

A Study of the Roles of Teachers in English teaching in China from the Perspective of Interculturality

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Abstract: The objective of the paper mainly studies the roles of teachers in English teaching in China with the theory of interculturality. Foreign language learning is an effective carrier of intercultural communication. And during foreign language learning understanding its culture is inseparable. An intermediate culture between the source language culture and the target language culture, which is called interculturality, can be generated in the process of cultural internalization. On the basis of the intercultural model proposed by X. D. Dai and G. M. Chen, the paper illustrates the four roles of teachers in English teaching from the perspective of interculturality, i.e., motivating emotions, enlightening cognition, guiding behavior and regulating morality.

1. Introduction of interculturality

In the early 1980s, some scholars in China begin to study the intercultural communication in China started around 1980. In its infancy the study mainly focused on the similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign cultures and their static characteristics. However, the development of a certain culture is a continuous dynamic process. The scholars generally get into the essential functions of intercultural communication and form its mechanism by studying the dynamic characteristics of intercultural communication. Accordingly, some scholars define inter-culture as the relationship generated by the interaction between different cultures. And inter-culture does not refer to the existing cultures themselves, but a new culture which is mutual integration and reorganization of the existing cultures. Now many scholars name the new cultural as interculturality, which can vividly reflect the internal process of intercultural interaction in the process of intercultural communication. In the study of intercultural communication, mutual integration and reorganization of the different can be necessarily recognized as the elementary subject. Only by grasping the correlation between cultures can the study of interculturality be conducted effectively. To an extent, interculturality is the intermediate culture between the source language culture and the target language culture.

2. Intercultural concept in English teaching in China

In China, educators always say that classroom is the home of teaching, and teachers are the core of teaching. In recent years, the reform of English teaching has been quite effective, for example, new teaching methods and ideas has been applied in the multimedia and internet classrooms. However, for a long time, the process of English teaching has been understood as stereotype that teachers make teaching plans, organize teaching activities and impart textbook knowledge to students in class, that is, "teaching-learning-testing". The major task of English teaching is to make students understand language knowledge points.

What do an ideal teacher in English teaching do? English teaching should combine the basic knowledge of language and cultural and strengthen students' intercultural communicative competence, which poses new challenges to the teachers. English teaching in China develop "international perspective", "intercultural awareness", "critical thinking" and "Chinese feelings" for students, which determines whether a communicator can communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds and avoid unnecessary conflicts.

With the speeding-up globalization, intercultural communication plays a vital role in promoting

the economic, trade and cultural exchanges among countries. The theory of interculturality not only guides the smooth intercultural communication but provides theoretical support for the study of language learning. As for the relationship between intercultural communication and interculturality, the intercultural communication activities provide interculturality with a solid practical foundation. In the other way round, the theory of interculturality expands the intercultural research. Habermas (2004) believes that after continuous interactive communication, a set of accepted public guidelines can be finally introduced to understand between cultures. At the same time, a broad communicative space can be established. In view of the theory, an empirical survey on the intercultural communication in English teaching has been conducted and proposed the major roles of teachers in English teaching.

3. The roles of teachers in English teaching

Dai and Chen (2015) analyzed intercultural competence from the perspective of interculturality. After having studied the communicator's personal characteristics and the mutual interaction, Dai and Chen believe that intercultural competence should not only include knowledge, emotion and behavior, but also include moral competence in intercultural communication.

Based on the theory, the roles of teachers in English teaching, as cultural coordinators, can be subdivided into four sub-roles: the emotion motivator, the cognition inspirator, the behavior guide and the morality regulator.

3.1 The emotion motivator

There is an old Chinese saying " They who love it are better than those who know it, and they who delight in it are better than those who love it." By using emotion teaching teachers arouse students' interest. Interest is the best teacher. Only when students keep their interest in learning can they be willing to devote themselves to it so as to improve the effectiveness of learning. The emotional function of interculturality indicates an open mind and appreciation of the target language and its culture. Students' English proficiency is largely reflected in their learning motivation, which determines their initiative in English learning. To stimulate students' interest in learning English and embrace the different culture have become a task for teachers. The interest stems from the student's psychological activity, so teachers encourage students to get in touch with the English culture and tap into interest in learning it. By creating the certain environment, teachers motivate students' curiosity and passion to pursue the new things in the different cultural background. Teachers are the leaders who promote students to constantly expand their horizons. As for motivating their emotion, teachers should do several things as follows: firstly, before teaching, teachers should first understand students' interest in cultural background, and pick out the sparkles from a great deal of cultural information; secondly, empathy has been conceived as being a cognitive process or an emotional cognitive, so some activities can motivate students' emotion when students are truly involved in them. Finally, teachers' preference to a certain culture can have an influence on the interest of accepting English language and its culture. Teachers use some humorous idiomatic tales and body language to enable students to show solicitude for understanding and assimilating into different cultures.

Self-esteem and self-confidence are also another two aspects which teachers should consider. Confidence and joy bring students more willingness to accept a new culture. Therefore, teachers should try their best to meet students' psychological needs in class, appreciate students' self-esteem and arouse the sense of achievement.

3.2 The cognition inspirator

The establishment of Intercultural cognitive system has much to do with the teaching principles and goals. To ensure the improvement of the intercultural cognitive system, teachers need to inspire students' cognition: Firstly, teachers have proper teaching ideas in order to lay the good foundation of intercultural teaching, to promote teachers' understanding of interculturality, and to master the specific intercultural teaching method. Secondly, teachers should fully learn that English teaching

has its social function, and they focus on awaken students' intercultural communication competence. Students have such competence to confront the impact between two cultures when learning English, thus teachers activate the intercultural competence and inspire students acquire more cultural information. Teachers should constantly review the English teaching and determine reasonable English teaching methods so as to adapt to the requirements of the intercultural communication. Thirdly, teachers should handle the relationship between the native culture and the English culture, clarify the relationship between English language and native culture. To enable students deal with the interculturality, teachers can help them make clear of the similarities and differences of two cultures. Fourthly, intercultural communication should be taken as the main body of college English teaching. Teachers make sure that the English teaching is carried out step by step, adhering to the students-centered method. Experiential learning, that is learning English vocally and visually in actual communicative environment, can ensure the efficient and effective cognition.

In terms of intercultural cognition, teachers are inspirators who guide students to master knowledge and cultivate their competence to understand others. Teachers put forward the students' autognosis which means students can know themselves well. On the one hand, as people's behavior is formed under specific cultural background, Chinese and western culture in the process of communication, students with profound understanding of the native culture can fully understand the Chinese culture and western culture.

3.3 Guiding behaviors

Intercultural cognition needs to be turned into action. Teachers should take every opportunity to make students take actions. In English teaching, students are the central and principal part, so teachers will improve the students' subjective initiative and encourage students by means of presentation, role-play, debate and so forth. More opportunities should be provided for students to participate in intercultural English practice. More practice can bring more understanding, and students can be easier to deal with interculturality. Firstly, teachers play the role as the intermediators in cultural interaction, students are encouraged to actively participate in intercultural English practice, for students with the background of Chinese culture they chance to know more about the relationship between Chinese and western cultural. Teachers, through some explanation and interpretation, provide students with a kind of original English teaching atmosphere, and help students get across the period of culture shock and cultural identity. Secondly, teachers should show students tension of creation. Students, after learning, can actively create cultural products. Interculturality need students' originality gets into teaching. For this, improving students' intercultural consciousness and interest enables them to independently participate in intercultural communication. Thirdly, Students has ability to teach themselves. Therefore, teachers should emphasize the self-taught ability to students. Besides learning and practicing in class, extracurricular assignments is indispensable to reinforce what has been learning in class. Better habits and awareness which prepare for intercultural communication become an urgent requirement for students.

To develop a sense of interculturality, teachers can act as guides just like in tourism. College English course plays an important role in cultivating students' intercultural communicative competence. The traditional teaching call for passive acceptance of the English culture while teachers ask students to forget the native Chinese culture, especially themselves. The traditional teaching and indoctrination methods of cultivating students' intercultural communicative competence have no significant effect when the world needs intercultural intellectuals. Therefore, one of the roles for teachers should be converted from only instructors into tour guides, who will introduce the language and culture and help student experience intercultural communication. The idea of "turning teachers into tour guides and turning students into tourists" is helpful for students to take in knowledge and take out competence. Teachers can use the rich internet multimedia resources to simulate real tourism scenes, and lead students to appreciate foreign folk customs and enjoy western culture. As the role of teachers has been changed and the teaching scene has been replaced by simulative scene of tourism, students' learning interest and enthusiasm will be aroused, and

students' intercultural communication competence will be improved in the simulative tourism of culture.

3.4 Regulating morality

Chinese students, when learning English, have some special characteristics in terms of morality. Respect, honesty and generosity can be widely publicized and rigorously followed. Teachers have to be coordinators to make students have the sense of inclusion when they face some moral problems in intercultural communication. Teachers remind students to learn more about the culture and customs in intercultural communication. In order to ensure the efficient English teaching, teachers explain and to students Chinese and western culture and custom and let them think of them. First, the concept of time: there exist some different concept on time between Chinese and western culture, and western countries pay more attention to the efficiency, so when they apologize to others for being late. Traditionally the Chinese people do not care time as the most important thing, so punctuality is not the requirement for meetings and appointments. Second, many ethnic customs in various communicative behavior are greatly influenced by culture. Teachers, as coordinators, have responsibility to persuade students to cooperate with a totally different culture. Harmony should be introduced to students when they begin to understand the diversity of cultures. Negative effects, such as rejection or indifference to a new culture, should be prevented when teacher give lectures, and teachers try best to make students understand the unity of language and culture.

4. Conclusion

From the perspective of interculturality, English teaching can be taken as a process of the intercultural communication. When teachers teach English, they are transmitting the cultural information to students. Under such circumstance, teachers are not only people who teach a foreign language, but motivators, inspirators, coordinators and guides. Every student yearns for recognition of his own value. After class, the necessary feedbacks and evaluations will have a great impact on boosting new round of the *mélange* of different cultures. Therefore, teachers should intervene to make clear that effective foreign language learning always accompany the harmony of the native culture and foreign culture.

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