

Reflection on English Education of Intercultural Perspective at Private Higher Learning Institutions under the Background of Transformation

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Abstract: Culture develops an increasingly important role on communication, while the cultural barrier is crucial cause for cross language communication failure in today's society. In recent years, private higher learning institutions gradually become the important power in the educational system, thus it has important significance on improve Chinese students' language competence by studying English education of intercultural perspective at private higher learning institutions. In this paper, a questionnaire method is used to analyze the English teaching status at private higher learning institutions, explore the causes for cultural teaching shortage in English teaching at private higher learning institutions, propose the strategy to improve college students' intercultural communication competence, and point out importance of cultivating intercultural communication competence.

1. The status of cultivating intercultural communication competence in English teaching at private higher learning institutions

1.1. Sample selection

Teachers and students at five private higher learning institutions in our province are selected as research objects of this study. Questionnaire, panel discussion and interview are used to complete investigation. This design is targeted at teachers' questionnaire to do data statistics from basic information, teaching method, and working environment to know about the occupational status of English teachers at private higher learning institutions. The design is also aimed at students' questionnaire to know about English teaching effect at private higher learning institutions from the aspect of basic information and classroom performance.

1.2. Teachers' investigation analysis

The first part is the basic information analysis of teachers. This part investigates teachers' age, educational year, title, education, and post. There are 283 English teachers at private higher learning institutions giving effective responses, including 36 male teachers and 248 female teachers. For the reference of their age, working years, and degree of education, please see Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3.

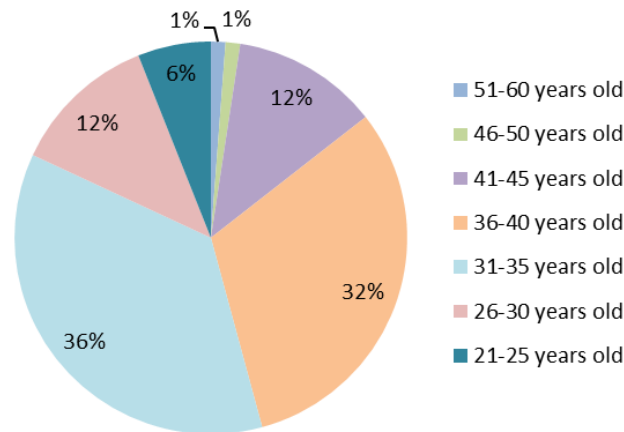


Figure 1 Age Composition of Teachers in Investigation Objects

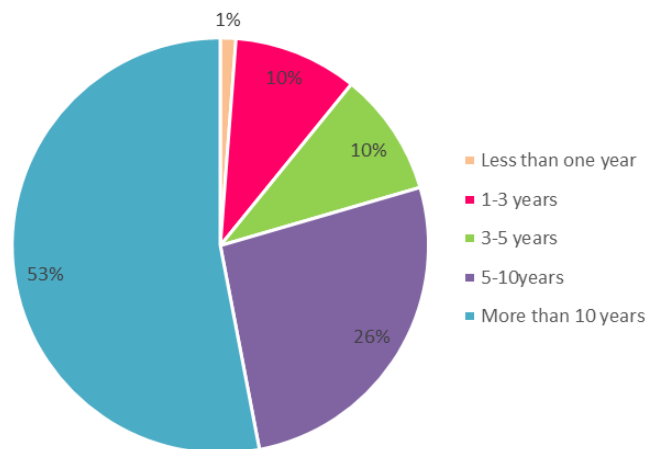


Figure 2 Educational Age Composition of Teachers in Investigation Objects

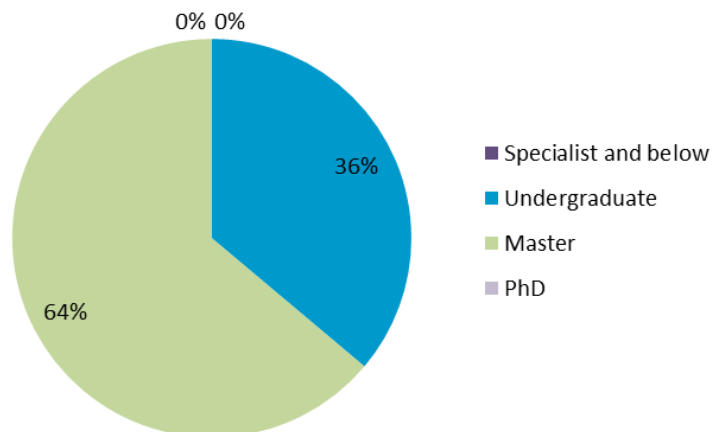


Figure 3 Education Composition of Teachers in Investigation Objects

According to investigation data, it can be observed some problems: English teachers at private higher learning institutions give priority to female teachers. There are 248 female teachers, accounting for 87.63%. By analyzing age, teachers below 30 years old occupy 18.07% and teachers below 40 years old account for 67.47%. By analyzing teachers time factors, it can be observed that teachers with more than 10 educational years have the highest occupation(58%). By analyzing education, it shows that teachers with undergraduate diploma occupy the most of them, followed by master and Ph.D. One of important objectives at private higher learning institutions is to attract talents with master's degree and Ph.D.

The second part is involves in analysis of the teaching method. This part investigates teachers' teaching situation, teaching pressure, working environment and school supporting. It can be

observed from data that 68.67% of English teachers think they enjoy a good health and have enthusiasm for teaching, but most of teachers lose teaching patience for some mischievous students who don't attend a class. 23.10% of teachers think cultivating students' intercultural communication competence is very necessary to English teaching. 32.7% of teachers make innovations on a teaching method and introduce a new teaching mode.

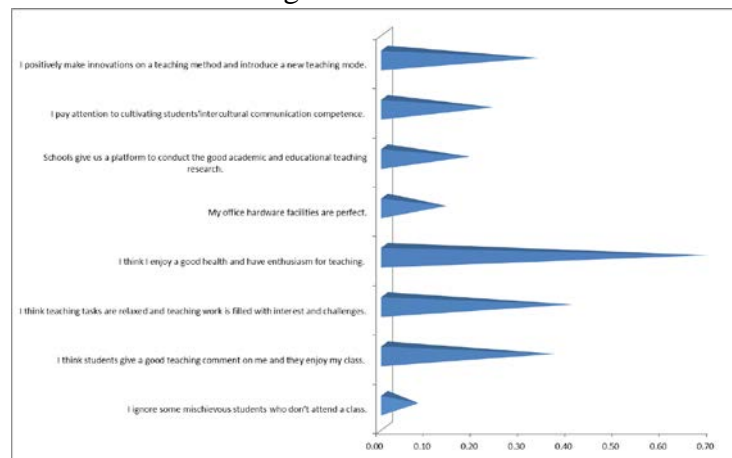


Figure 4 Teachers' Teaching Situation and Teaching Pressure in Investigation Objects

The third part is teachers' working environment investigation result analysis. This part investigates teachers' salary, promotion and occupational recognition. Data show that only 12.04% of teachers think the schools own the sound teachers' training system and they can improve themselves every semester. Also, they have a chance to receive further study and training at home and abroad. The selection mechanism for further study is fair and reasonable. 66.26% of English teachers are not satisfied with the current salary and welfare. 91.37% of teachers think the schools' salary system is not reasonable, while 84.34% of teachers are dissatisfied with the current post and think the evaluation system is just so-so. Meanwhile, they don't encourage and support public English teachers to go to enterprises and grass-roots units to do practice exercise. At the same time, the evaluation system of English teachers in majorities of private higher learning institutions is the traditional standard mode.

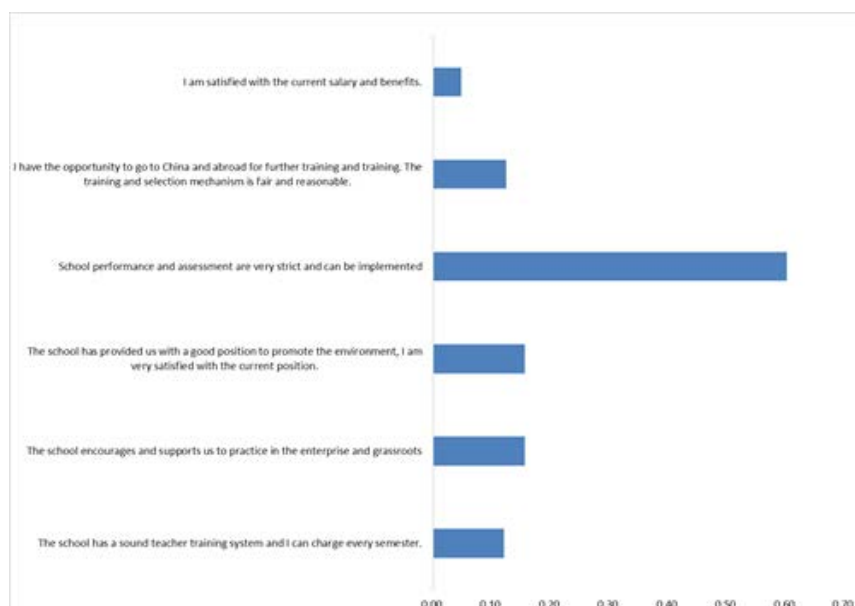


Figure 5 Teachers' Working Environment in Investigation Objects

1.3. Students' investigation result analysis

The first part is the basic information analysis of students at private higher learning institutions. This investigation objects include 501 students at private higher learning institutions who give the effective response, including 156 boys and 345 girls. Their age, origin o students, and political status see Figure 6.

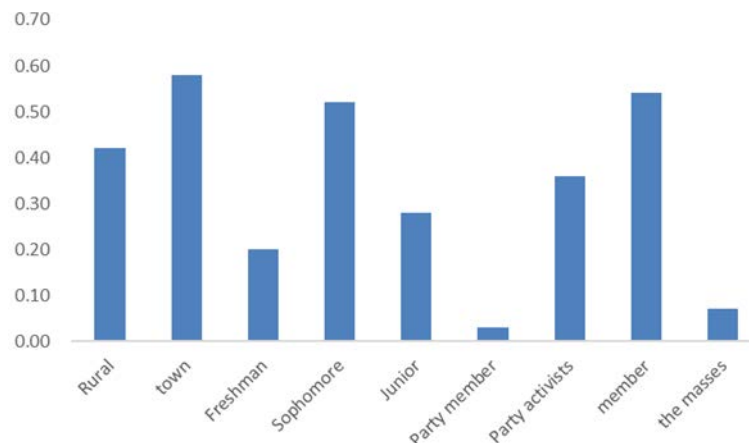


Figure 6 Basic Information of Students at Private Higher Learning Institutions

The second part refers to analyze students' English classroom performance. Majorities of English teachers will give extracurricular reading books in the first class of a term. More than half of students often "look over but forget them" and neve give sufficient attachment to them. Meanwhile, some students are often late and absent. They are easy to distract in class and fail to keep pace with teachers' teaching progress. Moreover, students seldom spend time on English study after class. 70% of students about spend 1h every week. 26% and 4% of respondents are respectively willing to spend 2-5h and 6-10h on it.

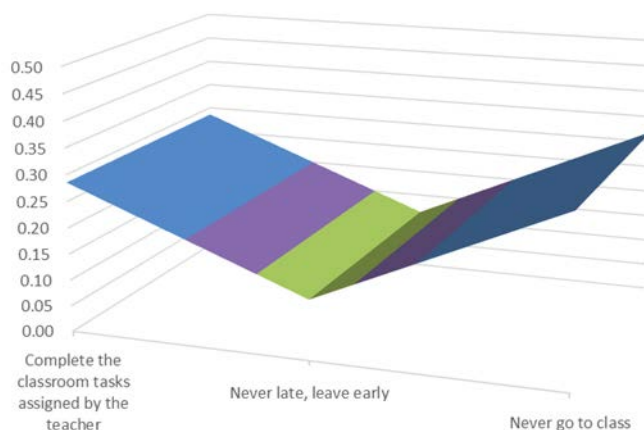


Figure 7 Students' English Classroom Performance Analysis

2. Existing problems in intercultural communication competence cultivation of English teaching at private higher learning institutions

2.1. Vague teaching goals

In current days, English teaching at China's private higher learning institutions is often targeted at semester exams and professional exams, while students become learning machines and only study for study's sake and for test [3]. In teaching, interactive communication is only limited to textbooks, but seldom gets involved in extracurricular knowledge. Most of teachers use traditional teaching methods, including recitation and explanation of word meanings, textbook reading,

translation of paragraph meanings, and exercise for reinforcing and intensifying basic knowledge. Even if such traditional teaching modes can slightly improve exam performance, such lagging teaching methods make students weary of studying. Monotonous teaching methods make English study as sharp as a marble, so this restrain students' learning interest to a large extent. Moreover, this seriously affects development of students' intercultural communication competence, thus students are lack of learning consciousness for intercultural communication[4].

2.2. Lagging teaching modes

According to investigation analysis, it can be observed that teaching methods for cultivating intercultural communication competence in English teaching at private higher learning institutions are relatively lagging and teaching strategy is not reasonable in use. Therefore, this becomes an urgent problem to be solved. To begin with, intercultural communication competence in English teaching at private higher learning institutions use old-fashioned cultivation methods. During the teaching process, teachers fail to effectively use various English teaching modes to carry out the intercultural teaching activities. Furthermore, students' subject status in the learning process is not obvious at all. There are fewer activities expanding in-class teaching activities towards extracurricular activities. Moreover, intercultural communication competence cultivation and teaching strategies at private higher learning institutions are urgent to be improved.

3. Reflection on cultivating intercultural communication competence in English teaching at private higher learning institutions

In order to improve students' intercultural communication competence, schools, teachers and students should make efforts together, reform the innovation cultivation mode and curriculum setting, motivate students and devote themselves to improving their intercultural communication competence.

With regards to schools, we can refer to the school-running ideas at European and American English language department and department of foreign languages, move teaching center of English major from language inter-translation to interconnection between Chinese and Western cultures, and absorb Chinese culture in the teaching range[5]. Also, it is necessary to change the teaching mode with the center of teachers, but focus on students, attempt multiple teaching methods, such as task-oriented teaching, practice-oriented teaching, and immersive teaching, etc., and break through limitations of teaching materials, but assist reading materials to reveal the native culture and objective culture, and guide students to deeply discuss questions. It is essential to set up English knowledge and professional knowledge courses, develop subject advantages of comprehensive universities, attempt to communicate with other departments, and set up courses as required, while emphasizing on professional skills of English. If there is an hour limit, schools can set up short-term courses or lectures. Different themes can be used to guide students to correctly comprehend and evaluate the cultural differences. In this way, they can positively participate in practice of intercultural communication.

In terms of teachers, as English teachers, they should try their best to guide students to notice cultural background knowledge of textbooks, reveal social and cultural significance of English-spoken countries, and enable them to study culture, while studying language. Only in this way can students improve their intercultural communication competence. Lots of English teachers should pay much attention to cultural teaching, start from cultivating students' intercultural communication competence, and avoid serious cultural conflicts in communication. Only by enriching themselves can they greatly transfer knowledge. At ordinary times, English teachers should constantly study and enrich their cultural connotations, hoping to clearly realize the cultural contents that they will teach. Teachers are important leaders in teaching activities. Only teachers change their teaching concept in subjectivity can students fundamentally accept and cultivate their cultural consciousness in their sub-consciousness[6].

In view of students, before studying English, teachers should know about relevant culture, combine with English knowledge learned in class, and comprehend the development history of

language culture. The application of the so-called intercultural communication in college English teaching is to ensure that students can apply their knowledge and use English for communication and study[7]. In other words, the learning process of college English is the process to communicate, comprehend, study and use English culture. Such a way not only make students effectively use English knowledge and culture, but also causes an important impact on improving language communication competence of many students.

References

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