On the Causes of Tcsl Teachers' Stress and Anxiety Coming from Teaching Online

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Abstract: Teachers' psychological and emotional conditions plays a vital and essential impact on their students and the whole teaching and learning process. Based on the interviews with teachers and their students and classroom observation, the Online teaching and learning activities puts some amount of stress and burden on TCSL (teaching Chinese as a second language) teachers when they have to make sure their online teaching has the same good effects as their offline teaching. This paper centres on the features of online teaching from TCSL teachers' perspective, and make a detailed analysis on the factors contributing their fears and anxieties from 3 different angles of physical teaching settings, their foreign students and TCSL teachers themselves. In the last part, some measures which potentially works well are put forward to reduce TCSL teachers fears and anxieties, giving a helping hand to them to carry out their online teaching more effectively.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the economic globalization and the sharply increasing influence of Chinese economy on the world, more and more people and businesses from all over the world come all the way to work, live and study in China. Learning Chinese is becoming increasingly popular among foreigners who wants to go to China to bring their dreams to fulfillment. At present, more than 330 Chinese universities have launched teaching Chinese as a foreign language. And each year up to 40 thousand foreign students choose Chinese as their second language or foreign language.

However, as result of the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 in China and across the world, TCLS teachers are compelled to move their traditional and routine classroom teaching and learning to online classroom. This sudden transformation of teaching and learning style produces a huge test and challenge to all TCSL teachers in a wide variety of ways. The big change in the style of teaching and learning challenge them in designing different types of teaching and learning activities which largely differ from the traditional physical classroom teaching and learning in which teachers can monitor, direct, and evaluate the interactions between students and teachers and among students in a more controlled way. They also have to spend much more time and energy to get themselves improved not only in giving vivid lectures but also adapted to online teaching and learning settings.

Language teaching and learning is a process of emotional interaction and communication which involves teachers and students in various academic activities instead of a process of the output of

simply words and pronunciations[1]. Emotional factors from teachers and students plays an extraordinary part in language teaching and learning. TCSL teachers tend to become more stressful and anxious because they are exposed to foreign students who have a completely quite alien culture. They are confronted with culture shocks, language barriers which involve in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Still, the fact that the ways of learning which foreign students are used to fail to accord with the style of teaching that Chinese teachers are accustomed to remains a puzzle for TCSL teachers to work out, which adds to their stress and anxiety.

2. The Unique Features of Online Teaching and Learning: from Tcsl teachers' Perspective

From teachers' perspective, the unique features of online teaching and learning are presented in the following 4 ways.

2.1 Varieties of Teaching and Learning Forms in an Unlimited Time and Space

Compared with traditional offline classroom teaching and learning, online teaching and learning interactions manage to step out of time and space limits. Traditionally, it is a mission impossible to complete for any teachers to conduct their teaching without physical classrooms. Also, they have a fixed class schedule to stick to which set teachers into a frame. But online teaching and learning succeed in breaking the frame into pieces, which makes it possible for TCSL teachers to start their work at any time and any places appropriate for effective and efficient teaching and learning. Online teaching and learning expands the length of time and width of space, facilitating teaching and learning in a big way.

For another, more forms of teaching and learning could be found online.   traditional classroom teaching and learning tend to teacher-dominated, TCSL teachers spend much time explaining language points, answering questions, and observing their students. there are quite few ways for students to get involved in interaction among them and between their teachers[2]. While on the other hand, online teaching and learning could provide many more interesting, effective, popular forms for students and teachers. Video teaching and Wechat teaching are the two widely used to conduct online activities. Students get much more relaxed and initiative when they get involved because they don't have to face to face their teachers.

Theoretically, varieties of online teaching and learning in an unlimited time and space can contribute greatly to the teaching efficiency and convenience. But in reality, it can also add much to TCSL teachers' stress and anxiety in that they have to devote much more time to adapting themselves to the new model of teaching and learning.

2.2 A Much Extended Period of Time for Preparing for Online Lessons

In order to get over the disadvantages brought about by online teaching and learning, TCSL teachers are compelled to make lots of preparations for online lessons by investing more time in it. For old-fashioned offline lessons, a teaching plan and text apps can afford to give a lecture while online preparing lessons not only requires TCSL teachers to make ppts, write a teaching plan but also to make sure that their electronic device ready to put to use and how they can handle the situation in which something comes up during the session. And this will surely prolong the time to make preparations. A much extended time for preparations for online lessons will certainly tire TCSL teachers out which will greatly increase the level of their fears and anxiety.

Moreover, TCSL teachers will feel a sense of being a failure when their online lessons don't go smoothly as they expect or the teaching materials they devote much time and energy to fail to work out well because something unexpected occurs such as a sudden cut on electricity. If that occurs

from time to time, TCSL teachers tend to believe however much time and energy they consume to prepare for the lessons, they will not necessarily be brought into full play.

2.3 Unstable and Slow Connection of Internet for Online Teaching and Learning

A stable and rapid and instant connection of internet make it possible for online teaching and learning to happen smoothly and go well. If Either TCSL teachers or foreign students cannot have access to Internet or the Internet they are using is not stable or the Internet works at a very slow rate, the online lessons will certainly be blocked, delayed or stopped occasionally. Any blockings, delays or stops break down the smooth flow of online teaching and learning, which has a negative impact on the teaching and learning because TCSL teachers compelled themselves to stop to tackle the unexpected disturbance to distract their attentions and students also stay unfocused.

At the same time, TCSL teachers have to get themselves familiar with their work on the computer including but not limited to making rolls, answering questions, giving assignment and preparing for any electrical teaching and learning materials to guarantee that online interactions go as well as possible. However, screened by the electric screen, students fail to work well with each other at any practical drills especially during the speaking and listening course. Any disconnections of the Internet without doubt contribute greatly to the smooth flow of the teaching and learning process.

2.4 Little Instant Interactions among Students and Tcsl Teachers

During the session of online teaching and learning, it's impossible for TCSL teachers to observe the facial expressions of students to find out how devoted their students are to the online interactions. Only by repeated inquiry and confirmation, can TCSL teachers work out whether their students can catch up with the process. Once they cannot receive their students learning feedback in time, they have got to think over what are the causes of the delays. Do the students cannot understand the teaching and learning materials or are the materials not appropriate for them? TCSL teachers fail to receive accurate feedback from their students online, which constitutes a big dilemma for teachers conduct their online teaching and learning.

3. Analysis on the Causes of Tcsl Teachers Feeling Stressed and Anxious

In this research, qualitative methods and ways are used to make a detailed analysis on the causes of TCSL teachers feeling stressed or anxious while teaching online. The causes could be deduced based on the data obtained from interviewing TCSL teachers and their foreign students, observing before-class teaching plans, in-class observations of how the teaching and learning online could be conducted. 10 questions are included in the questionnaire and two choices are attached to each question. The interviewees are required to answer the questions according to what it is like in the real online teaching and learning interactions. Last, the data will be collected for the analysis.

Four important factors play an essential role in leading TCSL teacher to feel stressed or anxious while they are launching their teaching and learning online.

3.1 Stress and Anxiety Caused by the Transformation of Teaching Online

Among all the contributing factors of TCSL teachers' stress and anxiety, the transformation of offline teaching to online teaching overwhelms other factors. TCSL teachers are confronted a big challenge of preparing for all the teaching materials from the very start, designing brand-new appropriate teaching ways for online education, getting familiar with all the devices involved in

online teaching in a very short period of time. And that imposes professional, technical as well as mental tress and anxiety on them. Even some of them are at a loss as to what they have to do to tackle the transformation from offline to online.

To-the point explanation and more drills get directly to the essence of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, which requires TCSL teachers redesign their ways of teaching appropriate for online learning. Online classroom interactions and classroom management are the two essential parts of online teaching and learning. Both of them can help teachers and students with teaching and learning. In the traditional offline classroom, when students meet with difficult sentence patterns or phrases or expressions, their teachers can solve the problem by face-to-face ask-and-answer, or with the help of concrete objects or body languages. However, TCSL teachers cann't make this take place online because the cameras attached to the computer cannot cover teachers body languages. They can only cover their facial expressions.

On the other hand, in traditional offline classroom, TCSL teachers can manage to make in-time adjustments to the teaching contents and activities by careful observation of their students' reactions, their facial expressions and how they are seated. any boredom shown on their reactions, expressions and the way they are seated gives a strong signal that their students are uninterested in what they are doing. However, during online education, some teachers and students choose to switch off the cameras. Thus, teachers cannot monitor and manage effectively the teaching and learning[3]. The advantages of face-to-face interactions in offline classrooms cannot be brought to full play in that teachers fail to monitor their students when they stay focused on their teaching.

3.2 Stress and Anxiety Brought about by Modern Teaching Facilities

Traditional offline classroom teaching and learning materials consist of textbooks, paper materials, the blackboard, and ppts. Even though they are modernized by types of ppts, audios and videos, they in fact have only upgraded ways of teaching and learning. Still, TCSL teachers conduct the face-to face interactions with their students, which makes it feasible for teachers to observe carefully their students expressions or their performance to adjust their teaching. Similarly, their students can understand, have deeper insight into what they are learning and what their teachers want to convey with the help of their teachers' body languages and facial expressions. Differing from the old-fashioned teaching, online educations involves a large amount of technical use of new and modern electric devices, such as the use of microwaves, speakers, volunm adjustment, and the connection of devices.

The use of new electric devices constitute huge challenges for TCSL teachers. They have to get skilled at how to use them and how to fix them when something comes up while teaching. The biggest challenge is that between them and their students stands a electric screen separating them, which confined the teaching and learning interactions to a very small electric frame. The small frame greatly cut down the originality from teachers' teaching and the initiative of students' learning.

Interactions among students and between teachers are a part of the process of learning Chinese as a second or foreign language. Interactions only take place when teachers ask students questions or students do language drill practice under the guidance of their teachers. These interactions are carried out in words or through human voice, which results in the difficulty in emotional communications between TCSL teachers and their students and any discussions among students. Meanwhile, TCSL teachers get distracted by the working of the computer and other attached electric device, thus neglecting their students' learning. The difficulty of putting online teaching and learning in control renders most TCSL teachers anxious about how much their students manage to learn and understand what they are instructing.

Also, brand-new teaching facilities and ways impose TCSL teachers a huge test for their capability of online instruction and capacity for making adjustment. The new way of instruction integrates videos, live videos, answer questions online into a whole.

And it requires TCSL teachers to equip themselves with new skills at using modern technologies to make ppts, videos and selecting and integrating the information for online instruction. They have to upgraded to 2.0 version to be qualified for online instructions.

3.3 Professional Stress and Anxiety Stemming from Tcsl Teachers Themselves

Faced with new teaching facilities and online teaching settings, TCSL teachers are forced to get themselves armed with new teaching ideas and concepts. It has always been a tough test for them how to exactly pull down online teaching and learning materials to guarantee that the teaching objectives are all successfully achieved. Unlike the offline instructions, they no longer stand in the classroom face-to-face with their lively and high spirited initiative students. Instead, they sit in front of a computer gazing their students on the computer screen in an enclosed and absolutely quiet setting. They go through their whole teaching process on the dead computer giving lectures, showing ppts, making explanations, asking and answering questions, instructing their students in drill practice, and giving assignment.

This tedious teaching way without doubt put out TCSL teachers passion and affection because they don't feel any little bit of lively teaching and learning atmosphere. Worse still, online teaching confines TCSL teachers to sitting in front of the computer because once they move and go out of their students' sight only for a little while they will be surely confused about where the teacher is, what is going on, thus interrupting the teaching. This sitting in front of the computer without any motion and gazing the computer for a long time lead to a very serious consequence. That does much damage to TCSL teachers' health, which raises the level of stress and anxiety.

3.4 Being Anxious about Their students' Attitudes Towards Learning Chinese

Online teaching materials take electric forms while students themselves need to prepare for paper textbooks and other paper-form materials. Some TCSL teachers tend to be anxious that their students don't get the materials ready necessary for online instruction, that they don't work effectively with them during online education, that they don't have enough initiative to learn, and that they fail to do the assignment. TCSL teachers are also worried that their students fail to make progress in learning Chinese as a second language if things continue to go on like that way they are anxious about for a long time. The accumulation of stress and anxiety for ages takes its toll on TCSL teachers' career development.

When teaching and learning takes place, the results will be greatly affected for worse if interactions between students and teachers are strictly confined to computers while offline interactions are completely neglected. Students have to take more initiative and stay more focused to learn online. When students are doing online learning, they tend to get distracted, lose their learning motivation, and give up halfway because there is no learning atmosphere when they are alone working. It remains a tough task how TCSL teachers manage to cultivate more initiative in their students' learning, to make it a sure thing that they can finish the assignment, and to increase more interactions offline between their students.

4. Countermeasures to Get over Tcsl teachers' Online Stress and Anxiety

TCSL teachers and the schools they work for play an essential role in conducting online instructions. TCSL teachers takes on the overweighing duties of online instruction and the schools

provide enough backup they need to conduct their teaching. So effective countermeasures should be taken to get TCLS teachers upgraded and urge their schools to equip them enough support on their online instructions.

4.1 Getting Physically Fit to Adapt to the New Style of Instruction

Take initiative to work out regularly outdoors. Working out regularly not only makes TCSL teachers stronger, more energetic, pleasant both in mind and in health, but also relieves fatigue and muscle stretch resulting from sitting in front of a computer for a long time. They can do sports three times a week to get themselves physically fit. Being physically fit and taking a positive attitude help them cope with the transformation of teaching and learning styles. When confronted with some certain psychological problems, TCSL teachers can also seek psychologists for help. Besides, they can manage to take down their levels of stress and anxiety by doing meditation to resolve the problems to achieve all teaching and learning objectives.

4.2 Taking More Courage to Embrace New Technologies for New Ways of Instruction

Taking more courage together with a positive attitude makes it easier for TCSL teachers to get themselves skilled in methods and techniques employed in online instructions and to actively get themselves emotionally ready to embrace and happily make full use of new things and new technologies which facilitate online instructions. They can have access to modern science and technology to assist their instruction in data collecting, data analysis and so on.

A good case in point is Dingding apps in which students can clock in and clock out. Dingding apps can also gather statistics of student attendance, record the length of time students spend on learning, keeping a record of what students discuss, make a analysis on the rate of being right answers to questions. All of these can help TCSL teachers have a deeper insight into what goes on with their students in learning. If Dingding data shows that something wrong happens with their students' learning, TCSL teachers can manage to make necessary adjustments on their online instruction.

4.3 Applying Various Teaching Ways with More Communications between Tcsl Teachers and Their Students.

TCSL teachers can make a merry, and relaxing teaching and learning atmosphere online to cut down the sense of distance between them and their students on the computer by effectively applying various exotic and fruitful teaching ways to get to a desired teaching and learning. More communications between their students should be highly encouraged. Communications with students can help TCSL teachers learn more about what their students are interested in learning, what kind of teaching ways their students are more used to. Keeping in mind what are right for their students, TCSL teachers get emotionally, psychologically and mentally relaxed whey they work on their online instructions.

4.4 Setting Reasonable and Feasible Teaching Objectives

Any teaching activities has its planned and designed teaching aims and objectives. It is true of online instructions. But unlike offline instruction TCSL teachers are used to, the objectives of online instruction are much harder to achieve because new ways of teaching and learning[4]. Consequently, TCSL teachers should set a reasonable teaching objective that can possibly achieved. Any online objectives of teaching as high as or higher than offline ones should be avoided. Unfeasible online

objectives add much to TCSL teachers' stress and anxiety that they can never accomplish the teaching aims whatever they do.

4.5 Gaining Support from Schools to Promote Their Online Instruction

Online instruction is a brand-new model of teaching and learning which has a large space to develop and has a great promising future. But most of TCSL teachers are not experienced enough to tackle online instruction, which makes it an obstacle to online education. To qualify TCSL teachers for online teaching, their schools have a lot to do. They can cooperate with their local education authorities and relative research departments to make studies on online instruction. Based on the peculiar features of teaching Chinese as a second language, they can also offer their TCSL teachers expert and professional advice appropriate for learners of different ages and learners with different learning conditions. High quality teaching resources the schools will build up are also a good source of greatly improved online instruction.

Feedback research and assessment research on online instruction which can assist TCSL teachers in promoting online education and relieve their online stress and anxiety for lack of online teaching experience should be strengthened. Schools are advised to organize online teaching seminars to share and exchange ideas experience, effective teaching activities and ways popular among students. TCSL teachers can make full use of the seminars to explore online ways of instruction. Schools should also take effective steps to cultivate TCSL teachers in their capacity in computer information qualifications and improve their abilities to have access to online information and integrate the information needed in online education. TCSL teachers are sure to take down their online stress and anxiety with lots of help and support from their schools.

4.6 Attending Psychological Lectures to Reduce Stress and Anxiety

Schools should start regularly psychological lectures for TCSL teachers to ease their mental stress by working with psychologists or with their own psychological teachers. By attending psychological lectures, TCSL teachers can learn how to tackle and reduce their online pressure. Attending psychological lectures regularly can greatly take down their online stress and in the end TCSL teachers can manage to live with it.

5. Conclusions

With the development of the Internet and the possible norm of COVID-19, online instruction to teach Chinese as a second language will surely become a popular tendency. TCSL teachers should come to realize that it's quite normal for them to feel stressed or anxious because of different factors and that high level of stress and anxiety takes its toll on online instruction while medium level of stress and anxiety can be an advantage of conducting online instruction.

TCSL teachers have to take the initiative to change their teaching concept and method and adapt themselves to new teaching facilities and settings. TCSL teachers' confidence and optimism towards teaching originality and their level of mind satisfaction have a great impact on online instruction. Therefore, TCSL teachers have to take initiative to improve their psychological quality to get over online teaching stress and anxiety. Only in this way, can TCSL teachers improve their online education to successfully achieve the teaching objectives.

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