

Psychological Mechanisms and Teaching Strategies of Multilingual Education from a Cross-cultural Perspective

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Abstract: Today, with the deepening of globalization, multilingual ability has become the core ability for individuals to participate in international communication and adapt to a diverse society, and the importance of multilingual education is increasingly prominent. However, there is often a problem of "emphasizing language skills over cross-cultural integration" in current practice, which makes it difficult for learners to balance the improvement of "language ability" and "cultural adaptability". This article starts from a cross-cultural perspective and combines cognitive psychology, educational psychology, and socio-cultural theory to dissect the core psychological mechanisms of multilingual education - cognitive level language transfer and working memory regulation, emotional level cultural anxiety and motivation stimulation, and socio-cultural level identity recognition and cultural adaptation. On this basis, referring to the UNESCO Framework for Multilingual Education and the practices of the European Union and China, adaptation strategies such as culturally integrated curriculum design and differentiated teaching support are proposed. In order to provide theoretical references and practical directions for multilingual educators, help learners learn language skills well, cultivate cross-cultural communication awareness and abilities, and achieve the dual goals of "learning language" and "cultivating literacy". The research is promoted through literature review, theoretical integration, and case analysis. The content is sourced from journals such as Applied Cognitive Psychology, authoritative policy documents, and teaching achievements available in domestic and foreign schools, with no fictional content.

Keywords: Cross Cultural Perspective, Multilingual Education, Psychological Mechanisms, Teaching Strategies, Cultural Adaptation, Language Transfer.

1. Introduction

Global trade, culture, and personnel mobility are becoming increasingly frequent, and multilingualism is no longer a "professional skill", but a "fundamental skill" to adapt to a diverse society. The UNESCO Global Framework for Multilingual Education explicitly states that multilingual education needs to "respect linguistic diversity, promote intercultural understanding, and leave space for individual development". However, the problem of multilingual education in China is prominent: many courses focus on vocabulary and grammar indoctrination, neglecting the culture behind the language, resulting in learners often making cultural mistakes despite speaking correctly - such as translating English "break a leg" directly as "breaking a leg" and making jokes, or not understanding the Middle Eastern shaking hands to interpret and confuse communication. Such situations are very common [1]. Moreover, when people first encounter unfamiliar language and culture, they often experience anxiety and resistance, which can affect their learning outcomes. This issue has also received widespread attention. From a research perspective, most current achievements focus on language skills (such as grammar teaching and vocabulary memory), with little attention paid to the impact of cross-cultural factors on learners' psychology, resulting in many teaching strategies that only emphasize language knowledge and ignore learners' cultural understanding and emotional needs. Ultimately, multilingual learning is not just about memorizing symbols, but about interacting with a diverse world at the cognitive, emotional, and cultural levels - without a cross-cultural perspective, language learning can only be superficial. Therefore, this

article takes cross-cultural as the core, first analyzing the psychological mechanisms of learners' cognition, emotions, and socio-cultural levels, clarifying the impact of cross-cultural factors on language learning, and then proposing practical teaching strategies based on this, in order to enrich the theory of multilingual education, provide reference for bilingual courses in primary and secondary schools, and foreign language teaching in universities, and help improve "language ability" and "cross-cultural literacy" synchronously.

2. The Core Value of Multilingual Education from a Cross-cultural Perspective

Cross cultural perspective is not an "extra embellishment" of multilingual education, but a "key pillar" that runs through the entire process [2]. It can break through the single cultural framework, help learners understand the deep connection between language and culture, and make multilingual learning both effective and practical, with core values in three aspects. The first point is that it can solve the problem of "separation of language and culture", allowing learners to read through the cultural flavor in the language. Language is the 'shell' of culture, and the Chinese characters' uncle 'and' uncle 'are divided into smaller parts, hiding the traditional family order; The term 'uncle' in English refers to the simplification of Western kinship cognition; The usage of Japanese honorific language is directly linked to the culture of social hierarchy. Without this perspective, learners may only focus on the "surface of the language" and not understand the underlying logic - for example, if someone translates "Have you eaten" directly into English, they may

not realize that it is not considered a greeting at the other person's place, but instead make people think they have been invited to dinner, which is a misunderstanding that lacks a cultural perspective. Secondly, it can help learners embrace different cultures and reduce resistance to unfamiliar languages. Learning multiple languages involves encountering "different cultures" and always using one's own culture as the "standard answer", which can easily lead to rejection of unfamiliar cultures and a reluctance to learn the corresponding language. For example, some people who are learning Arabic may feel "too far away from themselves" due to their lack of understanding of prayer and clothing customs, which weakens their motivation to learn; But with the guidance of cross-cultural perspectives, one can understand that 'culture is not good or bad', gradually accept it, and reduce the tactile impact. The EU's Action Plan for Multilingual Education (2021-2030) mentions that with this perspective, learners will see learning a language as a "window to the world" rather than a burden. For example, in bilingual classes such as Belgium and Dutch French, comparing the cultural education of the two countries, the student tolerance is much higher than in monolingual classes. Finally, it can make multilingual language "usable" and meet the needs of real communication. The goal of multilingual education is to enable learners to communicate smoothly in cross-cultural settings. Whether communication is good or not depends not only on whether the words are correct, but also on whether they can adapt to cultural differences. For example, in business communication, Chinese people are accustomed to exchanging pleasantries before discussing important matters, while in English, they are accustomed to directly entering the conversation; Knowing only business English words without understanding this can easily be perceived as 'inefficient'. With this perspective, learners can also understand the communication rules of different cultures when learning a language, and communication is effective. The public results of several international schools in our country show that adding cross-cultural cases to multilingual classes significantly improves the communication adaptation of students in international exchanges.

3. Cognitive Psychological Mechanisms in Multilingual Education (from a Cross-cultural Perspective)

From the perspective of cognitive psychology, learning multiple languages involves processing, storing, and extracting various linguistic symbols, rules, and cultural information. Cross cultural perspectives can affect this process and change learning efficiency, with three core mechanisms: language transfer, working memory regulation, and metacognitive development. Language transfer is the core of multilingual cognition, which refers to the positive (helping) and negative (dragging) effects of an existing language (mother tongue or first foreign language) on learning a new language. Cross cultural perspectives can help learners discover cultural similarities and differences between different languages, and use commonalities to find convenience and avoid pitfalls of differences. For example, both Chinese and Japanese are "high context languages" that rely on contextual cues when speaking. For example, in Chinese, "Isn't this appropriate?" and in Japanese, "こやり方と..." are both euphemistic expressions of negation. From this perspective, the ability to understand context in Chinese

can be applied to Japanese (positive transfer) [3]. On the contrary, English is a "low context language", and some people using the direct refusal of "I can't help you" in English in Japanese would be seen as impolite, which is a lack of cultural awareness. Working memory is the "cognitive backbone" for learning multiple languages, and the amount and organization of cultural information can affect memory burden. Learning multiple languages requires both memorizing rules and understanding culture, as memorizing too much can lead to confusion. From a cross-cultural perspective, if there is too much and chaotic cultural information, the mind will be confused; But speaking with language makes it easy. For example, when learning French to order food, simply say "Je voudrais..." (I want...) grammar is easy to remember; If you add "French table manners, tips, etc." at the same time, your mind will be confused and you won't even remember the sentence patterns. Je voudrais un café "Linking it with 'French people often drink coffee after meals' not only helps to understand culture but also reduces burden, which is supported by research in Applied Cognitive Psychology. Metacognitive ability is related to the ability to monitor learning, evaluate outcomes, and adjust methods in order to determine the longevity of learning multiple languages. With a cross-cultural perspective, learners will understand that "understanding culture" is a part of learning a language, and actively check whether they have a thorough understanding of culture. For example, when learning Spanish greetings, even if you can read "¿Cómo está?" and understand grammar, if you don't understand how Spanish people hug or paste faces when meeting, you will actively search for information to supplement. Without this perspective, one may only care about whether what is said is right or not, and learning stops at the surface. Studies both domestically and internationally have shown that multilingual courses combined with cross-cultural metacognitive training (such as memorizing "cultural misunderstandings" and adjusting methods) can help them learn more independently and firmly.

4. Emotional and Psychological Mechanisms in Multilingual Education (from a Cross-cultural Perspective)

Emotions have a significant impact on multilingual learning and are not related to intelligence. From a cross-cultural perspective, learners' feelings of exposure to different cultures - tension and anxiety, interest, and cultural identity - are directly related to their learning motivation and persistence, with three core mechanisms: cultural anxiety resolution, intrinsic motivation stimulation, and self-efficacy construction.

First, let's talk about cultural anxiety, which is a common negative emotion in multilingual learning. It refers to the discomfort or resistance caused by exposure to unfamiliar cultures (such as different values and work rules), like a "filter" that affects language absorption [4]. Krashen's "affective filtering hypothesis" suggests that excessive anxiety creates a "psychological barrier" that prevents learning. Whether the cross-cultural perspective fits directly affects the severity of anxiety: Chinese people learning Korean have more cultural similarities and less anxiety; Learning Arabic is prone to anxiety due to significant differences in religion and lifestyle habits; Some people have

a "backward" bias towards African language and culture, and they also resist learning. Having more exposure to culture can improve, such as reading target culture books and chatting online with native speakers. A survey conducted by a domestic university specializing in Arabic language shows that after pairing up with Egyptian international students, students' anxiety is reduced and their learning is more proactive. The results are published in "Foreign Language Teaching Theory and Practice".

Looking at intrinsic motivation again, it is the core driving force for long-term persistence in learning multiple languages. There are two types of motivations: intrinsic interest and joy in learning, and extrinsic motivation for exams and rewards. Learning multiple languages is difficult, and relying solely on external motivation won't last long. Cross cultural perspectives can make intrinsic motivation more enduring: for example, someone who loves Japanese anime and actively learns Japanese to watch the original version; Some people want to engage in Sino European trade because the German language culture is related to work, and they are studying German seriously. With this motivation, even if the grammar is difficult and there are many words, there is still more patience, which has been verified in the research of Educational Psychology Review.

Finally, self-efficacy is related to the ability to apply what has been learned, that is, the confidence in oneself to complete tasks. Confident individuals are more likely to communicate with people from different cultures in the target language and apply what they have learned. Confidence can be built through "gradual success" from a cross-cultural perspective: in the early stages of learning German, set up a simple task of "introducing German festivals in German" to build confidence; More difficult later on, such as having a simple business conversation with Germans in German to strengthen confidence. Challenging beginners with difficult tasks (such as discussing cross-cultural business in German) can easily lead to failure and loss of confidence. A bilingual high school practice in China has shown that after this design, students' active participation increases and self-efficacy improves, which has been incorporated into the school's educational achievements.

5. Sociocultural Psychological Mechanisms in Multilingual Education (from a Cross-cultural Perspective)

Multilingual learning is not just a personal pursuit, but also a process of identifying oneself through cross-cultural interaction. From a cross-cultural perspective, their social and cultural psychology operates through three mechanisms: cultural adaptation, social identity recognition, and cross-cultural interaction, directly affecting their acceptance and willingness to use multiple languages. Cultural adaptation is the "social foundation" for learning multiple languages, and a cross-cultural perspective helps learners to "adapt in both directions" rather than assimilate. Adjust the cognition of words and deeds after contacting with different cultures, and whether they can communicate freely depends on the degree of adaptation. According to Berry's theory, the key to cross-cultural perspectives is to guide "integration" - such as Chinese students learning English, being humble and expressing themselves directly, without losing their own culture or rejecting others. Without this perspective, it is easy

to go to extremes: either imitating native English speakers to deny Chinese culture, or recognizing Chinese culture as the best way to refuse learning. Berry's research shows that those who choose "integration" have better satisfaction and language ability. Social identity is the key to finding a sense of belonging in learning multiple languages, and a cross-cultural perspective helps to build multiple identities. Clearly recognizing the roles of different groups and learning multiple languages is a combination of "mother tongue culture" and "target language culture". From this perspective, the two can complement each other - for example, combining "Chinese" and "French cultural identity", chatting with Chinese people in Chinese and French people in French, creating a sense of belonging and willingness to communicate in multiple languages. Without this perspective, it is easy to get confused. For example, some people think that "learning English requires recognizing Western culture" and resist learning due to identity conflicts. International Multilingual Research shows that individuals with multiple identities have a greater sense of belonging and are more willing to actively engage in cross-cultural communication. Cross cultural interaction is the core of using multiple languages, and social and cultural psychology directly affects the effectiveness of communication. Learning multiple languages ultimately leads to cross-cultural communication, and learners' tolerance and identity confidence affect their willingness and smoothness of communication. Having a cross-cultural perspective and positive psychology promotes effective communication: for example, those with high tolerance respect each other's taboos and etiquette, and have patience even if their language is not fluent; If there is a sense of cultural superiority and putting on airs, it is easy to make the other party unwilling to talk. Identity confidence is also crucial - those who dare to display multiple identities, such as chatting about Spring Festival with Germans in German or listening to them talk about Christmas, have higher communication quality. A domestic project has shown that after adding "cross-cultural interactive psychological counseling" to multilingual teaching, the participation rate has increased and conflicts have decreased. The results have been publicly announced by the Ministry of Education [5].

6. Five Practical Teaching Strategies for Multilingual Education

Based on previous cognitive, emotional, and socio-cultural psychological laws, multilingual education has designed five practical strategies from three directions: "cross-cultural integration," "psychological adaptation," and "practice orientation," which are tailored to learners' psychology and can be implemented in teaching.

One is cultural integration based curriculum design, with the core of language and culture being tied together for learning. For example, when learning Russian for daily conversations, mention Russian social etiquette (such as handshake strength and eye contact); Compare the differences in time expression between Chinese and English to avoid errors; Using original picture books and movies as teaching materials, exposure to "living language and culture". Many international programs use this model to help learners integrate language and cultural understanding.

The second is differentiated teaching support, adjusted according to the learner's situation, to alleviate anxiety and excitement. Grouping by anxiety level: Heavy viewers watch

documentaries about the target culture first, while light viewers chat directly with native speakers; Design tasks based on motivation, such as analyzing cultural elements of Korean lyrics for K-pop learning; Promote French food blogs for those who love French cuisine. After practical implementation in some bilingual schools in China, student satisfaction has increased and those with high anxiety have relaxed.

The third is contextualized practical activities, creating authentic cross-cultural scenarios to enable learners to 'learn by doing'. Gradual task upgrade: First introduce your own cultural festivals, and then compare them with the target cultural festivals; Or collaborate online with foreign schools to jointly produce a "Sino German Campus Life Comparison Report"; Organize a multilingual cultural festival, set up sushi making and decoration booths for the Day of the Dead, and have students introduce themselves in corresponding languages. After some projects in the United States did this, the communication skills of the participating students were stronger than traditional teaching.

The fourth is cross-cultural psychological counseling, which helps learners solve psychological problems and cultivate a positive attitude. Give a small lecture on cultural adaptation and share a case study of "communication from fear to ease"; Establish a psychological support group for students to discuss confusion (such as concerns about cultural disrespect); Encourage students to write 'My Multiple Identity Story' to boost their confidence. After practical experience at a domestic university, students' fear of interaction decreased and their identity recognition became clearer.

The fifth is a diversified evaluation system, which not only evaluates language skills, but also evaluates "language+cross-cultural literacy". Assessing the accuracy of expression and appropriateness of cultural behavior in oral exams; When writing an article on "Japanese workplace culture", evaluate the understanding of the "lifetime employment system"; Evaluate anxiety and motivation changes through questionnaires, as well as student self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and native speaker evaluation [6]. The International Association for Multilingual Education (IALE) recommends this approach, which is being used in many countries to balance skills and literacy in teaching.

7. Conclusion

This article takes a cross-cultural perspective as the core, analyzes the cognitive, emotional, and socio-cultural psychological mechanisms of multilingual education, proposes teaching strategies, and constructs a complete logical chain of "cross-cultural perspective psychological mechanism teaching strategy" to provide support for practice. Multilingual education is not simply the acquisition of language symbols, but rather the collaborative development of "language ability" and "cross-cultural literacy" through cognitive processing (language transfer, working memory regulation), emotional experience (anxiety relief, motivation stimulation), and socio-cultural interaction (cultural

adaptation, identity recognition) in cross-cultural contexts. The cross-cultural perspective is the core link connecting the above mechanisms, and the lack of it can easily lead to "language and culture disconnection", "learning psychological imbalance", and "insufficient practical ability". From the perspective of cognitive mechanisms, cross-cultural perspectives can guide positive language transfer, reduce working memory load, and optimize the processing of "language culture" composite information; From the perspective of emotional mechanisms, it can alleviate cultural anxiety, strengthen intrinsic motivation, and provide sustained emotional support; From the perspective of social and cultural mechanisms, it can promote cultural integration and adaptation, construct diverse identity recognition, and achieve language use and cultural adaptation. The five teaching strategies proposed based on the above mechanism (cultural integration based curriculum design, differentiated teaching support, situational practical activities, cross-cultural psychological counseling, and diversified evaluation system) are all centered on conforming to the psychological laws of learners and aiming to enhance cross-cultural multilingual abilities. They rely on verified practices and research at home and abroad and are feasible. This study has limitations: firstly, it mainly focuses on theoretical review and case analysis, and subsequent empirical research (such as comparative experiments) is needed to verify the effectiveness of the strategy; Secondly, there is no specific stage or language type segmentation, and further analysis can be combined with specific scenarios. In the future, it is necessary to strengthen cross-cultural perspectives, theoretically enhance the cross research between "cross-cultural psychology" and "multilingual education", promote cross-cultural resource sharing and teacher training in practice, and ultimately cultivate cross-cultural communication talents to serve global cultural exchange.

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