influence of these factors. However, despite the potential biases in this study, it provides insights into the attitudes and challenges of master's CISs studying in the Business School in classroom interactions. Plus, this research also validates the consistency between the theoretical guidance and research findings of this study.

Meanwhile, the theoretical framework of this research suggests that students' academic integration is associated with promising teaching practice, international student satisfaction, and student perception of learning. However, this study did not specifically explore the contribution of promising teaching practices in enhancing CIS's classroom communication participation.

Therefore, it is suggested to complement this study in several aspects. First, changing the research method, such as employing quantitative research. Second, expanding the sample size. Third, studying other CISs who are learning in other programs. These measures may assist to determine whether Chinese master's students have the same performance and challenges in classroom communication across different

programs. Fourth, by introducing additional variables (such as participants' gender) to examine the relationship between research findings and variables.

After understanding the challenges and demands of CISs in classroom communication, it is crucial to help them overcome difficulties and let the classroom teaching meet their expectations. Therefore, future research can focus on identifying specific teaching strategies that effectively motivate CISs to engage in classroom interactions. Additionally, it would be valuable to investigate which measures are most welcomed and appreciated by CISs.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
### (Student in-person interview)

Title of Study: A Qualitative Study of Chinese International Master's Business Students' Classroom Communication Engagement at A Canadian Comprehensive University

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Bohui Liu, a postgraduate student in the Master of Education (M.Ed) program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. The result of this study will be applied to Bohui Liu's thesis.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Bohui Liu (a graduate student in the M.Ed program in the Faculty of Education) or Dr. Clayton Smith (Bohui Liu's supervisor is a professor in the Faculty of Education). The contact information of them as follows:

Email: [liu5t@uwindsor.ca](mailto:liu5t@uwindsor.ca) (Bohui Liu) and [Clayton.Smith@uwindsor.ca](mailto:Clayton.Smith@uwindsor.ca) (Dr. Clayton Smith)

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to explore how Chinese international master's business learners at the University of Windsor participate in classroom communication and test whether the research findings published by George Zhou, Zongyong Yu, Glenn Rideout, and Clayton Smith in 2021can be repeated among Chinese international students in the business program at the University of Windsor. This study will examine the influential factors to Chinese international master's business learners' classroom engagements and teaching strategies that help to increase this group of learners' classroom communication engagements from both students' and instructors' perceptions.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will receive a C\$ 10 Amazon gift card as compensation.

This study will conduct one-on-one interviews. You can decide whether to take part in an in-person interview. The in-person interview will be set in an independent discussion room in the library at the University of Windsor. Each interview will be 60 to 90 minutes including checking your demographic information..

When you enter the interview room, you will be asked some questions about your identification information, such as your name, to ensure you are the person whom I have

communicated with. After completing this section, you will be offered a chance to decide whether to continue the interview or not.

During this interview, you will be asked about twenty-four questions. If you feel uncomfortable during this interview, you will be welcome to ask for more explanation about the questions and answer the interview questions in your way. If you hope to withdraw from this interview, you are encouraged to inform the interviewer about your decision to withdraw. You are allowed to withdraw from this interview at any time. If you withdraw from the interview, your interview data will not be used in the following research and thesis writing. This interview will be audio recorded.
If you withdraw from the interview before the interview completion, you will not receive compensation.

Following the interview, the audio recording of this interview will be transcribed into text. You will be invited to check the transcriptions. If you would like to have an electronic copy (audio recording or transcription) of your interview recording, you will be provided via email. You will be welcome to make changes or add information to your interview. After verifying the transcripts, you will be invited to reply to me via email. I will offer you twenty days for verifying your interview transcription from the day I send your interview transcription. In order to ensure you receive and read my email, I will suggest you open the function of "deliver and/ or read" in your email. If I fail to receive your feedback on interview transcription in the 20 days after I send it to you, your interview data in the transcription that I sent to you will be used in my research.

You will be provided with a summary of the research results via the Leddy Library website: https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/ .

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There will be low psychological risks during interviews because you may feel discomfortable when you recall and present negative experiences. Therefore, you are welcome to stop interviews or refuse to answer questions when you feel uncomfortable and ask for breaks when you feel it is necessary. Moreover, you are encouraged to ask for more explanations or detailed information about the interview questions and answer the questions as you wish.

Besides, there will be low social risks if you share or discuss interview experiences with others because that may cause gossip for you. Therefore, you are required not to share your interview experiences with others, including other participants in this study. You will participate in a one-on-one in-person interview, which can ensure that other people will not know that you take part in this study.

If you decide to withdraw from this study before the $20^{th}$ days after checking transcription of your interview recording, you can ask for your data to be eliminated. Your interview recording will be confidential, which indicates that only I and my supervisor (Dr. Clayton

Smith) will be able to access it. Your name will be replaced by a code name in the whole study and the final report. The interview audio recording will be restored in my private laptop with a password secured. It will be destroyed after you verify the transcription of your interview recording. The electronic transcription of the audio recording will be saved offline in my private laptop with a password secured as well to ensure the confidentiality of your data while the printed transcription will be retained in a cabinet locked in my supervisor's (Dr. Clayton Smith) office.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There will be no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, the potential benefits to the scholarly community will be as follows: 1. Promote teaching strategies toward Chinese international business learners after knowing the Chinese international students better. 2. Help to create accurate education policies to international education. 3. Improve Chinese international business students' academic learning. 4. Increase the Chinese international business learners' satisfaction with Ontario education.

The potential benefits to society will be: 1. Enhance the sense of belongings for Chinese international business learners. 2. Attract more Chinese learners to study in Ontario universities and boost Ontario's revenue. 3. Promote the reputation of Ontario higher education.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

You will receive a C$10 Amazon e-gift card. The code/ link of the e-gift card will be offered after your interview via email within three days after you complete this interview. If you withdraw from your interview before completing this interview, you will not receive the compensation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

**A**ny information that can be identified with you and attained in this study will be retained confidentially. The disclosure of information about you will be conducted only with your permission. The printed interview data and your background information will be stored in a locked document cabinet in the researcher and her supervisor's office. The audio recording of the interview and electronic interview data will be saved offline on my private and secured laptop with password protection. Your real name will be replaced with your pseudonym or code name in the whole study and its report. The interview data and audio recording will be erased after your verification and the accomplishment of this research. Research data will not be provided to any third party for any reason.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You have the right of deciding whether to participate in this interview or not. You will have the option to withdraw from this study at any time without any penalty. If you withdraw from this research after completing your interview, you still will receive compensation for your participation in this research. During the interview, you are allowed to refuse to answer any question if you feel discomfort or ask for a more detailed explanation or

information about the question. The due date of the withdrawal of the data that you have contributed will be the twentieth day after the member check (information check of the transcription of the interview audio recording) deadline. If you withdraw from this study in 20 days after member checking deadline, the data that you have contributed will be destroyed by me. If you want to withdraw from this research after the 20th day from the member checking deadline, the data that you have contribute to this study will be used in data analysis and my thesis.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANT

A summary of the research results will be accessible on the REB website/ Leddy Library's Summary for Participants platform by spring 2023. The web address: https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/

Web address: ___https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/
Date when results are available: ___April 30, 2023_____

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: The Office of Research Ethics, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study [insert title] as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

   Name of Participant

_____
_____

   Signature of Participant                        Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

_____
_____
Signature of Investigator                    Date

**Appendix B**

<div align="center">

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**
**(Student online interview)**

</div>

Title of Study: A Qualitative Study of Chinese International Master's Business Students' Classroom Communication Engagement at A Canadian Comprehensive University

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Bohui Liu, a postgraduate student in the Master of Education (M.Ed) program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. The result of this study will be applied to Bohui Liu's thesis.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Bohui Liu (a graduate student in the M.Ed program in the Faculty of Education) or Dr. Clayton Smith (Bohui Liu's supervisor is a professor in the Faculty of Education). The contact information of them as follows:

Email: liu5t@uwindsor.ca (Bohui Liu) and Clayton.Smith@uwindsor.ca (Dr. Clayton Smith)

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to explore how Chinese international master's business learners at the University of Windsor participate in classroom communication and test whether the research findings published by George Zhou, Zongyong Yu, Glenn Rideout, and Clayton Smith in 2021can be repeated among Chinese international students in the business program at the University of Windsor. This study will examine the influential factors to Chinese international master's business learners' classroom engagements and teaching strategies that help to increase this group of learners' classroom communication engagements from both students' and instructors' perceptions.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will receive a C$ 10 Amazon gift card as compensation.

This study will conduct one-on-one online interviews via the software Microsoft Teams. Each interview will be 60 to 90 minutes including checking your demographic information.

You will receive a meeting invitation via Outlook before the interview. After accepting the meeting invitation, you will find a meeting schedule in the calendar in Outlook. When you are going to join the meeting, you can go to the calendar in Outlook and click the schedule to access Teams. When you enter the meeting room, you will be asked some questions about your identification information, such as your name, to ensure you're the person whom I have communicated with. After completing this section, you will be offered a chance to decide whether to continue the interview or not.

If you cannot join in the interview via the Microsoft Teams, please inform me immediately via email or phone call. If you fail to attend the interview via Microsoft Teams by connecting to the internet for many times or the interview disconnect in process, I will negotiate with you to make another appointment for interview with you via email.

During this interview, you will be asked about twenty-four questions. If you feel uncomfortable during this interview, you will be welcome to ask for more explanation about the questions and answer the interview questions in your way. If you hope to withdraw from this interview, you are encouraged to inform me about your decision of withdrawal or click the button of stop to quit this interview. You are allowed to withdraw from this interview at any time. If you withdraw from the interview before the interview completion, your interview data will not be used in the following research and thesis writing, and you will not receive the compensation. This interview will be audio recorded via an audio recorder (iFLYTEK SR302 PRO) that has been turned off the internet connection and the software of Microsoft Teams will not be used to audio or video record the interviews.

Following the interview, the audio recording of this interview will be transcribed into text. You will be invited to check the transcriptions. If you would like to have an electronic copy (audio recording or transcription) of your interview recording, you will be provided via email. You will be welcome to make changes or add information to your interview. After verifying the transcripts, you will be invited to reply to me via email. I will offer you twenty days for verifying your interview transcription from the day I send your interview transcription. In order to ensure you receive and read my email, I will suggest you open the function of "deliver and/ or read" in your email. If I fail to receive your feedback on interview transcription in the 20 days after I send it to you, your interview data in the transcription that I sent to you will be used in my research.

You will be provided with a summary of the research results via the Leddy Library website: https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/ .

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There will be low psychological risks during interviews because of several reasons. First, you may feel discomfortable when you recall and present negative experiences. Therefore, you are welcome to stop interviews or refuse to answer questions when you feel uncomfortable and ask for breaks when you feel it is necessary. Moreover, you are encouraged to ask for more explanations or detailed information about the interview questions and answer the questions as you wish. Second, you may have concerns that this interview will be video recorded. I promise that I will not turn the function of video record in Microsoft Teams. If you still worry that your interview may be video recorded, you are welcome to ask for audio call interview via Microsoft Teams. Third, you may worry that there will be other people in my room. To eliminate your worries, I will conduct this interview in a quiet and closed room and promise that only myself in the

room. The co-interviewer will be required to stay in a closed and quiet room with no one else in his/her room when they interview participants.

Besides, there will be low social risks if you share or discuss interview experiences with others because that may cause gossip for you. Therefore, you are required not to share your interview experiences with others, including other participants in this study. You will participate in a one-on-one in-person interview, which can ensure that other people will not know you take part in this study.

If you decide to withdraw from this study before the 20$^{th}$ days after checking transcription of your interview recording, you can ask for your data to be eliminated. Your interview recording will be confidential, which indicates that only I and my supervisor (Dr. Clayton Smith) will be able to access it. Your name will be replaced by a code name in the whole study and the final report. The interview audio recording will be restored in my private laptop with a password secured. It will be destroyed after you verify the transcription of your interview recording. The electronic transcription of the audio recording will be saved offline in my private laptop with a password secured as well to ensure the confidentiality of your data while the printed transcription will be retained in a cabinet locked in my supervisor's (Dr. Clayton Smith) office.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There will be no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, the potential benefits to the scholarly community will be as follows: 1. Promote teaching strategies toward Chinese international business learners after knowing the Chinese international students better. 2. Help to create accurate education policies to international education. 3. Improve Chinese international business students' academic learning. 4. Increase the Chinese international business learners' satisfaction with Ontario education.

The potential benefits to society will be: 1. Enhance the sense of belongings for Chinese international business learners. 2. Attract more Chinese learners to study in Ontario universities and boost Ontario's revenue. 3. Promote the reputation of Ontario higher education.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

You will receive a C$10 Amazon e-gift card. The code/ link of the e-gift card will be offered after your interview via email within three days after you complete this interview. If you withdraw from your interview before completing this interview, you will not receive the compensation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that can be identified with you and attained in this study will be retained confidentially. The disclosure of information about you will be conducted only with your permission. The printed interview data and your background information will be stored in a locked document cabinet in the researcher and her supervisor's office. The audio

recording of the interview and electronic interview data will be saved offline in my private and secured laptop with password protection. Your real name will be replaced with your pseudonym or code name in the whole study and its report. The interview data and audio recording will be erased after your verification and the accomplishment of this research. Research data will not be provided to any third party for any reason.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You have the right of deciding whether to participate in this interview or not. You will have the option to withdraw from this study at any time without any penalty. If you withdraw from this research after completing your interview, you still will receive compensation for your participation in this research. During the interview, you are allowed to refuse to answer any question if you feel discomfortable or ask for a more detailed explanation or information about the question. The due date of the withdrawal of the data that you have contributed will be the twentieth day after the member check (information check of the transcription of the interview audio recording) deadline. If you withdraw from this study in 20 days after member checking deadline, the data that you have contributed will be destroyed by me. If you want to withdraw from this research after the 20th day from the member checking deadline, the data that you have contribute to this study will be used in data analysis and my thesis.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANT

A summary of the research results will be accessible on the REB website/ Leddy Library's Summary for Participants platform by spring 2023. The web address: https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/

Web address: __https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/
Date when results are available: ___April 30, 2023_____

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact:  The Office of Research Ethics, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail:  ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study [insert title] as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____
   Name of Participant

_____
_____
   Signature of Participant                           Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR


These are the terms under which I will conduct research.


_____
_____
   Signature of Investigator                         Date

**Appendix C**

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
### (Instructor in-person interview)

Title of Study: A Qualitative Study of Chinese International Master's Business Students' Classroom Communication Engagement at A Canadian Comprehensive University

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Bohui Liu, a postgraduate student in the Master of Education (M.Ed) program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. The result of this study will be applied to Bohui Liu's thesis.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Bohui Liu (a graduate student in the M.Ed program in the Faculty of Education) or Dr. Clayton Smith (Bohui Liu's supervisor is a professor in the Faculty of Education). The contact information of them as follows:

Email: liu5t@uwindsor.ca (Bohui Liu) and Clayton.Smith@uwindsor.ca (Dr. Clayton Smith)

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to explore how Chinese international master's business learners at the University of Windsor participate in classroom communication and test whether the research findings published by George Zhou, Zongyong Yu, Glenn Rideout, and Clayton Smith in 2021can be repeated among Chinese international students in the business program at the University of Windsor. This study will examine the influential factors to Chinese international master's business learners' classroom engagements and teaching strategies that help to increase this group of learners' classroom communication engagements from both students' and instructors' perceptions.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you are suggested to acknowledge the following information.

This study will conduct one-on-one interviews. You can decide whether to take part in an in-person interview or not. The in-person interview will be implemented in your office or in an independent discussion room in the library at the University of Windsor. Each interview will be 60 to 90 minutes including checking your demographic information.

When we meet in the interview room, you will be asked some questions about your identification information, such as your name, to ensure you are the person whom I have communicated with. After completing this section, you will be offered a chance to decide whether to continue the interview or not.

During this interview, you will be asked about fourteen questions. If you feel uncomfortable during this interview, you will be welcome to ask for more explanation about the questions and answer the interview questions in your way. If you hope to withdraw from this interview, you are encouraged to inform the interviewer about your decision to withdraw. You are allowed to withdraw from this interview at any time. Your interview data will be used in the following research and thesis writing. This interview will be audio recorded.

Following the interview, the audio recording of this interview will be transcribed into text. You will be invited to check the transcriptions. If you would like to have an electronic copy (audio recording or transcription) of your interview recording, you will be provided via email. You will be welcome to make changes or add information to your interview. After verifying the transcripts, you will be invited to reply to me via email. I will offer you twenty days for verifying your interview transcription from the day I send your interview transcription. In order to ensure you receive and read my email, I will suggest you open the function of "deliver and/ or read" in your email. If I fail to receive your feedback on interview transcription in the 20 days after I send it to you, your interview data in the transcription that I sent to you will be used in my research.

You will be provided with a summary of the research results via the Leddy Library website: https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/ .

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There will be low psychological risks during interviews because you may feel discomfortable when you recall and present negative experiences. Therefore, you are welcome to stop interviews or refuse to answer questions when you feel uncomfortable and ask for breaks when you feel it is necessary. Moreover, you are encouraged to ask for more explanations or detailed information about the interview questions and answer the questions as you wish.

Besides, there will be low social risks if you share or discuss interview experiences with others because that may cause gossip for you. Therefore, you are required not to share your interview experiences with others, including other participants in this study. You will participate in a one-on-one in-person interview, which can ensure that other people will not know that you take part in this study.

If you decide to withdraw from this study before the 20th days after checking transcription of your interview recording, you can ask for your data to be eliminated. Your interview recording will be confidential, which indicates that only I and my supervisor (Dr. Clayton Smith) will be able to access it. Your name will be replaced by a code name in the whole study and the final report. The interview audio recording will be restored in my private laptop with a password secured. It will be destroyed after you verify the transcription of your interview recording. The electronic transcription of the audio recording will be saved offline in my private laptop with a password secured as well to ensure the confidentiality

of your data while the printed transcription will be retained in a cabinet locked in my supervisor's (Dr. Clayton Smith) office.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There will be no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, the potential benefits to the scholarly community will be as follows: 1. Promote teaching strategies toward Chinese international business learners after knowing the Chinese international students better. 2. Help to create accurate education policies to international education. 3. Improve Chinese international business students' academic learning. 4. Increase the Chinese international business learners' satisfaction with Ontario education.

The potential benefits to society will be: 1. Enhance the sense of belongings for Chinese international business learners. 2. Attract more Chinese learners to study in Ontario universities and boost Ontario's revenue. 3. Promote the reputation of Ontario higher education.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

There will not be compensation. However, I will gratefully appreciate your engagement in this interview as your participation will contribute to discovering how Chinese international students participate in classroom communication.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that can be identified with you and attained in this study will be retained confidentially. The disclosure of information about you will be conducted only with your permission. The printed interview data and your background information will be stored in a locked document cabinet in the researcher and her supervisor's office. The audio recording of the interview and electronic interview data will be saved offline in my private and secured laptop with password protection. Your real name will be replaced with your pseudonym or code name in the whole study and its report. The interview data and audio recording will be erased after your verification and the accomplishment of this research. Research data will not be provided to any third party for any reason.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You have the right of deciding whether to participate in this interview or not. You will have the option to withdraw from this study at any time without any penalty. During the interview, you are allowed to refuse to answer any question if you feel discomfortable or ask for a more detailed explanation or information about the question. The due date of the withdrawal of the data that you have contributed will be twenty days after the member check (information check of the transcription of the interview audio recording) deadline. If you withdraw from this study in 20 days after member checking deadline, the data that you have contributed will be destroyed by me. If you withdraw from this research after the 20th day from the member checking deadline, the data that you have contributed to this study will be used in data analysis and my thesis.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANT

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SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study [insert title] as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.


_____
    Name of Participant


_____
    _____
    Signature of Participant                                      Date


SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR


These are the terms under which I will conduct research.


_____
    _____
    Signature of Investigator                                      Date

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
### (Instructor online interview)

Title of Study: A Qualitative Study of Chinese International Master's Business Students' Classroom Communication Engagement at A Canadian Comprehensive University

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Bohui Liu, a postgraduate student in the Master of Education (M.Ed) program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. The result of this study will be applied to Bohui Liu's thesis.

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PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you are suggested to acknowledge the following information.

This study will conduct one-on-one online interviews via the software Microsoft Teams. Each interview will be 60 to 90 minutes including checking your demographic information.

You will receive a meeting invitation via Outlook before the interview. After accepting the meeting invitation, you will find a meeting schedule in the calendar in Outlook. When you are going to join the meeting, you can go to the calendar in Outlook and click the schedule to access Teams. When you enter the meeting room, you will be asked some questions about your identification information, such as your name, to ensure you're the person whom I have communicated with. After completing this section, you will be offered a chance to decide whether to continue the interview or not.

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During this interview, you will be asked about twenty-four questions. If you feel uncomfortable during this interview, you will be welcome to ask for more explanation about the questions and answer the interview questions in your way. If you hope to withdraw from this interview, you are encouraged to inform the interviewer about your decision of withdrawal or click the button of stop to quit this interview. You are allowed to withdraw from this interview at any time. Your withdrawal will not bring you any penalty or negative impact. If you withdraw from the interview after replying to the email of consent form, you still will receive compensation for engagement in this study. Your interview data will be used in the following research and thesis writing. This interview will be audio recorded via an audio recorder (iFLYTEK SR302 PRO) that has been turned off the internet connection and the software of Microsoft Teams will not be used to audio or video record the interviews. If you withdraw from the interview before signing this consent form, you will not receive compensation.

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conduct this interview in a quiet and closed room and promise that only myself in the room. The co-interviewer will be required to stay in a closed and quiet room with no one else in his/her room when they interview participants.

Besides, there will be low social risks if you share or discuss interview experiences with others because that may cause gossip for you. Therefore, you are required not to share your interview experiences with others, including other participants in this study. You will participate in a one-on-one in-person interview, which can ensure that other people will not know you take part in this study.

If you decide to withdraw from this study before the 20th days after checking transcription of your interview recording, you can ask for your data to be eliminated. Your interview recording will be confidential, which indicates that only I and my supervisor (Dr. Clayton Smith) will be able to access it. Your name will be replaced by a code name in the whole study and the final report. The interview audio recording will be restored in my private laptop with a password secured. It will be destroyed after you verify the transcription of your interview recording. The electronic transcription of the audio recording will be saved offline in my private laptop with a password secured as well to ensure the confidentiality of your data while the printed transcription will be retained in a cabinet locked in my supervisor's (Dr. Clayton Smith) office.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

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There will not be compensation. However, I will gratefully appreciate your engagement in this interview as your participation will contribute to discovering how Chinese international students participate in classroom communication.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that can be identified with you and attained in this study will be retained confidentially. The disclosure of information about you will be conducted only with your permission. The printed interview data and your background information will be stored in a locked document cabinet in the researcher and her supervisor's office. The audio

recording of the interview and electronic interview data will be saved offline in my private and secured laptop with password protection. Your real name will be replaced with your pseudonym or code name in the whole study and its report. The interview data and audio recording will be erased after your verification and the accomplishment of this research. Research data will not be provided to any third party for any reason.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You have the right of deciding whether to participate in this interview or not. You will have the option to withdraw from this study at any time without any penalty. If you withdraw from this research after signing this consent form, you still will receive compensation for your participation in this research. During the interview, you are allowed to refuse to answer any question if you feel discomfortable or ask for a more detailed explanation or information about the question. The due date of the withdrawal of the data that you have contributed will be the twentieth day after the member check (information check of the transcription of the interview audio recording) deadline. If you withdraw from this study in 20 days after member checking deadline, the data that you have contributed will be destroyed by me. If you withdraw from this research after the 20th day from the member checking deadline, the data that you have contributed to this study will be used in data analysis and my thesis.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANT

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Web address: __https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/
Date when results are available: ___April 30, 2023_____

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact:  The Office of Research Ethics, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail:  ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study [insert title] as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____
Name of Participant

_____
_____
Signature of Participant                                    Date


SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR


These are the terms under which I will conduct research.


_____
_____
Signature of Investigator                                  Date

**Appendix E**



**Interview Questions (Student)**

**Demographic information collection:**

1. What is your name? Could you spell it?

2. What is your nationality?

3. What program are you currently studying?

4. What level are you in? undergraduate, master, or doctoral?

**The following** interview list comes from Yu (2018).

1. Did you ever work before you came to Canada? If yes, how long?

2. What was your undergraduate major?

3. Could you tell me something about your families, such as your parents' work and their educational background?

4. How long have you been in Canada?

5. Why did you attend the business program (your own decision or your parents' decision)?

6. How are you doing in the program?

7. What are the differences you have noticed so far between the Chinese class and the Canadian class? How do you comment on these differences?

8. Did you actively participate in class interaction? How? (Why not?)

9. Do you think class participation is significant for your learning? Why or why not?

**10.** What factors influence (help or hinder) your participation in class?

**11.** Did you often raise questions in class? Why or why not?

**12.** Did you often provide feedback on your classmates' work? Why or why not?

**13.** When the instructor posted a question, who often responded?

**14.** Did you have the intention to respond? If yes, did you get a chance to respond? If not, what was the reason?

**15.** How do you feel about the group work in the course?

**16.** Did the instructor allow students to form their groups?

**17.** Did you get a chance to work with domestic students?

**18.** If you had group work with domestic students, did you think you contributed to the group discussion? Why or why not?

**19.** Did the instructor encourage you or other Chinese students to participate in class? How?

**20.** How do you feel teachers should improve the participation of Chinese students?

**21.** Do you prefer an international cohort-only class or a blended class with domestic students?

**22.** Did you perform differently in these two different types of classes? Why?

**23.** Did you notice any difference in Chinese students' performance in two different class configurations?

**24.** Are there any other comments about classroom participation?

**Appendix F**



**面试问题 (学生)**

**核对参与者个人信息:**

1. 请问您的名字是什么?能为我拼写一下吗?

2. 请问您的国籍是什么？

3. 您目前就读的是什么专业？

4. 您目前是本科，硕士，还是博士生?

**The following** interview list comes from Yu (2018).

1. 请问您来加拿大读书之前有工作经验吗?如果有，请问您工作过多久?

2. 请问您本科专业是什么?

3. 您方便介绍一下您的家庭成员吗?比如，您父母的工作和他们的教育背景。

4. 您在加拿大生活或学习了多久?

5. 您为什么选择学习商科？是你自己的决定还是你父母的决定？

6. 您目前的学习状况怎么样?

7. 目前您觉得中国学校课堂和加拿大学校的课堂有什么不同？您对这些不同有什么看法?

8. 您在课堂上踊跃互动吗？如何踊跃参与课堂互动的?(为什么不踊跃参与课堂互动?)

9. 您认为课堂参与对您的学习重要吗?为什么重要/为什么不重要?

10. 什么因素影响（帮助/阻碍）你参与课堂互动？

11. 您经常在课堂上提出问题吗?为什么/为什么不?

12. 您在课堂上会经常对同学的观点进行回应吗?为什么/为什么不?

13. 当老是在课堂上提出问题，通常谁会给予回应？

14. 您有给予回应的意愿吗? 如果有， 你有机会给予反馈吗?如果没有，为什么
不愿意回应?

15. 您对小组作业有什么看法?

16. 您的老师允许学生们自己组建小组吗?

17. 您获得过与加拿大学生进行合作的机会吗?

18. 如果你有过与加拿大学生合作的经历，你认为自己对小组讨论有贡献吗？为
什么/为什么没有?

19. 您的老师有鼓励你或者其他中国学生参与课堂讨论吗?他/她是如何做的？

20. 您觉得教师应该如何提高中国学生的课堂参与度？

21. 您喜欢纯国际班还是与国内学生混合的班级？

22. 您在这两种不同类型的班级中表现不同吗？为什么？

23. 您是否注意到中国学生在两种不同班级配置中的表现有什么不同？

24. 您对课堂参与还有其他意见吗？

**Appendix G**



**Interview Questions (Instructor)**

**Demographic information collection:**

1. What is your name? Could you spell it?

2. What program are you currently teaching?

3. What level are you teaching? undergraduate, master, or doctoral?

The following interview list comes from Yu (2018).

1. What are the differences you have noticed so far between Chinese and Canadian students? How do you comment on these differences?

2. Did Chinese students actively participate in class interaction? Why or why not?

3. What factors influence (help or hinder) their class participation?

4. Did Chinese students often raise questions in class? Why or why not?

5. Did they actively provide feedback on their classmates' work/ presentation in class? Why or why not?

6. Who often responded when you posted a question (Chinese students or domestic students)?

7. If Chinese students didn't respond, what was the reason?

8. Did you allow students to form their groups? Why or why not?

9. Did Chinese students get a chance to work with domestic students?

**10.** If Chinese students had group work with domestic students, do you think they contributed to the group discussion? Why or why not?

**11.** How did you encourage Chinese students to participate in class?

**12.** Have you taught both international cohort-only classes and blended classes?

**13.** Did you notice any difference in Chinese students' performance in two different class configurations? If yes, why such differences?

**14.** Are there any other comments on Chinese students' classroom participation?

**Appendix H**



**面试问题 (教师)**

**核实参与者的个人信息：**

1. 您的名字是什么？您能为我拼写一下吗？

2. 你目前在教什么课程？

3. 你在教什么级别的课程？本科生，硕士生，还是博士生？

The following interview list comes from Yu (2018).

1. 到目前为止，您注意到中国和加拿大学生之间有哪些不同之处？你如何评论这些差异？

2. 中国学生是否积极参与了课堂互动？为什么或为什么不？

3. 什么因素影响（帮助或阻碍）他们的课堂参与？

4. 中国学生在课堂上是否经常提出问题？为什么或为什么不？

5. 他们在课堂上是否积极为同学观点提供反馈？为什么？

6. 当您提出问题时，谁经常回答（中国学生或国内学生）？

7. 如果中国学生没有回应，原因是什么？

8. 你是否允许学生自己组建小组？为什么或为什么不？

9. 中国学生是否有机会与加拿大学生一起合作？

10. 如果中国学生与加拿大学生进行了小组合作，您认为中国学生对小组讨论有贡献吗？为什么或为什么没有？

11. 您是如何鼓励中国学生参与课堂讨论的？

12. 您是否既教过纯国际学生班又教过混合班？

13. 您是否注意到中国学生在两种不同班级配置中的表现有什么不同？如果有，为什么会有这种差异？

14. 您对中国学生的课堂参与还有什么其他意见吗？

**Appendix I**



**Recruitment Letter (Student In-person Interview)**

University of Windsor

Date:

Dear student participant,

I am inviting you to participate in a voluntary study on Chinese international master's business students' classroom communication engagement at the University of Windsor. I am a master's student under the supervision of Dr. Clayton Smith in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. I will use the interview data to inform my thesis.

This letter serves as an invitation to engage in a voluntary in-person one-on-one interview that will be conducted at a discussion room in the Leddy Library at the University of Windsor. I will coordinate an available time and book an interview room. The location of the meeting room will be informed to you via email.

Each interview will be approximately 60 to 90 minutes. You are allowed to refuse to answer any question or stop the interview at any time when you feel uncomfortable. You also will be encouraged to ask for more explanation or detailed information about the interview questions. The interview will be audio recorded and the recording will be stored confidentially on my laptop which is only accessible to me and my supervisor, Dr. Clayton Smith, and it will be secured with a password. The interview recording will be

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transcribed into text that will be verified by me and you. I will offer 20 days for you to verify your interview transcription from the day I send it to you. If you do not respond to the email that informs you to verify your interview transcription, the transcription that I will have sent to you will be used to data analysis and my thesis. The audio interview recording will be destroyed after your reply on the transcription verification by me. The transcription will be retained in a locked cabinet in my supervisor's (Dr. Clayton Smith) office and will be destroyed by me with the completion of my thesis. Your real name will be replaced with a code name during the whole study and the final report. Participation in the interview is voluntary. Meanwhile, this study has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.

If you are interested in engaging in the interview, please feel free to email me via liu5t@uwindsor.ca to state your interest.

I will appreciate your participation.

Sincerely,

Principal investigator: Bohui Liu

**Appendix J**



**Recruitment Letter (Student Online Interview)**

University of Windsor

Date:

Dear student participant,

I am inviting you to participate in a voluntary study on Chinese international master's business students' classroom communication engagement at the University of Windsor. I am a master's student under the supervision of Dr. Clayton Smith in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. I will use the interview data to inform my thesis.

This letter serves as an invitation to engage in a voluntary online one-on-one interview via the software Microsoft Teams. I will coordinate an available time for the interview.

Each interview will be approximately 60 to 90 minutes. You are allowed to refuse to answer any question or stop the interview at any time when you feel uncomfortable. You also will be encouraged to ask for more explanation or detailed information about the interview questions. The interview will be audio recorded and the recording will be stored confidentially on my laptop which is only accessible to me and my supervisor, Dr. Clayton Smith, and it will be secured with a password. The interview recording will be transcribed into text that will be verified by me and you. I will offer 20 days for you to verify your interview transcription from the day I send it to you. If you do not respond to

the email that informs you to verify your interview transcription, the transcription that I will have sent to you will be used to data analysis and thesis. The audio interview recording will be destroyed after your reply on the transcription verification by me. The transcription will be retained in a locked cabinet in my supervisor's (Dr. Clayton Smith) office and will be destroyed by me with the completion of my thesis. Your real name will be replaced with a code name during the whole study and the final report.

Participation in the interview is voluntary. Meanwhile, this study has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.

If you are interested in engaging in the interview, please feel free to email me via liu5t@uwindsor.ca to state your interest.

I will appreciate your participation.

Sincerely,

Principal investigator: Bohui Liu

**Appendix K**



**Recruitment Letter (Instructor In-person Interview)**

University of Windsor

Date:

Dear instructor participant,

I am inviting you to participate in a voluntary study on Chinese international master's business students' classroom communication engagement at the University of Windsor. I am a master's student under the supervision of Dr. Clayton Smith in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. I will use the interview data to inform my thesis.

This letter serves as an invitation to engage in a voluntary in-person one-on-one interview. I will coordinate an available time and an interview place, such as your office or a discussion room in the Leddy Library at the University of Windsor. The location of the meeting room will be informed to you via email.

Each interview will be approximately 60 to 90 minutes. You are allowed to refuse to answer any question or stop the interview at any time when you feel uncomfortable. You also will be encouraged to ask for more explanation or detailed information about the interview questions. The interview will be audio recorded and the recording will be stored confidentially on my laptop which is only accessible to me and secured with a password. The interview recording will be transcribed into text that will be verified by

me and you. I will offer 20 days for you to verify your interview transcription from the day I send it to you. If you do not respond to the email that informs you to verify your interview transcription, the transcription that I will have sent to you will be used to data analysis and thesis. The audio interview recording will be destroyed after your reply on the transcription verification by me. The transcription will be retained in a locked cabinet in my supervisor's (Dr. Clayton Smith) office and will be destroyed by me with the completion of my thesis. Your name will be replaced with a code name during the whole study and the final report.

Participation in the interview is voluntary. Meanwhile, this study has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.

If you are interested in engaging in the interview, please feel free to email me via liu5t@uwindsor.ca to state your interest.

I will appreciate your participation.

Sincerely,

Principal investigator: Bohui Liu

**Appendix L**



**Recruitment Letter (Instructor Online Interview)**

University of Windsor

Date:

Dear instructor participant,

I am inviting you to participate in a voluntary study on Chinese international master's business students' classroom communication engagement at the University of Windsor. I am a master's student under the supervision of Dr. Clayton Smith in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. I will use the interview data to inform my thesis.

This letter serves as an invitation to engage in a voluntary online one-on-one interview. I will coordinate an available time for the interview.

Each interview will be approximately 60 to 90 minutes. You are allowed to refuse to answer any question or stop the interview at any time when you feel uncomfortable. You also will be encouraged to ask for more explanation or detailed information about the interview questions. The interview will be audio recorded and the recording will be stored confidentially on my laptop which is only accessible to me and secured with a password. The interview recording will be transcribed into text that will be verified by me and you. I will offer 20 days for you to verify your interview transcription from the day I send it to you. If you do not respond to the email that informs you to verify your

interview transcription, the transcription that I will have sent to you will be used to data analysis and thesis. The audio interview recording will be destroyed after your reply on the transcription verification by me. The transcription will be retained in a locked cabinet in my supervisor's (Dr. Clayton Smith) office and will be destroyed by me with the completion of my thesis. Your name will be replaced with a code name during the whole study and the final report.

Participation in the interview is voluntary. Meanwhile, this study has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.

If you are interested in engaging in the interview, please feel free to email me via liu5t@uwindsor.ca to state your interest.

I will appreciate your participation.

Sincerely,

Principal investigator: Bohui Liu

**Appendix M**

**Member Checking Email**

Dear participant,

I hope everything is going well with you.

I appreciate your participation in the interview. I have transcribed the interview audio recording into text and attached the transcription. The audio recording has been restored in my laptop with password secured and that is only accessible to me. Your real name has been replaced by a code name (A to H).

This email aims to invite you to verify this transcription. You are welcome to add information or change your answers to the interview questions. You are suggested to submit your verification in two weeks from today by replying to this email. If I fail to receive your reply, the transcription that I sent to you will be used in the subsequent data analysis and my thesis.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Best regards,

Bohui Liu

**Appendix N**

## Research Ethics Board Clearance

Today's Date: February 08, 2023
Principal Investigator: Ms. Bohui Liu
REB Number: 42371
Research Project Title: REB# 22-164: "Factors that Cause Chinese International Master's Students Who Are Studying in the Business Programs at Canadian Universities to be Resistant to Communicating in Class"
Clearance Date: February 07, 2023
Annual Renewal Date: February 07, 2024

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This is to inform you that the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board (REB), which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans and the University of Windsor Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants, has granted clearance for the ethical acceptability of your research project.

An Annual Renewal/Progress Report must be submitted one (1) year after the clearance date for renewal of the project. The PI may request a modification in the annual report date to align with other annual reporting requirements. The REB may ask for monitoring information at some time during the project's approval period. A Final Report must be submitted at the end of the project to close the file.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB. Approval for modifications to an ongoing study can be requested using a Request to Revise Form.

Investigators must also report promptly to the REB:

a) changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting the conduct of the study;
b) all adverse and unexpected events that occur to participants;
c) new information that may affect the risks to the participants or the conduct of the study.

Forms for submissions, notifications, or changes are available on the REB website: www.uwindsor.ca/reb. If your data are going to be used for another project, it is necessary to submit a secondary use of data application to the REB.

Best wishes for your research project.

Sincerely,

Dr. Scott Martyn
Chair, Research Ethics Board
University of Windsor

# VITA AUCTORIS

NAME:                    Bohui Liu

PLACE OF BIRTH:          Shaanxi, China

EDUCATION:               University of Windsor, 2023, M.Ed.

                         Chongqing Normal University, 2010, BA