

Analysis on the Internal Connection Between Educational Psychology and Cross-Cultural Communication from the Perspective of Multilingual Education

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Abstract. Multilingual education refers to studying several languages; at the same time, students need to be able to adapt their thinking and emotions differently when living in different cultures. Educational psychology and cross-cultural communication are closely related and interact at various times. Given the actual situation of multilingual education, this paper will investigate how psychological factors, such as cognitive flexibility, language anxiety, learning motivation and cultural identity recognition, affect the quality and depth of cross-cultural communication. At the same time, it will also investigate the specific ways in which cross-cultural communication practices change the psychological structure of learners. The multilingual classroom is a representative case for educational psychology and cross-cultural communication research. Psychological dynamics and cultural understanding in teacher-student interaction and peer collaboration are mutually permeable and generate each other. Based on the above analysis, multilingual education should establish the concept of "psychology-culture synergy", integrate the cultivation of psychological adaptability and the improvement of cross-cultural communication skills into a unified teaching system, and provide a reference for classroom practice.

Keywords: Multilingual education, educational psychology, cross-cultural communication, psychological adaptation, cultural identity.

1. Introduction

Multilingual Education has attracted considerable attention. Policies promoting the diversity of languages in Europe, bilingual education in Asia, and the spread of English-medium instruction at higher education levels all show that multilingualism is now considered an important quality for the future. The main problems in multilingual education are not only related to the learning difficulties of the language system. Learners also need to deal with the psychological impact and adaptation pressure caused by multiple systems of cultural values, thinking habits and behaviour.

Educational psychology and cross-cultural communication studies are not traditionally the same. Research in the past has concentrated on the internal psychological factors of learners and how various factors, such as motivation, anxiety and self-efficacy, affect their learning results; at the same time, other scholars have studied the transmission of information and the meaning-negotiating and relationship-building functions of different-cultural groups. The two areas are closely related in their application to multilingual education. If the learners are anxious, they will avoid cross-cultural interaction, and a communication breakdown can increase their anxiety further, forming a vicious circle [1]. It can be seen that if the disciplinary barrier is not reduced, the full circumstances of multilingual learners cannot be revealed.

Recently, some scholars have begun to pay attention to this intersection of fields. Research on bilingual teachers of ethnic minorities shows that what appears to be a problem of language ability is, in fact, a deep-seated difficulty in cross-cultural adaptation. According to the above observation of cross-cultural classrooms, students are generally less interactive and unwilling to speak out. The above psychological responses will affect the quality of cross-cultural communication significantly. However, most of the existing achievements are only at the level of phenomenon description and lack a systematic theoretical integration of the direction of interaction between educational psychology and cross-cultural communication, as well as mediating mechanisms and interdependent relationships. Therefore, this paper aims to remedy this deficiency by constructing an analytical system that can

explore the internal connections among the two and provide a reference for the development of multilingual education theory and practice.

2. Cognitive Flexibility and Psychological Safety: The Psychological Readiness of Multilingual Learners

In order to build the above analysis system, we need to consider the psychological starting point of learners upon entering a multilingual classroom. Multilingual learners are not entering the learning process in a blank state of mind. Before entering the classroom, they already have certain cognitive habits, emotional tendencies and self-positioning that limit the depth of cross-cultural communication to a certain extent.

At the cognitive level, long-term use of multiple language systems by learners does show some advantages. Bilingual Exposure Enhances Inhibitory Control and Task Switching in Executive Functions. Bilinguals need to continuously suppress the activation of non-target languages, so this occurs [2]. An increase in cognitive flexibility can help multilingual learners adjust their thinking more readily, and such a trait is a basic cognitive condition required for learning about other cultures. Cognitive Flexibility is not necessarily favorable for good cross-cultural communication. If there is no psychological safety, even if learners have the cognitive ability to change perspectives, they may still choose to avoid or withdraw during actual cross-cultural communication.

Psychological safety is the sense of freedom one feels in a particular social setting without fear of harm to one's self-image, rejection or exclusion, etc. Multilingual classrooms: A Sense of safety helps students feel more confident expressing their thoughts in speaking, even when they are uncertain about themselves. The "cautious communication" phenomenon that some Chinese college students have experienced in cross-cultural classrooms is often not due to a lack of language ability but rather to deep-seated anxiety about making mistakes, losing face, or receiving negative assessments [3]. This problem is not a specific cultural or psychological feature of Chinese learners; rather, it is a psychological state that has been continually reinforced by the power dynamics and evaluation system in the classroom.

The level of cross-cultural communication among learners is determined by both their language abilities and cultural literacy, and cognitive flexibility and a sense of psychological safety are also required. Even if a person has a large vocabulary and correct grammar, if they are overly defensive internally, cross-cultural communication may remain superficial; although there will be some information exchange, genuine meaning and emotional connection cannot be achieved. It can be inferred from the above that, if only the quantity of students' language output is emphasised without regard for creating a psychologically safe classroom environment, the goals of education will not be achieved.

3. From Anxiety to Motivation: The Mediating Role of Emotional Factors in Cross-Cultural Communication

Psychological safety provides the basic conditions for cross-cultural communication, but the extent and quality of this communication are also influenced by other factors, namely the emotional experiences of the learners. Cognitive flexibility and psychological safety are required for cross-cultural communication; thus, learners' emotions will affect all links in communication and may lead to deep understanding or inhibit genuine connection.

Among all the studies on the emotions experienced by multilingual learners, most have focused on language anxiety. Language anxiety refers to a particular psychological phenomenon that occurs in the classroom environment and includes self-consciousness and beliefs, according to the above studies. As shown above, the anxiety of foreign-language learners is not the same as other kinds of situational anxiety; it directly harms their self-esteem and sense of cultural identity. When anxious, students are likely to exhibit a conservative style in their expressions, reduce the scope of content,

avoid difficult subjects, and speak less freely [4]. Although the above responses may reduce the tension for a short time, they are limited to instrumental communication between cultures and fail to explore each other's cultural worlds in depth.

Recently, some scholars have also studied how pleasure is obtained through foreign-language learning. The above studies have found that the categories of positive and negative emotions in language learning are not opposed to each other, but rather fall into different areas. Reducing anxiety is not the same as increasing pleasure, and often, stimulating pleasure can motivate people to want to talk more readily. Cross-national surveys show that teachers' emotional support, a friendly atmosphere among peers, and curiosity about the target language culture are jointly responsible for the main source of pleasure in foreign language teaching [5]. When the motive for pleasure is strong, students will be more willing to take part in cross-cultural activities voluntarily, put more emotion into their communication, and can handle the uncertainty of interaction better.

Different types of motives are associated with various emotions and are thus mediated by emotions. Motivations for learning can be classified as two kinds: integrative and instrumental. The former is related to a sense of belonging and a wish to join the target culture; the latter serves specific purposes, such as job hunting or exams. The positive correlation between integrative motivation and cross-cultural communication ability is relatively high because students who genuinely desire to learn about another culture will maintain an open mind during communication, be able to accept differences in information, and actively seek the meaning of the culture without immediately judging it. Based on the above, we believe that multilingual education should aim to arouse learners' own interest in cross-cultural communication rather than using external motives.

4. Bidirectional Construction in the Classroom Field: The Psychological Dynamics and Cultural Emergence in the Interaction Process

The above discussion focused on the psychological factors of individual learners; however, these factors do not occur in isolation but rather take on specific forms in the context of classroom interaction. Educational psychology and cross-cultural communication are not only concerned with individuals but also appear in the multilingual environment of the classroom. A classroom is a place for teaching language and also a social space to cultivate psychological motivation and cultural connotations continuously.

In teacher-student communication, the teacher's culture and style of teaching may be out of touch with what the students expect. Conflicts between foreign teachers and Chinese students in the classroom originate from differing teaching ideas on both sides. Foreign teachers are more likely to lead discussions independently, but Chinese students are used to being taught by the teacher. This will be confusing. Students believe that open-ended questions are not suitable for their preparation and consider encouraging questions to be a lack of standard answers. This disjunction is a conflict among different educational cultural traditions and their corresponding psychological scripts. If teachers only describe the language of teaching behaviour and do not address the psychological reasons for cultural demands, the problem will not be solved. Teachers in multilingual classrooms need to consider teaching languages, transferring cultures, and supporting psychological adaptation for students to find a balance point among cross-cultural expectations.

Cross-cultural communication among students in peer interactions is more decentralized and requires a higher degree of learner initiative. Group cooperation and project-based learning offer platforms for cross-cultural communication; however, whether these occasions foster understanding and trust depends on the psychological motivation of the individuals in the interaction. Although the groups of multicultural students appear harmonious, there may be communication anxiety among them during teamwork. Students are afraid of being different and thus do not participate in group discussions. This "precautionary face management" arises from the uncertainty of the boundary of the other party's reaction, and people thus adopt a conservative strategy to seek safety [6]. The above

measures may offer some psychological support but will not enhance the sense of cultural identity through the sense of difference.

The "semi-real" quality of the classroom environment offers a way to address the problems. Unlike real cross-cultural interactions, the psychological cost of a failed classroom communication is relatively low and thus serves as a safe space for experimentation [7]. Teachers can design tasks with moderate uncertainty and controllable risks to help learners extend their psychological comfort zone in a "structured adventure". Therefore, the optimisation of educational psychology and the deepening of cross-cultural literacy will work together in the integrated teaching process.

5. Reverse Path: How Cross-Cultural Communication Reshapes Learners' Psychological Structures

Language skills are not the only sources of changes that occur in the classroom. Experiences of cross-cultural communication then modify the learners' original psychological structure. Cross-cultural communication happens often in multilingual education. As a result, with an increase in the quantity of such communication experiences, the psychological state of learners will also change. Cognition, emotions and self-concept all change in the course of cross-cultural contact.

To foster deep cross-cultural communication among learners, provide them with culturally distant information. Therefore, there will be some confusion. As long as communication continues, the learners will be able to reach an "accommodation" state. Learners will update their old cognitive structures and add the new content. Multilingual people who have had a large number of cross-cultural interactions generally have better cognitive abilities and are more likely to see problems from multiple cultural perspectives. They no longer believe that the logic of their own culture is the only norm and can flexibly switch between different cultural systems [8]. This is not taught in class; instead, one learns by doing in daily life.

The second is the problem of emotions in cross-cultural communication. Learners are frustrated because they are misunderstood; they feel awkward when unable to express themselves accurately, and they are uncomfortable due to value differences. After experiencing and overcoming these difficulties many times, the students will have improved their sense of self-discipline. A Theory of Stress-Adaptation-Growth can be used to explain the above phenomena. Some stress can help the students break out of their normal thinking and achieve better adaptation. These moments in the difficult dialogue of multilingual education are often essential for the development of students' emotional intelligence.

Language can be used to communicate with others and, at the same time, helps us form a sense of self. Multilingual Learners' Sense of Self-Awareness Varies by Language. Some scholars have referred to the self-awareness that develops from multiple language and culture exposure as a "multilingual self" [9]. This identity is not the denial of the original cultural identity, nor is it a passive acceptance of a new one. It is an unstable state of ongoing adjustment and reconstruction in cross-cultural communication. Teachers need to know that this process takes time; therefore, they should refrain from judging students based on a single measure of "good adaptation" or "identity achievement" and allow them the freedom to discover their own meaning through cross-cultural communication at their own pace.

6. Towards Integration: The Psychological—Cultural Synergy in Multilingual Education

The preceding sections have gradually investigated the direction of the impact of psychological factors on communication, the reverse remodelling of the psychological structure by communication experience, and the mutual construction process of the two in the classroom environment. In short, educational psychology and cross-cultural communication work together in multilingual education to build each other up. The two are mutually conditioning and also mutually resulting: psychological

preparation provides the foundation for effective communication, and communication experience, in turn, expands the boundaries of psychology. According to the above analysis, the practical path of multilingual education should be adjusted.

For a long time, the design of the curriculum for multilingual education has treated language skills, cultural knowledge and psychological adaptation as separate elements [10]. Language classes cover vocabulary and grammar; culture classes introduce customs and habits; and psychological counseling is outside the curriculum and only provided for students with significant adaptation problems. The basic reason for this is that education psychology and cross-cultural communication have been closely linked in daily teaching for a long time. A student does not participate in the group discussion because they fear being mocked for their accent; this is related to psychological safety, cross-cultural participation and language practice. The three are interconnected, so they cannot be solved independently.

This paper proposes a transition to an all-encompassing model of "psychological-cultural synergy". No extra class time or courses are needed for this; instead, the two aspects of psychology and culture can be added to the design of the curriculum, teaching methods and assessment systems. Tasks in the design of curriculum for cross-cultural communication can be arranged according to the level of psychological risk, from low-risk tasks such as cultural information exchange to more in-depth dialogues on values, and gradually increase in difficulty for learners to adapt. In teaching strategies, teachers should consciously create a psychologically safe environment in the classroom, accept all kinds of answers, redefine "errors" in expression as learning resources rather than proof of failure, and show their own uncertainty and learning attitude in cross-cultural situations for the students. The evaluation system should also be expanded beyond the focus of language accuracy and correctness in cultural knowledge; it needs to include students' participation level, willingness to take risks, and depth of reflection in formative assessment [11].

This way will be more demanding for teachers. Teachers need to be proficient in teaching the Chinese language and also be aware of the psychological changes in children's classes, know how to present cultural differences to children simply, and know how to help children manage their emotions. Pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher development programs need to make corresponding adjustments to help teachers form an all-around teaching view in the early days of their careers.

7. Conclusion

The four levels of the above discussion are psychological readiness, emotional regulation, classroom behaviour and reverse reorganisation. Based on the general arguments in the entire text, the relationship between educational psychology and cross-cultural communication in multilingual education can be understood at three levels. First, the connection between the two has many types. Cognitive flexibility, language anxiety, motivation orientation, and cultural identity affect the willingness, strategy and depth of cross-cultural communication at the cognitive, emotional and identity levels, respectively, and the mode of intervention differs based on the circumstances of cross-cultural communication. Second, cross-cultural communication serves as the medium for restructuring psychological systems. Sustained cross-cultural communication helps learners expand their cognitive schemas, regulate their emotional thresholds and reconstruct the system of cultural identity; at the same time, particular psychological intervention measures can be used to achieve this goal. Third, multilingual classrooms are the space where the two-way association can be carried out. Psychological dynamics and cultural understanding in teacher-student interaction and peer collaboration mutually permeate each other; thus, the classroom has transitional characteristics of both authenticity and safety and is neither pure simulation nor completely exposed cross-cultural contact.

Based on the above analysis, educational psychology and cross-cultural communication research should no longer be viewed as separate and independent areas. They have already been closely

connected in the actual experiences of multilingual learners. In practice, the "psychology-culture synergy" approach refers to the idea that in order to enhance multilingual education, one should consider not only changes in teaching methods but also the psychological condition and cultural background of the learners.

This article provides theoretical analysis; therefore, the scope of application for the results cannot be determined empirically here. Future research can use a longitudinal tracking design to examine the interaction trajectory of educational psychological factors and cross-cultural communication abilities in a time series, as well as conduct classroom micro-analysis to explore the coupling mode of psychological and cultural factors in teacher-student interaction. This problem is still being studied at various times due to the ongoing deepening of globalisation.

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