



**Transformative Internationalization
through Kindness:
The Experiences of Chinese Undergraduate
Students and their Instructors
at a U.S. Higher Education Institution**

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Doctoral Defense**



What is this study?

Transformative
internationalization
through kindness

Cultures
of learning

Interculturality

The Three Contexts: ESL, BC, CWC

Impetus

Rationale

Literature review

- **Transformative Internationalization** (Mott-Smith, 2013; Jackson, 2018; Madge et al., 2015)
- **Instructors' Experiences with Chinese Undergraduate Students at U.S. Institutions:**
 - ✓ Perceptions (Frenzel et al., 2016; Abelman & Kang, 2014; Yan & Berliner, 2009; Du, 2015)
 - ✓ Cultures (Dervin, 2016b; Farinde-Wu et al., 2017; Dicke et al., 2015; Cortazzi & Jin, 2013)
 - ✓ Pedagogies (Abelman & Kang, 2014; Huang, 2012; Paldy, 2015; Clark-Gareca & Gui, 2019; James et al., 2019; Wang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2019; Holdway & Hitchcock, 2018)
 - ✓ Interculturality (Tolosa et al., 2018; Bovill et al., 2015; Chen & Yang, 2017; Smolcic & Arends, 2017)
- **Kindness** (Loreman, 2011; Gao, 1998; Magnet et al., 2014)
- **Chinese Undergraduate Students' Experiences in the United States:**
 - ✓ Preparedness and Motivations (Mustaffa & Ilias, 2013; Baumbaugh, 2015; Altbach, 2015; Brzezinski, 1994; Chao et al., 2017)
 - ✓ Language (Rawlings & Sue, 2013; Wang et al., 2017; Cheng & Erben, 2012; Gu, 2016; Swagler & Ellis, 2003)
 - ✓ Beliefs and Feelings (Heng, 2017; Boshier, 2017; Haarms et al., 2018)
 - ✓ Societies (Lu et al., 2019; Spencer-Oatey et al., 2017; Gu, 2016; Fu & Izuma, 2018; Yan & Berliner, 2016)

Interculturality (Dervin, 2010, 2016a, 2016b)

Interaction	is always jointly constructed;
Context	we have different identities that depend on context;
Recognition of power relations	when dealing with interculturality a certain degree of pain is inescapable;
Simplicity	the inevitable combination of “the simple” and “the complex”;
Intersectionality	the interaction of multiple identities and experiences of exclusion;
Failure	it is normal in interculturality and we should learn from it;
Cultural mélange	cultural mixing, fusion of the West and the East.

Research Questions

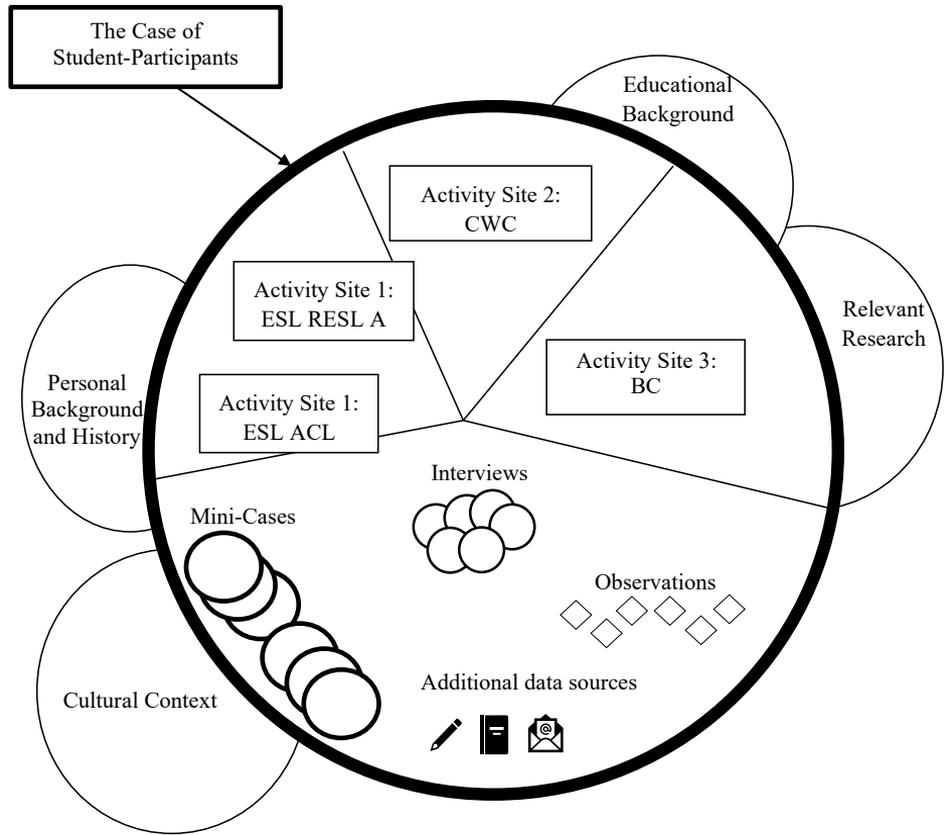
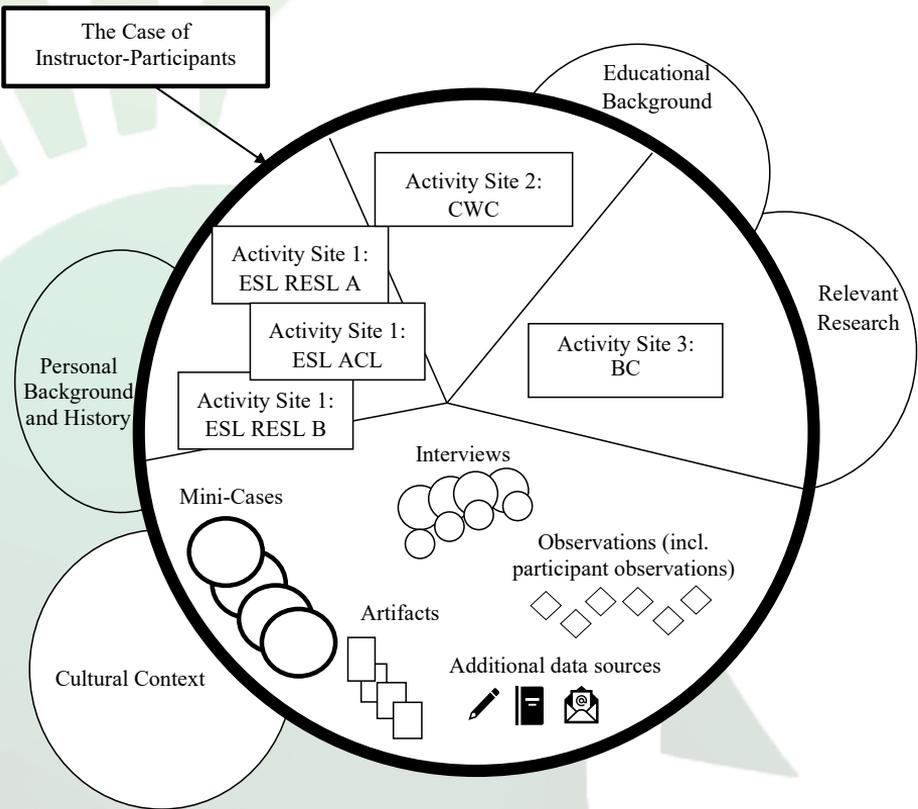
Instructor-participants' collective case study

1. In what ways do these four instructor-participants describe their experiences working with Chinese undergraduate students at Grand Lake University?
2. How do their experiences relate to interculturality in teaching?

Student-participants' collective case study

1. In what ways do these six student-participants describe their experiences at Grand Lake University?
2. How do their experiences relate to interculturality in learning?

Method: Multiple case study (Stake, 2006) MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY





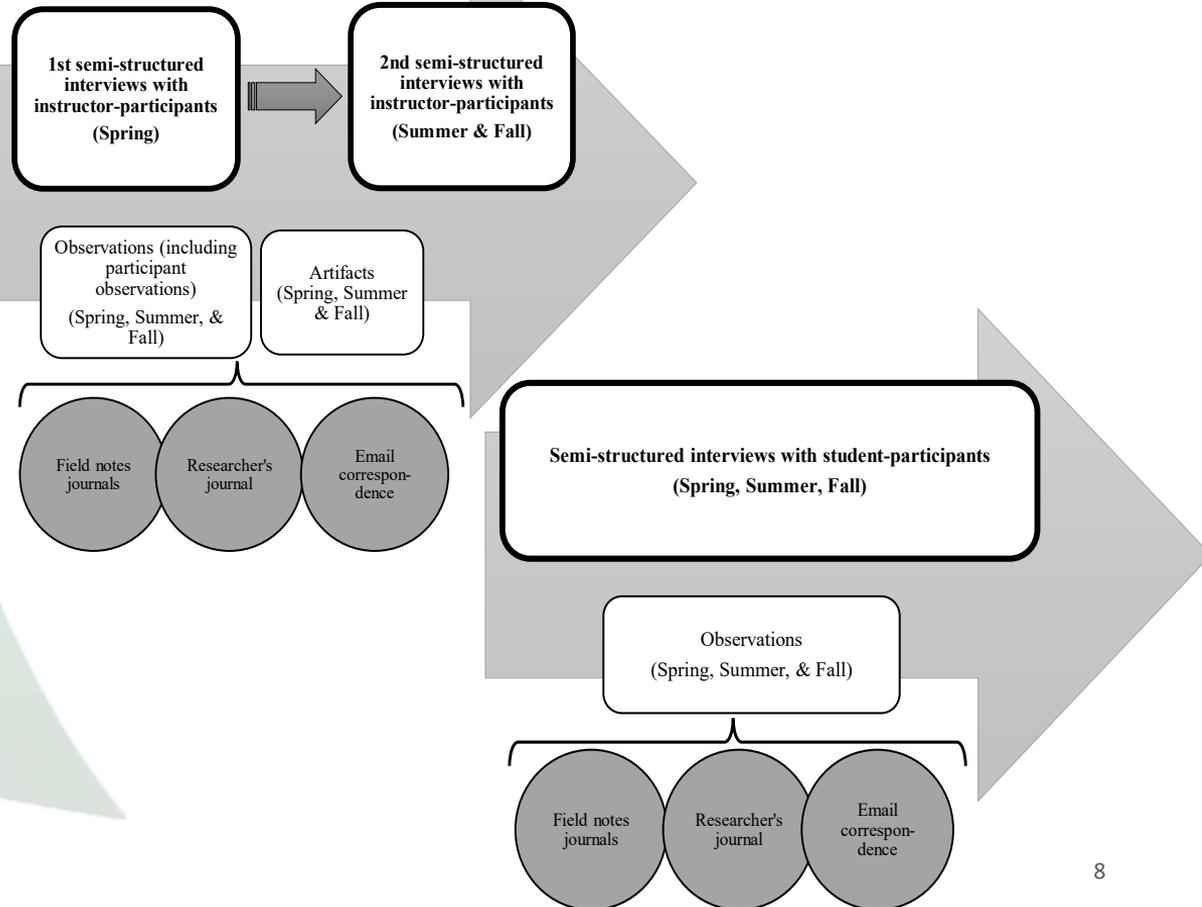
Method: Participants and Data collection

Instructor-participants

No	Pseudonym	Gender	Class
1	Stan	Male	RESL A
2	Han	Male	RESL B ACL
3	Andrew	Male	CWC
4	Peter	Male	BC

Student-participants

No	Pseudonym	Gender	Class
1	Aurora	Female	RESL A
2	Billy	Male	ACL
3	Jackson	Male	CWC
4	Amy	Female	CWC
5	Nick	Male	BC
6	Eve	Male	BC



Method: Data analysis

Review raw data under various possible interpretations.

Search for patterns of data (whether or not indicated by the issues).

Seek linkages between units of analysis.

Draw tentative conclusions.

Organize coding according to issues and organize final report.

Review data, gather new data (if needed), deliberately seek disconfirmation of findings.

First cycle of coding

=

holistic coding

Second cycle of coding

=

**pattern coding
or category construction**

Instructor-participants collective case MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY study: Findings and discussion

Transformative internationalization through teaching practices

1. Perceptions of Chinese undergraduate students
 2. Cultural mélange
3. Pedagogical approaches to Chinese undergraduate students
 4. Interculturality

Theme 1: Perceptions of Chinese undergraduate students

Stan, Interview 2:

*Now, when I walk into a classroom, I think that there's a lot about modern culture they could teach me. **I don't think they lag behind culturally.** I think their culture is different but I don't think that their country is like a poor backwater anymore.*

❖ Shi (2006), Heng (2018), Dervin (2016b)

Han, Interview 2:

*I was literally telling my friends: Oh my God, **I can't believe they're so good.** I was scared to teach this class, you know, because of my previous experience where there would be 2 or 3 students that were really focused and everyone else was like: **attitude** or they would tell me they thought my test was bad. [...] All of them are **hard-working**, even the weak ones.*

❖ Frenzel et al. (2016)

Theme 2: Cultural mélange

Andrew, Interview 1:

*So, the whole center of my teaching is **looking across cultures** [...]. It's just grounded in sort of the approach. It's like if we're discussing things and then the Chinese students will bring in a term like **tuhao** or whatever it is, that just serves as a focal point of discussions [...]. Everything in the course is sort of geared towards that.*

❖ Farinde-Wu et al. (2017)

Peter, Interview 2:

My grouping is very intentional.** I have an online tool that I can use with **an algorithm** and I can play with it. So, what I use is: sex – male, female, ethnicity, their GPA and then on top of that their schedules. [...] I run the algorithm and I look and see how the distribution is **to have diversity** in the teams [...]. I try to never put a single ethnic person alone [...]. I've read that that's a good approach to not split them because they have a little comfort in being able to speak in the native language and **participate instead of just being isolated.

❖ Dicke et al. (2015), Cortazzi & Jin (2013)

Theme 3: Pedagogical approaches to Chinese undergraduate students

Han, Interview 1:

*I don't go and say: Speak English, but what I find myself doing is **walking over** and kind of saying: Oh, are we speaking English? And then they always look at me and say: Yes, we are. And I'd say: What were we talking about? And **I'd sit down**. Because they might be talking about the text in Chinese, but **the goal is English**.*

- ❖ Holdway & Hitchcock (2018); Wang & Curdt-Christiansen (2019)

Peter, Interview 2:

***Positive integration with others** from wherever, you know, I would like to see more and more that people when they're in their formative years like this, start to **let go of some of the baggage** that they, probably we all, bring with is from our parents or grandparents or whatever. And just see that it's just us and we're different, but that's ok. We should be respectful of those differences. That to me would be the best thing of all. And **I've seen it**.*

- ❖ Erichsen & Bolligen (2011)

Theme 4: Interculturality

Stan, Interview 1:

*The most important part, I guess, is to recognize what classroom behaviors probably have **cultural roots**. It's kind of like trying to balance what you sense is their personality with what probably comes from cultural training and use that as a kind of **combined assessment of the person**. Like the other day, when you saw me talk about **Taiwan**. I was very careful to call it China.*

❖ Dervin (2017)

Andrew, Interview 1:

*I think teaching is about students [...]. I mean there is a term, something like **cultural reciprocity**. The idea is that the teachers move, and the students move. So, there's a **negotiation**. I think that's central to any teaching. I think there are **power dynamics** and structures, so synergy implies of course you want to leverage that, but I think of negotiation not simply in terms of leveraging students as resources, but I think sometimes the students have to move, like they should. I think there are certain norms in the class, and they should move but I think also the teacher needs to sometimes. I think **there's a struggle there**.*

❖ Tolosa et al. (2018)

Student-participants collective case study: Findings and discussion

Kindness

1. Preparedness for and motivation to explore the new
 2. Language experiences
 3. Beliefs and feelings about studying in the U.S.
 4. The social side of the new

Theme 1: Preparedness for and motivation to explore the new

Nick, Interview:

I used 'zhongjie' [in English: educational agents, middlemen]. I didn't do anything by myself.

❖ Zhang & Hagedorn (2011)

Eve, Interview:

*[...] before I came to GLU, I knew that the **business school here is pretty good**. So, I decided to go here. [...] You know. Some schools are higher ranking than GLU, but the business school is my best choice.*

Amy, Interview:

[...] because my dad just can't speak English, so it was a little hard [for my mom to come here] because they are already in a relationship.

❖ Chao et al. (2017)

Jackson, Interview:

*[...] I like **reading novels**, so when it comes to English, sometimes I wish I can understand a novel normally like Chinese. When I study, **I need a plan** but my schedule is a mess. It's hard to know when class is, how to prepare, if there is a test. That's painful. I often **feel lost**, so then I read novels, that's why.*

- ❖ Yan & Berliner (2016); Lin (2020)

Nick, Interview:

*And professor is like when I have some questions, ask him, he will answer specifically and accurate, but he speaks super fast and has a funny accent, too. Not like my other teachers. I have talked with him when the end of the first class and I said to him: I'm **too nervous to talk with other people in English**, and he told me: Just go and tell your teammates what's your problem and what's your idea. He also said **he very care about my feelings** and so he make the other Chinese boy with me in the one team. [...] I think all American students I meet are **very kind and always help me to do language check and ideas**.*

- ❖ Swagler & Ellis (2003); Loreman (2011)

Theme 3: Beliefs and feelings about studying in the U.S.

Jackson, Interview:

*[...] Chinese think, in class, unless you get a very nice idea, they **won't say anything**, if it's **not good enough**.*

- ❖ Haarms et al. (2018); Heng (2018)

Amy, Interview:

*(1) He **knows my name**, even my Chinese name.*

*(2) He **did not make me feel alone**.*

*(3) He was very **interested in China** and never make it look bad.*

- ❖ Duan et al. (2015)



Jackson, Interview:

*Because the Chinese students here is not really like the same people in our high school. Some students not work very hard so I **not into them**. They are **rich**, not like me, just very rich. It's **hard to make friends with them, nothing in common**.*

❖ Dervin (2016b)

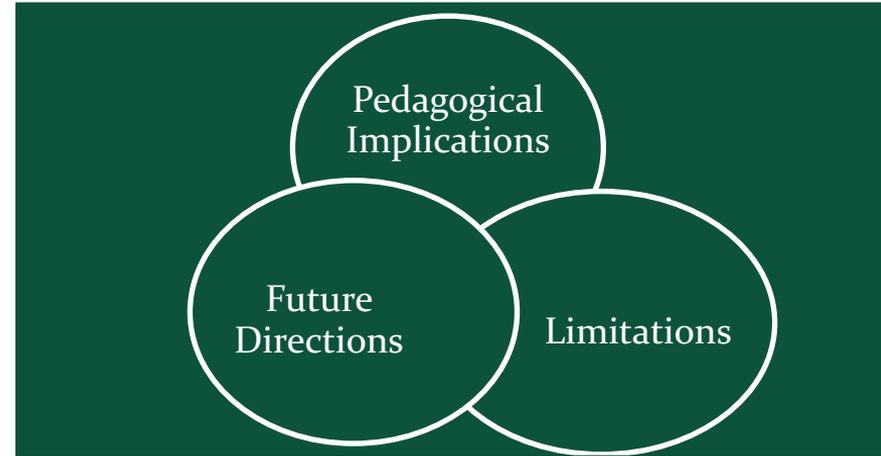
Nick, Interview:

*My American roommate, he always likes to **turn on the fan** and beside the window and cause me **very cold**. When I'm in the morning, I get up, poor me, always cold. I don't know why I see a lot of fans people put besides windows, the wind. It's **too cold for me**.*

❖ Gu (2016)

Conclusions

Participant	Quotations from their interviews
Nick	"All my classmates are very kind."
Billy	"The teacher here is also kind."
Aurora	"Everyone is so kind here. I feel good."
Jackson	"He [Andrew] is really kind to us. He is patient and always listens."
Amy	"People are kind in American."
Eve	"... it was very kind." (Referring to his instructor-participant's mentioning of Taiwan in class)



in a world where you
can be anything
be kind

Thank you for your attention!




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