

Research on Speech Skills Training System Construction for International Chinese Language Education Master's Students from the Perspective of the SECI Model

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Abstract: With the enhancement of China's national strength, international Chinese education has entered a stage of high-quality development. As a core indicator for measuring the comprehensive Chinese language application and cross-cultural communication abilities of master's degree students in international Chinese education, the training quality of speech skills has garnered significant attention. Based on the four core processes of the SECI model—socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization—this paper, combined with the core requirements for speech skills of master's degree students in this field, constructs a four-stage progressive training system: “experience accumulation, standardized output, system construction, and ability transfer.” It clarifies the objectives, paths, and tools for each stage, aiming to provide a new theoretical perspective and practical paradigm for breaking the bottleneck of international Chinese speech skills training and enhancing teaching quality.

Keywords: SECI model; Master of International Chinese Education; Speech

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1. Introduction

At the beginning of this century, with the deepening of China's opening up to the outside world and frequent cultural exchanges, there was a surge in interest in China globally. Chinese promotion projects, represented by the Confucius Institute, aimed at “going global,” have been increasing, and Chinese has become increasingly popular among foreign language learners. Currently, over 70 countries worldwide have incorporated Chinese into their national education systems, and more than 4,000 foreign universities have offered Chinese courses. The number of people learning Chinese outside China is about 25 million, and the cumulative number of people learning and using Chinese is nearly 200 million ^[1].

In 2012, the Ministry of Education approved the establishment of the undergraduate major “International

Chinese Education”^[2]. In 2019, the International Chinese Education Conference was held in Changsha, Hunan Province, marking the emergence of “international Chinese education” into the public eye and gaining consensus in the academic community.

Amidst the global surge in interest in Chinese, numerous universities have established master’s and doctoral programs in international Chinese education. The master’s program in international Chinese education has garnered significant attention. The “Introduction to Graduate Education Disciplines and Basic Requirements for Degrees (Trial Version)” (hereinafter referred to as “Requirements”), released in 2024, further emphasizes that master’s degree candidates in international Chinese education should possess a foundational understanding of educational theories centered around Chinese as a second language, combined with interdisciplinary knowledge, thereby acquiring teaching skills, interpretative and communicative abilities, cross-cultural communication skills, Sino-foreign language communication and organizational coordination abilities, educational research capabilities, and career development skills^[3]. The training objectives for master’s degree candidates in international Chinese education have shifted from imparting basic language knowledge to enhancing comprehensive application abilities. Speech skills, as a crucial ability for publicly expressing oneself, conveying viewpoints, and engaging in cross-cultural communication using Chinese, have become one of the core components of advanced Chinese language instruction.

However, in terms of university education, most current course teaching still primarily relies on lectures delivered by teachers, with limited teacher-student interaction and few opportunities for students to present and exchange ideas in class. Most teachers do not closely align with the master’s program objectives for the major, and still use traditional PPT presentations to deliver lectures on the entire course content^[4]. This not only affects the demonstration of comprehensive abilities of international Chinese language education masters, but also restricts their career development potential in the field of Chinese international education. There is an urgent need for a targeted and systematic training system to address this issue.

2. Theoretical basis

The SECI model was proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi^[5], a renowned Japanese management scholar hailed as the “father of knowledge creation theory”. The SECI knowledge creation process encompasses socialization of individual tacit knowledge (Socialization), externalization of group tacit knowledge (Externalization), combination and systematization of group explicit knowledge (Combination), and internalization of group explicit knowledge (Internalization)^[6]. This model reveals the “interaction process between explicit and tacit knowledge”^[7], providing a systematic framework for organizational knowledge creation and skill development. Tacit knowledge refers to knowledge embedded in personal actions and experiences that is difficult to articulate; explicit knowledge refers to knowledge that can be expressed in written words, diagrams, mathematical formulas, etc.^[8] Tacit knowledge is the source of creating differentiated value and core competitiveness, and the externalization of tacit knowledge is the main way for it to function^[9].

Introducing the SECI model into the speech skills training for international Chinese language education masters can revolutionize the traditional one-way indoctrination-style general speech training model, precisely aligning with the cultivation needs of compound talents in “language application + cultural dissemination + teaching practice”. By promoting the dynamic transformation of implicit knowledge, such as language sense and cross-cultural adaptation intuition, along with explicit knowledge, such as speech logical structure and language rules, it assists students in building a specialized speech ability system that meets professional demands.

3. Construction of an international Chinese speech skills training system based on the SECI model

Based on the four-stage framework of the SECI model and combined with the core components of international Chinese speech skills, a four-stage progressive training system can be constructed, namely “experience accumulation - standardized output - system construction - ability transfer”. Each stage is independent yet closely connected, forming a complete closed loop of “tacit knowledge sharing - tacit knowledge externalization - explicit knowledge integration - explicit knowledge internalization”.

3.1. Socialization stage: Tacit knowledge sharing, laying the foundation for speech experience

3.1.1. Stage objectives

SECI emphasizes that “communicators should use social survey methods such as analogy, observation, and interviews to deeply explore users’ knowledge needs and embed them into the entire process of knowledge diffusion”^[10]. In speech classes, the socialization stage refers to the preparation phase before the speech, aiming to help students share tacit experiences in Chinese speech, including teachers’ demonstration experiences, excellent speakers’ language sense and rhythm control experiences, and situational adaptation intuition in cross-cultural speech, establishing an intuitive cognition of Chinese speech.

3.1.2. Implementation path

This stage mainly involves building a “co-creation field” through situational experience and interactive observation to achieve tacit knowledge transfer. “Focusing the process of knowledge creation on the transformation of elements within the organization and among its members is the way to share individual tacit knowledge and organizational tacit knowledge through experience exchange, inspiration sharing, and other means”^[11]. Firstly, teachers lead by demonstration, selecting topics close to students’ lives, such as “My Chinese Learning Experience” and “Differences between Chinese and Foreign Festivals” for on-site speeches, allowing students to intuitively perceive the language style and expression characteristics of Chinese speech. Secondly, excellent case observation involves grouping students and selecting cases that combine language standardization and cultural adaptability, such as award-winning works from international Chinese education master’s speech competitions, to organize observation and discussion, focusing on the logical connection methods and cultural expression strategies of the cases. Thirdly, cross-cultural experience sharing involves holding an “English Speech vs Chinese Speech” themed salon, encouraging students to share their own speech experiences and confusions, and promoting the exchange of experiences among students with different English learning backgrounds.

3.1.3. Supporting tools

The efficiency and quality of the knowledge-sharing process supported by tools are crucial for transforming knowledge into organizational capabilities and creating value^[12]. To achieve efficient and high-quality speech preparation in this stage, it is necessary to rely on a multimodal case library (including audio and video recordings and speech scripts), a thematic salon discussion manual (produced by students), and a cross-cultural experience sharing record form (produced by teachers).

3.2. Externalization stage: Transformation of tacit knowledge, and construction of a standardized framework for speeches

3.2.1. Stage objectives

The externalization stage is the process of making implicit knowledge explicit, in which knowledge is crystallized, generating conceptual knowledge that can be shared by others and become the foundation of new knowledge. This includes publishing or clarifying knowledge, for example, concepts, images, and written documents, which can support such interaction ^[13]. This stage is the preliminary logic and language architecture stage of the speech manuscript, aiming to transform the implicit experience shared in the socialization stage into explicit speech knowledge, with a focus on breaking through core difficulties such as the logical structure of Chinese speeches, the use of conjunctions, and the norms of topic selection.

3.2.2. Implementation path

The key to this stage is to establish a “dialogue field” and promote the externalization of tacit knowledge through problem-driven and interactive discussions. Firstly, visual training of logical structure focuses on issues such as scattered arguments and abrupt transitions, guiding students to transform implicit logical experience into the explicit rules of the Chinese syllogism of “argument-evidence-sublimation”, and drawing the logical framework of the speech with the help of mind mapping. Secondly, standardized training of conjunctions, taking into account the “paratactic” characteristics of Chinese, strengthens the standardized use of conjunctions such as progression, transition, and sequence through activities such as comparing correct and incorrect examples, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and situational dialogues. Thirdly, standardized training of topic selection, taking into account the cultural background and Chinese proficiency of international students, refines the criteria of “cross-cultural adaptability, language accessibility, and distinctiveness of viewpoints”, transforming implicit topic adaptation intuition into explicit norms.

3.2.3. Supporting tools

To prepare a speech with clear logic and natural expression at this stage, it is necessary to rely on mind mapping software (such as Xmind), a manual for using Chinese logical connectors (including example sentence libraries), and a topic selection assessment scale (created by teachers).

3.3. Combination stage: Integrate explicit knowledge to form a system of speech skills

3.3.1. Stage objectives

In specific contexts, the process of knowledge transformation does not occur solely between two types of knowledge. Instead, it requires the integration of multiple forms of tacit and explicit knowledge to generate the desired knowledge ^[14]. This stage involves refining and cross-reviewing the speech manuscript. It aims to integrate the scattered explicit knowledge formed in the externalization stage, supplemented by standardized training in voice and body language during the speech, to form a systematic knowledge system for speeches, and enhance the completeness and logicity of the speech content.

3.3.2. Implementation path

The focus of this stage is to build a “systemic field” and achieve the systematization of explicit knowledge through task-driven and resource integration. Firstly, it involves the design of a thematic speech plan, integrating early explicit knowledge to complete the writing of the speech, the drawing of a logical framework diagram, and

the production of a PPT. Secondly, it involves multi-modal resource integration, relying on an intelligent teaching platform and combining students' learning history and interest preferences to optimize and improve the speech plan. Thirdly, it involves collaborative polishing, conducting group cross-review, focusing on the completeness of logical structure, the accuracy of conjunctions, and the adaptability of cultural expression, forming a review report to promote the integration and optimization of individual and group explicit knowledge. Fourthly, it involves collaborative rehearsals, where team members divide the work to practice the speech script, polishing their voice and body expression through taking turns to present, evaluate, and revise each other, achieving a unified style, precise and fluent language, and making full preparations for the class presentation.

3.3.3. Supporting tools

To achieve smoother speech, language and more appropriate selection of visual tools for speech preparation at this stage, it is necessary to rely on intelligent teaching resource recommendation platforms, speech scheme evaluation scales (made by teachers), and group collaboration polishing and rehearsal manuals (made by students).

3.4. Internalization stage: Transformation of explicit knowledge, achieving transfer of speech ability

3.4.1. Stage goals

In the internalization stage, individuals put the upgraded new explicit knowledge into practice and assimilate it, gaining experience through new practices and accumulating new tacit knowledge^[15]. This stage is the final presentation stage of the speech, aiming to internalize the systematic explicit knowledge from the previous stage into students' own speech skills, achieving a leap from "standard application" to "flexible transfer", and enhancing on-the-spot adaptability and cross-cultural compatibility.

3.4.2. Implementation path

The focus of this stage is to create a "practice field" to internalize explicit knowledge through practical simulation and feedback optimization. First, practical simulation training involves organizing "recorded speech + live Q&A" activities. After students play back their speech videos, teachers and classmates act as listeners from different cultural backgrounds to ask questions, specifically training on-the-spot adaptability. Second, multidimensional feedback optimization combines teacher comments, peer evaluations, and intelligent assessment systems to provide feedback from dimensions such as structural integrity, language and non-verbal expression accuracy, cultural compatibility, and on-the-spot flexibility, helping students identify and address weaknesses. Third, cross-situational transfer training designs impromptu speech tasks in different scenarios such as academic, professional, and daily life, with groups randomly selecting individuals to complete, promoting the flexible application of speech skills across different situations.

3.4.3. Supporting tools

To achieve excellent speech presentation and cross-situational transfer of speech skills at this stage, support tools such as simulated speech recording equipment, multi-dimensional feedback scales (made by teachers), intelligent evaluation systems (such as XueXiTong), and cross-cultural situational task libraries (also made by teachers) are needed.

3.5. The circulation and optimization of the training system

The four stages of the SECI model are not a linear progression, but rather form a closed loop. The end of one round is the beginning of a new round, forming a spiral upward organizational knowledge creation system. In the internalization stage, implicit experiences, such as on-the-spot adaptability and cultural fit accumulated by international Chinese language education master's students through practical experience, will flow back into the socialization stage for group sharing, promoting the iteration of the training system. Teachers need to regularly collect training data and student feedback from each stage, dynamically adjust training content, task design, and supporting tools, to ensure the adaptability and effectiveness of the system.

4. Conclusion

The SECI model is highly compatible with international Chinese speech skills training. Its transformation logic of “socialization-externalization-combination-internalization” provides a core framework for constructing a systematic training system. The four-stage training system established in this paper clarifies the objectives, paths, and supporting tools for each stage, enabling dynamic transformation of implicit and explicit knowledge. It provides an operable solution to breaking the current bottleneck in international Chinese speech skills training.

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