

# Study on Promotion of Intercultural Adaption of the International Students in China Based on the Information-based Teaching

Shaowei Xiong

School of Foreign Languages and International Business  
Guangdong Mechanical & Electrical Polytechnic  
Guangzhou, China

**Abstract**—Against the background of globalization, the internationalization of Chinese education has a rapid development. More and more international students choose to study in China and China has become the largest destination for foreign students in Asia. Intercultural adaption is one of the prominent problems both for the international students and the Chinese teachers. How to promote the intercultural adaption of the international students has gradually won the great research concern. The researchers abroad and at home have carried out plenty of research on international adaption, and some famous theories or models are put forward by the foreign researchers. The researchers have explored from different respects and have offered inspiring vision for the studies. In this paper, the focus is on culture teaching. Culture teaching is of important for the intercultural adaption development. Much attention should be paid to the reform of teaching methods so as to make the culture study productive. In view of the lack of resources, this paper puts forward that the information-based teaching can help to promote the intercultural adaption of international students.

**Keywords**—*intercultural adaption; the international students in China; culture teaching; the information-based teaching*

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid globalization, Chinese education is experiencing a significant development and education internationalization has become a hot topic in China. Education internationalization is one of the symbols of globalization. After years' development, educational internationalization has become an important supplement of higher education in China. Educational internationalization in China mainly includes two types, one is the cooperative education between Chinese and overseas partners which recruits the Chinese students, and the other is the Chinese program which recruits international students. Along with the reform and open-up policy, China has achieved successful development and now has become the second economic entity in the world. Nowadays, China has become a popular destination for the international students for the economic development, the social environment and the education resources etc. Account for the reasons why more and more international students choose to study in China. According to the latest statistics from Ministry of Education

of PRC, in 2017, there were nearly 500 thousands international students in China. China has become the largest destination for international students in Asia. The kinds of destination schools are becoming diversified. Based on the statistics, universities is always the only attraction for the international students, but now the vocational school (also named polytechnic) also becomes a choice for the international students as the Chinese government encourages the expansion of education internationalization in different kinds of education. What is more, China is developing a characteristic vocational education. It is forecasted that there will be more international students in 2018 than that in 2017.

The booming international student education will promote Chinese education to a new era. It boosts the exchanges among people in the world and promotes progress together in the world. Under the unremitting reform and innovation, a Chinese characteristic standard in education will come into being. The international student program involves lots of factors, which presents a much more complicated situation for the school education. The rise of number of international student has come in recent years and many schools seem to be short of kinds of experience, especially for the new comer. How to help the international students to be adapted to the study and life in China is an urgent issue for the Chinese schools.

## II. REVIEW

### A. *Studies in the West*

Among all those influence factors on international students, the intercultural adaption is one of the key factors. The studies on intercultural adaption are dated from early 1920s in United States. The term of intercultural adaption was firstly proposed by American anthropologists Robert Redfield, Ralf Linton and Melville Herskovits (1936). The following four model theories are among the popular in the world.

The American cultural anthropologist Kalervo Oberg (1960) first introduced the term "Culture Shock". He defined it as "an occupational disease of people who have suddenly been transported abroad which is precipitated by the anxiety

that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse” (Oberg, 1960). Culture shock is a feeling of frustration, uneasiness, or uncertainty that people experience in unknown settings, and the experience results from numerous stressors occurring in contact with a different culture (Liu 2014). In Culture Shock Theory, Oberg argues that the sojourner's emotional adaption generally consists of 4 stages: honeymoon stage, crisis stage, recovery stage and adaptation stage. Culture Shock Theory is also named U-Curved Theory. The 4 stages go just like a U curve.

Stress-Adaption-Growth Dynamic theory is proposed by Young Yun. Kim (1988), he emphasizes the dynamic nature of intercultural adaption and the importance of communication during the process. In this model, unlike Oberg's description, culture shock is regarded as a normal psychological phenomenon instead of a disease, which brings pressure to individuals and promotes growth and change of individuals. If keeping on knowing the new culture, as time by, “the fluctuation will be narrowed down until the expatriate find the way of adjusting to the new culture” (Li 2016). Kim states that the process of intercultural adaption is not a linear process but a process of spiral rise in which the individual goes forward and backward alternatively.

John. W. Berry puts forward Acculturation Theory. Berry states that the extent of pressure of intercultural adaption depends on how much cultural experience and how many kinds of pressure source the individual has. In his Acculturation Strategies Model (2005), Berry proposes 4 strategies including integration, separation, assimilation and marginalization for ethno cultural groups, and another four strategies including melting pot, segregation, exclusion and multiculturalism for larger society. Berry emphasizes the studies in the two dimensions, one is maintenance of heritage culture and identity, and the other is relationships sought among groups (2001).

Two aspects adaption theory is proposed by Colleen Ward (1994). Ward puts forward model of acculturation process. There are two aspects in the process, one is social culture adaption and the other is psychological adaption. Intercultural adaption involves not only psychology, culture but also personality and social factors.

The theories studies including the above have enlightened the international student education and have led the scholars to carry out deeper and wider studies.

### *B. Studies in China*

In China, research has been carried out on how to help the international student in China to adapt to the new culture society, and possible measures have been put forward.

Li Danjie (2007) discusses the importance of situational factors, internal variables, and personality characteristics that affect international student's adjustment process in China.

Liu Hongyu etc. (2014) puts forward that the teachers should adopt difference management and convergence management methods, make use of the students' social relation network and strengthen cross-cultural support for the

students so as to help them make a smooth cross-cultural adaptation on the basis of investigation of intercultural adaptation of Central Asian students in Xinjiang.

Sun Lili etc. (2017) discusses the difference of the degree of international students' acculturation, and puts forward some suggestions from macro and micro level aiming at the occurring problems, so as to help the students to better adapt to the life in China.

Ma Lili (2017) explores the reason for culture shock from the aspects of language, living habits and style learning environment and evaluation method. Ma puts forward the countermeasures from the perspective of teachers and administrators and offers suggestion on Chinese language teaching and teaching plan design.

Gao Di (2018) carries questionnaires and individual interviews for foreign students, and then summarizes some common problems and gives suggestion on the improvement of teaching and management, such as to optimize rules, to set up overseas student assistant system, to make use of new media to enhance communication.

## III. PRACTICE

### *A. The Problems*

For the international students, culture study is very important, and accordingly culture teaching should be the focus for the teachers. The teacher should make full use of teaching to bring out a productive culture study for the international students. Most of the studies focus on the international student's questionnaire analysis and offers countermeasures to improve intercultural adaption in China, and the countermeasures could be listed as the generalized one in view of culture teaching. There is short of detailed culture teaching suggestion. What is more, the case of information-based teaching is more limited. This seems not to keep in step with the information-based society. The teacher should help the international student to know more about Chinese culture on the basis of students' survey, which is one of the important and effective approaches to help overcome or alleviate culture shock and enhance intercultural adaption. The more Chinese culture the international students in China acquire, the less culture shock they meet, then the stronger intercultural adaption they possess which leads to a more successful study and happier experience they have. At school, teaching is a key culture delivery method. As the rapid development of international student education in China, the school is making efforts to improve the culture teaching. In fact the school is faced with lots of objective restrictions when it comes to culture delivery, and it is mainly displayed in the lack of various resources including the following top three.

Firstly, there is insufficient class time. The class time for the international students to learn Chinese culture is limited. It is impossible to make all the courses become culture-oriented courses, for culture study is not the only objective for the international students, and they should still learn the professional knowledge and others. Especially for the major-studying students, professional knowledge study is quite a

workload for them, which demands more time and more effort. The international students who major in Chinese have more time to learn Chinese culture compared with those majoring in other professions.

Secondly, they have insufficient experience on the spot. It is obvious that the best way to learn culture is to experience on the spot. It is no doubt that this will impress the students by the vivid and direct study mode. Therefore this will contribute to the promotion of intercultural adaption. Due to constraint of resources, including fund, land, location, facilities, equipment, transportation etc., it is impossible to realize the on-spot study all the time. The school couldn't organize all the culture class in the culture spots out of campus. In campus, the school can't afford to build all kinds of training rooms for Chinese culture. For the off-campus study, the practice is that the school would organize several times of on-spot experience.

Thirdly, there is lack of full-time culture teachers. The culture study requires qualified teachers. In fact, the teachers always act as professional teachers and culture teachers. When it comes to some topics, the teachers maybe are not quite familiar with the topic and fail to demonstrate it or make it clear.

#### *B. Suggestions on Promotion of Intercultural Adaption*

How to overcome the above obstacles is a priority issue for the school. Based on the teaching practice for international students, the author puts forward that information-based teaching should be introduced into the culture teaching for international students, and this could help fill in the above gaps.

Taking into consideration the limited resources such as the financial resources, the land and space, the school should build a virtual scene training room which provides virtual simulation for the training. It comprises of an abundant teaching resources library which provides interactive 3-D dynamic scene practice, human-machine dialog systems etc. The application of the virtual scene training room provides realistic environment for the international students and brings out the direct and vivid study, which could arouse interest motivation and produce an easily comprehensible culture study. In class, the student can choose to present the individual practice or group practice. The VR software can simulate kinds of scenes and build up a support system for the teacher to make the new scene resources if needed. The original teaching resources library caters for the generalized teaching and can't meet all the culture teaching requirements, especially the local culture. As the saying goes, when in Rome, do as Roman does. Since the international students study in certain district, to know more about local culture around is of important to them. For example, the teaching resources library includes a custom study which just goes in some districts but not in the district where the international students study. It is no doubt that this study could widen the students' vision for Chinese culture. If the resources could contain the local custom study, this could make the culture teaching more focused on the students' actual needs and promote intercultural adaption more quickly. In this situation,

it is necessary for the teacher to collect and select the local culture materials for teaching, and to add it into the teaching resources library. This homemade material not only meets the actual teaching needs but also enriches the teaching resources library. After teaching practice, this homemade resource can be beneficial to other schools. It is suggested that the school could cooperate with the training room supplier to develop the local culture resources. The supplier provides technology while the school provides culture resource, which would build up a mutually complementary and beneficial partnership. This partnership could build a characteristic teaching resources library besides the common resources.

In view of the limited class time, it is put forward that the teacher should renovate teaching mode by means of information technology. Flipped classroom mode could be introduced into culture teaching, which leads to expand the class teaching contents and helps the international students have access to get more abundant leaning. With the help of internet and computer technology, the international students could study by themselves in spare time, and the teachers focus on answering questions and guiding the international students to make use of knowledge in class instead of introducing knowledge in traditional class. If necessary, the teachers could deliver some extra contents based on the class performance to give the international student a chance to get a more comprehensive learning about Chinese culture, such as presentation of the comparison between two kinds of local culture. It is necessary that an online learning platform is built to realize the implementation of flipped classroom mode. Flipped classroom is supported by lots of resources, covering kinds of mediums such as reading, audio and video styles. The platform could realize the integration of resources and provide multifunction study including self-study and interaction study, and what is more, it supports resource updating to keep enriching resources. Updating is important for the flipped classroom.

Micro class is an efficient teaching mode as the mobile internet springs up, and it is a preferred measure to make up the lack of sources in culture delivery. The teachers can produce various types of micro class, such as a lecture, a role-play, a training, an on-the-site display etc. by means of live-action or animation. Each micro class covers 5-minute or so study, and the time period could keep the students' interest mobility. In modern society, people pursue the speed and efficiency, and the convenient study is in accordance with the trend, therefore the fragmented learning is prevalent. Micro class just helps to realize the fragmented learning with the more and more powerful cell phone. It meets the need of studying anywhere and anytime, and the teacher is just accompanying the students and immersive atmosphere is provided. Since a micro class covers 5 minutes or so in free style, it is possible for the teachers to produce a lot on culture for the students. With the help of mobile internet micro class constitutes a mobile classroom. Besides websites, mobiles etc. the students could have micro class from kinds of channels, for example, the students could just scan the quick response (QR) code in somewhere with the cell phones to

watch the micro class. To facilitate the study, the QR code of the micro class could be printed in the textbook.

Kinds of survey should be carried out before making culture teaching plan. First of all, make clear what the international students lack and need, so as to match culture study and their actual need as far as possible and to enhance the students' intercultural adaption. To be efficient, the online questionnaire could be introduced, like the SO JUMP. The international students are close to the local culture; therefore, to be familiar with the local culture is a priority for building up adaption. Then the teacher sorts out the culture and prepares for the teaching design. In spite of characteristics, generality is seen in all local culture, for example, the values, the thinking modes. The teacher should be able to summarize the general feature to help the student get to know more Chinese culture. When delivering the culture, the teacher should carry a compatible teaching with a balance between the local culture and other Chinese culture. The choice of other Chinese culture could be selected from the founding on the basis of the questionnaire — such as the question “what else Chinese culture would you like to know besides the local culture?” In this situation, the application of information-base teaching is quite helpful for the international students to have a better understanding of the culture which is not close to them. The online questionnaire could be put in the flipped class platform. It is required that the international students update information regularly, such as every half semester or one semester, so that the teacher could get to know the updating need of the international students and design the suitable teaching plan for their culture study.

Culture teaching is boundless, which involves plenty of aspects, and teaching staff is an important teaching quality guarantee. The school should attach high importance to the buildup of teaching staff. In view of manpower shortage, to optimize teacher staff is the preferred solution. Many schools don't have fulltime culture teacher and usually the professional teacher would act as the part time culture teacher. Besides reading books and taking training courses, the professional teacher could upgrade culture knowledge anytime and anywhere by means of internet study, such online class, micro class. The school should organize a team to concentrate on designing the culture teaching including the choice of contents, in which each teacher is responsible for one part of the job. The teamwork could produce brainstorming and cooperation that brings about an efficient and effective design. Besides culture knowledge, the teacher should also upgrade the teaching method based on information which is a necessity for the teacher in an information society. The qualified teaching staff is the fundamental and important guarantee for helping the international students to enhance the intercultural adaption. The teacher should realize that a teacher for international student doesn't just deliver knowledge but also acts as a culture envoy whose duty is to promote the intercultural understanding among people.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In the internationalized education, intercultural adaption is a focus which produces a profound influence on the international students' study and life in alien culture. The high adaption could help the students experience at ease for it could relieve the culture shock or even avoid the culture shock. Culture teaching is one of the efficient ways to enhance the intercultural adaption, and how to improve the efficiency of culture teaching is the top issue. In an information society, the teacher could resort to information-base teaching to reform the class mode and contribute to the promotion of intercultural adaption of the international students. As the great attention is paid to intercultural adaption, people would spare no efforts to design kinds of effective teaching methods to enhance the intercultural adaption and to promote the world to know better each other for the sake of realization of peaceful coexistence with all.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Redfield, R. Linton, R. & Herskovits, M. J. 1936. Memorandum for The Study of Acculturation. *American Anthropologist*. 149-152.
- [2] Oberg, K. 1960. Cultural Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environments. *Practical Anthropology*. 177-182.
- [3] Liu, T. Y. 2014. An Analysis of Cultural Shock and Adaption in Film *Crocodile Dundee*. *Overseas English*. 172-173, 179.
- [4] Kim ,Y.Y. 2001. *Becoming Intercultural: An Integrative Theory of Communication and Intercultural Adaption*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- [5] Li, D. 2016. Study on Intercultural Training for Expatriates From An Intercultural Adjustment Perspective Examples From Companies in Shaanxi. Master Thesis. Xi'an International Studies University.
- [6] Berry, J. W. 2001. A Psychology of Immigrant. *Journal of Social Issues*. 618.
- [7] Berry, J. W. 2005. Acculturation: Living Successfully in Two Cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. 697-712.
- [8] Ward, C. & Kennedy, A. 1994. Acculturation Strategies, Psychological Adjustment and Sociocultural Competence During Cross-cultural Transition. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. 329-343.
- [9] Li, D. J. 2007. Cross-cultural Psychosocial Adjustment of International Students in China and its Implications for Chinese Higher Institutions. *Journal of Yunnan Normal University*. 49-51.
- [10] Liu, H.Y & Jia, Zh. Ch. 2014. A Study on Cross-cultural Adaptation of International Students in China — A Case Study of Central Asian Students in Xinjiang. *Journal of Minzu University of China (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*. 171-176.
- [11] Sun, L.L, Wei, L.S & Niu, Y. T. 2017. Study on Cultural Adaptation of Foreign Students in China: Taking Example in Chongqing University. *Journal of Chongqing University of Technology (Social Science)*. 87-95.
- [12] Ma, L. L. 2017. The Phenomenon of Culture Shock Among International Students and Its Countermeasures. *Education Teaching Forum*. 80-81.
- [13] Gao, D. 2018. Problems of Cross-culture Foreign Students Adaption in Jilin Province and Countermeasures. *Journal of Changchun University*. 63-68.