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Role of Culture in the Acquisition of CSL – From the Perspective of Intercultural Communication Competence

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In the past few decades, the demands for coping with the rapid development of information communication technology, internationalization and globalization worldwide have shifted the focus of Chinese as a second language (CSL) towards intercultural communication competence in which the role of culture in the acquisition of CSL and in the pragmatic use of the language is emphasized and promoted. However, most of the present research in this academic area still remains only on a theoretical level.

In order to explore the possibilities and limitations of integrating Chinese culture and implementing intercultural communication theory into CSL education, an action research has been conducted since the beginning of 2013 to review an actual course for beginners. This paper will present the findings of the research: 1) By applying the theoretical framework of intercultural communicative competence, the findings indicated that the existing CSL course provided limited information explaining the cultural elements that are reflected in the Chinese language. 2) The findings also suggested that the cultural skills acquired in the students' first language do influence their acquisition of CSL. This is demonstrated in the students' written tasks such as introducing themselves and presenting other people, etc. The findings can be examples and resources for further research in this academic field.