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Teaching Local Minor Culture in English class: From the Perspective of Intercultural Communication Competence

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Abstract

Few empirical studies have examined teaching local minor culture in English class from the perspective of intercultural communication competence. The present study employed questionnaires to investigate 412 students from high schools to universities. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts: first on the teaching of local minor culture in English class; second on students' perceptions on the issue. Statistical analyses indicated that the questionnaires were highly reliable and valid. Results showed that local culture was seldom taught in English class. Despite their interests in learning local culture in English class, students were not satisfied with the learning contexts. Results of multiple linear regression analyses produced a model: Y (learning behavior) $= 0.83 + 0.116 X_1$ (affective attitude) $+ 0.539 X_2$ (contextual perception), indicating that contextual perception exerts greater impact on learning behavior (1:0.359), followed by affective attitude (1:0.116). Implications were discussed in relation to classroom practices.

Keywords: *intercultural communication competence, local minor culture, English class, learning behavior, contextual perception, affective attitude*

Introduction

Multilingual education has long extended beyond the acquisition of mere linguistic knowledge and skills (Fang et al, 2022; Wei & Banegas, 2026; Munezane, 2021). It also means learning different cultures to establish an understanding of "the others" and, crucially, learning one's native culture to foster a deep knowledge of "one self" (Yuan, 2006). Chinese culture has a long history of over 5000

years and encompasses a rich and diverse sub-cultures of the multi-ethnic groups and the long-standing local cultures (Cao, 2020). Among them, Hakka is a unique ethnic subgroup and one important branch of the Han nationality in China (Li & Lu, 2024). During Tang and Song dynasties, Hakka people migrated from the central areas of China to remote mountainous areas in the south. During Ming and Qing dynasties, they began to immigrate

overseas. At present, Hakka people are distributed across nearly 20 provinces in China as well as approximately 80 countries and regions in the world such as southeast Asia, north America, Europe, and Africa (Phiranawong, et al, 2026; Li & Lu, 2024).

Hakka culture is not only a regional culture but also an important component of traditional Chinese culture encompassing multiple ethnic groups. Originating from Huaxia culture and culture of the central areas, Hakka culture retains the mainstream characteristics of central areas while assimilating the cultural essence of local minority groups (Luo, 1992). Hakka culture, as a quintessential representation of regional culture and an integral part of Chinese culture, is characterized by its unique style, long history, wide distribution, and profound influence. Multicultural development through Learning cultural knowledge requires both diversification and localization (Wei & Li, 2009). Therefore, within the framework of intercultural communication competence, this study intends to conduct a quantitative survey on teaching the local minor Hakka cultural knowledge in English class across different educational levels. The study selected Guangdong Province, the main area of Hakka settlement in southern China (Klein, 2021), to explore how Hakka culture is taught in local English class, which makes an indicator of multicultural development in classroom contexts.

Literature Review

Intercultural communication competence and its research

Intercultural communication competence (ICC) is a complex conceptual system and a set of comprehensive skills with multiple competencies and techniques. More of its research has focused on conceptual interpretations and various models (Cong-Lem, 2025; Wang & Wang, 2025). For example, Cong-lem (2025) defines ICC as “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in multi-cultural contexts by utilizing a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to navigate cultural differences”. Schenker (2012, p. 450) regards ICC as “the ability to function effectively within one’s own culture as well as others, and to engage in meaningful interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds”. Although they have interpreted ICC in various ways, most researchers share a basic consensus that cultural knowledge is the fundamental component and prerequisite for ICC (Wu et al, 2013). Table 1 below shows that cultural knowledge is considered to be one common component of ICC by many researchers and serves as the foundation for the other dimensions of ICC (Liu & Shan, 2017). Cultural knowledge also constitutes the basic content and primary pedagogy of teaching culture in English class and is also the main goal of this study. Without learning and understanding the basic knowledge of intercultural communication, other dimensions of intercultural communicative competence—such as skill, attitude, awareness, and even behavior—are difficult to develop and master (Hu, 2013).

Table 1 Components of ICC

Researchers	Components of ICC
Canale & Swain 1980	grammar, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategies
Kim 1991	cognition, affect, behavior
Pedersen 1994	awareness, cultural knowledge , skill
Lustig & Koester 1996	cultural knowledge , motivation, behavior
Byman, 1997	cultural knowledge , attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction and critical cultural awareness
Byram, 2020	Empathy and intercultural attitudes, cultural knowledge , skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness
Gudykunst 2004	cultural knowledge , motivation, skill
Hofstede, 2001	power distance, individualism vs collectivism, masculinity vs femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term vs short-time orientation, indulgence vs restraint
Bennett 2004	ethnocentric stages, ethnorelative stages, intercultural sensitivity
Deardorff, 2006	attitudes such as respect, openness and curiosity; knowledge of cultural awareness, self-awareness, sociolinguistic awareness, skills of listening, observation, analysis and interpretation
Behrand, 2011	cultural knowledge , skills, awareness, attitudes
Gu, 2017	attitude, cultural knowledge , skill
Liu & Shan, 2017	cultural knowledge , skill, affect, behavior
Hu, 2013	cognition, affect (attitude), behavior
Yang & Zhuang, 2007	global awareness, cultural adaptation, cultural knowledge , communicative practices

Researchers believe that cultural knowledge of ICC should encompass both the target language culture and the native language culture (Lyu & Yu, 2021). Whether it is the target language culture

or the native language culture, the concept is rather broad, constituting an all-encompassing and complex system (Zhou et al, 2024; Yang & Zhuang, 2007). Therefore, in practice, imparting cultural knowledge poses considerable challenges in both teaching

and research. As shown in Table 2 below, researchers differ from each other in their understandings of cultural knowledge. It is thus necessary to clarify what it is and what it comprises in order to determine what to teach and what to research (Cao, 2020). This is an essential prerequisite and an important foundation for teaching and researching native language culture in English class. Based on the literature, the present study selected aspects of local language

culture, in this case, Hakka culture that are closely related to students from high schools to universities: i.e. local Hakka cuisine, traditional Hakka folk houses, Hakka folk arts, Hakka historical figures and Hakka traditional values. These serve as the five dimensions for the first part of the questionnaire in this study (Klein, 2021; Zhou & Wang, 2021).

Table 2 Cultural knowledge and its dimensions

Researchers	Categories	Cultural knowledge and its dimensions
Byram & Zarate, 1994	/	Background information of one's own culture, the foreign culture being studied, including cultural, social, historical and linguistic knowledge
Byram, 1997	/	Knowledge of social groups, their practices, products and interactional processes
Deardorff, 2006	/	knowledge of cultural awareness, self-awareness, sociolinguistic awareness
Yang & Zhuang, 2007	Uppercase C Culture	Literature, arts, music, architecture, philosophy
	Lowercase c culture	Customs, life habits, daily routines, social norms, interrelationships etc.
Wu et al, 2013	/	History and geography, society and politics, protocols and religions, daily life and values
Gu, 2017	/	Customs, religions, history and geography, values and norms
Xiao, 2019	/	Values and norms, customs and traditions, literature and arts
Lyu & Yu, 2021	Culture in its broad sense	Material life, social institutions, customs, values and norms
	Culture in its narrow sense	Literature and art, language, history and geography, education and technology

Review shows that research primarily covers such major areas as conceptual models along with its validation (Byram, 1997, 2021; Zembylas, 2023; Long, 2021; Song & Xia, 2020; Munezane, 2019), classroom teaching and instructional materials (Wei & Banegas, 2026; Liang et al, 2025; Qin, 2024; Delante, 2020) and the latest trend of AI impacts (Sun, 2025; Sanwari et al, 2024; Liu et al, 2023). Among these, conceptual models and validation have been a common research focus while research on multicultural teaching especially in relation to sub-ethnic group such as Hakka culture are scarce (Cong-Lem, 2025; Zhou & Perinpasingam, 2024). In terms of research methods, the multicultural research has evolved from theoretical articles to empirical studies and more quantitative research in recent years (Zuo, 2025; Guillen-Yparrea & Ramirez-Montoya, 2023). Regarding data collection, qualitative research mostly employs observation methods, case studies, and interviews, with samples being generally small and lacking generalizability (Yu & Yu, 2024; Simpson et al, 2022; Delante, 2020; Ware, 2013). Then in quantitative research, many surveys using questionnaires have utilized or adapted existing scales and the contextual fitness of these scales remains questionable (Liu & Lee, 2025; Wang & Wang, 2025; Munezane, 2021; Shi & Shan, 2016).

Hakka culture and its research

Hakka (客家) refers to a group of Han Chinese who migrated from the north to the south of China between the fourth and fourteenth centuries. Most Hakka people live in south China such as Guangdong province and Hakka populations also scatter in southeast Asian countries like Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore and also worldwide, including the United States, Canada, and

Australia (Phiranawong et al, 2026). Hakka culture is not only a regional culture but also an integral part of China's traditional culture. It is often hailed as a "living fossil" of ancient Chinese culture (Luo, 1992). The study of Hakka culture has undergone three main stages: the "Sub-ethnic Theory," (民系论) the "Clan Theory," (族群论) and the "Culture Theory" (文化论). Hakka culture encompasses specific cultural phenomena such as Hakka dialects, Hakka folk customs, Hakka cuisine, Hakka architecture, Hakka literature and music, notable Hakka figures, and Hakka traditional values (Zhou & Wang, 2021).

Literature shows that research of Hakka culture mainly cover such areas as the origin and history of Hakka culture (Luo, 1992; Sofield et al, 2024; Li et al, 2024; Klein, 2021; Lin & Lee, 2020; Tao et al, 2017; Erbaugh, 2009), Hakka identity (Wong, 2021), Hakka dialect (Phiranawong et al, 2026; Kloter & Bartsch, 2025; Wu, 2024; Chen & Tsai, 2022; Zou, 2020; Chang & Liao, 2017), Hakka cuisine (Kawai, 2022), Hakka architecture (Chen et al, 2025; Porretta et al, 2022) and Hakka folk music (Bender, 2017). Obviously, the research focuses more on Hakka origin and dialect. So far little empirical research, neither qualitative nor quantitative, has been conducted on the teaching of Hakka culture, let alone on teaching Hakka culture in English class.

Research of cultural studies and Hakka culture in Chinese

Considering the fact that Hakka culture has been rooted in China, it is necessary to take into account the research of both Hakka culture and cultural studies in its home country. In terms of cultural studies in Chinese, most of them are non-empirical studies featuring theoretical analyses, concepts and policy interpretation while

empirical research is very limited (Zhong & Zheng, 2026; Jiang, 2025; Zhou et al, 2024; Duan & Wang, 2021; Zhou & Wang, 2021; Zheng, 2020). Among the few empirical research in Chinese, many surveys are flawed with weak interpretation. For example, the operational concepts of culture are often insufficiently defined. Some are overly simplistic in that culture was defined as the ability of "whether one can translate Chinese idioms" or "whether one can use Chinese proverbs and sayings" (Xu, 2018). In other cases, the concept of "Chinese cultural knowledge" was defined as three all-embracing general terms of "knowledge of history, geography, society, and politics," "knowledge of social etiquette, religious culture," and "knowledge of lifestyles and values" (Wu et al., 2013). Furthermore, Research designs are often not very rigorous. Some studies were supported by insufficient textual data of only two sentences from student interviews (Yang & Zhao, 2018) or simple calculation of merely percentages (Zhang, 2014).

In similar vein, the research of Hakka culture in Chinese mainly covers these areas of history and identities (Jiang, 2025; Guo, 2025; Yang & Yang, 2021), AI-supported cultural heritage (Ye & Liu, 2025); transmission and translation of Hakka culture (Iyu, 2023), Hakka architecture (Hong, 2023), Hakka dialect (Ma & Zeng, 2023), local cuisine (Dai, 2022), tourism (Huang et al, 2025) and many others. However, research on the teaching of Hakka culture is scarce. The scant research on the teaching of Hakka culture is characterized mainly by articles of general concepts and discussion and none of them is empirical study (Liu & Zhu, 2021; Zhao, 2022). Researchers believe that empirical studies with rigorous research design and survey methods are more powerful and scientific in investigating research questions and interpreting practical problems with stronger generalization and explanatory power. (Chen, 2021)

Overall, multicultural development requires both language learning and cultural learning. It must encompass both the target language culture (English) and, more importantly, the local language culture of learners (in this case, Hakka culture). The connotation of culture is broad and this study selects aspects of Hakka culture that are closely related to daily life and familiar with the learners such as daily cuisine. In terms of cultural studies and Hakka culture research, empirical studies are notably lacking and quantitative studies on teaching native language culture, in this case, the regional Hakka culture, in English class are even scant. The limited research in the relevant fields has been challenged with numerous problems such as over-generalized operational definitions of culture, less rigorous research designs, small sample sizes, very basic statistical analyses and thus weaker explanatory power.

Therefore, to explore how Hakka culture is taught and learned in English class, the present study develops a questionnaire tailored to the local English teaching context and the regional native Hakka culture to investigate English learners across various educational levels in Guangdong province, which is one of the main settlements of Hakka people in China. Statistical methods such as factor analysis and t-test, ANOVA, multiple linear regression are employed to explore the relationships between variables and to establish a model. Thus, the present study is guided by the following three research questions:

1. What aspects of Hakka culture are taught in English class and how frequently?
2. How do students perceive the teaching of Hakka culture in English class?
3. In the process of teaching Hakka culture in English class,

what factors influence students' learning?

The study

Contexts and participants

To investigate how Hakka culture is taught and learned in English class, the present study investigated students from high schools to universities in Guangdong province. Guangdong province has been one of the main settlements of Hakka people, including Meizhou, Heyuan, Huizhou, Shaoguan, Shenzhen and Guangzhou, with Meizhou being the "World Capital of Hakka People". Among over 80 million Hakka people around the world, about 25 million Hakka people live in Guangdong province and it is estimated that the Hakka population in Guangdong province has increased to about 38-40 million by 2025 (Ke, 2014).

As a result, the present study targeted at students in the Hakka areas in Guangdong province where Hakka people mainly settle and live, including Meizhou, Huizhou, Heyuan and Guangzhou. A total of 412 students from junior high schools, senior high schools and universities in these areas were surveyed. Among the participants, 153 were male and 259 were female; 155 were junior high school students, 154 were senior high school students, and 103 were university students.

Instruments

To tailor to the specific context of teaching Hakka culture in English class in areas of Hakka settlement, the present study designed and developed a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of two sections: the first section explored the teaching of Hakka culture in English class at the local schools and universities, and the second section surveyed students' attitudes towards the teaching of Hakka culture in English class.

The first section of the questionnaire has a total of 22 items framed in 5 dimensions. These items refer to different aspects of Hakka culture. Researchers hold that teaching one's native culture should start with learning common things of one's daily life and that the teaching should be embedded in real-life contexts (Xiao, 2019). Therefore, this study initially selected over 90 cultural keywords across 8 categories of Hakka culture from previous literature (Pan Shijian, 2016; Song Dejian, 2014). Subsequently, local Hakka people in Meizhou were randomly sampled to further refine the keywords. Ultimately, 5 dimensions of 22 items were retained. These five dimensions are: daily cuisine, folk houses, folk arts, historical figures, and traditional values. In particular, daily cuisine includes 7 items: rock-salt baked chicken, stuffed Tofu, *Mei Cai Kou Rou* (braised pork belly with preserved mustard greens), Hakka *Niangjiu* chicken (stewed Chicken in fermented rice), braised pork, sweet rice cake, and immortal grass jelly; folk houses include 4 items: Square Weilong Houses, Earthen Fortress Buildings, Weilongwu Houses, and Quadrilateral Corner Towers; folk arts comprise 4 items: Hakka mountain songs, Hakka nursery rhymes, Lion Dance, and Dragon Dance; historical figures involve 3 items: Ye Jianying (叶剑英), Huang Zunxian (黄遵宪), and Tin Kaping (田家炳); traditional values incorporate 4 items: ancestor worship and gratitude, reverence for education and emphasis on farming and reading, industriousness and perseverance, and pioneering and initiative.

The 22 items were examined in two ways to serve two purposes: one purpose to investigate whether students know the local Hakka culture. This part used a 2-point scale, where 1 indicated "Yes" and

2 indicated "No". The second purpose was to investigate the teaching of Hakka culture in English class. It employed a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 to 5 represented "Never," "Occasionally," "Sometimes," "Often," and "Always" respectively. Table 3 below shows the reliability of section 1. The Cronbach's alpha values of the two parts and the whole section 1 were 0.822, 0.947, and 0.904, all larger than 0.60, indicating excellent reliability for the first section of the questionnaire in the present study.

Table 3: Results of reliability of teaching of Hakka culture in English class

Section 1 Teaching Hakka culture in English class	Cronbach α values
1.1 Whether students know the local Hakka culture	0.822
1.2 Teaching Hakka culture in English class	0.947
The overall section 1	0.904

The second section of the questionnaire centered on students' attitudes. Section 2 of the attitude scale was structured within the theoretical framework of the three-dimensional model of attitude. Researchers (Zhang and Campbell, 2011) hold that attitude comprises three components—*affect*, *behavior*, and *cognition*, which interact and impact each other. Based on literature review and the teaching practices in English class, the present study developed three dimensions of 28 items to examine students' attitudes towards teaching Hakka culture in English class (Zhao Congshan, 2020; Wei Xiaodong, 2019). Among them, the dimension of affective attitude encompassed students' views, opinions, and evaluations regarding teaching Hakka culture in

English class. For example, item 1 reads "I am interested in talking about Hakka culture in English," item 2: "I believe it is important to learn to talk about Hakka culture in English." Then the dimension of contextual perception referred to students' perceptions, awareness, and judgments of the contexts of teaching Hakka culture in English class. For example, item 3 reads "There is much content about Hakka culture in the English textbook I use". Finally, the dimension of learning behavior referred to students' actions and activities related to Hakka culture in English class. For example, item 14: "I have read English books about Hakka culture". Section 2 of the questionnaire also used a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 to 5 represented "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Neither Disagree Nor Agree," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree," respectively.

To test the reliability and validity of section 2 of the attitude survey, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), reliability analysis, and validity analysis were conducted. First, exploratory factor analysis was performed using the varimax rotation method. Items with factor loadings below 0.50, or with loadings above 0.50 on two factors, were removed. After five rounds of iteration and convergence, items that did not meet the factor extraction criteria were deleted. Ultimately, 16 items were retained and three dimensions with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted, which explained 66.12% of the scale variance. As shown in Table 4, the factor loadings of all retained items were above 0.60 > 0.40, indicating that the extracted factors could comprehensively explain the content of the scale and that the scale was validly structured. The three extracted factors were: affective attitude of 9 items (Items 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12); contextual perception, of 3 items (Items 3, 4, 7); and learning behavior of 4 items (Items 13, 14, 15, 16). Therefore, after factor analysis, the final attitude scale consisted of three dimensions and 16 items.

Table 4: Results of exploratory factor analysis of attitude survey

Variables	Items	Components			Convarience
		1	2	3	
Affective attitude	A1	0.690			0.529
	A2	0.744			0.590
	A3	0.808			0.658
	A4	0.857			0.747
	A5	0.844			0.735
	A6	0.701			0.518
	A7	0.763			0.654
	A8	0.754			0.671
	A9	0.703			0.564
Contextual cognition	B1			0.835	0.782
	B2			0.701	0.635
	B3			0.807	0.752
Intentional behavior	C1		0.651		0.658
	C2		0.759		0.681
	C3		0.823		0.723
	C4		0.790		0.683
Percentage of Variance Explained by Each Component/Factor		39.921	19.450	6.749	
Cumulative Percentage of Variance Explained		33.715	50.629	66.120	

Then the reliability test of section 2 of the attitude survey was conducted. Table 5 below shows that its overall Cronbach's α

coefficient was $0.894 > 0.6$, and the Cronbach's α coefficients of its three dimensions were all above 0.8, indicating excellent reliability of section 2 of the questionnaire.

Table 5: Results of reliability of section 2 of attitude survey

Components	Cronbach's α coefficients	Items
Affective attitude	0.917	9
Contextual cognition	0.832	3
Intentional behavior	0.837	4
The overall section 2	0.894	16

Finally, validity analysis was conducted. Table 6 below lists the data. The KMO value was $0.908 > 0.7$, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded a significant p-value of 0.000, indicating very high validity of the sample data.

Table 6. Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test of section 2 of attitude survey

KMO		0.908
	Chi-Square	3667.401
	df	120
	p	0.000

Given the literature and data presented above, the questionnaire employed in this study proved to be both reliable and valid in that it is well validated by both conceptual framework in the literature and empirical data of the survey. Researchers believe that the scientific nature of the research instrument, the measurement reliability of the questionnaire, and the objectivity of the respondents when completing the questionnaire contribute to ensuring the validity and interpretability of research findings (Shi & Shan, 2016).

To ensure that participants across the three educational levels can understand all the items in the questionnaire, the questionnaire was written in their native language of Chinese.

Data Collection and Analysis

Questionnaires were distributed both online and on site to collect the data. A pilot study was conducted and collected 75 questionnaires. After factor analysis and reliability and validity tests of the data of the pilot study, revisions were made to develop the final version of the formal questionnaires. Then a total of 500 questionnaires were distributed, with 451 questionnaires completed. Among them, 412 were valid, with a high response rate of 91.35%.

To explore the research questions, descriptive analyses, t-test and ANOVA were conducted to examine the teaching of Hakka culture in English class in section 1. In terms of section 2 on attitude survey, one-sample t-test and regression analysis were performed to reveal students' attitudes towards teaching Hakka culture in English class.

Results

Survey of teaching Hakka Culture in English Class

Results of descriptive statistical analyses of students' knowledge of Hakka Culture

Figure 1 below lists the data of descriptive statistical analyses. Students who claimed to know Hakka culture accounted for only 19.40% of the total participants. This indicated that students at high schools and universities in areas of Hakka settlement had a very low level of knowledge of the local Hakka culture. Among the five dimensions of Hakka culture, students showed the highest level of knowledge in folk houses (33.52%) while the lowest in daily cuisine (11.42%).

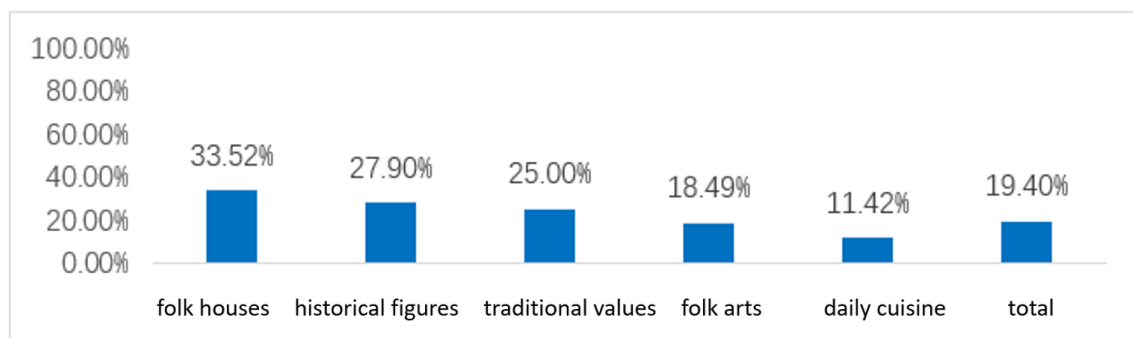


Figure 1 Students' knowledge of Hakka Culture

Results of t-test of teaching Hakka culture in English Class

T-test was conducted to explore the frequency of teaching Hakka culture in English class. Figure 2 shows that the overall mean value is 1.98, indicating that Hakka culture was only "occasionally" taught in English class. Regarding the five dimensions of Hakka culture, the teaching of traditional values had the highest mean of

2.05 while that of daily cuisine had the lowest mean of 1.63. Given scales 1 and 2 of the 5-point Likert scales representing "never" and "occasionally", these means between 2.05 and 1.63 indicated that the five common aspects of Hakka culture had been either "occasionally" taught or had "never" been taught in English class. The results of t-test revealed the low frequency of teaching local Hakka culture in English class at schools and universities in the areas of Hakka settlement.

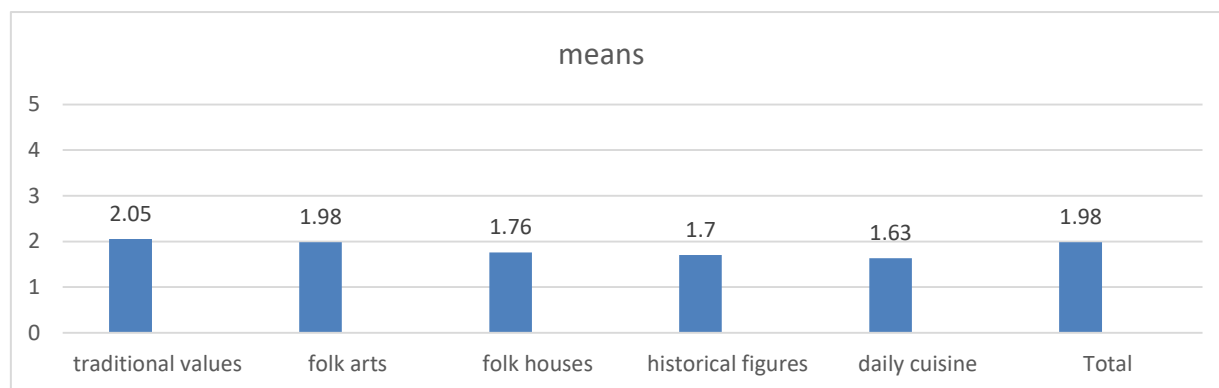


Figure 2 Means of frequency of teaching Hakka Culture in English Class

Results of ANOVA of teaching Hakka culture in English Class across different educational stages

To Further explore the teaching of Hakka culture in English class, ANOVA was conducted to examine the differences of frequency across the three educational levels. According to data in Table 7, the mean differences of folk houses, folk arts and historical figures among junior, senior high schools and universities reached a significant p value of $0.000 < 0.005$, indicating teaching these three

aspects of Hakka culture in English class were significantly different across the three educational levels. In particular, the means of junior high schools were significantly lower than the other two levels, suggesting that these three aspects of Hakka culture, i.e., folk houses, folk arts and historical figures, were less frequently taught at junior high schools than at senior high schools and universities. As to daily cuisine and traditional values, their means were not significantly different, with p values of 0.588 and 0.143 both exceeding 0.005. It meant the fact that daily cuisine and traditional values were rarely taught in English class was similar across the three educational levels.

Table 7 Results of ANOVA of differences across the three educational levels

Descriptive statistic					ANOVA	
	Levels	N	Means	SD	F	Sig. (p)
Daily cuisine	Junior high	155	1.599	0.767	0.533	0.588
	Senior high	154	1.686	0.782		
	University	103	1.622	0.734		
Folk houses	Junior high	155	1.581	0.702	8.057	0.000***
	Senior high	154	1.920	0.796		
	University	103	1.794	0.751		
Folk arts	Junior high	155	1.758	0.763	8.748	0.000***
	Senior high	154	2.144	0.962		
	University	103	2.074	0.801		
Historical figures	Junior high	155	1.441	0.667	13.210	0.000***
	Senior high	154	1.777	0.950		
	University	103	1.977	0.941		
Traditional values	Junior high	155	1.944	0.862	1.951	0.143
	Senior high	154	2.164	1.098		
	University	103	2.078	0.988		

Note: *** for $p < 0.001$; ** for $p < 0.01$, * for $0.01 < p < 0.05$

Results of attitude survey

Results of t-test of the three components of the attitude survey

Section 2 of the questionnaire examined students' attitudes towards teaching Hakka culture in English class. Data were listed in table 8 below. Results showed that the means of the three components— affective attitude, contextual perception, and learning behavior— were significantly different. Among them, the mean of affective attitude (3.8397) was the highest, indicating that students were largely inclined to learn Hakka culture in English. Then the means of contextual perception and learning behavior were 2.7397 and 2.7536, suggesting students' attitudes were somewhere between “disagree” and “neither disagree nor agree”. The results indicated that while students were basically interested in learning Hakka

culture in English, they were not satisfied with the contexts and the situations of teaching and learning Hakka culture in English class.

Table 8 Results of t-test of the three components of the attitude survey

Components	Means	Sig.
Affective attitude	3.8397	0.00
Contextual perception	2.7397	0.00
learning behavior	2.7536	0.00

Regression analysis

1) Multicollinearity and Residual Analysis

The tolerance for affective attitude and contextual perception is 0.905; the variance inflation factor (VIF) between variables is $1.105 < 5$, indicating minimal multicollinearity and no high correlation among the independent variables and making them all possible to predict the dependent variable independently.

2) Correlation Analysis of the three components of attitude survey

Results of Pearson correlation analysis showed that affective attitude and contextual perception had a significant positive correlation with learning behavior at the 99% confidence level. Specifically affective attitude was positively correlated with learning behavior ($r = 0.276, p = 0.000 < 0.05$), and contextual perception was positively correlated with learning behavior ($r = 0.615, p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, affective attitude and contextual perception were selected for regression analysis on learning behavior to further explore their relationships.

3) Linear Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression was performed with the independent variables of affective attitude (X_1) and contextual perception (X_2) and the dependent variable learning behavior (Y). The model is as follows:

$$Q(Y) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Table 9 below listed the data of model fit. Results showed that the R^2 of the model was $0.387 > 0.3$, indicating that in present study, 38.7% of the variance in learning behavior could be explained by affective attitude and contextual perception. The F-value is 128.578 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), suggesting a linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The Durbin-Watson statistic was $1.963 < 2$, indicating no strong correlation among the independent variables. These results suggested that the model had a good fit.

Table 9 Model Fit Statistic

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.	Durbin-Watson
0.622*	0.387	0.384	128.578	0.000	1.963

Table 10 below showed that $\beta_0 = 0.830$, $\beta_1 = 0.116$, and $\beta_2 = 0.539$. A multiple linear regression model was established to represent the impact of affective attitude and contextual perception on the learning behavior: $Y = 0.83 + 0.116 X_1 + 0.539 X_2$. The results indicated that in this study, contextual perception had the greatest impact on learning behavior, followed by affective attitude. In other words, for each one-unit increase in contextual perception, learning behavior increases by an average of 0.539 unit; for each one-unit increase in affective attitude, learning behavior increases by an average of 0.116 unit.

Table 10 Results of regression analyses

Model	Regression coefficients	T	Sig. (p)
Constant factor (α)	0.830	4.374	0.000***
Affective attitude	0.116	2.354	0.019**
Contextual perception	0.539	14.368	0.000***

Note: *** for $p < 0.001$; ** for $p < 0.01$, * for $0.01 < p < 0.05$

Discussion and implication

So far results of the questionnaires have led to the following findings: 1) participants of the study had very limited knowledge about the local Hakka culture and Hakka culture was rarely taught in English class across different educational levels, indicating the absence of the participants' native culture in English class; 2) Among different aspects of Hakka culture, folk houses, folk arts and historical figures were less frequently taught in English class at junior high schools than senior high schools and universities; 3) The attitude survey discovered that participants largely held a positive attitude towards Hakka culture in English class while they were not satisfied with the teaching conditions and learning contexts. 4) The results of the multiple linear regression analysis established the following model: contextual perception has the greatest impact on students' learning behavior ($\beta = 0.539$), followed by affective attitude ($\beta = 0.116$).

These findings will be discussed in relation to previous studies and more importantly to classroom practices of teaching Hakka culture in English class in its home country. Previous studies have found that the absence of one's native culture in English class is quite common (Peltonen & Ning, 2025; Fang et al, 2022; Delante, 2020; Zhang Shan, 2017; Xu Xiuxia, 2018; Liu Yanhong et al., 2015). Similarly, this study also finds the native Hakka culture of the participants had seldom been taught in the local English class. Even though integrating the native culture in English teaching and learning is clearly stated and required by national curriculum and guidelines of English education and proposed by theorists and experts (Zhang Hongling, 2012), it has not been fully implemented in classroom practices. Then how can native culture, including local ethnic culture and regional culture, be effectively integrated in English teaching and learning?

To this end, teaching one's native culture in English class should begin with teaching and learning the daily routines of the learners in English, which result from various aspects of the local culture, either sub-ethnic or regional culture. For example, the daily food and drink of local Hakka people such as rock-salt baked chicken, stuffed Tofu and stewed chicken in fermented sticky rice; the traditional folk houses where local Hakka people have lived for hundreds of years such as Weilongwu of round earthen buildings. These contents feature the lowercase "c" culture that are embedded into life experiences of ordinary Hakka people (Yang & Zhuang, 2007). Such contents of native culture should be integrated in learning materials like English textbooks at all levels and most importantly should be actually taught and learned in English class. Selection of these contents should be grounded in the local contexts of cultural and historical heritage to facilitate learning the native culture and to preserve its unique characteristics. In this way, learners might be more emotionally attached to their native culture and cultural roots and better empowered to learn their native culture in English (Lyu & Ding, 2019). Researchers have found that the actual contents being taught and learnt in classrooms make up one of the main factors leading to the reduced motivation of students to learn English (Su & Chi, 2018). Thus, the present study holds that instructional contents of diverse topic areas of native culture and multiple pedagogies that are closely related to students' lives are likely to promote its learning in ICC and English education (Huang, 2022). Blending the learning of native culture in learners' real-life experiences is believed to foster their sense of

identity and their emotional connections with their native culture. Only then can students be inspired to truly love their native culture and to actively learn it with other languages and eventually be capable of proper cross-cultural communication, leading to multicultural development (Xiao, 2019).

Furthermore, teaching local minor culture should traverse across different school years. It may begin from as early as the lower grades at junior high school and continue across senior high school into university (Lyu & Ding, 2019). At different educational levels, instructional materials should be differentiated with distinct learning goals, contents and difficulty, progressing step by step to teach native culture in English (Chang & Zhao, 2012). In this regard, contrasting previous literature featuring limited empirical studies supported by statistic data (Cong-Lem, 2025; Zhou et al, 2024), the present study found that in senior high school and at university, more abstract themes such as folk houses, folk arts, and historical figures were taught in English class more frequently than at junior high schools. However, the other two aspects of daily cuisine and traditional values saw no significant differences across the three levels, with daily cuisine regarded as more fundamental and more closely related to real life experiences of participants while traditional values as more abstract themes. These confusing findings may indicate that various dimensions of Hakka culture had been randomly selected and taught in English class in the local areas. Although it is difficult to refer the findings to previous literature due to the lack of similar studies, the classroom teaching revealed by the present study might not align with the rules of language learning and cultural learning or suit the cognitive needs of learners of different ages across the three educational levels (Lyu & Ding, 2019). Researchers hold that as learners proceed from lower to higher grades, teaching native culture in English class should advance from more concrete and tangible contents closely related to daily life to more abstract and theoretical domains such as values and ideologies (Chang & Zhao, 2012). Contrary to theoretical propositions by theorists and experts, the present study found mixed results in English class across different educational levels, indicating the distance from policies and theories to classroom practices. Researchers think that classroom teaching in practices requires further empirical investigation and analyses to promote the fitness of instructional contents to different educational levels and the learning effects of students (Huang, 2022).

Although Hakka culture was rarely taught in English class, the present study found that learners were largely positive about learning their native culture in English class (3.8397/5). Among the limited existing literature, Lü and Ding (2019) had similar findings: students had high expectations for traditional culture courses (7.59/10), indicating that traditional culture is appealing for students. Chang and Zhao (2012), in their action research, found that students used to hold a passive and negative attitude towards cultural learning and then changed their attitudes after one year of study, with approximately 93% of students approved learning culture in class. Previous studies also identified factors influencing students' attitudes towards ICC teaching, which include merging ICC teaching with language teaching and application of student-centered approach (Chang Xiaomei and Zhao Yushan, 2012). On contrary, the present study found that students' affective attitudes, together with their perceptions of the teaching contexts, played a role in impacting students' learning behavior. In other words, whether students take interests in learning their native culture and how much resource and scaffolding they obtain from the teaching

contexts are vital for students and will impact their learning in English class. Given the limited number of empirical studies in the field to echo similar findings, the researcher holds that the model supported by statistic data of the present study align with the common understanding and theories of cultural learning and English education (Wang, 2018). Both policies and theories need to be implemented in classroom practices however advanced they are and empirical studies substantiated by statistic data need to be conducted to examine the implementation of policies and theories in practices and to be generalized to other educational contexts.

Conclusion

Previous literature shows fewer empirical studies, especially research investigating the learning of local culture such as Hakka culture in English class (Cong-Lem, 2025). This study employed questionnaires for quantitative survey. The scale was designed and developed to fit the particular contexts and demonstrated high reliability and validity, which in turn enhanced the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

In addressing multicultural development for language learners across different educational levels, more extensive and specific empirical studies are needed to provide substantial data to formulate appropriate teaching goals and select contents tailored to students' needs at different educational levels. Rather than solely depending on conceptual frameworks, further empirical studies may also serve to examine the implementation and fitness of policies and theories in classroom practices and to align them with the emotional and cognitive needs of students of different ages. In addition, given students' interests in and expectations of learning their native culture in English class across all levels, it is necessary to provide students with adequate resources and scaffolding. For example, teachers may be encouraged to integrate more local culture in English class. English textbooks may comprise more contents of local culture at different levels, together with a wide variety of extracurricular reading materials and more extracurricular activities to bring forth better cultural development in the process of language learning. (Zheng, 2018; Chen, 2019).

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亲爱的同学：

你好！感谢参与本次关于客家文化融入英语课堂的研究。此调查问卷共有两个部分：第一部分为客家文化融入英语课堂的现状调查；第二部分为学生对客家文化融入英语课堂的态度调查。本次问卷调查为匿名调查，我们承诺，此问卷所有数据仅用于学术研究，无隐私泄露风险，不会对你造成任何不利影响。

题目选项无对错之分，你的真诚帮助将为我们的分析研究提供重要信息，请根据实际情况作答，再次感谢你的参与和支持！

个人信息

- 1.你的性别是（ ） A.男 B.女
- 2.你所在的学校是_____（请填写全称）
- 3.你所在的年级是_____（如：初一、高一、大一）

正式问卷**一 客家文化融入英语课堂的现状调查**

本部分旨在调查客家文化融入英语课堂的现状，共有22个题目。请从每个题目中，选出一个与自己实际情况最相符的选项，并勾选对应数字。如果有其他内容，请在“其他”一栏补充。

客家文化相关主题		你了解这些内容吗		这些内容在英语课上出现的频率				
		1=了解	2=不了解	1从不	2偶尔	3有时	4经常	5总是
客家 饮食	1.盐焗鸡	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	2.酿豆腐	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	3.梅菜扣肉	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	4.娘酒鸡	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	5.红烧猪肉	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	6.甜粿	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	7.仙人粿	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	其他：							
民居 建筑	8.方形围屋	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	9.土围楼	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	10.围龙屋	1	2	1	2	3	4	5

客家文化相关主题		你了解这些内容吗		这些内容在英语课上出现的频率				
		1=了解	2=不了解	1从不	2偶尔	3有时	4经常	5总是
	11.四角楼	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	其他：							
客家 艺术	12.客家山歌	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	13.客家童谣	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	14.舞狮	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	15.舞龙	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	其他：							
客家 名人	16.叶剑英	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	17.黄遵宪	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	18.田家炳	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	其他：							
客家 精神	19.崇先报本	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	20.崇文重教，耕读传家	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	21.吃苦耐劳，艰苦奋斗	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	22.开拓进取，锐意进取	1	2	1	2	3	4	5
	其他：							

二 客家文化融入英语课堂中的态度调查

本部分问卷旨在调查受试如何看待客家文化融入英语课堂，共有16个题目。请仔细阅读每个题目，在选项①-⑤中勾选最符合自身实际情况的选项：①非常反对；②反对；③既不反对也不赞同；④赞同；⑤非常赞同。

1. 我对使用英语表达客家文化感兴趣。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
2. 我认为学习使用英语表达客家文化很重要。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
3. 我使用的英语教材中，涉及客家文化方面的信息很多。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
4. 英语课堂中会对客家文化进行讲解。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
5. 我认为学习使用英语表达客家文化，对促进英语学习很有帮助。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
6. 我认为开设专门的课程来学习用英语表达客家文化很有必要。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
7. 在课外，我能够很容易地获得有关客家文化的英文课外读物。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤

8. 如果我能用英语表达客家文化，我会感到很自豪。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
9. 我愿意用英语向世界传播客家文化。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
10. 我愿意努力学习客家文化的英语表达。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
11. 如果在英语课堂上出现客家文化内容，我会更积极上课。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
12. 我愿意积极参加客家文化主题的各种英语活动。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
13. 我上过关于客家文化英语表达的课。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
14. 我阅读过客家文化相关的英语课外读物或观看过相关英语视频。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
15. 我向老师请教过客家文化相关英语表达。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
16. 我在课外曾使用英语介绍客家文化。	① ② ③ ④ ⑤