

Research on Ways to Improve the Cross-cultural Communicative Competence of International Students in China

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ABSTRACT

With the policy of the Belt & Road Initiative put forward by China's President Xi Jinping, China has increasingly become a popular destination for foreign young students to exchange and study, especially for the students from those countries along the Belt & Road Initiative. To improve cross-cultural communication skills will help foreign students to better know and understand China and also help them succeed in cross-cultural communication. The research has found that there are some factors that block the improvement of cross-cultural communicative competence of foreign students in China, such as the large differences of multicultural background, the weak cross-cultural communication abilities and their low level of Chinese proficiency. Therefore, colleges or universities should take some measures to overcome these obstacles by constantly broadening the cross-cultural communication platform for foreign students in China, continuously optimizing the curriculum structure system and strengthening the construction of the team of teachers.

Keywords: *The Belt & Road Initiative, International students in China, Cross-cultural communication.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Belt & Road Initiative was put forward by China's President Xi Jinping to adjust to the globalization and the international development. This strategy deepens the fields and space for China's cooperation and exchange with foreign countries, and also brings unprecedented opportunities and conditions for international students to study in China. Influenced by this favorable factor, the number of overseas students from countries along the "the Belt and Road Initiative" has shown a significant increase in recent years. Therefore, further enhancing the cross-cultural communication ability of international students in China is of great practical significance.

With the continuous increase in enthusiasm for studying in China, more and more young foreign students are choosing to come to China to pursue academic courses, especially in the graduate stage where the number of international students in China has achieved rapid growth. At the same time, the fields of study chosen by international students in China also exhibit diverse characteristics. They

major in a wide range of subjects. In Huaiyin Institute of Technology (HIT), international students select the majors from liberal arts to science, such as IET (International Economics and Trade), BE (Biological Education), TCE (Telecommunication Education) for Bachelor degree, and for Master Degree, there are Agriculture, Chemistry, etc.

In order to better support the development of education for overseas students in China, especially young students from countries along the "the Belt and Road", the Chinese government has set up special government scholarships at the national level, providing 10000 government scholarships for countries along the "the Belt and Road" every year, and actively encouraging students from relevant countries to exchange and study in China. With the continuous expansion of the scale of international students coming to China and the wider coverage of countries, cultural exchanges between different countries are more frequent and in-depth than before under specific time and space conditions. Based on this practical foundation, it is of great practical significance to deepen their profound

understanding of Chinese culture among international students studying in China in a relatively short period of time, especially to cultivate more high-level international talents who are friendly to China and have excellent academic performance. The key to achieving the above goals lies in actively creating conditions to cultivate cross-cultural communication skills among international students studying in China so that they can better perceive and understand China.

This research mainly focuses on the impact of various environmental factors on the cross-cultural communication ability of international students studying in China, as well as how to improve the content and methods of education and teaching

The research also aims to provide a better literature and theoretical support, and helps to fundamentally improve the cross-cultural communication ability of Chinese students in the context of the "the Belt and Road Initiative".

2. MAJOR PROBLEMS IN THE CULTIVATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BELT & ROAD INITIATIVE

In recent years, "the Belt and Road Initiative" has received more and more responses from countries and regions. China's investment in the training of foreign students in China has gradually expanded and the training quality has shown a trend of continuous improvement.

From the perspective of students themselves, there are still some prominent issues in improving their cross-cultural communication abilities.

2.1 The Diversity of Cultural Backgrounds Among Individuals Has Not Yet Been Transformed into the Driving Force for Cross-cultural Communication Among the Majority of International Students Studying in China

Cultural differences are unique cultural symbols formed in a country or nation in the long history, and generally accepted by a country or its people.

With the rapid development of education, especially the significant improvement of higher

education quality, China has gradually become an influential destination country for international students to study in. Studying in China has become an ideal choice for young students from many countries. They have been coming to China for learning and exchange, which objectively requires more cross-cultural communication activities. The problem is that a considerable number of international students generally lack a deep understanding of Chinese culture. The result is that some international students become more strongly aware of their own cultures and form a potential "isolation zone" towards Chinese culture, leading to the phenomenon of self isolation. The reason for this is that they converge with their own cultures and exclude other cultures. They may even have stereotypes about other cultures. Thus, it is easy to encounter communication barriers or conflicts in the learning and living process of countries with new cultural backgrounds. During daily teaching it is found that some international students have low enthusiasm and initiative in recognizing and understanding Chinese culture in communication, and lack a sense of inclusiveness, which may further strengthen existing cross-cultural communication barriers.

This phenomenon should be detected in a timely manner and effectively intervened.

2.2 Inadequate Knowledge of China's Cultural Backgrounds and Communication System Affects the Effectiveness of International Students' Cross-cultural Communication in China

The phenomenon of interpersonal communication is a common occurrence in human society. Cross-cultural communication also belongs to a specific type of the above categories. It has been proved that systematic learning of the formation and development of the cultures of different countries or nations is the key to in-depth and accurate understanding of the cultural context in which they live and study. Although young students from different countries may have some knowledge of China's historical and cultural traditions, they will be deeply affected by their living habits, customs and concepts of their own culture, which will have a negative impact on the actual effectiveness of cross-cultural communication.

In and out of class, while talking with international students in HIT on topics in their daily lives that focus more on food, tourism, shopping, and other aspects in addition to their learning needs, they will be interested and have much to say even in Chinese. However, they are relatively less interested in exploring deeper aspects of China's history, culture, economy, and society. The reason for this is that various topics directly related to life are more likely to find common interests among international students from different cultural backgrounds, and there are fewer obstacles to mutual communication on these daily lives. Simple communication and interaction can only touch the surface of the relevant topic and cannot go deep.

In the communication involving deep historical, cultural, economic, and social aspects, more professional knowledge is required.

2.3 International Students' Low Language Proficiency Seriously Affects the Actual Effectiveness of Their Cross-cultural Communication in China

Language is an important tool for communication between people. Language is part of culture and also a unique cultural symbol of a country or nation.

Currently, there are over 2000 ethnic groups living in over 200 countries or regions around the world, using over 5600 languages. The coverage of international students in China has exceeded 190 countries or regions, and most countries around the world have students studying and exchanging in China. Although the vast majority of international students studying in China have some experience in learning Chinese, their Chinese proficiency varies, and if they come from non-English speaking countries, it may cause greater communication barriers.

Generally speaking, international students who stay in China for a longer time have relatively better communication skills, and if they can speak English, they usually have better cross-cultural communication ability. Moreover, a relatively deep understanding of Chinese culture is beneficial for improving the actual effectiveness of cross-cultural communication among international students studying in China. However, it should be pointed out that due to factors such as the personality traits of different international students coming to China, although some senior students already have a high level of Chinese proficiency and a certain level of

knowledge in cross-cultural communication, their enthusiasm and initiative to actively engage in cross-cultural communication in their daily learning and life may not be high. Also their cross-cultural communication desire may only stay at the level of meeting the basic needs of their own life and study, which may have a negative effect in the cross-cultural communication.

3. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CHINA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE "THE BELT AND ROAD"

At present, to improve the cross-cultural communicative competence of International students, teachers should not only focus on improving the external environment, actively create opportunities and conditions for more foreign students to improve their cross-cultural communicative competence, but also focus on cultivating the enthusiasm and consciousness of foreign students to improve their cross-cultural communicative competence, so that they can actively improve this competence.

International students studying in China are not only a precious asset of their own country, but also a friendly ambassador for China's exchanges with countries around the world. Improving the cross-cultural communication skills of international students studying in China not only helps to improve the effectiveness of their professional learning, but also helps more young foreign generations to know and understand China, and achieve the goal of "knowing China and loving China" in the cultivation of international talents.

Based on the above consideration, each college or university with this program should teach students according to their aptitude, implement precise strategies, and take measures such as continuously expanding cross-cultural communication platforms for international students in China, enriching the curriculum structure system, and strengthening the construction of the team of teaching staff for international students in China. Through multiple approaches and collaborative efforts, teachers can effectively improve the cross-cultural communication competence of international students in China.

3.1 Continuously Expanding Cross-cultural Communication Platforms for International Students Studying in China

The platform for enhancing the cross-cultural communication ability of various types of international students in China is an incubator for improving their cross-cultural communication ability and level. Each college or university should adopt an open and inclusive attitude, actively create a good atmosphere and conditions for international students to know and understand China, and also help Chinese students better know and understand the world without leaving their homes.

In university HYIT, the school of International Education (SIE) attaches great importance to the cultivation of cross-cultural communication skills among international students. At present, the total number of international students studying in school is 165, mainly from the countries along the "the Belt and Road", of which about 48 are Master's students. The School of International Education actively organizes various cultural festivals, art festivals, food festivals, and important cultural activities to bridge the gap between international students from different countries and enhance mutual understanding. Taking various cultural and entertainment activities as an opportunity, international students, under the leadership of Chinese teachers, complement Chinese culture through various cultural exhibitions, specialty food production and tasting, characteristic literary and artistic performances, and ethnic handicraft production exhibitions from around the world. At the same time, they showcase the cultures of various countries and Chinese culture, promoting interaction and exchange between international students and Chinese students. In this way, it not only enriches the study life of international students in China, but also enhances multicultural exchanges and friendly relationships among students from various countries.

3.2 Continuously Optimizing the Curriculum Structure System for International Students Studying in China

The curriculum structure system is an important lever for the professional education of international students in China, and also an important support for improving their cross-cultural communication competence. It is necessary to integrate the concept

and practice of enhancing the cross-cultural communication ability of international students in China into the construction of the education curriculum system for them, especially in the construction of the public basic curriculum system.

The SIE of HIT has been trying to build a more targeted school-based curriculum system, paying particular attention to the development and promotion of courses that reflect China's national conditions and the general situation of various regions in China. For example, besides their major courses, some public basic courses are arranged to arouse their interest in China and Huaian city in which they live and study. In each semester, the International students here will take the required courses such as 'China's Panaroma', Huaian Local Culture etc., which provide a platform for them to understand the country and city where they live and study, thus enhance their recognition of Chinese culture, improve their ability of cross-cultural communication.

3.3 Strengthening the Construction of Cross-cultural Education Faculty for International Students Studying in China

It is important to strengthen the professional level of domestic teachers who teach Chinese language to the international students, especially in the face of the diverse nationalities, learning motivations, customs and habits, religious beliefs, and the Chinese language proficiency of the international students coming to China, and put forward higher requirements for teachers' practical teaching ability. Therefore, considering the special characteristics of international students, it is necessary to strengthen the interaction and communication mechanism within the teaching team by providing professional guidance for young teachers through programs such as "guiding the new with the old", in order to improve their ability to face the educational practice of international students coming to China, i.e., experienced teachers should try to help young students in teaching and dealing with different problems in international students' cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, experienced teachers should encourage young teachers to combine learning with exams, actively participate in cultural and language related training, and support them in obtaining the Certificate for Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (CTCSOL) to improve their comprehensive professional quality. Universities or

colleges should actively expand the international perspective of teachers and create conditions for more frontline teachers to exchange studies or pursue degrees abroad. This not only significantly improves their overall level of knowledge, but also helps them to accurately identify the needs of international students in their work positions after returning to China by personally experiencing the cultural differences and reasons behind their formation. It can also enter the daily lives of international students in China, timely resolve some conflicts or contradictions that may arise from multicultural backgrounds, and actively guide international students coming to China to communicate, integrate and progress together, and continuously improve their cross-cultural communication skills.

4. CONCLUSION

To improve the cross-cultural communication skills of the International students who study in China will help foreign students to better understand and love China and also help them succeed in cross-cultural communications. Although there are some obstacles, such as low motivation, inadequate knowledge of Chinese culture, and low language proficiency etc., teachers should make a great effort to overcome these obstacles by expanding communication platforms, optimize the curriculum structure system, and strengthen the construction of cross-cultural education faculty.

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