

The Application of the Cultural Comparison Method in the Cultivation of Intercultural Communicative Competence in Junior Middle School English Teaching

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Abstract

Cultural comparison method in junior middle school English teaching is a very important teaching method, which can help students better understand and grasp the differences between different cultures. This paper explores the use of cultural comparison in English teaching at junior middle school level, focusing on the analysis of lexical comparison, address comparison, values comparison, greeting comparison and so on. It also highlights the importance of fostering intercultural communicative competence in the classroom. The research shows that through the application of cultural contrast, students can have a deeper understanding of the differences between different cultures, so as to enhance intercultural communicative competence and improve English language ability and cultural accomplishment. Indeed, in junior middle school English teaching, it is crucial to actively incorporate cultural comparison in order to enhance students' development of intercultural communicative competence. By understanding and appreciating different cultures, students can effectively communicate with people from diverse backgrounds and broaden their perspectives. Cultural comparison not only promotes language learning but also cultivates students' intercultural sensitivity and global awareness, preparing them for a more interconnected world.

Keywords

Cultural Comparison Method; Intercultural Communicative Competence; Junior Middle School English

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Introduction

With the rapid advancement of globalization and the growing recognition of a global community striving for a shared future, the importance of intercultural communication skills has become increasingly crucial for individuals in today's society. As English remains the most prevalent language globally, it serves as a vital means of establishing connections between diverse countries and cultures, making it an indispensable ability for effective intercultural communication. Consequently, it is becoming increasingly imperative for junior middle school English teaching to not solely focus on linguistic proficiency, but also to emphasize the development of students' competence in real-life communication scenarios and their adaptability in diverse cultural contexts. Through such an approach, students can acquire the necessary skills and confidence to proficiently navigate through various cultural environments, fostering an inclusive and globally aware mindset.

The concept and importance of intercultural communicative competence

Intercultural communicative competence refers to a kind of competence that one can communicate and exchange ideas effectively in different cultural context, and it includes the knowledge, skills and attitudes. It involves four aspects: cultural knowledge, cultural skills and cultural attitudes. People with this competence can better understand and adapt to different cultures and promote intercultural communication. The significance and indispensability of intercultural communicative competence can be observed in the following aspects:

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Promote international exchanges and cooperation: it has become paramount in the context of globalization. The convergence of economies, politics, science, and technology has created a unique landscape where countries are interdependent and interconnected like never before. In such a globalized world, it is imperative to have individuals quipped with intercultural communicative competence, as they are better able to facilitate effective communication and understanding between countries. Talents who possess this competence play a crucial role in bridging the cultural gaps that often hinder effective international cooperation. Their ability to navigate diverse cultural contexts, understand different viewpoints, and adapt to various social norms enables them to foster positive interactions and build relationships based on mutual trust and respect. As cultural ambassadors, these individuals can effectively promote international cooperation by establishing meaningful connections and facilitating collaboration across borders. By promoting intercultural understanding, talents with intercultural communicative competence contribute to the harmonious development of international relations.

Improve personal competitiveness: in the workplace, individuals with intercultural communication skills are more likely to get more career development opportunities, because they can better communicate

with colleagues, customers and partners from different cultural backgrounds, thus improving work efficiency and teamwork ability. Moreover, individuals with strong intercultural communication skills are better equipped to connect with customers and partners from different cultural backgrounds. They possess the ability to adapt their communication style to suit the cultural nuances of their counterparts, which facilitates effective interaction and builds trust. This enhances customer satisfaction, strengthens business relationships, and opens doors to new opportunities for professional growth. Overall, individuals with intercultural communication skills gain a competitive edge in the workplace. Their ability to communicate effectively across cultures not only improves their individual performance but also contributes to the overall success of the organization. As globalization continues to shape the business landscape, these skills are increasingly sought after and can significantly impact one's career trajectory.

Enrich personal life experience: in the process of traveling, studying and living, people with intercultural communicative competence can better establish friendship with local people, understand and appreciate the charm of different cultures, and thus enrich personal life experience and life value. **Promote social diversity:** developing intercultural communicative competence contributes to improved comprehension and acceptance between individuals from various cultural backgrounds, reduce cultural conflicts and misunderstandings, and provide support for building a harmonious and diverse social environment. Therefore, intercultural communicative competence is of great significance and necessity in the context of globalization, and intercultural communicative competence serves as a catalyst for facilitating international exchanges and collaborations, thus promoting positive global interactions, improving personal competitiveness, enriching personal life experience and promoting social diversification.

What's more, when considering students' psychological well-being, nurturing intercultural competence enables them to establish a strong sense of self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-identity. When communicating with people from different cultures, students are able to show their own cultural characteristics while respecting and appreciating other cultures, hence a positive self-image can be built. It also enhances students' communication skills, mastering intercultural communication skills can help students be more confident and calm when communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds, which is essential to a student's success in academic, professional and social setting. In addition, from the aspects of social change needs, it follows the globalization trend, therefore, the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence helps students adapt to the challenges of globalization and improve their competitiveness and influence in the international environment. Also, modern society has an increasing demand for talents with intercultural communication skills. Developing this competence is advantageous in enhancing students' competitiveness in the job market and expanding their career prospects. Furthermore, it equips students with the ability to effectively utilize information resources, enhance their innovation skills, and adapt to various situations.

The function of cultural comparison method in cultivating students' intercultural communicative competence

Cultural comparison is a method of studying the differences and similarities between different cultures, which compares two or more cultures and analyzes their differences and similarities in language, values, customs, etc. Comparing cultures facilitates a deeper comprehension of their differences, promoting cross-cultural communication and fostering mutual understanding. In terms of language, cultural contrast can help people understand the ways of expression and language habits between different languages. For example, the difference between Chinese and Western greetings is that Chinese emphasizes respect and intimacy, while English emphasizes politeness and politeness. In terms of values, cultural comparison can help people understand the values and beliefs of different cultures, such as the differences between China and the West in family concepts and interpersonal relationships. Cultural contrast method also has certain

enlightenment significance for junior middle school English teaching. Through comparing the distinctions between Chinese and Western languages and cultures, students can enhance their comprehension of unique expressions and language customs in English. Simultaneously, this also fosters students' appreciation and comprehension of diverse cultures. In addition, cultural contrast can also be used as a way to expand the teaching content, guide students to understand the differences and similarities between different cultures, and cultivate students' intercultural communicative competence and cross-cultural awareness.

Cultural comparison method is an effective teaching method, which can help students better understand and cope with the differences between different cultures in cross-cultural communication, and cultivate intercultural communicative competence. (1) Help students understand the differences between different cultures. By comparing the cultures of different countries and regions, students can better understand the differences between different cultures. This is very important for cross-cultural communication. (2) Enhance students' cultural awareness. Through the method of cultural contrast, students can gain insights into the similarities and differences among various cultures, which aids in expanding their knowledge and understanding of different cultures. Furthermore, this practice enhances their competence in cross-cultural communication. (3) Improve students' language ability. Cultural contrast can help students learn and master more English vocabulary and grammatical structure in the process of comparison and contrast, so as to improve their ability of using English language. (4) Stimulate students' intercultural interest. Through the method of cultural contrast, students can learn interesting and interesting things between different cultures, thus stimulating their interest in cross-cultural communication. (5) Foster students' intercultural communicative competence. Cultural comparison can help students to better know and deal with the differences between different cultures in intercultural communication, in order to cultivate their intercultural communicative competence.

In short, cultural comparison method is a very important teaching method, which can help students better understand and master the differences between different cultures, improve students' English language ability. Combining cultural contrast with English teaching allows students to better learn English and to better understand the similarities and differences between the cultural background in which English is spoken and other cultures. For example, when teaching English texts, students can better understand and master the English language and culture by comparing the cultural differences between Britain and the United States, so as to improve their English level and cross-cultural communication ability. At the same time, cultural comparison in English communication enables students to better adjust to and assimilate the cultural distinctions of English-speaking countries, so that enhance their proficiency in intercultural communication.

The application of cultural comparison method in cultivating students' intercultural communicative competence

Lexical comparison

In terms of lexical comparison, cultural comparison can cultivate students' intercultural communicative competence in the following ways: (1) Compare the use of synonyms: different cultures may have different words to express the same meaning, furthermore, students can acquire knowledge about these cultural differences by examining the usage of synonyms. For example, in English, both "Mom" and "Mother" can mean "Mother", but in Chinese, "Mom" and "Mother" have different usage occasions, and students can learn these differences by comparing them. (2) Compare the cultural backgrounds of words: different words may have different cultural backgrounds and meanings. Students can understand these differences by comparing the cultural backgrounds of words. For example, in English, "tea" and "coffee" are both words for drinks, but in British culture, "tea" is a cultural habit and social activity, while "coffee" is more associated

with work and independence. (3) Compare the contextual use of words: the identical word can exhibit distinct meanings and applications depending on the context in which it is used. Students can understand these differences by comparing the contextual use of words. For example, in English, “table” can be used as a noun to mean a table or as a verb to mean to set aside, and students can develop an understanding of these disparities by contrasting the usage of the same word in various contexts. Through the above methods, cultural comparison can help students understand the differences in the use of words in different cultures, so as to improve their intercultural communicative competence.

Here are some specific examples: “Opinions” in the west, it usually refers to personal opinions or suggestions, while in China, opinions tend to refer to orders or instructions. “Cherish” in the west, it usually refers to attaching importance to and protecting something or someone, while in China, cherish often emphasizes cherishing time. “Freedom” in the west, it usually refers to individual rights and the ability to make independent choices, which in China, freedom tends to emphasize social and political freedom. “Culture” in the west, culture usually refers to an expression of art, literature, music, etc., while in China, culture tends to emphasize traditional values and moral norms. “Practice” in the west, it usually refers to learning or achieving goals through actual operation, while in China, it often emphasizes the practice and application of theories. “Knowledge” in Chinese emphasis is placed on the knowledge one has mastered, while in English, more emphasis is placed on the information and cognition one has.

The inspiration for junior middle school English teaching emphasizes the importance for teachers to provide contextual explanations and introduce the cultural background of words during teaching, so that students can understand the meaning and usage of words more comprehensively. At the same time, students should also pay attention to the understanding of the cultural background and context of the language in order to the understanding of the cultural background and context of the language in order to better use the knowledge.

Address comparison

In terms of the comparison of Chinese and Western address, cultural comparison can cultivate students’ intercultural communicative competence in the following ways: (1) Compare Chinese and Western address habits: let students understand the habits and difference between Chinese and Western people when addressing others, such as the different titles used in Chinese and Western people when addressing elders, friends, colleagues, superiors and other people. (2) Master Chinese and Western etiquette: let students understand Chinese and Western etiquette in social occasions, such as how to greet each other, how to give gifts, and the table etiquette. For example, there are clear differences between how Chinese and Westerners address their elders. In Chinese culture, elders are regarded as noble figures, so young people usually address elders as “Grandpa”, “Grandma”, “Father”, “Mother”, “Uncle”, “Aunt” and so on. In the West, elders are regarded as figures of equal status, so they are usually addressed by respectful titles such as “Mr.”, “Mrs.”, “Miss”, or their first names.

By comparing the Chinese and Western address habits, students can better understand the values and social habits in different culture, so as to better carry out cross-cultural communication.

Greetings comparison

In terms of greetings, cultural comparison can cultivate students’ intercultural communicative competence in the following ways: (1) Compare the use of greetings in different occasions in east and the west. For example, there are big differences in the way greetings are used in business situations. Westerners usually greet each other directly, while Chinese people usually greet each other for a while before getting to the point. (2) Time and occasion: Greetings in Western countries are usually related to time and occasion, such as “Good morning” in the morning, “Good evening” in the evening, and “May I help you?” in business

situations and so on. However, Chinese greetings focus more on relationship and status, such as “Nin hao” in front of elders and “Ni hao” among friends. (3) Compare different expressions of greeting in China and the West. For example, the expression of greeting is also very different. Westerners are generally more direct, commonly used greetings such as “Hello”, “How are you doing?” and Chinese people like to use “Have you eaten?” and so on. (4) Compare different greeting gestures. For example, westerners are used to shaking hands, while Chinese are used to shaking hands and bowing. Through the above comparison, students can understand the differences of greetings in different culture, so as to cultivate cross-culture communication competence and avoid embarrassment or misunderstanding in intercultural communication.

These differences have important implications for junior high school English teaching. Teachers can teach greetings from different countries so that students can understand the differences, at the same time, teacher can also teach etiquette knowledge to let students learn to use greetings correctly in different occasions, in order to improve their social skills and expression ability.

Value comparison

In terms of the values, there are several ways in which they can be implemented: There are great differences in the view of interpersonal relationship. Chinese culture emphasizes “people are divided by groups” and pays attention to family and social collective, while Western culture pays more attention to individual freedom and independence. By comparing how relationships are viewed in different cultures, students can enhance their comprehension of and appreciation for the diversities existing among various cultures. For example: students can compare family structures and forms of social organization in China and the United States, and discuss patterns of interpersonal relationship in different cultures and their effects.

In Chinese culture, emphasis is placed on traditional moral concepts, such as loyalty, filial piety, respect for elders, and helping others. In Western culture, the emphasis is on modern values, such as individuality, freedom, equality, and human rights. In addition, Chinese culture emphasizes long-term responsibilities and obligations, while Western culture emphasizes short-term interests and power. This difference in values has also had a profound impact on the social life of the the cultures. In Chinese culture, emphasis is placed on the fulfillment of family and social responsibilities, the relationship between people and mutual assistance, and the harmony and stability of the big family; In Western culture, it emphasizes individual freedom and rights, individual pursuit and personality expression, and emphasizes individual achievement and value. By comparing the values in different cultures, students can better understand and respect the differences between different cultures. For example: students can compare Chinese and American values, such as family values, education values, work values, etc., and discuss the impact of values in different cultures on people’s lives and behaviors.

There are also differences in the way of thinking between Chinese culture and Western culture. In Chinese culture, the mode of thinking is mainly inductive and relational thinking. Chinese people are generally good at overall thinking, intuitive thinking and relational thinking. In Western culture, the mode of thinking is mainly deductive and logical thinking. Westerners are usually good at thinking through logic and deduction, and put more emphasis on individual thinking ability and independent thinking. This difference in way of thinking affects the way each person acts, socializes and makes decisions. Chinese people tend to pay more attention to interpersonal relations and social etiquette, and tend to seek consensus and compromise; While Westerners pay more attention to individual independent thinking and expression, and tend to express personal opinions and propositions directly.

There is still a big difference in the concept of time. In Chinese culture, time is often regarded as a circular concept, emphasizing the harmony between man and nature. Chinese people tend to believe that time is infinite, and so is life, so we pursue harmony, balance and stability. In Western cultures, time is often

seen as linear, with an emphasis on individual achievement and progress. In Western culture, time is limited, life is also limited, so the pursuit is efficiency, speed and achievement. This difference in the concept of time has a profound impact on work, life and social life. Chinese individuals generally prioritize the interpersonal connections and bonds they have with others, social and family stability, usually more patient; while Westerners pay more attention to personal achievement, efficiency and speed, and usually pursue the efficiency of time use.

Therefore, in teaching, we should respect students' cultural background, understand their cultural differences, and avoid imposing Western culture on them. And let students understand difference of such values, so as to form their own values in many aspects.

Topic comparison

There are some differences between Chinese and Western chat topics, which also affects English teaching. (1) The difference between greeting: in the west, people usually use "How are you?" this sentence to start a conversation, while in China, people usually greet each other with "Ni hao" or "Hello". In addition, in the West, people often ask each other about their family or friends when they talk, while in China, people pay more attention to each other's work and life. So, in English teaching, it is necessary to teach students how to greet in English, and let students understand the ways of greeting in different cultures, so as to cultivate students' intercultural communicative competence. (2) The difference between talking about personal experiences: In the West, people are usually more willing to talk about their personal experiences, such as travel, hobbies, etc., while in China, people are more focused on social and political topics. In English teaching, it is necessary to teach students how to talk about personal experiences in English, and let students understand how different cultures view and value personal experiences. (3) Differences in polite language and tone: In the West, people usually use polite terms and tone to express their attitudes and ideas, such as "Excuse me", "I'm sorry", "Could you please", etc., on the other hand, in China, there is a greater focus on expressing one's attitudes and emotions, such as "Thank you", "Sorry", "Please", etc.

In English teaching, it is necessary to teach students how to use polite words and tone, and let students understand the views and ways of using polite words and tone in different cultures.

Furthermore, in Western countries, there are certain topic that are considered taboo or sensitive, including: (1) Politics: it can be a sensitive topic of conversation, especially during elections or major political events. Even between good friends, there may be disputes or unpleasant atmosphere due to political differences. It is important to be respectful of others' political views and avoid heated debates or arguments. (2) Religion: religious beliefs are often considered to be a personal matter and are not typically discussed in polite conversation in Western countries. It is important to be respectful of others' beliefs and not to try to impose your own beliefs on others. (3) Money: talking about money is often considered to be impolite in Western countries. It is generally not appropriate to ask someone about their salary, how much they paid for, or how much they owe. (4) Personal relationships: discussions about personal relationships, such as marriage, divorce, or infidelity, can be uncomfortable for some people and often considered to be private matters. (5) Physical appearance: comments about someone's physical appearance, particularly negative comments, are generally considered to be impolite in Western countries. It is important to be respectful and avoid making hurtful remarks. Understanding these taboos in Western conversation topics and grasping the sensitivities surrounding certain subjects of conversation in Western culture is vital to establish effective English communication and cultivate harmonious relationship with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. (6) In Western countries, race, gender and sexual orientation are sensitive topics, and talking about these topics can cause controversy and unpleasant atmosphere. Therefore, it is best not to casually talk about these topics, especially in unfamiliar relationships.

In English teaching, teachers need to introduce the cultural differences and social etiquette of western countries to students, so that students can understand these taboo topics and avoid unnecessary

misunderstandings and conflicts in cross-cultural communication. At the same time, teachers also need to teach students how to properly express their views and opinions to avoid unnecessary controversy due to sensitive topics.

Custom comparison

There are some differences between Chinese and Western diets and festival customs, which have some implications for junior high school English teaching. On one hand, the difference in diet: there are certain difference between Chinese and Western food cultures. Chinese food takes rice and noodles as the staple food, emphasizing the combination of meat and vegetable, paying more attention to color, aroma, taste and shape. The western diet takes bread, rice and noodles as the staple food, valuing the authenticity of ingredients, emphasizing taste, and prioritizing nutritional balance are essential aspects to consider. For example, Chinese people like to eat steaming hot food, while Westerners like to eat cold dishes. Junior high school English teaching can start from the food culture, so that students can understand the food culture and habits of different countries, and acquiring pertinent English vocabulary and phrases is imperative in order to effectively communicate and understand these concepts.

On the other hand, there are also some differences between Chinese and Western festival customs. In China, some of the traditional festivals observed include the Spring Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival, while in the west, there are festivals such as Christmas and Easter and Thanksgiving. For example, Chinese people will stick couplets, eat set off firecrackers during the Spring Festival, while Westerners will decorate Christmas trees, send gifts and sing Christmas songs during Christmas. Junior high school English teaching can learn the festival customs of different countries, understand their cultural background and traditional customs, and learn relevant English vocabulary and expressions.

In short, the contrasting Chinese and Western dietary habits and festival customs can serve as valuable teaching resources and inspiration for English classes and enhance their intercultural communicative skills.

Conclusion

Cultural contrast is a very important teaching method in junior middle school English teaching, which can help students better understand and grasp the differences and similarities between different cultures, so as to improve their intercultural communication ability. In the process of teaching, when students are exposed to the comparative analysis of Chinese and Western cultures, they gain a deeper understanding and mastery of the cultural nuances embedded within the English language. Consequently, their language proficiency and application skills are notably enhanced. The practice of contrasting these two cultures broadens students' perspectives, allowing them to comprehensively explore the intricate connections between language and culture. By examining the differences and similarities, students are not only able to acquire linguistic knowledge, but also develop cross-cultural competence, which is vital for effective communication in today's global. In the teaching of cultural contrast, teachers need to make full use of the cultural elements in the teaching materials, combine them with students' actual life and experience, and explain and explain them through concrete examples and actual situations. In addition, teachers also need to focus on cultivating students' intercultural communication ability, and guide them to maintain an open, inclusive, understanding and respectful attitude in intercultural communication, so as to better communicate and communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds.

To sum up, cultural contrast in junior high school English teaching is a very effective teaching method, which can help students better understand and master the cultural connotation of English language, and improve their cross-cultural communication ability. In the future teaching, we should pay more attention to the application of culture contrast teaching, and continuously improve teaching methods through continuous exploration and practice, so as to provide better support and help for the improvement of

students' language learning and intercultural communication ability.

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