

# Guiding Mongolian College Students' English Teaching with the Theory of Trilingual Acquisition in College English Teaching

Mingbo Yu

School of Foreign Languages, Chifeng University, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia, 024000

**Keywords:** English teaching; The theory of trilingual acquisition; College English course

**Abstract:** College English course is not only a basic language course, but also a quality education course to broaden knowledge and understand world culture, which has both instrumentality and humanism. Therefore, when designing college English courses for minority college students, we should also give full consideration to the cultivation of students' cultural quality and the imparting of international cultural knowledge.

## 1. Trilingual Education and Trilingual Acquisition

### 1.1 Trilingual Education.

Trilingual education is a way of language education in many minority regions in China, including the teaching of Chinese, minority Language and English, which belongs to the extension of bilingual teaching in the past and reflects the unique nature of multi-ethnic education in China. Moreover, trilingual education can be regarded as the most distinctive language teaching method of minorities in China, which is a key issue of national education and has remarkable effect in promoting the modernization of the whole nation. In practical teaching, it is necessary to take the local national language as the basis and effectively combine with Chinese and English for learning. With the continuous progress of economic globalization, the implementation of trilingual education within the Mongolian Nationality has become a necessary path for the development of the times, which is the core point of strengthening the overall strength of the minority college students. Moreover, in the current Mongolian education, it has become the way of inheritance and development of national culture. English can help the Mongolian people learn foreign advanced technology and integrate with international practice at a certain level. Therefore, the implementation of trilingual education in an all-round way within the minority has become a necessary path for its all-round modernization.

### 1.2 Trilingual Acquisition.

The specific manifestation of trilingual acquisition is that Mongolian college students, after mastering Mongolian and Chinese, should clarify a concept of English. At the same time, it is also the core way for the college students of this minority to learn English. During the period of learning English, the college students of this minority are usually influenced by Chinese and Mongolian. Therefore, English teachers in local colleges and universities need to learn and use the theory of trilingual acquisition effectively during their teaching work, so as to improve the basic English education level of this minority group at the corresponding level. Compared with previous bilingual acquisition, trilingual acquisition is more complicated, often with the complicated, special and hidden relationship of Mongolian, Chinese and English, and previous bilingual acquisition only belongs to the influence of mother tongue on the second language. During the period of trilingual acquisition, the process of its influence includes three parts. Therefore, in the process of English learning of the minority college students, the three major linguistic knowledge and cognitive structures in their minds work together and influence each other alternately. Therefore, compared with the learners who regard Chinese as their mother tongue and English as their second language, the learners who regard Mongolian as their mother tongue, Chinese as their second language and English as their third language will have a more complicated acquisition process.

## **2. The Influence of Mongolian, Chinese and English Trilingual Acquisition on Mongolian English Teaching**

After a lot of theoretical research and practical investigation, it is concluded that Mongolian college students' English learning should embody better learning ability because of their basic ability of bilingual acquisition. However, through the past English scores of the middle school entrance examination and college entrance examination of Mongolian students, it can be found that their English scores are worse than those of Han students, and their oral English expressions are also quite different. In my opinion, the influence of Mongolian, Chinese and English acquisition on minority English teaching can be illustrated from the following points:

### **2.1 The Influence of Mongolian and Chinese on Mongolian Students' English Learning.**

Previous education models suggested that Mongolian college students should not only master the minority language, but also master standard Chinese. Therefore, the mode of thinking of the minority college students in learning English naturally includes Chinese and Mongolian. Due to the collaborative effect of three major linguistic factors, according to the theory of language learning transfer, it can be found that both Chinese and Mongolian will interfere with the English language transfer of this minority college students. The main manifestation is that during trilingual acquisition, the first language of the minority college students affects the second language and is interfered by the third language, and the second and third languages influence each other. Therefore, the English learning of the minority college students belongs to the dynamic process of advancing sequentially, so we must pay great attention to the influence of Chinese and Mongolian on English learning. For example, the sentence structure in English and Chinese is usually a fixed subject-verb-object structure, while the former Mongolian sentence structure is a subject-object-verb structure. Therefore, during the period of learning English for the minority college students, if affected by Chinese language transfer, it can easily grasp English sentence structure. However, if Mongolian language transfer occupies the dominant position, the minority college students will have problems in learning English. Moreover, due to the significant differences in grammar between English and Mongolian, modal verbs in English are often placed before verbs, but in Mongolian, the positions of the two are exchanged with each other. At the same time, both Chinese and Mongolian have the same phenomenon. Therefore, under the influence of the trilingual acquisition, the development of English teaching for this minority is greatly hindered.

### **2.2 The Influence of Textbooks Used in Mongolian, Chinese and English Trilingual Acquisition.**

Textbooks are the key tools in English teaching, which have significant effects in improving the quality of teaching. However, the current Mongolian nationality still uses the unified national English textbook in English teaching, so it is difficult to achieve the actual needs of Mongolian college students in the context of trilingual acquisition. Many contents and sentences in the unified English textbooks in China are usually presented in Chinese form, so they do not pay attention to the customs of this minority. Thus, they deviate from the English learning habits of the minority college students at the corresponding level and can not effectively apply the more active thinking characteristics of bilingual students. Moreover, most of the contents in the textbooks are different from the actual life of this minority, which will lead to the difficulty for the students to adapt to the content and thinking mode of the textbooks. This not only increases the difficulty of English teachers' teaching work, but also makes it difficult for students to understand and has a great impact on the quality of teaching.

### **3. The Enlightenment Analysis of Mongolian, Chinese and English Trilingual Acquisition on Improving Mongolian English Teaching**

#### **3.1 Teachers should Clarify the Characteristics of Mongolian, Chinese and English Trilingual Acquisition.**

Compared with previous bilingual acquisition, Mongolian, Chinese and English trilingual acquisition is not only based on the bilingual acquisition. It should be known that the integration of the third language has an intuitive impact on the way of learning and thinking of the three major languages. From the perspective of language transfer, if there are positive transfer phenomena, the efficiency of the three major languages can be improved. However, if there are negative transfer phenomena, then the three major languages will be hindered at the corresponding level at the same time. It can be seen that the incorrect application of trilingual acquisition will greatly affect the teaching of English teachers. Therefore, English teachers in Mongolian universities need to have a clear understanding of the characteristics of trilingual acquisition. Specifically speaking, English teachers need to further clarify the basic learning characteristics and expressions of Mongolian, Chinese and English, and know the similarities and differences of the three languages, so as to ensure that they can effectively deal with the difficulties encountered in the process of education, so as to give strong support to the minority college students in learning English, thus effectively embodying the positive transfer utility in the process of trilingual acquisition of Mongolian, Chinese and English, reducing the negative influence and influence scope under the trilingual environment, and erasing the negative transfer utility in the process of Mongolian, Chinese and English acquisition. In this way, the best expression of positive transfer utility in trilingual acquisition can be ensured, so as to effectively guide the minority college students to learn English, and ensure the quality of the minority English teaching to be improved.

#### **3.3 Designing English Textbooks that Suit the Characteristics of Mongolian College Students.**

At present, there are no textbooks specially designed for Mongolian college students to teach English, which limits the improvement of their English ability to a great extent and makes the local English teaching quality unable to improve. Therefore, the design of English textbooks suited to the characteristics of the Mongolian college students can ensure the effect of Mongolian, Chinese and English trilingual acquisition at the corresponding level. In order to improve the efficiency of English teaching for this minority, English teachers should effectively link up with the real needs of teaching, innovate and flexibly organize English teaching activities, effectively utilize the English teaching resources of this minority, and revise and rectify the contents of the textbooks currently used. For example, English teachers should have the courage to point out and delete the contents in the current English teaching materials that are far from or completely inconsistent with the actual life of college students of this minority and that do not have good value in English teaching in order to strengthen the pertinence of the English Teaching of this minority and enhance the efficiency of learning English knowledge of the local college students. Generally speaking, in the context of Mongolian, Chinese and English Trilingual acquisition, local English teachers need to effectively link up the real life experience of college students, and rectify the thinking mode and cultural structure of the textbooks, especially the content that the college students of this minority can not grasp, so as to lay a good foundation for the college students to learn English.

#### **3.4 Applying Diversified Mongolian English Teaching Methods.**

At present, Mongolian English teaching methods are still relatively backward, and it is difficult to reach an agreement with the needs of Mongolian, Chinese and English acquisition at the corresponding level, which will weaken the effectiveness of Mongolian English teaching. Therefore, the effective combination of contemporary diversified English teaching methods and the actual characteristics and requirements of the English teaching of this minority can greatly improve the effectiveness and quality of the English teaching of this minority. During the period of practical work, English teachers should innovate the current English teaching methods, such as introducing

the hierarchical teaching method into the minority English teaching, which can effectively deal with the polarization of the current minority English teaching work. Through the division of students' levels within the class by English teachers, different learning objectives are formulated for college students at different levels, so as to ensure that all students can learn the relevant knowledge and appreciate the charm of English learning, and ensure that the enthusiasm of college students of this minority in learning English can be stimulated, which is very important in improving the quality of Mongolian English teaching.

In addition to the above strategies, the contemporary education methods should also be effectively applied during the acquisition of Mongolian, Chinese and English. Multimedia technology should be used in Mongolian English teaching to improve the quality and efficiency of English teaching for this minority.

## References

- [1] Terenzini P T, Springer L, Pascarella T E, Nora A. Influences Affecting the Development of Students' Critical Thinking Skills [J]. *Research in Higher Education*, 1995:(1):23-39.
- [2] [Shulman, L.S. Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform[J]. *Harvard Educational Review*, 1987 (1).
- [3] Leung. I. Y. K. *Third Language Acquisition and Universal Grammar*[M]. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2009.
- [4] Cenoz J, Gorter D. Focus on multilingualism as an approach in education contexts. In A, Creese and A. Blackledge (eds.) , *Heteroglossia as Practice and Pedagogy*[M]. Berlin: Springer, 2014.
- [5] Krashen, S. P. *Second Language Acquisition & Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981.
- [6] Fouser, R. Problems and prospects in third language acquisition research[J]. *Language Research*, 1995 (31); Jessner, U. Metalinguistic awareness in multilingual: cognitive aspects of third language learning[J]. *Language Awareness* 1999( 8) .
- [7] Odlin, T. *Language transfer: cross - linguistic influence in language learning*[M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2001.