



Research on the Cultivation of Intercultural Communicative Competence in Junior High School English Teaching

Based on the Components of Intercultural Communicative Competence Proposed by Brain Spitzberg

Hongyao Yu (✉)

Dezhou University of Foreign Languages, Dezhou 253000, Shandong, China
yukifingerscrossed@163.com

Abstract. This paper illustrates an empirical research on the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in junior high school English teaching, which introduced the components of Intercultural Communicative Competence Proposed by Brain Spitzberg. In view of the trend of globalization, the cultivation of ICC must be necessary in order to help students to adapt to the frequent interaction between different cultures in various fields, especially for those students who study in junior high school, an important stage for shaping ICC. In this work, the introduction of empirical research method and Brain Spitzberg's theory including knowledge, motivation and skills can be creative aspects. Besides, the current situation of junior high school students' ICC and teacher's relevant teaching approaches are displayed through questionnaire and interview, after which the relevant issues, reasons, and advice for improvement are summarized as the research results. Moreover, the focus of this paper is to analyze the reasons leading to the current situation of ICC based on empirical research results and Brain Spitzberg's theory.

Keywords: Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) · English teaching · junior high school

1 Introduction

Nowadays, tendency of globalization acts as a great tide in the present-day world, which put forward the requirement to adapt to intercultural communication for people all over the world. As a necessary part during intercultural communication, intercultural communicative competence can promote students' practical use of English [1] and help them contact with native English speakers [2]. As to the current situation in China, junior high students act as an important group for the cultivation of ICC in view of their future involvement in globalization. Moreover, the cultivation of ICC has been extensively studied in recent years. However, little attention on theory and empirical support exist in some previous research, causing controversial results to some extent. The main purpose

of the experiment reported here is to provide systematical theory support as well as empirical evidence. In addition, an effort is made to provide little help for cultivation on ICC in junior high school English teaching. In this way, the information presented should be useful to improve ICC cultivation.

2 Literature Review

The importance of ICC is illustrated in certain studies. Houying Liu (2014) investigated that the cultivation of ICC in junior high school English teaching suggests that improving junior high school students' ICC can promote the practical use of English, acting as the teaching objectives of English teaching [1]. Similarly, Guping Li (2003) confirmed that the cultivation of ICC will help junior high school students a lot when they contact with native English speaker in the future [2]. However, certain teaching content could not meet the requirement to cultivate ICC. John Harper (2020) identified that language instructors might need to make a special effort to meet the coursebook halfway in view of Coursebooks which will continue to remain imperfect [3]. As suggested by Wenzhong Hu (2013), the cultivation of ICC can be realized through all the teaching process instead of setting one or several courses [4]. In addition, current teaching modules can not realize equal status of language and culture in English lesson. Chaoqun Huang (2013) tend to value the teaching concept and teaching modules should be changed from single language teaching to the equality of both language and culture [5], cultivating talents who have a deep acknowledgement of home and abroad (Juan Xu, 2016) [6]. Moreover, Yuxiang Zhang & Jiling Wang (2012) have linked the cultivation of ICC in English teaching with teachers' consideration on language form, language use, verbal and nonverbal dimensions, style and register and culture of the target language.

3 Research Method

3.1 Questionnaire

This questionnaire designed questions from three dimensions including knowledge, motivation and skills. Besides, all the data analysis was carried out by SPSS.

3.1.1 Object of the Research

Junior high school students learn English under Chinese educational system were chosen as the object of research.

3.1.2 Statistical Hypothesis

Firstly, grade affects junior high school students' ICC to some extent. Secondly, junior high school students mastery of knowledge, motivation and skills in ICC affects each other.

Table 1. Cronbach Reliability Analysis-simplified Format

Cronbach reliability analysis-simplified format		
Number of items	Sample size	Cronbach α coefficient
23	224	0.962

Table 2. Spearman Related - Detailed Format

Spearman Related - Detailed Format-Correlation coefficient with grade	
Using body language or other nonverbal communication	-0.189**
Knowledge of foreign history, geography, society and culture	-0.156 *
Adhere to the principle of moderation and find links between native culture and foreign culture	-0.145 *
Tolerate foreigners' different values, eating habits, taboos and politeness	-0.140 *
Learn a foreign language and communicate with foreigners from different cultures	-0.156*

3.1.3 Reliability of the Questionnaire

The reliability coefficient value of the questionnaire is 0.962, exceeding 0.9, which means that the data has high reliability quality and can be further analyzed.

3.1.4 The Questionnaire Results

3.1.4.1. Correlation Analysis

The sample size of all the research data was greater than 50, so k-S test was used with p of 0.000**. All the questions presented significance ($P < 0.05$), indicating that the null hypothesis data were normally distributed and the results of all the questions did not have normal characteristics. Therefore, Spearman correlation-standard format was used for correlation analysis: Grade was negatively correlated with the five questions below, which act as the sign of junior high school students' ICC.

3.1.4.2. Binary Logistic Regression

The relationship between grade and the components of ICC including knowledge, motivation and skills is showed as follows by illustrating the significance between grade and results of two questions.

The relationship between the components of ICC is illustrated in the chart below by showing the significance between different questions.

In summary, grade significantly affects junior high school students' ICC from the two aspects in Table 3. Plus, Junior high school students' mastery of knowledge, motivation and skills in ICC affects each other, which can be witnessed in Table 4. Thus, the above two statistical hypotheses were verified.

Table 3. Binary logistic regression 1.

Binary Logistic Regression -Significance exists between grade grade and the following three aspects	
understand the history, geography, society and culture of foreign countries	0.046
tolerate foreigners' different values, eating habits and taboos.	0.048

Table 4. Binary logistic regression 2.

Binary Logistic Regression -The interaction between the components of ICC		
understand the history, geography, society and culture of a foreign country	the willingness to learn a foreign language well, understand foreigners and communicate with people from different cultures.	0.026
	The ability to avoid mentioning foreign privacy	0.046
willingness to tolerate foreigners' different values, eating habits, taboos and politeness	emotional experience	0.049
awareness of differences between one's own cultural identity and the others' cultural identity	the ability to avoid holding prejudice and prejudice against foreigners and foreign cultures	0.033
emotional experience	willingness to tolerate foreigners' different values, eating habits, taboos and politeness	0.023

3.2 Interview

This interview is used to collect ideas of English teachers in junior high school about actuality of cultivation of intercultural communicative competence during English teaching process.

3.2.1 Object of the Interview

English teachers in a junior high school under Chinese educational system were chosen as the object of interview, including Ms Liu, Mr Sun and Miss Wang.

3.2.2 Interview Result

As to knowledge, although they have given oral examples of cultural differences and try to transform knowledge of ICC, all the efforts are in vain due to the requirement to finish teaching tasks and perform better in English examination, which have no connection with application of ICC.

Turn to motivation, although before the new class all the English teachers show some pictures and videos, including some foreign buildings, clothes, food and use English to

tell their students the culture and customs of other cultures, all the students still pay no attention to teachers' efforts on stimulation on their motivation because ICC has little even no relation with English exams.

Moving onto skills, all the junior high school English teachers would teach students some customs or body language when students are role-playing to make sure that students will not make serious mistakes and offend others if they take part in intercultural communication in the future. Besides, some young teachers will invite some English native speakers to connect with these junior high school students occasionally.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

4.1 Reasons

The several reasons of the actuality of ICC cultivation in junior high school based on the components of ICC proposed by Brain Spitzberg can be summarized below.

4.1.1 Knowledge

4.1.1.1. The Lack of Intercultural Communication Content in the Classroom

Most textbooks mainly focus on grades and take full use of all the time to improve students' ability of passing exams and checking students' understanding of relevant knowledge, occupying a bunch of time, leaving no additional time to cultivate junior high school students' ICC [3].

4.1.1.2. The Lack of Teachers' Cross-Related Knowledge

Most English teachers in junior high school hold teaching skills, such as writing, pedagogy, psychology, teaching methods, oral English, without adding additional courses and training on cultivation of ICC [8].

4.1.1.3. The Assessment Mechanism of Intercultural Communication is not Perfect

Traditional English tests mainly organized by three parts including listening, reading and writing, putting no requirements on transforming theories or do any practice related to ICC.

4.1.2 Motivation

4.1.2.1. Teaching is Boring

Most English teachers in junior high school only focus on knowledge and repeated training on students' reading, listening and writing skills, without any sense of refreshment, causing less willingness to contact with any knowledge related to English, including those of ICC.

4.1.2.2. The Shyness and Fear of Adolescent Students

Less practice for students to speaking English in Chinese education result in less willingness and encouragement to take part in intercultural communication. Most junior high

school students in China tend to keep silent to escape from embarrassment and fear. Besides, these students are in adolescence, a sensitive and high self-esteem age during one person's growth, which act as the psychological factor.

4.1.2.3. The Lack of Teacher Guidance

Nowadays, all the teachers are focus on how to improve students' mark without additional energy to pay attention to the cultivation of ICC [4].

4.1.3 Skills

4.1.3.1. Lack of Intercultural Communication Skills Teaching

Traditional English tests putting no proportions on transforming skills related to ICC. Besides, junior high English teachers have less training on their own ICC skills [8].

4.1.3.2. Teachers and Schools Do not Pay Enough Attention to It

Both schools and teachers are trying their best to obtain better result in English examinations to contribute to school's reputation, causing less even no attention to the cultivation of ICC, which has no impact on English tests result.

4.1.3.3. Lack of Practice Opportunities and Platforms

Schools and teachers only invest limited sources and funds on practice related to examinations so that less support can be provided, especially in poor areas in view of the tough living conditions.

4.2 Advice

Several advice on how to improve English teaching methods to benefit the cultivation of ICC in junior high school are put forward as follows.

4.2.1 Knowledge

The ministry of education should put assessment on ICC as a necessary part in English examination. In addition, regulations on the proportion of ICC cultivation in each English lesson should be put into practice [5] [6], adding relevant workers to calculate each English lesson at any time. Besides, organizing regular training on junior high school English teachers' ICC by creating contact with native English speakers can also be a great way.

4.2.2 Motivation

English teachers in junior high school should encourage and reward those who speak more English and know more about intercultural communication to motivate other students to take part in intercultural communication. Competition about theories or practice of ICC can also improve students' initiative. Moreover, some activities will be helpful, such as listening to English songs and watching videos related to English-speaking countries.

4.2.3 Skills

The government should distribute sufficient money and resources to junior high schools and setting advanced teaching facilitates to organize intercultural practice. Besides, the ministry of education can invite professional English experts to assess junior high school students' ICC regularly and strengthen training of junior high school English teachers' ICC skills.

Acknowledgment. These students involved in this research are only the first and second grade in a rural middle school in China. The future study can complete investigation of all the three grades or a wider range of research objects (city, province or nation), causing a more universal conclusion. In addition, binary logistic regression classifies the neutral results of the questionnaire to the weaker side, more accurate result can be got by setting less neutral point.

References

1. Houying Lin. (2014). The cultivation of middle school students' intercultural communication ability in junior high school English teaching. *Journal of Kaifeng College of Education* (11), 223–224.
2. Guping Li. (2003). The Presentation and teaching Countermeasures of Chinese and Western Culture in junior high school English textbooks. *Journal of Guangxi University for Nationalities (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)* (S1),104–106.
3. Harper J. (2020). The Teaching of Intercultural Communicative Competence in China: How Much Help Do Coursebooks Provide? *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*,10(06): 647.
4. Wenzhong Hu. (2013).How to position cross-cultural communication ability in foreign language teaching. *Foreign language*(06),2–8.
5. Chaoqun Huang. (2013).The penetration of cross-cultural communication in junior middle school English teaching. *Journal of Jishou University(Social Sciences Edition)*(S2),220–221.
6. Juan Xu. (2016).How to improve students' cross-cultural communication ability in junior middle school English teaching. *Journal of Jiamusi Vocational College* (01),310–311.
7. Zhang Y, Wang J. (2012). The Elaboration of Cultivating Learners' English Communicative Competence in China. *English Language Teaching*, 5(12): 111–120.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

