

Research on the Challenges, Strategies and Optimization Paths of Cultivating Cross Cultural Communication Competence in International Chinese Education

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Abstract: *As a tool for communication, dissemination, learning, and social development between people, the main purpose of learning a foreign language is to engage in cross-cultural communication. As an ancient civilization in the world, China has a very long cultural system. For foreign learners, it is difficult to deeply understand Chinese culture. Therefore, cultural teaching should be highly valued in international Chinese education, and cultural factors should be cleverly integrated into it. This article reviews the relevant literature on international Chinese education and intercultural communication competence, summarizes its concepts and framework, and points out the future development direction - integrating Chinese language teaching with Chinese literature and culture, implementing diversified teaching models to meet the new development needs at home and abroad.*

Keywords: International Chinese Education, Cross cultural communication, Chinese culture.

1. Introduction

The relationship between culture and language is complementary. In the process of international Chinese education, teachers often face foreign learners with different cultural backgrounds, which may lead to a very tricky problem - cultural conflicts. If not handled properly, the relationship between teachers and learners will deteriorate, which will greatly affect the smooth implementation of the teaching process. The basic mission of international Chinese education is to eliminate language and cultural barriers, enabling people from different countries and regions to cooperate and communicate more easily, reducing prejudice and misunderstandings, and deepening mutual understanding and consensus. However, in the field of international Chinese education, our attention to the cultural literacy of teachers is often insufficient. Therefore, we need to make improving learners' cross-cultural communication skills the main goal of cultural teaching. At present, the research on how to cultivate cross-cultural communication skills in the industry is not comprehensive enough. Faced with this situation, educators should first change their teaching concepts and adopt a "cultural integration" strategy to help learners learn Chinese better.

2. Concept of Intercultural Communication Competence

Cross cultural communication refers to the oral communication of communicators from different cultural backgrounds using the same language (mother tongue or target language) in specific communication situations. This is a common phenomenon that has existed since ancient times. Any communication between two people is cross-cultural communication. In the research of cross-cultural communication, we should first focus on national research and study the dominant culture of a country. It was first proposed by American anthropologist Edward Hall in 1959.

In Silent Language, he proposed that learners with different cultural backgrounds are actually dealing with the relationship between communication and culture when conducting cross-cultural communication. Therefore, when teaching Chinese to foreign learners, teachers should focus on improving learners' cross-cultural communication ability. Hu Wenzhong [1] proposed that intercultural communication competence refers to the ability to effectively interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. Its cultivation is not solely based on classroom teaching, but can be combined with other humanities disciplines such as politics, history, and geography. Cui Yonghua [2] proposed that intercultural communication competence is a comprehensive ability. Fu Mimi [3] believes that intercultural communication competence is a very complex concept. It mainly includes language, socio-cultural, and psychological factors. The ultimate goal of learning a language is to engage in effective cross-cultural communication. Li Zhi [4] believes that intercultural communication competence can be decomposed into a "trinity" structure consisting of knowledge and ideas, knowledge and information, skills and adaptability, such as knowledge, motivation and skills in communication. Hu Wenzhong and Gao Yihong [5] believe that the purpose of cross-cultural communication is to strengthen understanding between different cultures. Zhao Jingli [6] believes that cross-cultural communication is the exchange between people who speak different languages and have cultural differences. In the process of communication, both parties use the same language, whether it is one party's native language or a third party's language that both parties understand together, that is, a common language. Li Meiying and Wu Guanghui [7] believe that intercultural communication competence is the development and cultivation of human rationality. Leng Lin [8] believes that intercultural communication competence is a combination of knowledge and consciousness. Hofstede [9] also proposed the cultural dimensions of collectivism and individualism. Samovar [10] believes that intercultural communication competence is composed of three dimensions

of competence: motivation, knowledge, and ability.

In summary, although different scholars have certain differences in the definition of intercultural communication competence, it is generally consistent. It can be summarized as the ability of educators to flexibly apply cross-cultural knowledge to solve teaching problems during teaching.

3. Research Framework for Intercultural Communication Competence

3.1 The Significance of Cultivating Cross-cultural Communication Skills

3.1.1 Spread and promote Chinese culture

Chinese culture has a long and profound history. Wu Weishan [11] believes that spreading Chinese culture not only enhances the world's understanding of China, but also contributes China's strength to the world. In the process of its dissemination, educators with excellent cross-cultural communication skills can to some extent avoid cultural conflicts, culture is inclusive, and respecting the culture of other countries can better spread and promote Chinese culture. In the process of international Chinese education, learners' interest and liking for the language are crucial. It can greatly enhance learners' learning motivation, making the teaching process flexible and easy, and greatly promoting the development of international Chinese education.

3.1.2 Promoting International Relations

At present, the foundation of friendly relations between countries is cultural exchange. When we learn to appreciate and accept cultural differences between different countries, we can better resolve differences and conflicts between nations. By improving cross-cultural communication skills, we can break down existing biases and misunderstandings, strengthen international cooperation, and promote the common development and prosperity of countries around the world. Only by understanding and respecting the culture of other countries can we establish genuine diplomacy and cooperation in the international community.

3.1.3 Establishing the Image of China

In the process of international Chinese education, teachers will come into contact with many foreign learners who are not familiar with China. At this time, teachers play the role of "Chinese business cards", and learners can understand China through their daily words and actions. Therefore, having good cross-cultural communication skills is extremely important. Teachers can respect and understand the cultures of various countries in the world with the attitude of "embracing all rivers, being tolerant is great", tell Chinese stories well, spread Chinese voices, and thus establish the image of a civilized great country.

3.2 Cultivation of Cross Cultural Communication Skills

3.2.1 Strengthen awareness and learn theory

In the process of conducting international Chinese education,

educators often face learners with very complex backgrounds, most of whom have their own languages, cultures, customs, and habits. Sometimes, cultural conflicts may arise due to these factors. Therefore, cross-cultural communication skills play a crucial role in second language teaching. Teachers should strengthen their awareness of intercultural communication, continuously learn intercultural communication theories, enhance cultural sensitivity, broaden their horizons, and understand cultural differences between different countries. At the same time, in the process of this practice, Liu Hongjuan [12] believes that we can use the Internet platform to watch excellent cross-cultural communication videos to get inspiration, and we can also learn about local customs through communication in our daily interactions with learners.

3.2.2 Adhere to an open and inclusive attitude

When learners encounter cultural conflicts during the process of learning Chinese, it often reduces their interest in learning and even leads to resistance. At this time, educators should skillfully handle cultural conflicts and analyze the fundamental reasons for this phenomenon. A good learning environment is very important. We should maintain an open and inclusive attitude towards different cultures, and not classify them into different levels. Chinese international teaching is essentially a great integration of cultures. At this point, educators play a crucial role as coordinators to guide learners towards harmonious coexistence.

3.2.3 Mastering strategies and actively communicating

Cross cultural communication strategies are skills summarized through repeated practice, mainly including reasonable expectations, identifying cultural differences, developing empathy, understanding the other party's culture, seeking common ground while reserving differences, weakening cultural conflicts, and learning from each other's strengths and weaknesses. At the same time, try to avoid stereotypes: do not make judgments about the entire cultural group based on the behavior or opinions of individuals. Culture is diverse and has internal differences. When learners discuss politically sensitive topics during the teaching process, the teacher can first avoid them appropriately and then engage in in-depth discussions with the learners after the teaching is over.

4. Issues Arising in the Cultivation of Cross-cultural Communication Skills

4.1 Unclear Concept Definition and Unclear Talent Cultivation Goals

At present, the definition of intercultural communication competence is relatively vague, lacking specific evaluation criteria, training programs, theoretical frameworks, etc. Overemphasizing foreign language learning and neglecting the cultivation of cross-cultural competence. In terms of curriculum, many schools allocate approximately 50% or more of their course time to foreign languages, while cultural courses account for about 20%. These data indicate an excessive emphasis on foreign languages and a neglect of cross-cultural communication.

4.2 Neglecting the Importance of Practice in the Teaching Process

In cross-cultural communication courses, most educators attach great importance to the theoretical knowledge taught, usually explaining theoretical knowledge or imparting experience in the classroom, thus lacking understanding of the practical needs of learners. Learners only have a preliminary understanding of cross-cultural knowledge, but they do not know how to apply this knowledge in the process of cross-cultural communication, let alone develop their own cross-cultural communication skills. Therefore, educators should carefully consider how to connect theory with practice in the teaching process, rather than passive acceptance of abstract and obscure cross-cultural theoretical knowledge by learners.

4.3 Lack of Professional Flexibility in Textbook Writing

At present, the textbooks for the course of intercultural communication are relatively single and lack many targeted teaching cases. Compared with other second language educators, the development of cross-cultural competence among international Chinese language educators has certain particularities. Due to their unique international background, Chinese culture, and traditional customs, they face different cross-cultural issues. Wang Yunan [13] believes that case-based teaching method can transform listening, speaking, reading, and writing into communicative competence. Therefore, educators can enhance their cross-cultural communication skills through case studies. Cui Xiliang [14] believes that he has a global perspective in textbook development, curriculum design, teacher training, teaching operations, proficiency testing, and academic research. He views the world from a Chinese perspective and also views China from a global standpoint. If there are no appropriate textbooks, international Chinese language teachers will lack professional sensitivity and solutions when encountering related problems. Therefore, the lack of professional relevance in textbooks will affect the cross-cultural communication skills training of international Chinese language teachers. In addition, a case library can be established in the field of international Chinese education to collect case studies on cross-cultural communication issues.

5. Future Development Direction of International Chinese Education

Li Rulong and Chen Yanyi [15] believe that among world languages, due to the non enlightening nature of Chinese, international Chinese education must follow the common characteristics of Chinese language teaching. More importantly, it must consider the characteristics of Chinese, carefully experiment and learn, and adopt different methods. Whether in preschool education or compulsory education, children grow up by singing children's songs, listening to stories, solving puzzles, and learning proverbs. Interest is the best mentor, and second language teaching should also enable learners to stimulate their interest through learning and utilizing high-quality literature. Li Quan; Chen Tianqi [16] believes that in the future, international Chinese education should be as spontaneous as English teaching in China. Li Yuming; Tang Peilan [17] believes that teaching Chinese as a

foreign language has greater inclusiveness and requires continuous innovation. Duan Peng [18] believes that international Chinese education should be combined with excellent traditional Chinese cultural factors. Zhang Hui and Chen Chen [19] believe that in traditional teaching processes, the evaluation of learning outcomes is entirely based on typical classroom charts, assignments, tests, etc., and the results may not necessarily be objective. Especially, it is difficult to conduct language courses in small class teaching, and teachers need to spend a lot of time and energy on students' feedback. Big data and learning analytics technologies allow for performance evaluation and allocation at various stages of the learning process. And by issuing corresponding learning certificates to learners, their learning motivation can be improved. In addition, emphasizing the cultivation of composite talents, the cultivation of international Chinese education talents cannot only focus on professional knowledge. In this way, the employment path is extremely narrow. If combined with other disciplines such as traditional Chinese medicine, media science, computer science, etc., talents have flexibility and can better adapt to the development of social situations. In addition, we should also focus on protecting data privacy. Chinese international textbooks should be combined with Chinese literature and effective teaching methods should be implemented. We should all have confidence in Chinese characters and culture. Without cultural confidence, we cannot teach Chinese and spread Chinese culture. The purpose of international Chinese education is not only to impart Chinese knowledge, but more importantly, to spread Chinese culture. In the future, international Chinese education will pay more attention to spreading Chinese culture, introducing more Chinese cultural elements into teaching to help learners better understand and recognize China. Zhu Zhiping [20] believes that the ability cultivation of future educators should not be limited to knowledge, but should also focus on skills. International Chinese language education needs to be combined with excellent traditional Chinese cultural factors, such as calligraphy, shadow play, Paper Cuttings, etc., to attract more overseas learners. At the same time, various Chinese cultural activities can be organized and courses on Chinese culture can be conducted to enhance learners' sense of identity with Chinese culture. As more and more people learn Chinese, the forms and contents of international Chinese education will become more diverse. In the future, in addition to traditional classroom teaching models, new teaching models such as online teaching, mobile teaching, and blended learning will also emerge to meet the needs of different learners. At the same time, the teaching content will also be more diversified, including not only language knowledge, Chinese history, politics, culture, economy and other knowledge, in order to help learners comprehensively understand China.

6. Conclusion

In international Chinese education, teachers mainly teach foreign learners with different cultures, ways of thinking, and languages. The huge differences in cultural backgrounds can cause cross-cultural communication problems, which is detrimental to the teaching and communication between teachers and learners. Therefore, improving the cross-cultural communication skills of educators is crucial. By reviewing existing literature, it can be concluded that there are not many

journal articles on international Chinese language teachers. In addition, the research viewpoints in most academic papers have a high degree of repetition, and most studies are based on sensory experience, with few innovations and few empirical studies. The research on cross-cultural communication competence of international Chinese language teachers has not established a framework theory, and the research is more fragmented. In the future, the international Chinese education field should shift its focus from learners and teaching to educators, and there should be a unified definition for intercultural communication competence. The problems faced by educators are unique, resulting in different cross-cultural communication issues and different methods of solving them. Secondly, regarding the training program and objectives, it is important to clarify the components of intercultural communication competence and establish a curriculum system that prepares educators for intercultural communication. How to develop teaching materials to help teachers train their cultural communication skills? If different countries have different requirements for teachers' cross-cultural communication skills, it is necessary to improve the cross-cultural communication skills of specific teachers more targetedly. Finally, a professional evaluation system can be established to assess whether the cross-cultural communication skills of educators are qualified, in order to better adapt to overseas Chinese language teaching life. In short, the current international Chinese education field has not given sufficient attention to the cross-cultural communication skills of educators, and research is relatively fragmented and unsystematic. The research perspective is relatively single and has not formed a systematic theoretical framework. There is only one-sided research on cultivating cross-cultural communication skills. Therefore, there are still many places worth researching and supplementing in the future. Foreign language teaching without integrating the culture of the target language will be an incomplete teaching. Only by combining language teaching with cultural teaching and infiltrating cultural teaching into language teaching, can we achieve modern international Chinese education. Cultural teaching in international Chinese education is a complex teaching activity. The key to successfully and effectively conveying Chinese culture to students lies in the flexible application and unremitting exploration and practice of teachers in teaching practice.

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