

Research on Intercultural Communication Ability Training Strategies in College English Education in Cangzhou Open University in Hebei Province, China

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Abstract: As economic globalization continues to advance, the importance of Chinese-English intercultural communication skills becomes increasingly evident. In order to effectively cultivate more skilled professionals in society, this study observed and investigated the English language teaching environment and situation at Cangzhou Open University. Through questionnaire surveys and face-to-face interviews with students and English teachers, the researcher collected relevant data and content, and identified existing issues in intercultural communication within English teaching. By the analysis of the data and the scientific classification of the conversation content summary, the researcher proposed effective methods for improving current English language teaching methods and recommended effective intercultural communication cultivating strategies in English teaching.

Keywords: English teaching, Intercultural communication strategies, University education.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

With the continuous development of English globalization, as the most widely used language in the world, Chinese-English intercultural communication skills are extremely important. And with the development of economic globalization and the requirements of continuous social progress, China's foreign exchange opportunities are increasing day by day. College English education has begun to focus on the cultivation of language application ability, lifelong learning ability and intercultural communication ability. Through a large number of teaching practices, the author found that students only master the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. Therefore, it is crucial to study how to cultivate their intercultural ability among the students of Cangzhou Open University. Considering my research field and interest direction, to make the research more specific and in-depth, this paper chooses the intercultural communication ability training strategies as the research object. Under the background of the era of English globalization, excellent expatriate talents should have language ability, intercultural knowledge, intercultural ability and intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural ability includes respect for others, objective and inclusive attitude, intellectual curiosity, empathy, team spirit, the ability to build and maintain interpersonal relationships in a team, and tolerance of ambiguity in communication, and other (Graf 2014). Previous studies generally believe that intercultural communication ability includes English professional skills. Obviously, English professional skills are of great significance to the success of intercultural communication. In the process of English teaching to help students to develop English thinking, according to the English-speaking culture, customs for business communication, experience shows that English learners or users should according to the context, properly organize language, try to avoid the interference of mother tongue, and the corresponding, also want to cultivate

students' intercultural communication strategy to strengthen intercultural communication (Li Taizhi, 2016).

So much teaching knowledge is not only to impart language and theoretical knowledge, but also to cultivate students' communication skills in practice. Therefore, English teaching has a great relationship with the cultivation of students' intercultural communication skills.

In the process of research, this paper refers to a large number of literature, through books, network and other methods and means to collect data, and have a deeper understanding of the research of this topic. The purpose of this paper is to promote the further development of English teaching in cultivating students' intercultural communication ability.

1.2. Review Literature of Intercultural Communication

The research on intercultural communication in China started relatively late. In the 1980s, scholars began to pay attention to this field, and in the 1990s, Chinese scholars began to write and edit research works on intercultural communication, and a large number of papers were published. With the rise of intercultural communication science, people begin to realize that language teaching must be organically combined with cultural teaching. In order to accurately grasp the research status and development trend in the field of intercultural communication in China, the author reviews and summarizes the research situation in the field of foreign language communication in intercultural communication in the past 7 years from 2015 to 2022, trying to affirm the achievements on this basis and point out the problems existing in the research in this field.

Hu Haiyan(2015) published intercultural communication papers published by Chinese academic journals compared with the papers published by International Journal of Intercultural Relations in the same period, and found that there were few intercultural communication papers based on empirical research in Chinese journals. In this regard, the

author calls on the Chinese intercultural communication researchers to vigorously strengthen the empirical research. Li Hong (2015) combined foreign Russian teaching with intercultural communication to discuss the relationship between vacancy phenomenon and cultural concept and cultural concept circle from the perspective of intercultural communication. Gao Yongchen(2016) believes that cultural empathy ability is the most important factor in the intercultural communication ability system. It directly affects the quality, effect and process of intercultural communication. It is of great theoretical and practical significance to fully understand the value of cultural empathy ability and consciously cultivate and improve cultural empathy ability in practice for intercultural communication.

Lei Maili(2017) emphasized that mother culture plays a role as a platform and bridge in intercultural communication, and proposed that only by strengthening the study of mother culture and its English expression can Chinese traditional culture occupy its due position in the new era. Han Haiyan(2018) proposed that the successful intercultural communication in the "era of globalization" must master four ability elements: cultural expression ability of language, cultural cognitive ability of language, cultural perception ability of language and cultural thinking ability of language. Dai Wei(2019) in the study of intercultural cognition and intercultural communication ability training relationship on the basis of think: under the background of multicultural foreign language teachers should cultivate the communicators of multicultural consciousness and context cognitive ability to build a dynamic, mutual adaptation of intercultural communication mode, so as to achieve the purpose of intercultural communication.

Research results that focus on combining theory and practice

Some researchers use empirical research methods for research. For example, Gao Yongsheng(2016) took the empirical investigation of students' intercultural communication ability in the "higher requirements" class of University as evidence, revealed the problems existing in college students' intercultural communication ability, and put forward the basic countermeasures for cultivating students' intercultural communication ability in college English teaching. Li Yuan and Fan Jieping(2017) conducted an empirical study on the identification status of Chinese college students' "fixed pattern" of different cultures before and after going abroad. Some researchers used the speculative method for research. For example, Peng Shiyong(2020) introduced the practical application of Pearson's correlation, multivariate regression, one-way variance analysis, multivariate variance analysis, factor analysis, confirmation factor analysis and other statistical technologies in intercultural communication research through the specific research examples of international mainstream research. Wang Xiaofeng and Xiao Xuhua(2020) according to the deconstructionism learning theory, analyzes the characteristics of the multimedia network teaching methods in teaching and advantages, expounds the university English teaching teachers should not only pay attention to students listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation training, and making full use of the advantages of the network to cultivate students' sensitivity to cultural differences.

Although the research has been fruitful in recent years, there are also some problems. First, intercultural

communication is an interdisciplinary research field, which determines that it has diversity and uncertainty in theoretical models and research methods. However, it should not ignore the theoretical discussion of intercultural communication research, but only synthesize related subject theories. At present, domestic research is not systematic and scientific theoretical basis, and it is difficult to develop in depth. The author believes that intercultural communication should have a clear research direction, scope and focus and relevant knowledge system.

Secondly, some domestic researchers have begun to use the method of empirical research to conduct intercultural communication research. But the published articles are only a small percentage, and most researchers still use speculative research. Just as Hu Qiuju(2015) pointed out that there are very few articles that systematically collect data for analysis and research in China, many articles follow the following approach: a certain view or theory with some examples and conclusions.

Finally, in the past seven years, Chinese researchers have published few papers combining foreign language teaching and intercultural communication and have not applied the latest achievements in intercultural communication research to foreign language teaching. In addition, although multimedia teaching has been applied to university classrooms, it is rarely combined with intercultural communication research, and it is not fully applied to the cultivation of college students' intercultural communication ability.

1.3. Significance of the study

This paper is mainly based on the intercultural communication training strategy. It adopts questionnaire survey, literature review method and qualitative and quantitative research methods, which can reveal the actual situation of English teaching in Cangzhou Open University and the problems encountered in the training process of intercultural communication. Through the problems found, targeted measures are taken to effectively improve the status quo of school English teaching, enhance students' intercultural communication ability, and improve the quality of school teaching. At the same time, it will also improve the lack of intercultural communication in English teaching in Chinese universities, cultivate students with high-quality and strong intercultural communication skills, and provide fresh blood for the development of China's economy.

1.4. Objectives of the study

To enhance the effectiveness of English teaching strategies at Cangzhou Open University by identifying the challenges students face in developing intercultural communication skills and proposing targeted improvement measures.

2. Design and Methodology

2.1. Research Paradigm

Intercultural communication was first proposed in *The Silent Language*, published by American cultural anthropologist Edward T. Hall, marking the birth of intercultural communication science. The study of intercultural communication abroad began in the 1950s, and the western cultural teaching has roughly gone through the following three stages: segmentation stage, attachment stage and organic combination stage.

Divided language teaching and culture teaching. In 1880, the French educator Gouin discussed the importance of culture in his book *The Art of Teaching and Studying Language*. In the book, the author conveys a message that cultural teaching can be implemented in a regular curriculum by using appropriate teaching methods. This is the first western theoretical work on the importance of cultural teaching.

Cultural teaching is dependent on language teaching. After the Second World War, some achievements of anthropology and sociology were applied to language teaching, and the idea of combining language teaching and cultural teaching was gradually put on the agenda.

In 1972 and 1988, the Northeast Foreign Language Teaching Conference (NECTFL) held two seminars on cultural teaching, and the conference reached consensus on the significance of cultural teaching for foreign language teaching and foreign language learners. (Zhang Zhen, 2017) More and more people in foreign language teaching believe that understanding foreign culture and making cultural comparison is an essential part of language teaching, and discuss cultural teaching from different perspectives. Compared with the previous stage, the cultural teaching in this stage has made a big step. The learning of cultural knowledge is regarded as a means of language learning, and the cultural teaching knowledge is dependent on the language teaching, without establishing its own independent status.

Organic combination of cultural teaching and language teaching. As English is used more and more widely and presents the characteristics of the universal and international common language, what English represents is no longer the narrow British and American culture. In addition, with the rise of intercultural communication in the United States, more and more researchers realize that culture is not a static fact, but a dynamic development process. At this stage, scholars have always believed that cultural teaching should be just as important as language teaching.

The meaning of intercultural communication. Intercultural communication refers to the communication and interaction under different cultural backgrounds. It involves the communication between people from different countries, regions or groups who have different languages, values, beliefs, customs and behaviors. The goal of intercultural communication is to promote effective communication and understanding in order to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships, while avoiding misunderstandings, conflicts, and cultural clashes.

Intercultural communication involves many aspects, including language, non-verbal communication, social etiquette, values, beliefs, cultural differences, etc. It requires individuals to have intercultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence, and flexibility, to be able to and respect differences in different cultures, and to adopt appropriate communication strategies and behaviors.

In intercultural communication, people need to pay attention to the differences between language barriers, communicative styles and communication methods, as well as the hidden rules and expectations in the culture. They need to learn to listen and observe, respect the views and customs of others, and be willing to take the initiative to learn and adapt to the new cultural environments.

The importance of intercultural communication is even

more prominent in the era of globalization. As the connections between different countries and cultures around the world become closer and closer, intercultural communication ability is crucial for people in business, education, tourism and international cooperation and other fields. Through effective intercultural communication, people can enhance mutual understanding and cooperation, promote cultural exchange and sharing, and build a harmonious global society.

2.2. Design and methods

This paper adopts a research design that is quantitative descriptive method. This study makes use of the quantitative descriptive research method. Quantitative data collection relies on random sampling and structured data collection instruments that fit diverse experiences into predetermined response categories. Quantitative research design can be very useful in getting an accurate understanding of the intercultural communication experiences of the students. Specifically, the research used a descriptive design using a questionnaire survey. Survey research is a quantitative method whereby a researcher poses some set of predetermined questions to an entire group, or sample, of individuals (Blackstone, 2018). Survey research is an advantageous approach when the researcher describes or explains an extensive group or group features. To enrich the study, interviews were utilized to support the quantitative results. This data will support the quantitative data analysis and results.

Data Gathering Tools---There are usually four ways to obtain information in the questionnaire survey (Zhen & Zheng, 2016). Direct observation, Interview method, Communication method, Network survey method. The network survey method is applied on English teaching survey. The sample base is large, and the amount of information obtained is large. To save time, effort and efficiency, the researcher decided to adopt the fourth method - online survey to obtain the required survey information. The researcher chose an online questionnaire software to collect the questionnaire information of the respondents in a fixed time. This software is called "Questionnaire Star". It has the ability of data collection and statistical analysis. Considering the convenience of information access and the representatives of the questionnaire, this paper conducted a sample survey on the actual English teaching situation from the students of Cangzhou Open University. They are all the registered students, and they all have English courses. For the questionnaire participants are the selected undergraduate students of the Open University in 2022, including administration, business administration, mathematics and law. These students all have basic English courses, in line with the topic of this article. The five interview teachers were teachers from the basic English foundation department of the Open University, with three lecturers and two associate professors.

The questionnaire aimed to address a crucial issue in higher education at Cangzhou Open University: the enhancement of students' intercultural communication abilities within the context of English language education.

The questionnaire is divided into two main parts:

Part 1: Personal Information and Preliminary Assessments

Demographic Information: This section collects basic personal information such as gender, academic level, and current English proficiency. It aims to understand the background diversity of the participants.

English Learning Motivation and Awareness: Questions are designed to gauge students' interest in learning English, their primary objectives for studying the language, and their familiarity with and perceived necessity of intercultural communication skills. It also assesses students' willingness and readiness to engage in intercultural communication.

Part 2: Identifying Intercultural Communication Issues and Suggested Improvements

Intercultural Communication Challenges: Participants were asked to rate the severity of various problems they face in intercultural communication, including language barriers, understanding cultural differences, adapting to non-verbal cues from non-native English speakers, and overcoming cultural misunderstandings.

Improvement Measures: This section sought agreement on potential strategies to enhance intercultural communication abilities, such as increasing cultural knowledge, practicing intercultural communication, adopting new teaching strategies, and fostering an intercultural communication-friendly atmosphere.

Strategies and Activities for Improvement: An open-ended question invited participants to suggest specific strategies and activities that could help improve their intercultural communication skills.

Data gathering procedures---First, design the content and time of the questionnaire. Then the questionnaire software will be put into online testing, and the questionnaire will officially released after success. During the test, a communication will sent to formally start the questionnaire, which belongs to the academic questionnaire and does not require the permission of the relevant department. After the questionnaire is completed, the questionnaire results are statistically analyzed with the questionnaire software, and invalid questionnaires and data are eliminated. The gathering will last for 3 days.

Treatment of Data---For each questionnaire question, the software Questionnaire Star can automatically calculate the percentage of students who choose each option and summarize real situation of English teaching and the main problem about cultivating intercultural communication ability. The data types of summaries and analysis are mainly percentage and degree indicators.

The items in the survey questionnaires are in the form of a 4-point Likert- scale. Weighted mean and standard deviation will be used. The survey instruments will use the following descriptive equivalent and verbal interpretations.

Table 1. Intercultural communication issues
Descriptive equivalent and verbal interpretations for Intercultural communication Issues

STATISTICAL LIMIT	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENT	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
3.26 - 4.00	Strongly Agree	Very Serious Issue
2.51 - 3.25	Agree	Moderately Serious Issue
1.76 - 2.50	Disagree	Slightly Serious Issue
1.00 -1.75	Strongly Disagree	Not an Issue

Table 2. Strategies to address intercultural communication problems
Descriptive equivalent and verbal on Strategies to address Intercultural Problems

STATISTICAL LIMIT	DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENT	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
3.26 - 4.00	Strongly Agree	Most Effective Strategies
2.51 - 3.25	Agree	Moderately Effective Strategies
1.76 - 2.50	Disagree	Slightly Effective Strategies
1.00- 1.75	Strongly Disagree	Not Effective Strategies

The interviews were supplemental to the quantitative results as they were used as supporting details.

Ethical Considerations---The objects of the questionnaire are about 218 random students in Cangzhou Open University. The content of the questionnaire is related to English teaching, and the form of the questionnaire online anonymously. The research did not have any adverse impact on the investigated objects, ensure that the research process and results conform to human ethics and public morals, resolutely eradicate research behaviors that violate human ethics and morals, protect human life and health, and safeguard human dignity. Furthermore, participants were duly informed of the study's findings, and there is a possibility that the results may be published in reputable online academic journals, contributing to a broader understanding and knowledge dissemination within the field.

3. Results and discussion

Through the screening and review of the data collected by the questionnaire, the data were processed by the spss software, and the following results were obtained, and then the data were analyzed as follows:

Table 1. Resents intercultural communication issues.
Intercultural communication Issues

Table 1: Intercultural communication issues				
Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent	
In intercultural communication, I often encounter language barriers, leading to communication difficulties.	2.58	1.17	Moderately Serious Issue	
I lack understanding of values and ways people from different cultures.	2.27	0.88	Slightly Serious Issue	
When communicating with non-native English speakers, I am difficult to understand or adapt to their non-verbal expressions (such as body language, facial expressions, etc.).	2.37	0.89	Slightly Serious Issue	
Due to cultural differences, I often encounter misunderstandings or communication barriers.	2.29	0.87	Slightly Serious Issue	
My lack of cultural sensitivity and adaptability affects my intercultural communication skills.	2.32	0.88	Slightly Serious Issue	
The English textbooks involve less knowledge of intercultural communication, which affects my intercultural communication level.	2.35	0.86	Slightly Serious Issue	
The lack of teaching methods and content of teachers has affected my intercultural communication ability	2.29	0.88	Slightly Serious Issue	
The lack of intercultural communication atmosphere caused my low-level intercultural communication ability.	2.32	0.85	Slightly Serious Issue	
Overall Mean	2.35	0.09	Slightly Serious Issue	

Problems existing in the cultivation of communication ability in the English education of Cangzhou Open University. The survey reveals that "In communication, they often encountered language barriers, leading to communication

difficulties” and this item is the moderately serious issue among the forecast problems. Language is the bridge of communication and the primary tool of interaction, if there are no tools, communicative activities are impossible to happen. In the second place is “When communicating with non-English speaker, I am difficult to understand and adapt to their non-verbal expression.” The mean of this item is 2.37 which shows a slightly serious issue. People's facial expression and body language have a subtle influence on interpersonal communication. For people with different cultural backgrounds, we should pay attention to the communication barriers caused by the differences in facial expressions and body language. In this index, the target population surveyed considered this as one of the main factors contributing to communication disorders. The next influence factor is “The English textbook lacks relative knowledge about affects their intercultural communication ability.”, the mean of this item is 2.35. It represents this item is the slightly serious issue for cultivating intercultural communication ability of students. We all know The action program is a guide to action for growth and progress. The school's textbook is like a program of action. If there is no relevant guide on action on the action, the result of this action can be imagined.. The next one is “Lack cultural sensibility This results of the questionnaire show that cultural communication channels are not smooth. In the context of global diversified development, the foreign language teaching process is no longer limited to traditional pronunciation, grammar teaching and the mastery and application of vocabulary. It should help students establish an awareness of the interoperability of Chinese and Western cultures and guide students to contact and learn about more it, which contains many Western cultural connotations. It effectively improves students' learning and understanding of language knowledge, and at the same time it is of great help to students' future life, study and work. At the same time, the low dissemination of knowledge, the low closeness of teaching materials and the lack of teaching content and teaching methods are also the main reasons for the low cultivation ability in the English education of Cangzhou Open University.

In conclusion, through the survey results we find 4 main problems in English teaching about cultivating intercultural communication ability at Cangzhou Open University. They are language barriers, non-verbal expressions, Uncomprehensive teaching textbooks and cultural sensibility low. Next, the author will combine the above questions, use the teachers 'interview results and the students' survey results to put forward the corresponding solution strategies.

Table 2. Strategies to address intercultural communication problems

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
Learning to provide more cultural background knowledge and intercultural communication practice can help me to better solve the intercultural communication problems.	2.40	0.92	Slightly Effective Strategies
Working together with students from different cultural backgrounds can promote my intercultural communication skills.	2.36	0.88	Slightly Effective Strategies
Access to teaching strategies and methods has helped me to solve intercultural communication problems.	2.42	0.90	Slightly Effective Strategies
The construction of intercultural communication discipline can improve my intercultural communication skills.	2.41	0.88	Slightly Effective Strategies
Cultivating confidence and adaptability can help me better cope with the challenges of intercultural communication.	2.46	0.88	Slightly Effective Strategies
Overall Mean	2.41	0.03	Slightly Effective Strategies

Primary Objective2: Communication ability development strategies in English teaching at Cangzhou Open University. The analysis results of the questionnaire are as follows: “Learning to provide more cultural background knowledge and communication practice can help me to better solve the communication problems, working together with students from different cultural backgrounds can promote my communication skills, access to teaching strategies and methods has helped me to solve communication problems, the construction of communication discipline can improve my communication ability, cultivating confidence and adaptability can help me better cope with the challenges of communication, these items their mean value are 2.40,2.36,2.42,2.41,2.46. These values represent that the above strategies are effective in effectively improving the ability training in the English education at Cangzhou Open University.

The following summarizes the responses from English teaching teachers from Cangzhou Open University based on the open questions.

In order to better understand the problems and solution strategies of intercultural communication ability in the English education of Cangzhou Open University, the author designed five questions to solicit the opinions and suggestions of relevant teachers. Among them, questions 1-4 are about teaching questions, and questions 5 are about teaching improvement strategies. Next, the author will summarize the results of these two aspects combined with the interview records.

Intercultural communication issues

There are 4 questions about intercultural communication issues, they are:

1. In your English teaching, have you noticed the problems that students encounter in intercultural communication? If yes, please give an example.
2. What common difficulties do you think students have in understanding and adapting to the values and behaviors of different cultures?
3. Do you find it difficult for students to understand or adapt to non-verbal expressions (such as body language, facial expressions, etc.) when communicating with non-native English speakers? How can you help them to overcome these difficulties?
4. Have you encountered misunderstanding or communication barriers caused by cultural differences when teaching English? How do you handle these situations?

The following issues are obtained by sorting out and summarizing the interview records:

In English teaching, all of them have encountered communication problems include misinterpreting gestures, navigating humor disparities, adapting to diverse negotiation styles, grappling with indirect communication, and managing differing perceptions of time. These experiences highlight the importance of fostering cultural awareness and providing strategies for effective intercultural communication within the classroom. Through activities like role-playing, real-life case studies, and open discussions, students can develop essential communication skills, promoting a more inclusive and understanding learning environment.

In the realm of English teaching, students frequently grapple with diverse cultural challenges. These encompass

variations in social norms, particularly in greetings and gift-giving customs, impacting daily interactions. The dichotomy between collectivism and individualism poses a challenge in understanding the importance of collaboration and teamwork within multicultural settings. Navigating diverse approaches to authority and decision-making further complicates students' effective engagement in group activities. Additionally, disparities in the perception of time, with some cultures prioritizing punctuality and others adopting a more relaxed attitude, influence students' scheduling and meeting expectations. The interpretation of non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language, emerges as a common hurdle, requiring students to discern cultural subtleties for effective communication across various contexts. Addressing these challenges is crucial for fostering a culturally inclusive and communicatively competent learning environment.

Strategies to address intercultural communication problems

In the teacher interview record, the author designed the following questions about the strategy of improving intercultural communication ability: In your teaching, have you adopted specific strategies or methods to develop students' intercultural communication skills? Please share some successful experiences or teaching practices. The following results are obtained based on the teacher's answers:

In English teaching, fostering communication skills is a priority. Collaborative projects involving students from diverse cultural backgrounds provide hands-on experiences, promoting teamwork and understanding. Utilizing multimedia resources such as videos and documentaries helps students recognize and adapt to various cultural nuances. Guest lectures and virtual sessions with individuals from different cultures offer direct insights, engaging students in Q&A sessions to enhance their awareness. Integrating regular intercultural discussions within the curriculum encourages students to share perspectives and learn from one another, fostering a dynamic and inclusive learning environment. Additionally, the introduction of reflective journals aids students in identifying personal biases, adapting communication styles, and ultimately enhancing their ability to navigate diverse cultural contexts throughout their academic journey.

4. Conclusion

Through the analysis of the results of the questionnaire survey, we learned that the English teaching at Cangzhou Open University has the following problems in the process of cultivating students' intercultural communication skills: the biggest obstacle for students in intercultural communication is language barriers and weak listening and speaking skills; The intake of cultural background knowledge is less, resulting in difficulties in understanding non-verbal expressions; the school textbooks have less knowledge about intercultural communication, resulting in students' weak intercultural communication abilities; and the school provides few intercultural communication practice activities, resulting in cultural Communication channels are narrow.

In view of the problems encountered in English education at Cangzhou Open University in the process of cultivating intercultural communication skills, under the guidance of intercultural communication theory, data analysis of questionnaire surveys and face-to-face interviews with front-

line teachers were conducted, and the following effective results were obtained: Measures to solve the problems of intercultural communication in English education: providing more cultural background knowledge and communication practices can help students better solve communication problems, and students with different cultural backgrounds can improve communication skills and get help with teaching strategies and methods. Students solve communication problems, building communication subjects can improve students' communication skills, and cultivating confidence and adaptability can help students better cope with communication challenges.

5. Recommendation

Based on survey results, literature analysis, and in-person discussions with the English teachers from Cangzhou Open University, I have identified several strategies for developing the communication skills to improve the problem of cultivating intercultural communication skills in English education at Cangzhou Open University.

Focus on practicing and paying attention to the cultivation of communication awareness, enriching the setting of courses, strengthen awareness of cultural interchange and communication, improve teachers' own knowledge of communication and communication quality.

(1) Focus on practicing and paying attention to the cultivation of communication awareness.

Scholars in their research on language and culture have said that "culture is not optional in language learning, ranking behind listening, speaking, reading and writing instruction." Culture permeates the learner's entire learning process from the first day they start learning their first foreign language. Ignoring cultural learning distracts them in the learning process, exposes their communicative deficiencies, and exposes their ability to understand." Therefore, when cultivating students' communication skills, full attention should be paid to the influence of cultural factors. intercultural communication is a practical interaction of two-way communication, in the classroom teaching, teachers should put the cultivation of intercultural communication in an important position in the classroom teaching, teachers should integrate more into the content of intercultural communication, cultural background explanation, Chinese and Western cultural interest cultivation and language ability cultivation, pay attention to reading and writing to listening and speaking.

(2) Enriching the setting of courses

At present, CET4 and CET6 are an important means of checking university teaching, so many colleges and universities take the goal of university English teaching through level 4 and 6 instead of cultivating actual language communication skills, which leads to many students who have passed level 4 or even 6 still have difficulty communicating smoothly in real life in English. Therefore, the establishment of communication courses is very necessary. The main contents of communication courses generally include: the historical background of communication and the training strategies of communication, the relationship between language and culture, and the difference between verbal and non-verbal communication. The main purpose of this course is to cultivate students' awareness and ability of communication, provide students with rich link courses, and

provide channels for the cultivation of communication skills.

(3) Strengthen awareness of cultural interchange and communication

In the English teaching of Cangzhou Open University, teachers and students are native Chinese speakers, who are very familiar with Chinese culture, neglect the learning and dissemination of Chinese culture in the teaching process, and focus on the learning of Western cultural knowledge. As everyone knows, our Chinese culture has a long history and rich connotations. As the pillars of the country, the majority of students will not only be the main force in retrying cultural exchanges between China and the West in the future, but also the pioneers leading China's mainstream culture, and also shoulder the historical mission of inheriting Chinese culture. According to the "Curriculum Requirements", the goal of university English highlights the cultivation of students' comprehensive application ability, emphasizes the communicative function of language, that is, English teaching ultimately serves students' language communication, and cultural communication is an important aspect of language communication, as stated in the preface of "New University English" (Volume 4, 2005): "Language is both a part of culture, advantageous communication culture is an effective medium, and the exchange of ideas and culture is two-way." Therefore, while allowing students to understand the culture of English-speaking countries, it is also necessary to cultivate their ability to express and disseminate their own culture."

(4) Improve teachers' own knowledge of communication and communication quality knowledge disseminators, teachers should first pay attention to the reserve of their communication knowledge and the improvement of communication ability, so that they can help students have a clear understanding of the cultural differences between China and the West in their teaching process, and formulate scientific and effective teaching plans, enrich English teaching content, use advanced teaching concepts and cultural knowledge to improve students' communication ability, and strive to eliminate obstacles in the process of intercultural communication between China and the West. Teachers can increase their knowledge of foreign language and cultural background by reading some books and magazines that reflect Western politics, economy, culture, religion, etc., participate in Chinese and Western academic exchange activities, etc., and continuously improve their intercultural awareness and cultural literacy, so as to improve the quality of classroom teaching and reduce and eliminate the language barriers that exist in the process of communication between China and the West.

6. APPENDICES

1. QUESTIONNAIRE

With the development of Chinese political economy and culture, the cultivation of intercultural communication ability is an urgent and important task of Chinese higher education in the new century. In order to better cultivate the students' intercultural communication ability in the English teaching of Cangzhou Open University, we hereby do the following questionnaire survey on the registered students to better implement the teaching and training plan. The questionnaire will keep student information confidential and be used for teaching research. Thank you all for your cooperation.

Part1: personal information

1. Gender A. Male B Female

2. Your Level
A. freshman B. sophomore C. junior D. senior E. other;
3. Your current English level
A. Above CET6 B. CET6 C. CET4 D. below CET4
4. To what extent are you interested in learning English?
A. Very much
B. A little
C. Interested but also afraid of it
D. Not Interested
5. The main purpose of learning English.
A. To pass this subject.
B. To communicate.
C. To get much progress in career.
D. Others: _____
6. Do you know what is intercultural communication skills?
A. I know its meaning.
B. I don't know its meaning.
C. I never heard it.
7. Do you think it is necessary to learn some skills about intercultural communication?
A. Yes B. No
8. Do you have any experience of intercultural communication?
A. Yes, I have. B. No, I haven't.
9. Are you willing to take the initiative to communicate with foreigners?
A. Yes, I love. B. No, I don't like.
10. When communicating with foreigners, do you worry about communication disorder?
A. Never B. Sometimes D. Frequently C. Always

Part 2: Intercultural communication issues

Choose one of the following five options that will best fit you.

4. Strongly agree

3. Agree

2. Disagree

1. Strongly disagree

Sheet1: Intercultural communication issues score sheet

Descriptor	1	2	3	4
1. In intercultural communication, I often encounter language barriers, leading to communication difficulties.	1	2	3	4
2. I lack understanding of values and ways people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4
3. When communicating with non-native English speakers, I am difficult to understand or adapt to their non-verbal expressions (such as body language, facial expressions, etc.).	1	2	3	4
4. Due to cultural differences,	1	2	3	4

I often encounter misunderstandings or communication barriers.				
5. My lack of cultural sensitivity and adaptability affects my intercultural communication skills.	1	2	3	4
6. The English textbooks involve less knowledge of intercultural communication, which affects my intercultural communication level.	1	2	3	4
7. The lack of teaching methods and content of teachers has affected my intercultural communication ability	1	2	3	4
8. The lack of intercultural communication atmosphere caused my low-level intercultural communication ability.	1	2	3	4
Strategies to address intercultural communication problems				
1. Learning to provide more cultural background knowledge and intercultural communication practice can help me to better solve the intercultural communication problems.	1	2	3	4
2. Working together with students from different cultural backgrounds can promote my intercultural communication skills.	1	2	3	4
3. Access to teaching strategies and methods has helped me to solve intercultural communication problems.	1	2	3	4
4. The construction of intercultural communication discipline can improve my intercultural communication ability.	1	2	3	4
5. Cultivating confidence and adaptability can help me better cope with the challenges of intercultural communication.	1	2	3	4

OPEN ENDED QUESTION: What strategies and activities will you suggest to improve your intercultural communication skills?

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire! Your feedback is very valuable to our research. If you have additional comments or suggestions, please provide them below. Thank you a lot.

2. Interview Questions

In order to effectively improve the training strategy of intercultural communication in English teaching of Cangzhou Open University and improve the level of English teaching, 10 registered students and 5 in-service English teachers of Cangzhou Open University are interviewed, so as to better understand the current situation of intercultural communication training and formulate more practical strategies. Thanks for your cooperation and support.

The Interview questions are for English teachers:

1. In your English teaching, have you noticed the problems that students encounter in intercultural communication? If yes, please give an example.

2. What common difficulties do you think students have in understanding and adapting to the values and behaviors of different cultures?

3. Do you find it difficult for students to understand or adapt to non-verbal expressions (such as body language, facial expressions, etc.) when communicating with non-native English speakers? How can you help them to overcome these difficulties?

4. Have you encountered misunderstanding or communication barriers caused by cultural differences when teaching English? How do you handle these situations?

5. In your teaching, have you adopted specific strategies or methods to develop students' intercultural communication skills? Please share some successful experiences or teaching practices.

Resume

Name: Liu Hong

Phone number: 8615733736860

Email: 20225620@s.ubaguio.edu

Employer: Cangzhou Open University

Title: lecturer

Research direction: English education

Main research achievements: Participated in the "Protection and utilization of intangible cultural heritage of Cangzhou Grand Canal under the perspective of collaborative innovation", third participant; The third participant of the "Research on the strategy of enhancing the influence of canal culture brand by cultural and creative industry in the new media era". As the first author, I published the Chinese paper Application analysis of micro-class and flipped classroom in English teaching of TV University, Application of Mixed Teaching Mode in English Reading Teaching in Universities, An Analysis of Open University English teaching under the background of "Internet +".

Interview Records:

Interviewee A

Date: December 1, 2023

Method: Face to face

Title: Associate Professor

Company/Organization: Cangzhou Open University

Interviewee B:

Date: December 8, 2023

Method: Face to face

Title: Lecturer

Company/Organization: Cangzhou Open University

Interviewee C:

Date: December 15, 2023

Method: Face to face

Title: Professor

Company/Organization: Cangzhou Open University

Interviewee D

Date: December 22, 2023

Method: Face to face

Title: Associate Professor

Company/Organization: Cangzhou Open University

Interviewee E

Date: December 28, 2023

Method: Face to face

Title: Lecturer

Company/Organization: Cangzhou Open University

The Interview questions are for English teachers:

1. In your English teaching, have you noticed the problems that students encounter in intercultural communication? If yes, please give an example.

2. What common difficulties do you think students have in understanding and adapting to the values and behaviors of different cultures?

3. Do you find it difficult for students to understand or adapt to non-verbal expressions (such as body language, facial expressions, etc.) when communicating with non-native English speakers? How can you help them to overcome these difficulties?

4. Have you encountered misunderstanding or communication barriers caused by cultural differences when teaching English? How do you handle these situations?

5. In your teaching, have you adopted specific strategies or methods to develop students' intercultural communication skills? Please share some successful experiences or teaching practices.

Thank you for participating in this survey! Your feedback is highly valued and will contribute to enhancing the quality of English teaching at Cangzhou Open university.

1. In your English teaching, have you noticed the problems that students encounter in intercultural communication? If yes, please give an example.

Interviewee A: Certainly, one notable issue involves

students misinterpreting gestures; for instance, a thumbs-up might convey approval in one culture but be seen as inappropriate in another.

Interviewee B: Yes, I've observed difficulties in navigating humor across cultures. A joke that's well-received in one cultural context may be met with confusion or offense in another.

Interviewee C: Absolutely, I've noticed challenges in students adapting to diverse negotiation styles. Some may find assertiveness normal, while others perceive it as confrontational.

Interviewee D: Indeed, students often struggle with indirect communication. For instance, a student might miss subtle cues indicating disagreement, leading to misunderstandings in group discussions.

Interviewee E: Yes, I've encountered issues related to the perception of time. Some students from cultures valuing punctuality might find it challenging to work with peers who have a more relaxed approach to time.

2. What common difficulties do you think students have in understanding and adapting to the values and behaviors of different cultures?

Interviewee A: Many students struggle with variations in social norms, like greetings or gift-giving customs, as these can differ significantly between cultures, impacting daily interactions.

Interviewee B: Understanding the importance of collectivism versus individualism can be challenging for students, influencing their collaboration and teamwork within multicultural settings.

Interviewee C: Students often find it hard to navigate diverse approaches to authority and decision-making, impacting their ability to engage effectively in group activities.

Interviewee D: The concept of time can pose difficulties, with some cultures valuing punctuality while others have a more relaxed attitude, affecting students' scheduling and meeting expectations.

Interviewee E: Interpretation of non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language, proves to be a common hurdle, as students need to discern cultural subtleties to communicate effectively in various contexts.

3. Do you find it difficult for students to understand or adapt to non-verbal expressions (such as body language, facial expressions, etc.) when communicating with non-native English speakers? How can you help them to overcome these difficulties?

Interviewee A: Yes, some students initially struggle with interpreting non-verbal expressions. To address this, I incorporate interactive activities like cultural sensitivity workshops and role-playing to enhance their awareness and comprehension.

Interviewee B: Understanding non-verbal cues can be challenging for students. I provide resources such as videos, articles, and real-life examples to illustrate the cultural significance of different gestures and expressions, fostering a more nuanced understanding.

Interviewee C: It's common for students to face difficulties with non-verbal communication. I encourage peer collaboration, where students from diverse cultural backgrounds share insights and experiences, promoting a mutual understanding of non-verbal cues.

Interviewee D: Some students find it hard to adapt to non-verbal expressions. I organize intercultural communication exercises, where students practice interpreting and responding to various non-verbal cues, allowing them to build confidence in diverse communication scenarios.

Interviewee E: Non-verbal expressions can be a challenge for students. I incorporate reflective discussions into the curriculum, where students analyze their own cultural communication styles and those of others, fostering self-awareness and adaptability.

4. Have you encountered misunderstanding or communication barriers caused by cultural differences when teaching English? How do you handle these situations?

Interviewee A: Certainly, navigating cultural differences in communication is common. I handle such situations by organizing intercultural sensitivity workshops, where students actively engage in discussions and activities to understand and appreciate diverse perspectives.

Interviewee B: Yes, cultural misunderstandings arise, and I address them through a proactive approach. I encourage open communication, provide additional resources on cultural norms, and guide students in finding common ground to foster effective intercultural communication.

Interviewee C: Encountering communication barriers due to cultural differences is not uncommon. I utilize case studies and role-playing exercises to immerse students in real-life scenarios, allowing them to practice adapting their communication strategies and enhancing their cultural competence.

Interviewee D: Indeed, cultural discrepancies can lead to misunderstandings. To address this, I create a supportive environment where students can freely express concerns, and I offer guidance on navigating cultural differences, emphasizing empathy and active listening.

Interviewee E: Yes, handling communication barriers caused by cultural differences is part of the teaching experience. I integrate reflective assignments into the curriculum, prompting students to analyze and share their experiences, fostering a deeper understanding of cultural nuances.

5. In your teaching, have you adopted specific strategies

or methods to develop students' intercultural communication skills? Please share some successful experiences or teaching practices.

Interviewee A: Absolutely, I've implemented collaborative projects where students work with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds. This hands-on experience fosters intercultural communication skills, promoting teamwork and understanding.


Interviewee B: Yes, incorporating multimedia resources like videos and documentaries showcasing diverse communication styles has proven effective. This visual approach helps students recognize and adapt to various cultural nuances.

Interviewee C: Certainly, I've organized guest lectures or virtual sessions with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. This provides students with direct insights and allows them to engage in Q&A sessions, enhancing their intercultural awareness.

Interviewee D: Indeed, I integrate regular intercultural discussions within the curriculum. These discussions focus on real-world scenarios, encouraging students to share their perspectives and learn from one another, fostering a dynamic and inclusive learning environment.

Interviewee E: Yes, I've introduced reflective journals where students document their intercultural experiences. This self-reflection helps them identify personal biases, adapt their communication styles, and ultimately enhances their ability to navigate diverse cultural contexts.

File 1. Certificate of consent



UNIVERSITY OF Baguio
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General Luna Road, Baguio City Philippines 2600

Tel/Fax No.: (074) 442-3071 Website: www.ubaguio.edu E-mail Address: ub@ubaguio.edu

CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT

I have been invited to participate in a study about "A Intercultural Communication Ability Training Strategies in College English Education in Cangzhou Open University in Hebei Province"

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions. I have been asked and have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant: Han Fei, Hui Yiwen, Yang Yuru, Wang Yanmin, Zhou Zijian
 Signature of Participant: Han Fei, Hui Yiwen, Yang Yuru, Wang Yanmin, Zhou Zijian

Date: 21th Mar 2024

STATEMENT BY THE RESEARCHER/PERSON TAKING CONSENT

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participants, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant fully understands what s/he is being asked to do in the research project.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participants.

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent: LIU HONG
 Signature of Researcher/person taking the consent: Liu Hong

Date: 20th Mar 2024

Day/Month/Year

File2.Participant consent form

Voluntary Participation:

Please be assured that your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision to participate or not will in no way affect your current or future relationship with Cangzhou Open University.

Confidentiality:

We are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all participants. Your identity will be protected, and any information shared during the interview will be used solely for research purposes. Responses will be anonymized in any reports or publications resulting from this study.

Han Fei.

Hui Jiwen.

Yang Yuru.

Wang Yanmin.

Zhou Zijian.

Lack of Practical Activities: There were few intercultural communication practice activities provided, leading to a narrow range of communication channels and experiences for students.

Proposed Strategies:

Enhanced Cultural Background Knowledge and Practice: Providing more cultural background knowledge and opportunities for communication practice was recommended to help students better address communication challenges.

Collaborative Learning: Encouraging collaboration among students from diverse cultural backgrounds to promote skill development.

Improved Teaching Strategies and Methods: Access to innovative teaching strategies and methods was suggested to assist students in overcoming communication issues.

Curriculum and Confidence Building: Establishing specific disciplines or courses focusing on intercultural communication and building students' confidence and adaptability to face communication challenges effectively.

Conclusion:

The study concluded that addressing the identified challenges through targeted strategies could significantly improve the effectiveness of English teaching at Cangzhou Open University, thereby enhancing students' intercultural communication abilities. The recommendations aim to enrich course settings, foster cultural exchange awareness, improve teacher qualifications in communication and cultural knowledge, and ultimately bridge the gap between different cultures in educational settings.

Liu Hong.

File3.Results of the study

Dear Research participants:

The following are the salient findings of the research *"Intercultural Communication Ability Training Strategies in College English Education at Cangzhou Open University in Hebei Province"*

The study conducted by Liu Hong at the University of Baguio on *"Intercultural Communication Ability Training Strategies in College English Education at Cangzhou Open University in Hebei Province"* aimed to address and improve the challenges faced by students in developing intercultural communication skills through English education. Through a combination of literature reviews, a questionnaire survey, and interviews with students and teachers, the study identified key issues and proposed strategies for enhancing intercultural communication abilities.

Key Findings:

Language Barriers and Weak Listening/Speaking Skills: The biggest challenge in intercultural communication for students was language barriers, significantly affecting their ability to communicate effectively.

Limited Cultural Background Knowledge: A lack of understanding of non-verbal expressions and cultural nuances due to insufficient cultural background knowledge was identified. This led to difficulties in adapting to and understanding non-verbal cues from speakers of different cultural backgrounds.

Inadequate Educational Materials: The study found that school textbooks lacked sufficient information on intercultural communication, negatively impacting students' ability to develop intercultural communication skills.

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