

## Original Research Article

# Intersubjective Communication in Higher Education between China and the B&R Countries: A Perspective of Cultural Transmission

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**Abstract:** Intersubjective communication refers to the interactive communication between subjects for mutual understanding, identification, and solutions to the problems. The objectives of this research were to explore the procedures of cultural transmission by studying intersubjective communication in higher education between China and “Belt and Road” countries. The researcher adopted semi-interview with 13 participants and analyzed through MAXQDA software (V. 2020) and text analysis based on Yuri M. Lotman’s dialogue. The major finding indicated that intersubjective communication in higher education between China and “Belt and Road” countries works through contact and selection, internalization and integration, and transmission.

**Keywords:** intersubjective communication; higher education; Belt and Road; cultural transmission.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Intersubjective Communication (IC) refers to the interactive communication between subjects for mutual understanding, identification, and solutions to the problems. In September 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward the “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI), also known as the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and the “21st-Century Maritime Silk Road” (Ume, 2018). Higher education is not only an important part of the BRI and the promotion of people-to-people bonds but also solid support for the common construction, consultation, and sharing of the BRI (Li, Lin, & Liu, 2019). The support to human resource development in the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation Virgin Islands can be found under many projects. However, the overall center remains higher education (Kenneth, 2020). On October 13, 2023, the fourth “Belt and Road” (B&R) International Conference on Higher Education Research was held in Qingdao. More than one hundred scholars conducted academic exchanges on educational policy, cultivating talents, and higher educational cooperation (China Association of Higher Education, 2023).

The B&R construction promotes higher education’ cultural communication, brings the new opportunity for higher education to absorb the different cultures, and promotes the common prosperity and different civilizations. Because of more than 150 B&R

countries do not understand each other completely, there are even misunderstandings among them. It will need to communicate with Chinese culture to promote communication and deepening understanding in the B&R countries to dissolve the misunderstanding. The world is becoming cultural diversity, and the competition between B&R countries in culture and core values are becoming increasingly fierce. Therefore, how strengthening cultural transmission in higher education between China and the B&R countries is a major problem to be solved urgently. This research mainly focuses on two questions: (1) What are the stages of intersubjective communications in higher education between China and the B&R countries? (2) How does intersubjective communication work in higher education between China and the B&R countries?

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Yuri M. Lotman borrowed some idea of dialogue from Mikhail Bakhtin. Bakhtin proposed the famous idea of dialogue in the book *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (Bakhtin, 1992). The process of dialogue includes three stages from the ‘receiving’ side (Lotman, 1990):

The text coming in from the addressor keeps strangeness. It is read in the foreign language. It holds a high place on the scale of values and is regarded as true,

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beautiful, and divine (Gibson, 2003). Both principles - the imported texts from a sender and the internal culture of receiver - restructure each other. The codes imported with the texts become a part of the metalingual structure. (2) A trend develops to search within the imported world view a higher content. The ideas were realized in an untrue, confused or distorted form, in the center of the receiving culture they will find their true and natural heartland. The culture which first transmitted these texts falls out of favour and the national features of the texts will be emphasized. The imported texts are entirely immersed in the receiving culture; the culture starts quickly to generate a new text; the new text is founded on cultural codes that in the past was stimulated by occupation from outside but which now has been completely transformed through lots of asymmetrical transformations into a new and original structural mode. (3) At the last stage, the receiving culture, which now occupies the general centre of the semiosphere, changes into a transmitting culture and sends texts directed to others.

In all, IC in higher education between China and the B&R countries from the perspective of cultural transmission is based on three stages of dialogue of Lotman. The process in IC in higher education has three stages, namely, contact and selection, internalization and integration, and transmission.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research method

Methodologically, this research employs a qualitative research design underpinned by semi-structured interview with MAXQDA software (V. 2020) and textual analysis. The objects of this research were administrators in public and private higher education between China and the B&R countries including 13 participants in Russia, Laos, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, China, Israel, and Belarus. The type of higher education was divided into research-based, applied, and vocational. The selection of the participant was based on several criteria as follows. The 13 participants were chosen arbitrarily in higher education in China and the B&R countries. The reason for selecting them was to ensure that they have direct and sufficient experiences that can be used to explain the phenomenon concerning the research questions, so the sample is representative. No real names of the participants are used for confidentiality and ethical considerations. Each participant was coded with "Interviewee+number". Semi-structured interviews with 3 research questions were conducted with 13 typical participants including face-to-face interview and adopting from the *Interview of international education cooperation under the background of B&R* to explore their opinions on procedures of IC lasting half an hour. The information of 13 interviewees is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1: The Information of Interviewees**

Interviewee	Position	Location
Interviewee 1	Vice Director of Moscow State Normal University	Russia
Interviewee 2	Laos Ambassador to China	Laos
Interviewee 3	Former Thai Ambassador to China	Thailand
Interviewee 4	Philippine Ambassador to China	Philippines
Interviewee 5	Vice Director of University Malaysia Pahang	Malaysia
Interviewee 6	Director of UNESCO Association of Gansu	China
Interviewee 7	Director of Tel Aviv University	Israel
Interviewee 8	Director of Belarusian State University	Belarus
Interviewee 9	Director of Belarusian State Technical University	Belarus
Interviewee 10	Director of the Belarusian State University of Economics	Belarus
Interviewee 11	Director of the Federal University of Kondebaltic	Russia
Interviewee 12	Director of Hespanachon University	Thailand
Interviewee 13	Director of Confucius Institute Chulalongkorn	Thailand

Textual analysis of this research followed a further systematic investigation. To optimize the validity of the results, the data were obtained in two ways: First, the policy document of Ministry of Education (MoE) was obtained. In the public section of the home page of the MoE, the columns of important documents were ensured. In addition, some texts are collected in Yidaiyilu website. All the texts are credible because of scientific sources.

#### 3.2 Data collection

Data collection has two aspects including interview and the text. Data collection about interview through face to face, telephone and email by

interviewing experts in higher education in China and B&R countries. First, the researcher consulted the interviewee about record before face to face, or telephone and email interview. Second, the researcher transcribed the record into written words. In the first step of the interview, the researcher attempted to provide a comfortable and free interactive environment for the respondents (Yukiko et al., 2021). An online Tencent meeting was used in this research. Each interview took about 30 minutes. After completing the interviews, the transcripts were exported and then the code was conducted. In addition, some interview material adopted

from the book *Interview of International Education Cooperation under the Background of B&R*.

The texts were collected between October, 2022 and June, 2023. As Smith (2017) noted, the standard methodological process of text analysis is to propose a research question that can be tested. The text selection follows the principle: the source of the text is researcheritative. To select reasonable and convincing texts, the two types of texts selected in this study are all official texts issued or published in public. The platforms are official, legal, and credible. Finally, all the texts related to this study were selected through searching, screening, and categorizing, the texts were selected for textual analysis.

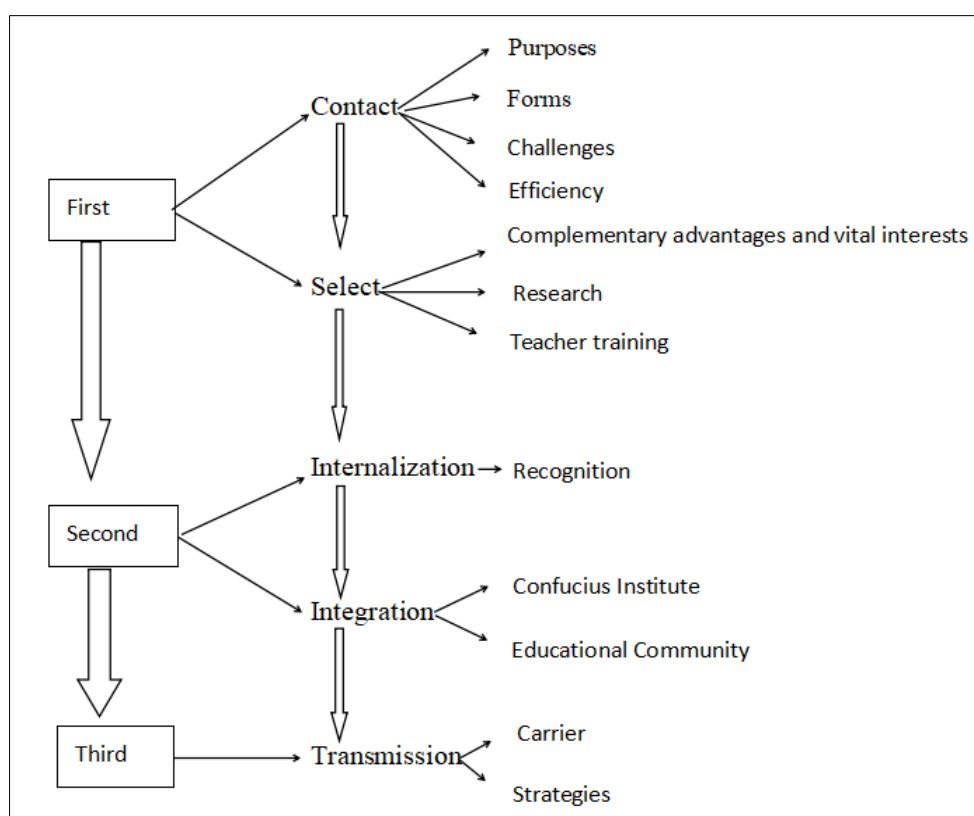
### 3.3 Data analysis

Data analysis is a circular and recursive process. The researcher repeatedly read the text, deeply analyzed the data, extracted the theme by combining top-down and bottom-up methods, encode, and then selected representative interview fragments as supporting material. Each transcript was read repeatedly. Codes have been explained as tags or labels. The codes of transcripts in the research

including the data of interview and text were checked and matched to combined answers and reactions from participants. Last, analyzed the relation of data with the research questions through MAXQDA software and found the results.

## 4. RESULTS

According to the first research question: the stages of IC in higher education between China and the B&R countries, the result indicated that it includes contact and selection, internalization and integration, and transmission. According to the second research question: how does intersubjective communication work in higher education between China and the B&R countries? It is demonstrated in Figure 1. including three sections. First, higher education will consider contact purpose, forms, challenges, efficiency, complementary advantages and vital interests. Second, higher education will consider recognition, Confucius Institute and educational community in central stage. Last, higher education will consider carrier and strategies of transmission in the last stage.



**Figure 1: Three Procedures in Intersubjective Communication**

The first interview question sought to explore the initial stage of intersubjective communication in higher education between China and the B&R countries. The result indicated that contact and selection is the first stage of IC between higher education in China and the B&R countries. There are four forms of contact, and according

to the challenges in the contact, the strategies will be given. The forms of contact in higher education between China and the B&R countries have an education of foreign students, foreign exchanges, internationalization of teachers, and international cooperation. It is elaborated in Table 2.

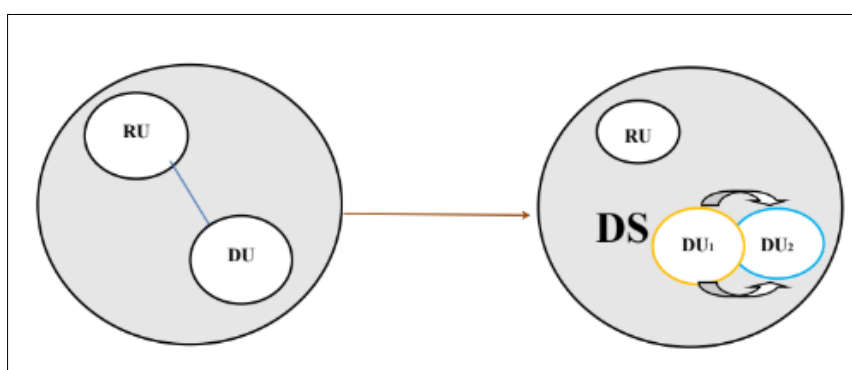
**Table 2: The Forms of Contact**

The form of international cooperation	Detail
Education of foreign students	Recruit international students (for degree)
	Recruit short international students (academic visit, advanced study)
	Receiving international internship
Foreign exchanges	Students study abroad
	Overseas non-degree course
	Overseas internship
	Teachers and students visit each other
	International meeting
Internationalization of teachers	Teachers training abroad
	Introducing foreign teachers
International cooperation	Project/research cooperation
	cooperation with foreign company
	Running a school in cooperation

There are some challenges on contact to be solved such as superficial contact, language, and efficiency problems. Two strategies are based on the challenges of contact. First, the forms of Chinese culture promotion should continue to innovate and diversify and cultivate talents with minor language. Second, sincere, positive communication and coordination and more staff could solve the low efficiency.

There are many factors that affected selection. In this stage, the addressee selects relevant knowledge and

experience in the newly constructed Umwelt to make preparations for transmitting his message. The process is illustrated in Figure 2. Due to cognitive and cultural differences between individuals, the addresser's text cannot immediately be integrated into the addressee's Umwelt when it arrives. Thus, the addressee selects, classifies, and reconstructs the text actively. The addressee assimilates the external text to enrich his cognitive structure.



**Figure 2: The Construction Process in the Diplomatic Semiosphere**

DS: Diplomatic Semiosphere (Addressee), RU: Reporter's Umwelt (Addresser)  
DU: Diplomat's Umwelt (DU1: Original Umwelt; DU2: Reconstructed Umwelt)

Many reasons exist for selecting partners in higher education. Academic factors are also important factors for higher education to choose partners. Strong academic brand and learning from each other's frontier disciplines to develop their disciplines or related disciplines integration; Excellent teaching staff and strong management team, but many colleges and universities are faced with the shortage of excellent teachers and management teams, therefore,

strengthening teacher training is an urgent problem to be solved; Policy is an indispensable factor in the selection of colleges and universities, therefore, relevant departments should make policies that are conducive to both sides of the selection; In addition, the selection criteria also related to the convenience of transportation, culture, and political environment.

The second interview question tried to explore the central stage of intersubjective communication in higher education between China and the B&R countries. The result indicated that internalization and integration is the central stage of IC. The mutual recognition of higher education diplomas and degrees is the precondition of IC. The mutual recognition of higher education diplomas and degrees can effectively promote the cross-border flow of higher education and regulate all kinds of cross-border higher education activities, which is a major institutional issue related to the smooth development of cross-border higher education activities. Mutual recognition of academic qualifications is needed before internalization of academic qualifications. Chinese government should actively establish credit mutual recognition institutions through cooperation mechanisms at the national level, implement regional credit mutual recognition mechanisms, and establish a

credit mutual recognition framework covering all research institutes in the region. The transparency of quality certification and credit mutual recognition should be enhanced by integrating rich higher education resources in the region through credit mutual recognition.

Since December 2020, twenty five B&R countries have realized mutual recognition of higher education diplomas with China (Wang & Shang, 2022). Table 3 illustrates it. Mutual recognition agreement for academic degree provides more opportunities and greater support for Chinese students to study in the B&R countries, and further optimizes the study abroad pattern in China, and alleviates the phenomenon of excessive Europeanism in receiving places to some extent. The institutional barriers of mutual recognition of higher education degrees should be broken.

**Table 3: The B&R Countries with Mutual Recognition of Academic Degrees**

Area	Country
East Asia	Mongolia
South Asia	Sri Lanka
West Asia	Cyprus
Southeast Asia	Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia
Central Asia	Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia
Eastern Asia	Poland, Estonia, Bulgaria, Czech, Lithuania, Hungary, Romania, Latvia
Middle East	Egypt
European Commonwealth of Independent States	Russia, Belarus, Ukraine

The B&R educational community provides a platform for the integration of higher education in China and B&R countries. China has always emphasized harmony but difference, concerted effort, and cooperation, proposing the world belonging to all. Although different higher education in the B&R countries has different cultures, they live in harmony and treat each other equally. Different colleges and universities coexist in harmony and complement each other.

It should be achieved through the coordination of educational policies between China and B&R countries. Such coordination can be realized by providing advice and policy consultation to B&R countries, establishing framework agreements for educational communication and mutual recognition of dual and joint degrees, simplifying visa application process, and setting up platforms for communication. (Central Committee and State Council, 2019).



The B&R educational community provides a platform for equal dialogue among higher education in the B&R countries. The educational community has its strict requirements, which include the following aspects: First of all, members of the educational community share weal and woe. In other words, they gain each other's internal trust, moral care, and emotional concern through intersubjective communication, and members gain confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth experience in intersubjective communication. Such intersubjective communication is continuous, and members form the value of association with the community and their responsibility for the community. Secondly, the educational community means security, belonging, freedom, and comfort to its members. Simultaneously, being a member of the community means the acquisition of qualifications, equal rights, and inevitable dependence; Thirdly, the educational community is not only a learning community for knowledge acquisition and ability development but also a living community in which members depend on and benefit each other. One of the important functions and goals of the educational community is to form a "harmonious life" among its members. Fourthly, the educational community always means publicity. However, this kind of publicity does not exclude private interests and private life.

The third interview question sought to explore the last stage of IC in higher education between China and the B&R countries. The result indicated that Transmission is the last stage in IC between China and the B&R countries in one semiosphere. However, it is the first stage in another semiosphere. During the transmission stage, the addressee transforms his role in the communication and starts to transmit information. After the previous two stages of contact and selection, internalization and integration, the addressee has already thought of an appropriate reply.

International students as a carrier of cultural transmission. Since the 21st century, studying abroad has become the trend of the world. Not only Chinese students go abroad to study, but also foreign students come to study in China. The number of overseas students increases year by year. These students from different cultures learn and communicate with each other, opening up infinite cultural space and educational space, and creating a richer cultural variety. In the future, the world's culture will be more prosperous because of foreign students.

The IC of higher education in the B&R countries is not blind communication but needs to master the strategies of cultural communication. It includes at least three aspects: the communication strategy based on the university alliance, the practice platform of win-win cooperation, and the choice of appropriate network media communication.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The three stages (Contact and selection, internalization and integration, and transmission) of IC in higher education between China and the B&R countries are based on Yuri M. Lotman's dialogue. How do three stages work are discussed below.

### 5.1 Contact and selection in intersubjective communication

Contact in higher education involves cultural conflicts, which determine a minimal and fragmentary mutual influence. During the contact, the text is transmitted to the addressee's semiosphere but still keeps its original appearance. After the addresser's text arrives at the addressee's Umwelt, he begins to construct the external information actively and renew his Umwelt (Lotman, 1990). The construction process is active and involved rather than passive.

The purpose of contact in higher education between China and Thailand, interviewee 3 (former Thai ambassador to China) proposed: "First, to encourage student exchange and inter-school programs; Second, to increase exchange programs for teachers and researchers; Third, jointly hold academic activities and professional summer camps; Fourth, international colleges can be jointly established". Interviewee 2 (Laos ambassador to China) expressed that "Soochow University is not only the first institution of higher learning established by China overseas but also the first foreign university approved by the Lao government. This once again confirms the traditional friendship between the two countries".

The forms of contact in higher education between China and the B&R countries have education of foreign students, foreign exchanges, internationalization of teachers, and international cooperation. Interviewee 1, 6, 10, and 11 discussed education of foreign students with 3 facets with recruiting international students (for degree), recruiting short international students and receiving international internship; Interviewee 2, 7 and 3 said the foreign exchanges with 5 aspects including students studying abroad, overseas non-degree course, overseas internship, teachers and students visiting each other, and international meeting; Interviewee 4, 12 and 13 interview expounded internationalization of teachers with 2 points comprising teachers training abroad and introducing foreign teachers; and interviewee 5, 8, and 9 elaborated international cooperation with 3 sections from project cooperation, cooperation with foreign company and running a school in cooperation. It demonstrated in Table 2 above.

There are some challenges on contact to be solved such as superficial contact, language, and efficiency problems. The first challenge in contact between China and the B&R countries is superficial. The text of MoE is following:

*Some projects seem to exist primarily on paper and may not result in much more than good intentions and one or two discussion meetings every year. The number of initiatives by stakeholders poses a challenge to the Chinese government in terms of coordination and efficient use of resources (MoE, 2016).*

Interviewee 4 (Philippine ambassador to China) also proved superficial contact between China and Philippines:

*Some Filipino students go to China to study, but overall, the number of international students is small. When I attend the forum on China-Asean relations held by Peking University. Many students from ASEAN countries attended, but only one or two students from the Philippines.*

Except for the superficial contact, language and culture is a great challenge for China and the B&R countries. There are five interviewees who put forward language, but some differences exist. Interviewee 8 (the Director of Belarusian State University) said: "The obstacle to cooperation is lacking the talents who know the Chinese language and culture, but the problem is temporary. The University's Department of Oriental Languages is studying the establishment of a national Chinese language school in Belarus." Interviewee 10 (the Director of the Belarusian State University of Economics in Belarus) recognized: "Our university has established a development relationship with Hexi University in Gansu Province. To improve the quality of educational services for learning Chinese language and culture, we have opened a Confucius Research Center." Interviewee 9 (the Director of Belarusian State Technical University) thought: "the success of scientific and technological cooperation meetings and negotiations depends on the quality of translation. Practice shows that engineers who are proficient in Belarusian and Chinese technical languages are very important and scarce."

In addition, interviewee 12 (the Director of Hespanachon University) indicated efficiency: "in terms of cooperation between the two countries, efficiency is the biggest problem due to different cultures." At last, interviewee 6 (Philippine ambassador to China) emphasized the efficiency of visas. Because of the low efficiency of visas, international students can not get to the university timely. Regarding the strategy for low efficiency, interviewee 12 (The president of Hespanachon University) indicated that as long as both sides are sincere, positive communication and coordination, problems can always be solved. For the ambassador's low efficiency of visa, more ambassadors should be nominated.

There are many factors for higher education to select partners, such as complementary advantages and vital interests. The IC among higher education is accompanied by cultural exchanges and mutual learning of civilizations, which will surely give birth to new

relations of interests and help build the B&R. China and Russia have different resources and cultures, and respect for differences is the premise and basis of high-level intersubjective exchanges between China and Russia. Just as interviewee 1 said in Moscow State Normal University in Russia: "higher education of China and Russia have been increasingly in cooperation. Nearly 1,000 cooperation agreements have been signed between the higher education of the two countries and more than 100 programs of cooperative schools have been set up."

Academic factors are also important factors for higher education to choose partners. For example, interviewee 5 (the Vice President of University Malaysia Pahang) in choosing Xiamen University in China opened a branch school in Malaysia because of: Xiamen University has a strong academic brand in frontier disciplines. We hope that Xiamen University in Malaysia will continue to leverage the strengths of these disciplines in the future, create healthy competition and cooperation with Malaysian higher education, and provide more options for Malaysian students. Interviewee 7 (the Director of Tel Aviv University in Israel) had the following understanding of selecting a partner: "the academic research at Tel Aviv University is focused on fostering interdisciplinary research. What universities do is to set up research centers that bring together researchers from different fields to develop new perceptions and approaches that are beneficial to society."

Teacher training is the most important factor to select the higher education as the partner. Teacher training is a significant basic project for the construction of the Luban Workshop. From 2018 to 2019, a total of 5 teachers from Luban Workshop in Djibouti went to Tianjin Railway Vocational and Technical College for a 4-month teacher training. Aiman, a teacher in Djibouti, said, "I want to bring the knowledge and skills to my country. Now I have learned back to Djibouti and make greater contributions to the development of the railway in Djibouti" (Zhao, 2022). Interviewee 13 (the Director of Confucius Institute Chulalongkorn in Thailand) put forward: "excellent teaching resources were the most scarce at the Confucius Institute of Chulalongkorn University in Thailand."

## **5.2 Internalization and integration in intersubjective communication**

### **5.2.1 Internalization**

The reason why the addressee's Umwelt can internalize the addresser's text is that the text has the function of memory, which builds a communication bridge between two Umwelts (Lotman, 1990). Mutual recognition of academic qualifications is needed before internalization of academic qualifications. International mutual recognition of academic qualifications means that an institution of higher education in a country accepts an applicant for further study at an institution of higher education in a foreign country by recognizing that the

applicant has studied and obtained academic qualifications, including courses, qualifications, diplomas, and degrees. Zhu (2016) proposed to sign international conventions on bilateral, multilateral and regional educational cooperation and exchange, gradually unblock the joint granting of educational cooperation and exchange policies and degrees, and jointly promote the building of an educational community.

Interviewee 6 (the Director of the UNESCO Association of Gansu Province) said: “three Confucius Institutes and several Confucius classrooms in Kyrgyzstan are jointly built by higher education in Xinjiang. Through educational cooperation, the development concept of the B&R can be accepted and internalized by the people in B&R countries.”

Interviewee 2 and 10 indicated that establishing mutual recognition system of higher education qualifications is an important factor in the legalization of regional education cooperation, which affects the flow of international students and the acquisition of learning and employment opportunities. Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in 2011 states, recognition by a higher education qualification awarded by another country has various uses, including further higher education study, using academic titles, and gaining the chance of employment (UNESCO, 2011). Therefore, improving the mutual recognition system of higher education qualifications is an urgent task of China and the B&R countries to fulfill the community responsibility.

### 5.2.2 Integration

At the integration stage, the external text has been completely internalized by the addressee. Under the influence of the newly constructed text, by talking to himself, many new texts are generated in the addressee's Umwelt. It is of vital significance for the addressee to talk to himself and internalize what has already happened in the dialogue, trying to make some adjustments in his next reply during the IC process. The process of the addressee's auto-communication reconstructs his text by making contact with his original text. In this process, the addressee's speaking ability will be improved through deep reflection (Lotman, 1990).

IC between higher education promoting cultural integration. In the process of studying in China, many international students are confronted with cross-cultural adaptation problems such as different languages, cultures, and customs, which require them to adjust themselves as well as guidance and help from the outside. Chinese teachers abroad have also promoted the integration of Chinese into the B&R countries. Just like the text said by Sun (2022) from Yidaiyilu website:

*Song Jie, Director of the Confucius Institute of Maha Salakan University of Thailand, Lin Haoye, Chinses Director of the Confucius Institute of Maha Salakan*

*University of Thailand, 5 public teachers, and 12 volunteers of international Chinese teachers attended the training. Song Jie welcomed the volunteers to come to Thailand and stressed that the Confucius Institute of Maha Salakan University of Thailand has distinctive characteristics.*

Interviewee 12 (the Confucius Institute of Panakon University) considered:

*The Confucius Institute and the Royal University of Panakon influence and integrate as a part of each other, but are independent. The Confucius Institute became a functional department of the Institute of Development of the Royal University of Panakon but was financially independent of each other. Confucius Institute offers language courses to the Royal University of Panakon and scholarships (master and doctor) to students who wish to study in China. Students benefit most from the cooperation process. Exchange students from Dali University who come to the Royal University of Panakhon can go to the Thai Embassy as an intern to lay the foundation for their future work. Experience the excellent culture of Thailand and make friends from different countries.*

In all, IC in Confucius Institute promoting cultural integration between China and Thailand.

When speaking of the educational community, it refers to the people who influence and are affected by a certain educational context (Gallardo-López & López-Noguero, 2020). “An educational community of shared future” asserts a romantic form of regionalism—no borders, no general rules, and yet mutually beneficial. Educational community construction is not to establish a unified model, on the contrary, the existence of sovereign countries or different cultures is the premise. Xin and Kan (2018) believed that the B&R higher education community is a significant part of the human community with a shared future. Interviewee 6 pointed out that since the BRI was put forward, China has actively cooperated with the B&R countries to build a community of higher education, and achieved obvious results. As an important part of the BRI, China needs to improve its communication mechanism and steadily promote education policy communication with B&R countries. Interviewee 11 and 13 pointed out that in the community cooperative relationships can keep both sides independent, promote both sides to combine their advantages, build a unified goal and expectation, and establish a cooperative relationship of mutual trust. Interviewee 5 pointed out that the formation of the education community needs dialogue and support.

China promotes the BRI and is committed to building an educational community with B&R countries. In the opinion of interviewee 11 (the Director of the Federal University of Kondebaltic, Russia): “Russia has established long-term cooperation mechanisms with many colleges and universities and social organizations



in China to ensure the long-term and effective flow of talents.”

In all, both “common development” and “interactive development” point out that the collective development right pursued by the educational community has reciprocal benefits, which accords with the spirit of mutual benefit and win-win cooperation emphasized by the community of a shared future for mankind. One of the salient features of the right to development is its interactivity, which affects other rights (Jiang, 2018). This interaction is not only reflected in the mutual benefit between countries in the community but also reflected in the driving role of education in other fields of development. It should be noted that the interaction of collective development rights should also emphasize the common but differentiated responsibilities within an educational community.

### 5.3 Transmission in intersubjective communication

#### 5.3.1 International students as a carrier of cultural transmission

In recent years, there has been a wave of studying abroad in China. Compared foreign higher education with more excellent resources than China, more and more Chinese students choose to study abroad. These international students show Chinese culture in various ways, which is an important channel for foreigners to understand Chinese culture. Interviewee 12 (Confucius Institute of Panachon University in Thailand) said about international students’ transmission: “the international students at the Confucius Institute of Panachon University in Thailand spread Chinese tea culture, drama culture, paper-cutting culture, food culture, and shuttlecock culture through WeChat public account, Xinhua News Agency, *People’s Daily* Online, Facebook, and YouTube.”

The charm of Chinese art has deeply attracted international students. They absorb the essence of traditional Chinese art and simultaneously take root in their cultural soil. In terms of cultural transmission, Xue (2018) said, internationalization of local higher education benefits not only their development but also the spread of Chinese excellent culture. During the epidemic time, the international students of the Guzheng major at Beijing Language and Culture University not only completed the learning content but also held the online concert of “Chinese Zither Five Continents Tour”. The concert received a good response, which not only demonstrated the mission of international youth but also strengthened the determination of people around the world to protest the pandemic. The overseas edition of *People’s Daily* specially reported the concert (China Education Association for International Exchange, 2021).

Through the practice of training courses, Donghua University takes “self-achievement, resource-sharing and green development” as the guidance of the curriculum setting concept. The team published multi-language textbooks and books for the lack of teaching materials for the B&R training of the textile industry. He published *Research on Textile Cultural Heritage of Countries along the Belt and Road* (West Asia volume) and published the English version of *Cotton Science and Processing Technology* in cooperation with an internationally renowned publishing institution Springer (China Education Association for International Exchange, 2021).

Spreading culture is the main path in teaching, and only by loading culture into effective carriers can it effectively convey, which is also related to the teaching of foreign students. Interviewee 13 said that only when international students accept Chinese culture and are actively willing to spread Chinese culture, can the purpose of “going out” of Chinese culture be realized, and enhance China’s cultural soft power.

#### 5.3.2 The strategies of cultural transmission in the B&R countries

First, the transmission strategy is based on the university alliance. Trust and interactive justice refer to the degree to which individuals perceive that they are respected, which is a significant psychological factor affecting the effect of alliance cooperation. Only by strengthening the institutional constraints and gradually cultivating the cultural consciousness of alliance members can the alliance develop to a higher quality, which is also the basic requirement for education to promote people-to-people communication. Interviewee 4 said that non-governmental organizations as unofficial forces should actively cooperate with the construction of the B&R and promote the spread of Chinese culture in B&R countries. Through the direct transmission of Chinese culture through non-governmental organizations, China’s ideas of peace, openness, and inclusiveness are conveyed to the B&R countries. Interviewee 1 said that holding a seminar on the “Culture of B&R” is a way of transmitting culture. The school has unique conditions, such as an academic lecture hall in hardware and deep cultural accumulation in software, where various advanced ideas and innovative ideas can be exchanged and collided.

Second, build a practical platform for win-win cooperation. Interviewee 6 indicated that actively promote the construction of a digital museum and B&R culture exchange platform, build an electronic network information platform, and fulfill the role of the Internet. The establishment of the Institute of Maritime Silk at Huaqiao University provides a high-end platform for teachers and students to exchange and gather consensus on the study of B&R, aiming at building an influential think tank on Maritime Silk. The key to strengthening cooperation in education and culture and improving the

cultural exchanges and cooperation platform of the B&R lies in exploring, carrying forward, and spreading the spirit and culture of the B&R.

Third, choose the right network media to communicate. 6 interviewees mentioned network media in transmission. Teachers should focus on the content related to the B&R culture. They can collect relevant videos of the B&R culture through the Internet. For example, in the 2018 Spring Festival Gala, the Silk Road Landscape Map was displayed, which geographically ranged from Jiayuguan Pass to Tianfang (Mecca in Saudi Arabia), causing a great response. The dance "Silk Road Bloom" takes the Buddha statue in the Mogao Grottoes of Dunhuang as the prototype, choreographers the representative fingers of the Buddha into a dance, perfectly combines ancient art with modern art, and reproduces the cultural features of the ancient Silk Road. All these can be used as media for foreign cultural teaching.

To expand the influence of the B&R culture in the ideological and political education of higher education through the Internet, China must use of all kinds of material and spiritual resources of the B&R culture, and build a website for the study of B&R culture with great appeal. First of all, China should strengthen the construction of the content of the B&R website. To establish a website for the study of the culture of B&R, the following requirements should be met: the learning function of the content of the theory of the B&R spirit; The display function of the spirit and material form of B&R; The function of online appreciation of the spiritual works of the B&R; Communication and interaction function. In addition, set up a forum or post-bar, so that visitors can express their understanding of learning, exchange ideas and confusion, and explore the value of life.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Based on five stages in Yuri M. Lotman's Dialogue, this research employs a qualitative research design underpinned by textual analysis and semi-structured interview. According to the first research question of the procedures of IC in higher education between China and the B&R countries, the major finding is IC in higher education between China and the B&R countries works through contact and selection, internalization and integration, and transmission. According to the second research question how do the procedures work, the major findings have three sections. Higher education will consider contact purpose, forms, challenges, efficiency, complementary advantages and vital interests, research, and teacher training initial stage. Higher education will consider recognition, Confucius Institute and educational community in central stage. Higher education will consider carrier and strategies of transmission in the last stage.

According to the previous discussion and results, this research provides two implications. First, the higher education department in China needs to strengthen the top-level design and strategic deployment to make a good higher education policy planning that is compatible with the B&R strategy. China should draw lessons from previous higher educational communication in the B&R countries, constantly improve the ways of educational communication and form new ways of educational communication that match the B&R strategy. Second, Optimize IC in higher education. Improving quality management, developing digital education and IT application in higher education, and conducting risk assessments could optimize IC in higher education between China and the B&R countries. However, this research is far from perfect and there still exists some to discover in the future study. First, the limited sample size is one limitation of this research. For future studies, more participants could be invited and make the research more authentic. Second, this research only involves the analysis of linguistic items in the diplomatic events in higher education, which do play a great role in IC. However, non-linguistic factors, such as gestures, interruptions, and expressions are also dramatically important during IC.

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