

# Strategies for Cultivating Intercultural Communication Competence in the Context of New Media Communication

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## ABSTRACT

**This paper studies strategies for cultivating intercultural communication competence in the context of new media communication, and proposes to reform foreign language teaching through new media technology. Micro class, flipped classroom and situational teaching can be employed to integrate foreign language theory teaching with communication practice, so as to improve teaching efficiency and students' intercultural communication competence.**

*Keywords: new media, cross-culture, communication competence, training strategy*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Culture has a narrow sense and a broad sense. In a narrow sense, it refers to literature, music, art and so on. Broadly speaking, it refers to the general pattern of a society's unique beliefs, habits, institutions, goals and technologies. Language is a part of culture and conveys culture with the help of words. Sapir, an American linguist, said: "There is something behind language, that is culture, and language cannot exist without culture." In fact, language contains not only the history and cultural background of a nation, but also the nation's way of life and thinking as well as its views on life. Therefore, the ultimate goal of language learning is communication. Communication through language is actually communication through culture.

In foreign language teaching, students' conscious response or awareness of cultural differences in language is known as intercultural consciousness, and their communicative competence is called intercultural communicative competence. The cultivation of students' intercultural consciousness and intercultural communication competence requires their understanding towards history, geography, local conditions and customs, traditional habits, lifestyle, literature and art, norms of behavior and values of foreign countries.

## II. THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTIVATING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

### A. *Achieving the fundamental goal of foreign language teaching*

The fundamental goal of language learning is communication. Communication requires not only vocabulary, grammar or imitation of authentic pronunciation, but more importantly, the cultural meaning behind the language. Therefore, language communication is actually intercultural communication of people in different cultural backgrounds, which proves the importance of cultivation of intercultural communication competence in language teaching. Students learning foreign language are supposed to understand cultural background where the language is rooted, the differences between the language and Chinese in customs, emotions and other aspects, so as to truly grasp the essential connotation of the language, and then conduct intercultural communication on this basis.

### B. *Contributing to China's educational reform*

The practice of foreign language teaching in China is divorced from the actual needs. Most foreign language teachers are exam-oriented and emphasize language knowledge required by exams over practice, especially the cultivation of intercultural communication competence in teaching, which is a far cry from current reform of China's educational system.

The continuous reform of educational system, new teaching mode and teaching method, and the wide

application of Internet in teaching provide a sound communication environment for foreign language teaching, as well as a space and platform for students' self-training. Students' foreign language thinking can be cultivated, and the deficiency in current foreign language teaching practice can be made up, so as to promote students' intercultural communication ability.

### *C. Improving intercultural communication competence*

The communicative competence of communicators is a prerequisite to sound communication. To be specific, the most basic thing in communication is that both parties can fully understand the intention expressed by the other party and take it as a guide for further communication. However, restricted by various factors, it is difficult for both parties to fully understand each other's intentions in the actual communication process, especially in cross-cultural communication where more misunderstandings are encountered. Such misunderstanding can be reduced in the following ways:

*1) Taking the communication environment into consideration:* In addition to the objective language environment, intercultural communication is also affected by artificial language environment, so both should be taken into account. Favorable intercultural communication competence requires a full understanding of the artificial language environment, especially cultural environment.

First of all, socially speaking, to socialize with Europeans and Americans requires an appointment in advance. This way, the invitee is prepared and not in a panic. In addition, it also shows the respect to the invitee.

Secondly, in terms of life, if you are invited by an European or American for dinner, you must pay attention to the time of arrival. Not only should you not be late, but you should not arrive early, otherwise you will embarrass the host who is not ready. It is best to arrive on time.

Finally, in terms of education, the Classroom in the UK and the US is quite different from that in China. Chinese people value the dignity of teachers. Students are supposed to sit up and listen to teachers and take notes carefully. They should not whisper or look around, which otherwise is disrespect to teachers. However, students in European and American classes have much more freedom. They can interact with their teachers easily and happily. They don't have to listen to everything the teacher says, and they can even eat while listening to the teacher. Similarly, teachers are more casual, sitting or walking, or even sitting on the table to teach students.

Therefore, understanding the cultural environment of language in intercultural communication can greatly facilitate communication.

*2) Empathy should be paid attention to in intercultural communication:* Empathy, a psychological term, refers to a process in which the patient transfers his/her feelings, attitudes and attributes to his/her parents or an important person in his/her past life to the counselor and responds to the counselor accordingly. However, empathy in intercultural communication is actually transpositional consideration: feeling the experience and thoughts of the other from their perspective, which ensures grasp of the other person's psychology and what they are trying to say.

In addition, transpositional consideration is helpful to understand the other's way of thinking, interpret the other's logic of expression, grasp the other's point of view more accurately, so as to strike a chord with the other or evaluate the other objectively.

*3) Dialogue can be adopted in communication:* Communication can be conducted through various ways, among which dialogue is undoubtedly the most direct and effective. Intercultural communication through dialogue can minimize the "misunderstanding" encountered and solve all kinds of contradictions and problems. For example, cultural prejudice, national confidence, and shrinking emotions caused by cultural differences can be easily solved in this way.

At the same time, both sides can communicate based on their own positions and views in the dialogue, and show their own personality, which can ensure the communication effect while giving full play to the timeliness of intercultural communication.

### **III. STRATEGIES FOR CULTIVATING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF NEW MEDIA COMMUNICATION**

New media refers to all kinds of communication media operating on the basis of digital technology, such as digital TV, mobile TV, network TV, mobile magazine, network magazine, virtual community and so on. New media dominates information transmission, which has changed people's way of life. The development and application of multimedia network technology provides a broader platform and opportunity for the training of intercultural communication competence, especially in enriching ways and means, improving training efficiency, increasing learning materials, and enhancing interest and motivation in learning.

Therefore, the cultivation of intercultural communication competence in the context of new media should follow closely the goals and trends of current educational reform. The existing resources and conditions should be fully utilized to give full play to

the subjective initiative and enhance the training effect to the greatest extent.

*A. Micro-course can be used to cultivate students' intercultural communication competence*

Micro-course is a teaching form based on the rapid development of the Internet. To be specific, micro-class is a short, high-quality course, usually about ten minutes long. Micro-courses are short and concise, which are generally aimed at explaining the key points and difficult points in teaching. The course capacity is relatively large, so it can achieve a better effect. Compared with traditional foreign language teaching classes, micro-course can give full play to subjective initiative. In traditional classes, teachers pay attention to the teaching of English knowledge and students receive education passively, but teachers seldom take the initiative to understand students' English knowledge understanding ability, learning habits and knowledge structure, not to mention their intercultural communication ability. However, micro-course is actually the optimization of existing teaching knowledge and teaching activities. Students can watch videos selectively according to their own needs for independent learning, which fully arouses their initiative and enthusiasm in learning. Micro-courses also make full use of Internet technology. Both students and teachers can watch it at any time, breaking the limitation of time and space. Students can make full use of the rich resources on the Internet and download micro-courses they need online at any time, so as to watch them repeatedly at a convenient time, achieving the purpose of gaining new insights through reviewing old material, and improving learning efficiency. The issue of uneven knowledge ability of students is also alleviated. This also offers a window to teaching mode around the world, which facilitates the cultivation of intercultural communication ability. Therefore, it's no exaggeration to say that micro-course is an effective supplement to classroom teaching.

Teachers should fully capitalize the Internet and look for micro-courses or videos of foreign teachers for assistance, allowing students to understand and get familiar with the teaching mode and teaching content of Western English teaching, and improve their understanding of the connotation of intercultural communication subtly.

Teachers should also guide and encourage students to use micro-courses for self-learning. While watching micro-course, students can also explore the knowledge that they do not understand very well, and constantly explore new knowledge with the help of abundant network resources. In addition, some micro-course platforms welcome feedback or consultation. After receiving the feedback, teachers can understand the

difficulties encountered by students in learning, so as to switch teaching method.

In addition, teachers can also directly apply WeChat in classroom teaching, allowing students to watch videos, answer questions and discuss with each other. However, it is worth noting that the role of teachers cannot be changed. Teachers should grasp the overall situation of the classroom, summarize learning situation of students, improve teaching mode and enhance teaching efficiency.

*B. Flipped classroom can be employed to cultivate students' intercultural communication competence*

The new curriculum reform requires more on teachers' teaching methods, among which flipped classroom is to change the role between teachers and students. Specifically, students become the subject of classroom learning and teachers play an active role. In flipped classroom teaching, teachers should first plan the learning content, determine teaching objectives and tasks, and then distribute the teaching contents and tasks to students. After receiving the teacher's task, students use their spare time to collect and sort out the materials assigned by the teacher. Classroom teaching activities are no longer dominated by teachers. Instead, students show and summarize the materials they have collected.

First of all, teachers should make full use of new media, launch WeChat group and WeChat public account, and encourage students to study independently. Students can upload, download and share supporting learning materials, classroom extension materials and supplementary explanation materials on these platforms. Students are encouraged to make full use of mobile phones and other new media to find relevant information through online and offline interaction, classroom questions and discussions. Teachers and students can also communicate on the platform to stimulate students' interest in learning, improve their initiative and enthusiasm in learning, create more ways to understand the cultural background and connotation of English, and improve students' intercultural English communication.

Secondly, teachers should fully consider the characteristics of foreign language teaching, value interaction and communication, and explore the integration of new media and teaching with the help of diversified teaching methods. QQ groups, personal blogs and related web videos and apps can be adopted to broadcast and comment, role play, discussion and debate can also be employed for inquiry-based learning. It is also possible to improve communicative effect of foreign language through group practice, including PPT, design scheme and case analysis.

### C. *Situational teaching can be applied to cultivate students' intercultural communication competence*

Many students in China performed poor in intercultural communication, which can be explained by their failure to understand the differences between British and American culture and Chinese culture, to grasp the cultural characteristics of language in application, which will cripple language communication. Situational teaching allows students to conduct comparative learning, improve their tolerance of British and American culture, deeply explore the British and American cultures and realize their differences with Chinese culture. The way of language expression varies with the language environment, and it is important to conform to the local language culture.

In learning English, students will inevitably encounter the problem of different names in English and Chinese. In Chinese culture, parents are referred to as "father" or "mother", or "dad" or "mom". In Anglo-American countries, children call their father and mother by their first names, indicating that parents and children are equal. The brothers and sisters of the father and mother are called "aunt" or "uncle". These confuse Chinese students learning English. Such trouble can be brought to an end when students perform family sitcoms, which not only enables students to intuitively feel the cultural differences, but also improves the flexibility of their language expression. There were also students using Chinese logic to express English, such as "Good morning, Teacher Chen". Such comparison can make students feel the difference between the two cultures.

Situational teaching can also imitate the real scene for teaching. For example, with the help of new media technology, students can learn from classic video materials on the Internet and understand the cultural connotation behind the film. New media tools can be used to process these videos and let students dub them. For example, 4D imaging technology creates an atmosphere for students to experience and cultivate cross-cultural communication in such scenes.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Language learning is for communication. The language error in communication process is harmless, and the worst scenario is to hamstring communication. However, cultural errors will cause certain harm to the other side, and even seriously affect the feelings of the country and the nation. Therefore, the sound application of language requires good intercultural communication competence. In English teaching, teachers should keep in mind the purpose of training students to communicate effectively and appropriately in English, and help students eliminate cultural barriers in communication while improving their language ability, so that students can enhance their intercultural

communication ability while improving their language ability.

In the information age, multimedia is applied in foreign language teaching, making the teaching environment and activities more colorful. It can not only attract students to immerse themselves in the English classroom environment, but also shapes a good English intercultural communication environment for students. Gradually, students' language thinking ability will be improved, so will their language communication ability.

The advantages of new media technology and new media tools should be fully utilized in the new era to enable students to flexibly respond to various English cultural scenes. Foreign language teachers are supposed to integrate resources and create a learning atmosphere when giving guidance to students. First of all, new media should be used as a teaching means, and students can experience language teaching modes under different backgrounds through micro-courses. At the same time, the tailwinds of educational reform should be seized to stimulate students' initiative and enthusiasm in learning and communication with the help of flipped classroom. In addition, situational teaching and other methods can be applied to create a favorable environment for students, improve the effect and efficiency of foreign language teaching, and sharpen students' intercultural communication ability, thus bringing students' intercultural communication competence to a new level.

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