

The Blended Learning in Developing Undergraduates' Intercultural Pragmatic Competence in International Publicity

Qu Hui

Fundamental Department, Engineering University of PAP, Xi'an, China

qh3798150@sina.com

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Abstract: The undergraduates' intercultural pragmatic incompetence in international publicity has caused big concern in college English teaching. To acquire the intercultural pragmatic competence in international publicity, and to promote cross-cultural communication competence, the corresponding teaching and training should be required. Therefore, this paper proposes to design the teaching based on blended learning which is popular in the field of education in order to improve college students' intercultural pragmatic competence.

1. Introduction

In recent years, blended learning has become the focus of college education. In the new era, blended learning is endowed with a new connotation, which embodies the educational concept of "teacher-led, student-centered", combining the advantages of traditional classroom teaching and online learning. This is of great significance to change the current situation of "time-consuming and low efficiency" in College English teaching, and provides a new way for College English teaching. At present, scholars have done a lot of research on blended teaching in various disciplines and periods, but there is a lack of research on its application in the development of intercultural pragmatic competence in College English teaching. How can we create a good learning and teaching approach for the development of college students' intercultural pragmatic competence in international publicity?

The design of blended learning model in intercultural pragmatic competence development is to be explored, gives full play to the advantages of blended learning model, and changes the inefficiency in college students' intercultural pragmatic competence. With the blended learning model, massive resources and materials can be applied to the intercultural pragmatic competence development to realize the optimization of classroom teaching. Moreover, real cross-cultural communication in international publicity can be simulated and provided online for college students with information technology, so as to meet their personalized learning needs and improve students' intercultural pragmatic competence.

2. International publicity language competence and intercultural pragmatic competence

International publicity in the modern time is an important means to enhance cultural influence, promote national image and seize the initiative of international discourse. As the first means of international publicity, language competence is also one symbol of the soft power of China. The "Make China know the world, make the world know China" international publicity activities can not go smoothly without the publicity language competence. Publicity language competence refers to the application of English language needed in the process of foreign exchange, and publicity. Meanwhile the publicity language competence is closely related to cross-cultural communication, which involves and is restricted by many cross-cultural factors.

The concept of intercultural pragmatic competence is evolved from the combination of pragmatic competence and intercultural communication competence. First of all, pragmatic competence refers

to the appropriate use of knowledge of a language in various situations according to different purposes. Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to use one language to achieve communicative purposes. It refers to the ability to correctly and flexibly organize language materials into discourse, so as to accurately express a specific ideological content, so it is called expressive competence. Language expression is always targeted at a certain communication, in a specific time and space conditions, and used to express the ideological content to the specific object.

Although there is particular emphasis laid on the different competence, whether it is to use language according to the content or purpose of expression, or to use language according to the communication object or language environment, the selection of language materials and the combination and adjustment of discourse forms should be focused on. Therefore, to master the English language used in intercultural publicity, to acquire the intercultural pragmatic competence, and to promote cross-cultural communication, the corresponding teaching and training for college students should be requested.

3. The undergraduates' intercultural pragmatic incompetence and ways to develop their intercultural pragmatic competence

College English traditional classroom teaching is faced up with limited teaching hours and large class size. Badly it is more teacher-centered and focused on the development of students' basic language proficiency of grammar and vocabulary, which led to the students' lack of intercultural pragmatic competence. For example, at the listening and speaking level, students have little idea about culture related slang and idioms, which makes it difficult for them to accurately understand the relevant context. And in translation, due to the influence of mother tongue, Chinese culture and negative language transfer, it is difficult for students to correctly translate the target language. Furthermore, there are almost no courses of intercultural communication or pragmatics in College English curriculum. As a result, most students do not understand taboos in English language and culture, which leads to their embarrassment in intercultural communication. Even worse, they do not understand the values and ways of thinking of people in English speaking countries, and wrongly apply Chinese thinking or values to the cross-cultural communication.

Intercultural communication competence consists of three parts: knowledge, motivation and skills. It is a higher goal to require the communicators to have cognitive, emotional and behavioral competence as well. The existing models of intercultural communication competence can be roughly divided into three categories: constituent elements, development stages and dialogue interaction. Byram's model of intercultural communication competence is very influential in the field of foreign language education. From the four dimensions of knowledge, skills, attitude and critical thinking, the model divides intercultural communication competence into attitude, knowledge, interpretation and connection skills, discovery skills and communication skills, as shown in Figure 1.

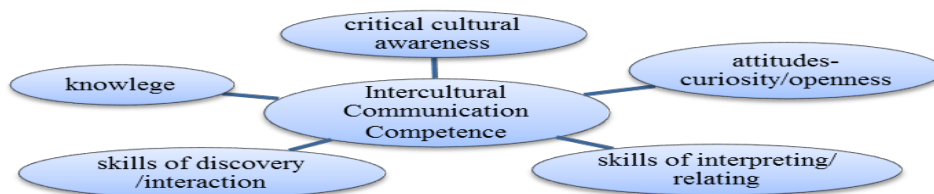


Figure 1 Byram's model of intercultural communication competence

Most importantly, the linguistic competence can be developed through traditional classroom teaching, while the sociolinguistic competence can be acquired in fieldwork, and the discourse competence can be reinforced by autonomous learning. Hence, only by combining the advantages of both traditional classroom teaching and online learning, can we achieve the best learning effect in this regard.

4. The conception and characteristics of blended learning model

The definition of blended learning is that the core of blended learning theory is to optimize the academic achievement corresponding to the learning goal by using appropriate learning technology for the right person at the right time and transferring appropriate skills with the right learning style. Blended learning model was originally used for enterprise training, and later it was introduced into the field of education. The most intuitive understanding of blended teaching is the integration of information technology and traditional teaching model. Blended learning is the integration of science and technology or media with traditional classroom teaching activities as shown in Figure 2:

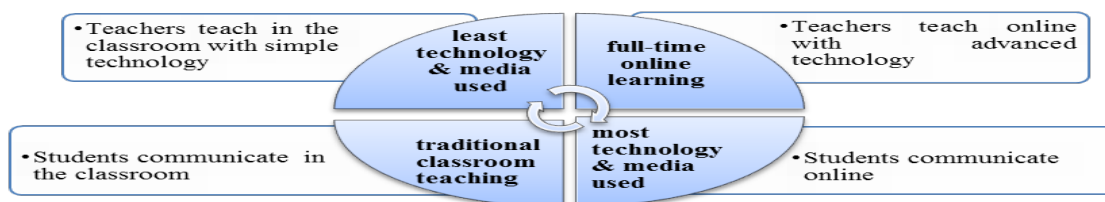


Figure 2 Blended learning

Blended learning is a new concept put forward by the international educational community after in-depth thinking about online learning. It is the trend of future educational informationization and development, which brings about the change and improvement of educational concepts and teaching ideas. The purpose of blended learning is to achieve the optimization of learning effect; it is not only the blending of learning methods, but also the blending of educational theory, instructional design, instructional media and other teaching elements to achieve complementary advantages. Blended learning is to combine the advantages of traditional face-to-face learning model with e-learning. It not only gives full play to the leading role of teachers in guiding and monitoring the teaching process, but also elicits and reflects the initiative, enthusiasm and creativity of learners as the main body in learning and teaching. Undoubtedly, the blended learning with combination of online and offline teaching can be applied to the development of intercultural pragmatic competence for college students.

5. The design of blended learning model in undergraduates' intercultural pragmatic competence development

According to the four major cultural teaching activities of cultural learning, cultural comparison and contrast, cultural exploration and orientation of intercultural mediator in English language teaching, the blended learning model is mainly designed from three aspects: before class, during class and after class as shown in Figure 3:

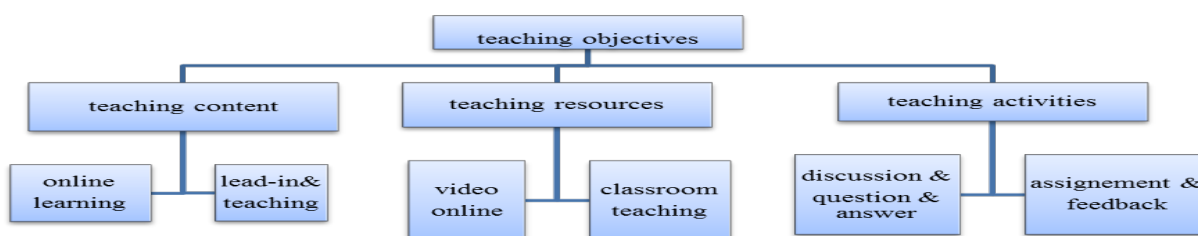


Figure 3 design of blended learning model in intercultural pragmatic competence development

Through the online teaching and learning before class, teachers design authentic and challenging intercultural communication learning tasks in intercultural publicity based on the production oriented approach, involving the development of intercultural pragmatic competence in speaking, writing, translation and other aspects. Intercultural courses of MOOC, lectures on cultural topics, videos of large-scale international and domestic activities and conferences are used as the learning resources for

intercultural pragmatic competence developing. Students can adjust their learning progress to their different language proficiency. With the teacher's guidance, students carry out autonomous learning, and implement group cooperation, so as to meet the teaching objective of improving the students' understanding of knowledge about cross-cultural communication.

Through the offline teaching and learning in class, teachers integrate cross-cultural teaching into the framework of pragmatic teaching, focusing on the completion of students' pre class learning tasks. Teachers should not only teach intercultural pragmatic knowledge, but also lecture in cultural conventions and communication norms behind the language. The effective interaction between teachers and students is achieved face to face and the efficient teaching is maximized. And students improve and apply their intercultural pragmatic competence through group work.

Through the online teaching and learning after class, teachers urge students to reflect, apply and internalize the distilled pre class learning and in class content. Through online tasks such as cross-cultural pragmatic project, cross-cultural case study and analysis, virtual cross-cultural communication and cultural performance, students can directly participate in cross-cultural real-time interaction, and improve their ability and creativity to solve practical problems in cross-cultural communication by means of diversified evaluation methods such as peer evaluation and online evaluation. It is the teaching goal to evaluate what students have learned, what production they have accomplished and what competence they have achieved in cross-cultural teaching.

The blended learning model in the stages of pre class, in class and after class gradually increases the challenge with the cognitive process for students, which sets clear task requirements, provides a cross-cultural knowledge and language support, and offers cross-cultural pragmatic competence practice platform, thereby students gradually complete the learning tasks through self-regulated learning.

7. Conclusions

As an important dimension of College English teaching, the cultivation of intercultural pragmatic competence deepens the connotation of College English curriculum and makes English teaching more meaningful. The integration of intercultural pragmatic language teaching into College English teaching can promote the instrumental and humanistic features of College English curriculum. With the inevitable trend of the popularization of communication and mobile intelligent devices, the blended learning is facing innovation. In essence, the connotation of the blended learning model expands with the change of teaching conditions. Therefore, teachers should study the blended learning theory, explore the innovation of education and teaching model based on new technology to promote the development of blended learning with much better education resources sharing. The emergence of various online learning platforms and mobile learning apps has brought a brand new development for blended learning. Hereby, the development of undergraduates' intercultural pragmatic competence will be better accomplished with the blended learning.

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