

Cultivation of Intercultural Communicative Competence in General Engineering Colleges and Universities from the Perspective of Constructivism

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Abstract: A series of problems have arisen in the process of intercultural communication among students in engineering colleges and universities, which shows that intercultural communication ability needs to be improved. In order to get rid of the present situation of low intercultural communicative competence, it is necessary to start with the cultivation of students' intercultural pragmatic competence, intercultural communicative awareness and intercultural adaptability. Based on this, the problems encountered in the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence were analyzed in this study, and the current situation of intercultural communicative competence of engineering students was obtained by means of on-the-spot investigation, quantitative research and qualitative analysis, then the cultivation strategies of intercultural communicative competence from the perspective of constructivism were further explored, with a view to providing theoretic reference for the reform and development of English teaching.

1. Introduction

With the globalization of economy and pattern, countries all over the world cultivate cross-cultural communication talents to meet the needs of the times. At present, the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence in China is carried out under the combination of College English education and related cultures. However, for non-English majors, especially engineering colleges, the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence is wrapped in a baggage. Because of the bad atmosphere of learning English in engineering colleges, it is difficult to get rid of local cultural habits and inherent communicative consciousness to communicate with foreign culturist in cross-cultural communication. At the same time, it is difficult for college students who have long been learning English in the context of local culture and have local communicative habits to form intercultural communicative competence in foreign language learning. The process of foreign language acquisition itself is difficult, and it is even more difficult to understand the cultural connotation of language. Although the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence has undergone many years of reform and changes, the domestic professional teacher resources are limited, and the intercultural communicative competence of engineering college students is generally low. Nowadays, universities should carry out more cross-cultural communication activities with local characteristics to cultivate high-quality talents with strong linguistic competence and social perception of communicative behavior, excellent professional knowledge and international vision.

2. Problems Encountered in the Cultivation of Intercultural Communicative Competence

In order to understand the current situation of intercultural communicative competence in engineering colleges, a set of questionnaires was designed to investigate some college students in Chengdu. According to the survey of students' foreign cultural knowledge, intercultural communicative performance and intercultural communicative awareness in English-speaking countries, students generally have the following problems:

The first problem is the lack of the second education class. The way of intercultural education in China is mainly to grant theoretical knowledge in the first classroom. Current teaching modes mainly focus on the teaching activities of College English and some general education courses. Few studies have been done on the second classroom of cultivating students' intercultural communicative

competence, which causes that students' knowledge structure is chaotic and their understanding level is shallow, and they can't systematically understand and successfully use intercultural communicative competence in intercultural communication [1].

The second problem is that teaching mainly deals with examinations and is independent of quality education. For a long time, many domestic universities have regarded the passing rate of CET-4 and CET-6 as one of the hard indicators of English teaching quality [2]. Examination-oriented education will directly result in high scores, low competence and lack of students' intercultural communicative competence.

The third is the wrong way of thinking in learning. For the students of engineering colleges who are not English majors, they apply their inherent thinking habits and thinking habits to English learning, which results in students learning only superficial knowledge of intercultural communication but not improving their ability [3]. Teachers' requirements for the cultivation of students' intercultural communicative competence in College English teaching in China are closely related to the teaching content. In intercultural communicative competence teaching, teachers only pay attention to the content of book knowledge, but there is still room for improvement in guiding students to read foreign cultural books independently, to absorb knowledge in related fields and to understand foreign cultural knowledge [4].

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research objects

In this study, 90 students of four majors of 2016 in an engineering college in Chengdu were investigated. Through on-the-spot investigation, quantitative research and qualitative analysis, the present situation of intercultural communication competence was obtained. The conclusions of the investigation and analysis were universal to a certain extent. The questionnaire consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions. The first part was about intercultural communication knowledge, with 13 questions; the second part was about self-assessment of English language competence, the relationship between intercultural communication and teaching environment, with a total of 7 questions. A total of 90 questionnaires were sent out and 88 were recovered, 84 of which could be used for statistics.

3.2 Results and analysis

Questionnaires on intercultural communication knowledge were designed. English language competence is the basis of intercultural communicative competence and the guarantee of smooth intercultural communication, which is mainly embodied in five aspects: listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. The list of students' self-assessment results in these five aspects is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Hierarchical distribution of English language competence self-assessment (percentage)

	Good	Preferably	General	Bad
Listening	2.4%	33.3%	39.3%	25%
Speaking	0	22.6%	33.3%	44.1%
Reading	0	52.4%	40.5%	7.1%
Writing	2.4%	46.4%	44.1%	7.1%
Translation	2.4%	27.4%	45.2%	25%

As can be seen from the table above, students' reading ability is the best, followed by writing ability, listening comprehension ability, translation ability and oral expression ability, among which listening, reading and writing ability are the key aspects of CET-4 and CET-6, and reading comprehension accounts for the largest proportion in CET-4. Oral expression ability is directly related to intercultural communication ability, but this part is the weakest part of students' language ability, this is related to the current situation of CET-4 and CET-6 oriented college English teaching in China over the years. The direct consequence of this kind of examination-oriented education has

led to such phenomena as "high scores and low abilities" and students' weak intercultural communicative competence.

Students' understanding of intercultural communicative competence mainly focuses on students' mastery of their intercultural communicative knowledge, their concern for their intercultural communicative level and cultural phenomena, and their understanding of the importance of Western communicative customs. The results are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Self-assessment of intercultural communication level

Intercultural Communication Level	Good	General	Bad	Poor
Number of people	0	27	25	32
Percentage	0	32.1%	29.8%	38.1%

As can be seen from Table 2, at present, the students of engineering colleges and universities generally believe that their intercultural communication level is not high. The main reasons include: firstly, more and more foreign enterprises have set up factories and developed in China, which provides graduates with the opportunity to find a good job, also requires graduates to master and be skilled in using foreign languages to communicate with foreigners; secondly, nowadays, students are more and more broad-minded, more and more aware of the importance of foreign exchanges, and show great interest in foreign cultures and customs; thirdly, these students are all graduates of science and engineering, the lack of humanistic knowledge also leads to their interest and enthusiasm in understanding foreign culture.

4. Cultivation of Intercultural Communicative Competence from the Perspective of Constructivism

The constructivist characteristics of English subject determine that language learning is bound to be characterized by constructivism. Therefore, the cultivation of students' intercultural communicative competence is also a process of continuous construction of knowledge and competence through learners' active exploration and consultation and cooperation [5]. The purpose of cultivating students' intercultural communicative competence is to help them construct the cultural knowledge and significance of the target language and improve their cultural literacy of the target language.

4.1 Effective utilization of rich network teaching resources

Constructivism emphasizes the role of learning environment in learning, stresses the creation of real situations, and holds that the real context is the necessary prerequisite for "meaning construction". In teaching, teachers use network media to combine cultural content with language teaching to popularize intercultural communication knowledge, and the classroom changes from static teacher indoctrination to dynamic communication with abundant pictures and texts, which fully reflects the situational and social nature of learning [6]. It is worth noting that the highly developed society of information and network technology requires a wide range of cross-cultural communication, but in the limited classroom teaching, teachers can't list one by one [7]. Therefore, students can use the computer network to independently acquire a large amount of knowledge information from teachers, so that they can change from the recipient of knowledge to the active constructor of knowledge meaning, which not only exercises the ability of independent analysis and problem solving, but also gives full play to the autonomy of learning.

4.2 Situational teaching model of communicative interaction

Constructivist theory holds that social interaction and practice play a more critical role in the construction of knowledge meaning. Therefore, language teaching must strive to create a communicative atmosphere. In classroom teaching, teachers provide students with real or simulated communication scenarios for exploratory and cooperative learning [8]. Under the constructivist model, English teaching should focus on the dynamic process of realizing meaning construction through situational, cooperative, conversational and meaning construction, with teachers and students

as the center of simulated authenticity task. So situational teaching is one of the main teaching modes advocated by constructivism [9]. This teaching method regards English learning as a cognitive process, pays attention to students' active participation, and cultivates students to choose the right way and meaning in cross-cultural communication, so as to achieve the desired communicative purpose. Constructivism emphasizes the initiative, situationality and sociality of language learners, and emphasizes exploring unknown knowledge and constructing new meanings from existing knowledge. Therefore, this oral practice begins with controlled dialogue and gradually transits to semi-open training, so that students can actively link life experience with language activities on the basis of meaningful thinking activities and driven by real communicative needs, thus completing the construction of meaning.

4.3 Teaching strategies for developing students in an all-round way

One of the goals of university education is to cultivate students' lifelong autonomous learning ability, so it is necessary to pay attention to the cultivation of students' autonomous learning ability in teaching strategies. Constructivism holds that the role of teachers lies in initiating and promoting students' knowledge construction. In order to cultivate students' intercultural communicative competence in foreign language teaching, teachers should guide students to adopt positive teaching strategies with guiding and promoting effects on the basis of their interest in what they have learned [10]. In addition, constructivism attaches great importance to the role of social interaction in learning, so in the classroom, teachers should design some activities to effectively promote communication and cooperation between learners.

Constructivism holds that intercultural communicative competence is a manifestation of multi-dimensional and comprehensive quality. On the theoretical level, it includes not only the theory of cross-cultural communication such as cultural knowledge and language competence, but also the skills of cross-cultural communication in some specific situations in practice. Teachers should engage students in the reality of intercultural communication, arrange various types of intercultural communication practice activities in a planned and organized way, and encourage students to participate actively.

5. Conclusion

The learning concept and teaching mode advocated by constructivism conform to the real requirement of foreign language talents in the information age and to the requirement of quality education. The cultivation of intercultural communicative competence from the perspective of constructivism emphasizes the cultivation of learners' problem-solving ability through their active participation and interaction, so as to make students more competitive in the future international community. Therefore, in future English teaching, colleges and teachers should attach importance to the cultivation of students' intercultural communicative competence, should not only clarify the cultivation objectives of intercultural communicative competence, strengthen oral English training and enhance oral English expression, but also introduce cultural communicative knowledge, broaden students' English communicative knowledge and reform English teaching methods.

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