

## On Effect of Chinese Movies on Intercultural Communication Competence

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### 異文化間コミュニケーションにおける中国映画の効用

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#### 要 旨

中国語を学ぶには聞く、読む、書く、喋る、訳などの基本技能要素と共に、異文化間コミュニケーションへの理解と育成が極めて大切である。筆者は日本の大学での中国語教育の経験と方法に基づいて、日本の大学生が異文化間コミュニケーション能力をどのように発達していくのかを分析する。さらに授業の中で中国語映画を題材に使用することで、学生の異文化間コミュニケーション能力を高める優位性を検証し、最後にその具体的な実施方法を述べるものとする。

#### Abstract

While training the basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation in Chinese, a special attention shall be paid to intercultural communication competence. The author analyzes how to cultivate Japanese university students to learn Chinese during the Chinese teaching and the development of intercultural communication competence based on his Chinese teaching experience and methods accumulated in Japanese university; and through using Chinese movies in Chinese class, discusses the superiority of Chinese original movies in enhancing the students' intercultural communication competence; and finally generalizes the specific implementation and methods.

**Keywords:** Chinese language teaching; intercultural communication; Chinese movies;

## Introduction

Complied with the habit, “Chinese language teaching” has always called “language teaching”. “Language” as a whole, includes two parts, one is “language” (language); the other is “culture” (character, literature and culture). The contents and methods of language teaching depend on three factors: linguistic factors - the characteristics of language and character; social factors — social system, education policy and cultural background; scientific factors — the development level of linguistic sciences, education sciences and other related sciences.

While emphasizing cultural background factors, first of all, attention should be paid to the cultivation of intercultural communication competence, which has now become another basic requirement for Chinese teaching, in addition to cultivation of basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation. The rational use of existing teaching resources to overcome the difficulties of fewer foreign teachers and limited opportunities for intercultural communication is the problem demanding prompt solutions in enhancing students’ intercultural communication competence. With the strengthening and development of economy and trade, the exchanges between China and Japan become more frequent, and intercultural communication has become an indispensable component. As we all know, the verbal behavior of people will be affected and restrained by their respective culture in intercultural communication, and then generate cultural conflicts and cultural integration between different cultural patterns.

Transfer to cultivation of “interdisciplinary” foreign language talents has gradually began in the field of education, where it is more obvious that whether the talents cultivated by schools have good intercultural communication competence and the competitiveness in the international talent market or not has become one of the important standards to judge their foreign language teaching level. However, currently, the small number of foreign teachers at the universities in Japan and limited opportunities for intercultural communication are the common problems that most colleges and universities cannot overcome in a short

time of period, which to some extent constrains the improvement of the students’ intercultural communication competence. Compared with the traditional Chinese teaching methods, Chinese original movies have unique characteristics in the vision, sound effect and other aspects. Therefore, this paper carries out study and research on the aspect of using Chinese original movies to enhance students’ intercultural communication competence.

## I . Development status of intercultural communication competence

### 1. *The meaning of intercultural communication competence*

What is intercultural communication competence? Intercultural communication competence is a concept rising and developing with the study of pragmatics and is an important term in the field of pragmatics. As a result, it has certain correlation with the research scope of pragmatics. Widdowson (1989) argued that intercultural communication competence is based on grammatical competence and involves the use rules of language, which refers to the ability of wording and phrasing by the correct use of grammar rules, and also includes the ability to perform a communicative function by correct use of linguistic forms under the specific linguistic environment conditions.<sup>i</sup> Jiang Zhan Hao(2009) pointed out that the lack of intercultural communication competence will directly lead to verbal communication misunderstandings and affects the verbal communication.<sup>ii</sup> He Ziran and Chen Xinren (2004) pointed out that the failure in the intercultural communication is not caused by the failure of language use in the general wording and phrasing, but by wrong time of speaking, improper speech, unidiomatic expression, etc. that lead to the failure of communication in its desired effect.<sup>iii</sup>

### 2. *Development status of intercultural communication competence*

For many students who are learning Chinese, the main purpose of learning Chinese is to pass the exam. The phenomenon of “Holding Chinese grading certificates, but in reality is dumb Chinese and Chinese illiteracy” is not surprising. Especially for character-writing students, the phenomenon that

they can write but can not speak is more obvious. Of course, in order to meet the needs of the development of the times, many Chinese grade examinations have gradually been reformed and improved and changed into practical examination. At present, listening and speaking abilities have got more attentions; the proportion of Chinese cultural knowledge in a second language examination has increased daily. In this social background, intercultural communication competence becomes even more important. It is mainly by habit when a linguistic form is chosen. When the students performed request behaviors, the selection of linguistic form and the use of pragmatic routines shall be affected by individual expression habit, teaching materials and native languages, etc.

For example: Teacher Zhang has been nearly 60 years old, one day she wore a beautiful new dress to give a class, a Japanese student saw her and said: you are very cute! The Japanese student intended to please Teacher Zhang, but Teacher Zhang was very unhappy on hearing the words of the student. She felt that the student disrespected her by expressing in this method. Obviously, this student was influenced by his native language and culture in intercultural communication, and applied Japanese verbal communication rules to Chinese communication, and thus this embarrassing scene happened.

In recent years, with the continuous improvement and enhancement of foreign language teaching, some simple basic communication failures can be avoided, but there is still much space for further improvement, and the learners should be aware of the importance of intercultural communication competence and focus on the introduction of the corresponding cultural knowledge in the process of language acquisition.

## II . The superiority of Chinese original movies

### 1. *The language materials are authentic and practical*

Chinese original movies feature truth in linguistic input, which not only include the true grammars, vocabularies, pronunciations, and intonations in real life, but also often tailor the argots, euphemisms, puns and calembours for every actor or actress. The students can come to realize the diversity and vividness of language expression from the Chinese original movies, and can find out the implied tacit

rules in the language by mimicking the native dialogues of actors or actresses in the movies, thereby getting a full knowledge of Chinese language expression patterns. In the Chinese language teaching, it tends to focus on the practice of linguistic form while the authenticity of language and context is ignored. The mistakes are mainly two parts, namely: language errors and pragmatic errors. If importance is not attached to language learning in the specific context of situation, when the students are engaged in a real language situation, they will not be able to properly use appropriate communicative strategies and extract the linguistic knowledge they have learned to express themselves. In the Chinese teaching, pictures and other teaching models are often used, which will fail to reach a certain effect if not emphasizing the relationships between characters, things and objects in a written narrative or their extents or steps, while a sound movie can clearly reflect the characters and consistency of contents and create a linguistic context. From these definitions, we can see that these ideas focus on the truth of the sources of materials, i.e. teaching materials should select native language teaching materials, and should not adapt them. These requirements are difficult for the compilation of teaching materials. The author have also compiled a number of Chinese teaching materials, in which the most difficult to handle is not only the truth, and the more important is how to focus on the engagement of the learners in the materials. Engagement means in the teaching process, the teaching content can provide models and guidance basis for the design of real communication contexts, and give support to the students' participation in these contexts. It is nearly impossible to fully meet these requirements. Here, we can use Chinese original movies. Chinese original movie is rooted in China, and the language of the movie carries the Chinese culture. When the students are watching Chinese original movies, they will understand Chinese customs, social history and cultural customs, feel the cultural and historical background knowledge, and better adapt to Chinese communicative habits and thinking models. In other words, Chinese original movies create a real environment of language acquisition for the students relying on their linguistic environment and vivid

native language materials, these movies have their own advantages in improving the students' intercultural communication competence.

## ***2. Effectively enhance the linguistic perception and direct comprehension***

Modern Chinese teaching has changed from the past "traditional unitary type" teaching mode into "comprehensive type" teaching mode, and focuses on cultivating the comprehensive language ability of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. This ability includes not only the students' language knowledge and skills, but also language application skills. But in the Chinese teaching at the colleges and universities in Japan, the listening materials used by the students were mostly edited and redrafted and have some differences from real vivid daily Chinese, which causes a compromise in the students' intercultural communication. The dialogue in Chinese original movie is the reproduction of real daily Chinese. In the movie, the characters in different genders, different ages, different occupations and different identities demonstrate the different characteristics of daily Chinese for the students, for example, the voice of adult female is soft, while the intonation of adult male is fortitude, etc.

By watching Chinese original movies, the students can feel the charm of Chinese in a relaxed and comfortable environment, understand the customs and habits of each region, and familiarize themselves with Chinese grammars, syntaxes, and sentences, and enhance their perception of Chinese. In the teaching process, teachers can use Chinese original movies as teaching materials, and make the students truly feel the culture connotations of Chinese language via role-playing. In spare time, teachers can arrange the students to introduce, describe and comment certain highlights, so as to encourage students to actively imitate and practice. Cultivate the students' linguistic perception and direct comprehension in a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere, and enhance the language comprehensive application accordingly.

## ***3. Greatly stimulate the learning initiative and enthusiasm***

Chinese original movies are not just the carrier of Chinese language and its culture, it is also a form to

reflect art, and it can achieve illustrated three-dimensional manifestations. Chinese original movies in the play enable the students to feel the charm of Chinese through combinations of voices, characters, images and other art forms, thereby enhancing their interest in learning. We can run through the contents of each scenario via the content design of the plots and dialogues. Incorporate dialogues in the movies into the teaching materials, develop the plot mainly with some actors or actresses as heroes or heroines, namely to set task-chains with the topic of each unit as the main clue, and focus the scope of topic selection on the scope of the basic requirements of teaching level, to increase the students' interest. As we all know, interest is the best teacher. Strong learning interest can stimulate students' learning initiative and enthusiasm, so as to achieve a multiplier effect. Since the movie itself is full of entertainment, the timely use of Chinese original movies in the Chinese language teaching process can arouse the students' enthusiasm for learning, and this enthusiasm will gradually be changed into the students' initiative and enthusiasm for learning Chinese, thereby improving the efficiency of Chinese learning. Besides, the college students are quiet young and in a sensitive period, and they are susceptible to infection and impact of external things and have their favorite actors and stars. When they come into their own idols that vividly express the emotions and inward worlds of some characters, their passion for language practice will be ignited and they hope use Chinese language freely and skillfully.

## **III . The implementation method of original movie teaching**

### ***1. The material selection of Chinese original movies***

There are wide varieties of Chinese original movies, which are rich in contents, but because the Chinese teaching in the colleges and universities is targeted at the non-Chinese major students and aims to improve the students' intercultural communication competence, not every movie can be applied to the Chinese teaching. Select those that suitable for the students' psychological characteristics and that cultivated students' intercultural communication competence can really benefit students. In terms of

ideology, the movies shall be selected with clear theme, positive content and positive thinking, such as *Romance on Lushan Mountain*, *Not One Less* and other classics. In terms of the difficulty level of language materials, the movies that have moderate difficulty language and rich contents, with standard and clear pronunciation and beautiful image quality shall be selected. In determination of the theme, the movies that can fully reflect the local conditions and customs, living habit, thinking model and communication standards, etc. of China shall be selected, such as movies, such as *Camel Xiangzi* and *Forrest Gump*. Also, some of the Sino-Japanese cooperation movies can be selected, such as *An Unfinished Chess Game* and *Son of the Earth* and others, through which students are able to understand two cultures when watching a movie and thus make the appropriate comparison. In the teaching process, teachers shall guide students to absorb what is best and discard what is dross, and comprehend the essence of the movie with positive values and worldview, and to achieve the meaning and purpose of Chinese movie teaching.

## **2. Dynamically integrated language teaching and non-verbal behavior teaching**

Language includes the semantic level of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, as well as non-verbal behavior. In the teaching process, teachers shall organize language teaching and design language teaching activities from two aspects.

(1) Language teaching. Language teaching mainly includes vocabulary, phrases, sentences and other Chinese learning elements. Take vocabulary as example, many words in Chinese language have implied cultural color, and is an indirect reflection of national culture. Therefore, understanding the deep connotation of words in intercultural communication is particularly important. Take “pig” and “wild boar” for example; the distinctions of those two characters in Sino-Japanese culture have significant differences. In Chinese Zodiac, “pig” is a blessing, a symbol of luck, and it is the lucky star in the eyes of the Chinese people. While in Japanese Zodiac, “wild boar” often has derogatory, and contains the meaning of handling affairs without thinking and being sloppy.

(2) Non-verbal behavior teaching. In intercultural communication teaching, many teachers put their attention on language teaching, and only concern the appropriateness of language use to neglect the teaching of non-verbal behavior. In intercultural communication, non-verbal behavior is sometimes more important than language use. People in different countries and regions have huge difference in the non-verbal behavior.

Take “shaking legs” that represent “get dizzy with success” and “edgy” for example. In Japan, this is considered as poor and rude, besides, this behavior shall not occur in the daily life.

And in Japan, the behavior of “kneeling down” is very common. When greeting guests, kneeling down and bow are very common in a tatami room and these are ritual. But in China, a man “kneel down” to other man is impossible unless he committed heinous crimes. This shows that non-verbal behavior in different countries has huge difference. In the teaching process, teachers shall guide students to think different non-verbal behaviors and cultivate students’ perception of intercultural awareness.

## **3. The cultivation of sensitivity to cultural difference**

In intercultural teaching, Chinese original movies play an important role in cultivating the sensitivity of students to cultural difference and enhancing their intercultural communication competence. Firstly, the Chinese original movie can help students to understand the Chinese life style and customs, historic culture, thinking model and other practical knowledge of Chinese. Secondly, cultural scenes provided by the Chinese original movie can help the students from the perspective of target language feel its culture, and understand and master some practical knowledge of intercultural communication, laying a good foundation for their daily communication in Chinese.

## **IV . Conclusion**

Throughout the world, the population using Chinese and Chinese characters has more than one billion. In many countries, more and more people learn Chinese. The research and development of Chinese language teaching is the development

demand of Chinese culture, education and science, as well as the demand of the development of international relations and international cultural exchange. To make Chinese teaching be more closely integrated with the development of educational science and linguistic science, bring it into the orbit of the development of applied linguistics and improve the teaching efficiency is the important subject of current Chinese teaching research. All in all, intercultural communication competence teaching is an important part in Chinese language teaching. The outstanding performance of movies' influence on literature is that the diversity, authenticity, vitality and other characteristics of original movies highlight advantages in communicative communication competence teaching. In teaching practice, teachers must select the Chinese movies with moderate difficulty and appropriate subjects, design appropriate teaching activities and follow the principle of combining language and culture, in order to better achieve the goal of cultivating highly qualified talents with certain intercultural communication competence.

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### Major references

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