A Study on Cross-Cultural Communication and the Cultivation of Cross-Cultural Competence in German Language Teaching in Universities

Wulan*

Chongqing College of Mobile Communication, Chongqing 401520, China

***Corresponding author:** Wulan, dalai7019@aliyun.com

Abstract: In the concept of German, cross-cultural competence is regarded as an important skill, which can help learners to better understand the differences between two cultures and establish mutual cognition. This competence can effectively reduce unnecessary misunderstandings and improve communication efficiency. In college German classes, teachers should realize that cross-cultural communication skills are crucial to the development of students' communicative competence. Therefore, they should strive to improve their teaching methods and make the courses more interesting to help students to communicate better.

Keywords: Cross-cultural communication; German teaching in colleges and universities; Cross-cultural competence; Training

1. Introduction

Although the German courses of most universities provide cross-cultural communication courses, the students' understanding of this knowledge is still relatively less. However, with the ever-increasing ties between China and Germany, many university graduates will face the challenge of choosing a career related to German language. Therefore, providing cross-cultural communication courses is crucial to help them communicate better in German. College German teachers need to develop a variety of teaching methods and continuously strengthen the implementation of cross-cultural teaching to improve the effectiveness of German courses.

2. Current situation of German majors teaching in Chinese colleges and universities

With the development of the era, German professional teaching has made great progress. However, compared with other foreign language subjects, the teaching of German in colleges and universities still faces many challenges, such as insufficient teachers, outdated facilities and teaching models. In addition, there are relatively

few foreign exchanges in German. Due to restriction by traditional structuralism and translation teaching methods, many students only focus on memorizing words and sentence patterns while ignoring the cultivation of comprehensive application competence that integrates language and culture, leading them to encounter many obstacles when communicating with people from German-speaking countries. The "Syllabus for German Undergraduates for German Majors in Colleges and Universities" aims to help students to master language knowledge and skills, cultivate their understanding of German culture and national conditions, and improve their cultural accomplishment and cross-cultural communication competence [1].

3. Significance of cross-cultural competence training

German is one of the most widely spoken languages in the European Union, with official usage in countries such as Italy, Germany, Belgium, and Switzerland. However, due to the large differences in grammar between local languages, it often leads to communication problems. Therefore, when Chinese colleges and universities teach German professional courses, they mainly focus on learning standard German. The most significant difference between German and Chinese lies in three aspects, including language structure, grammar, and pragmatics. These languages are closely related and have their own characteristics [2]. For example, the pronunciation, semantics, and voice of German are all influenced by Western culture. Therefore, teachers should provide students with more practical opportunities in combination with the actual situation of German, help them to better understand the language characteristics of German, and cultivate their competence to think independently. Improving teaching methods can rapidly improve the teaching quality. Therefore, teachers should focus on cultivating students' cross-cultural competence, so that they can master the basic knowledge, and improve their humanistic quality and cultural knowledge through cultural education. In this way, it not only reflects the culture and practicality of the German subject, but also enriches the educational content and helps students to become excellent German talents with good cross-cultural awareness [3].

4. Measures and methods for cultivating cross-cultural communication competence in German teaching in colleges and universities

Through cross-cultural communication courses, students can better understand the cultural differences and develop their competence to view these differences objectively. Students can be asked to compare and summarize behaviors and thoughts in cross-cultural communication scenarios, and summarize and analyze the reasons for communication failures, so as to improve their cross-cultural communication skills.

Transcultural communication theory involves differences in thinking styles and values in different cultural backgrounds, but they are also closely related. "Cultural differences" is a ubiquitous cultural phenomenon. In the cross-cultural communication class, the aim is to enable students to deeply understand the differences between different cultures and to examine them from an objective perspective. Every thinking mode and value is inseparable from the current socioeconomic and political development, and cross-cultural communication is also a comprehensive and in-depth understanding. Therefore, practical learning is particularly important in the classroom [4].

Although students have a deep understanding of local cultural phenomena and behavior patterns, they still lack a real understanding of the reasons behind these phenomena. Therefore, in order to better master the skills of cross-cultural communication, one must clearly recognize these skills, and at the same time master the academic theories, such as thinking stereotypes and prejudices, cultural dimensions, and culture shock. Students should not only master academic theory, but also learn to apply it for cultural comparison and analysis [5].

4.1. Integration of cross-cultural teaching content based on German textbooks

Due to the lack of cross-cultural teaching content in most undergraduate German textbooks, many German teachers neglect cross-cultural communication with students in the teaching process. They believe that a true mastery of German can only be achieved through further language study. However, students who have completed intensive language studies and graduated are still unable to communicate in German. This situation is not conducive to the study and future work of German majors. If the teaching only focuses on the learning of the German language while ignoring the in-depth knowledge of German culture, students will not be able to really master the German language [6]. Therefore, it is necessary to develop students' German cultural awareness through more activities and interactions, so as to improve their German language proficiency. In order to better guide students' cross-cultural communication, college German teachers should build on the original curriculum system and incorporate more cross-cultural knowledge.

"Bitte nicht so direkt!" in the second unit of the third volume of "Contemporary University German," it was found that the way of German speaking is very concise and clear, which is very different from the Chinese way of thinking. Therefore, a university teacher majoring in German should introduce the different cultures of China and Germany to students and help them to better understand the differences between the two countries [7].

4.2. Optimization of the scope of students' German coverage by actively providing German resources

In order to improve students' cross-cultural communication competence, teachers should actively help them acquire more German resources. Since most students are introduced to German at university, they may not be familiar with the language and may not be able to find relevant materials. German teachers in colleges and universities should provide some useful resources for students to better understand German [8]. These resources can be original or translated, as well as others, such as television series and movies, which can help students to better understand German culture. Through the guidance of these resources, students can better understand the cultural differences between China and Germany, thus increasing students' open and inclusive attitude towards German culture.

For example, in the second book "Der Berliner Alexanderplatz" of "Contemporary University German," the German teacher can help students to understand the differences between Chinese and German cultures and stimulate their enthusiasm for learning [9].

4.3. Understanding Chinese and German cultures by offering German culture courses

In the first and second grades of the university, students' German proficiency can be improved by adding German cultural knowledge courses. These courses will help students to understand German culture and communicate with Germans in everyday life. Generally, undergraduates will only be exposed to courses on German national conditions in their junior year, but due to this arrangement, students may find it difficult to learn German. Therefore, these courses can hopefully help students to learn more about German culture and communicate better with Germans in daily life [10]. In future teaching, students may find it difficult to truly understand Germany in a different cultural context, which may hinder them from developing cross-cultural communication skills. In the early stage of undergraduate German learning, teachers should set up German cultural knowledge courses so that students can understand the German cultural background from the very beginning. This will not only help students to better understand German, but also help to promote cross-cultural exchanges between China and Germany.

For example, in order to better explain the lesson of "Guten Tag," the German teacher can first introduce

German etiquette, the way, and content of greetings. This can provide students with a good foundation, so that they can take the initiative to use cross-cultural communication to communicate in German [11].

4.4. Scene simulation

Simulating actual situations is the key to cultivating cross-cultural communication skills. Through practice, students can better understand the differences between different cultures. In a short period of time, it will be more effective for students to simulate the communication and collision between different cultures than to directly analyze the case. In the scenario simulation, students need to go beyond their own cultural background, understand the problems in cultural collision in a more realistic way, and analyze cultural differences from an objective perspective combined with theory. This is a heightened requirement for students representing different cultures. In "Handshake," the Chinese students express their ideas through etiquette. In other cultures, hugs and handshakes are seen as harmonious forms of communication, but kisses and silence can be offensive or incomprehensible [12]. Over time, in daily life, people have become accustomed to the behavior pattern of shaking hands, so students representing foreign countries are more likely to see the impact of cultural conflicts, while Chinese students do not. This suggests that, in other simulated situations, we should try to move away from established thinking patterns in order to better understand and remember our culture.

4.5. Increasing real-life examples

In order to improve students' cross-cultural competence, teachers should change the course content and avoid simply teaching German knowledge, instead they should use examples to help students to understand the differences between Chinese and German cultures and increase their cultural knowledge reserves. In this way, they can better grasp the knowledge they have learned. For example, when teaching, teachers should use real-life examples, such as diet, cultural customs, family life, etc., to expand classroom topics, so that students can not only master the knowledge in the textbooks, but also improve their own awareness in cross-cultural communication. In this way, it can not only stimulate students' interest in German, but also improve the learning effect in an interesting classroom atmosphere, so as to truly reflect the educational significance of language subjects and cultivate more diversified German talents [13].

4.6. Real communication scenarios

In college, students should not only learn through scene simulation and analysis, but also gain the most direct and authentic experience through direct contact with Germans. Through cross-cultural communication, students can not only better understand the knowledge, but also choose and judge information more autonomously. Therefore, teachers in colleges and universities should strive to provide more opportunities for students to help them achieve this goal. There is a significant difference between practical experience and theoretical knowledge. In order to help students to master the skills of cross-cultural communication, foreign teachers and friends can jointly design and prepare communication scenes, so that students can experience cross-cultural communication more intuitively. It is necessary to observe and analyze the communication process, and non-verbal information, such as eye contact, expression, and body language, is combined with verbal information [14]. With the increasing cultural exchanges, there are more and more film and television works of cross-cultural communication. In addition to showing the differences between China and Germany, and the resulting misunderstandings and conflicts through works, teachers can also guide students to observe and analyze the communication methods between Germans through the guidance of cross-cultural communication theory. It can be compared with a similar situation in China, so as to discover the differences in the intercultural communication between China and Germany, and provide students with ways to change their minds and deal

with problems that may arise. Through various ways of exploration and practice, students' cultural diversity can be cultivated and their skills in dealing with cross-cultural communication can be improved, so that they can make more objective and rational decisions in daily communication and business negotiations, instead of being limited to simple classification and judgment [15].

4.7. Internet and multimedia applications

With the rapid development of Internet technology, the communication between information and knowledge has become more convenient. A large amount of data and information brings great convenience to German teaching. Using these rich text and video materials, the course content can be better constructed, and a realistic German cultural atmosphere can be created. This allows students to better understand the latest activities, ideas, and trends of the German people, and motivates them to learn from their own interests and hobbies. Starting from the foreign language, the language learning habits of listening and watching more can be cultivated, being diligent in imitating and being good at thinking will also help them to better master cross-cultural communication skills. By using a variety of multimedia tools, such as projectors, computers, and teaching software, teachers can integrate the teaching content into links such as sound, light, images, and animations, making the teaching process more realistic and interesting which contributes to the development of students' cross-cultural communication competence.

5. Conclusion

With the increasingly frequent exchanges between China and Germany, it has become a very important task to cultivate students' cross-cultural communication skills. Therefore, college German teachers should strive to explore new teaching models and incorporate more cross-cultural content into the curriculum to help students to better understand the cultural differences between China and Germany, and maintain tolerance and respect in Sino-German exchanges. If students can communicate proficiently across cultures, they will be able to communicate better with the international community and lay a solid foundation for improving their German professional level.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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