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A Comparative Analysis of Theory and Pedagogy on Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning

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Abstract:

This study reviewed literature about various standpoints of Michael Byram, Anthony J. Liddicoat, J.M Bennett, ClIL (Content and Language Learning) and Zhang Hongling in intercultural foreign language teaching research. Their researches is analyzed through comparison and induction, which find the characteristics of these representative studies, the similarities between theories, and the differences between Chinese and Western cross-cultural foreign language teaching. Based on the above analysis, the relevance and adaptability of the integration of Western intercultural foreign language teaching into the process of Chinese localization and the future development direction are presented.

1. Introduction

In retrospect, intercultural competence was ignored or separated from foreign language teaching and learning, since language was seen as a structural system. However, when language teaching shifts to focus on communication and language context, educationalists gradually raised awareness and put practice into promoting intercultural communication competence

In current global village, intercultural communication is inevitable. It is also a hot topic of international conferences, especially for promoting intercultural communication in foreign language teaching and learning. During the 11th International Conference for Intercultural Studies, many experts have presented some latest research theory and methodology with diverse perspectives in this field, but also brought some opportunities and challenges to our country in the new era, put by scholars Chi Ruobing & Weng Liping & Zhang Xiaojia [9].

Previous study reorganized the foreign model of ICC (abbreviation of intercultural communicative competence) with English teaching to fit in Chinese domestic condition. A literature reviewer like researcher Yang Ying, Zhuang Enping [7]

proposed that Intercultural communicative competence is composed of global awareness system, cultural adjustment ability system, knowledge ability system and communicative practice ability system, which should be integrated to develop learners' ICC. But their research didn't reveal all dynamic intercultural development process and local ICC model adjustment up-to-date. This study will integrate different theories in a well-rounded and comparative perspective, based on Michael Byram, Anthony J. Liddicoat, J.M. Bennett, ClIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), Zhang Honglin and other related papers.

2. Theory of Intercultural Foreign Language Education

2.1. Components of Intercultural Competence

Byram [11] gave definition that Intercultural competence "requires students to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and critical cultural awareness in intercultural communication. Byram's theory based on European context and started much earlier than Chinese domestic intercultural theory. Chinese researcher Zhang Honglin [4] puts forward a new and localized theoretical framework about "4 - 3 - 2 - 1", including four perspectives, three dimensions, two contexts and one platform. M.J. Bennett (2013) defined intercultural competence' as" the general ability to transcend ethnocentrism, appreciate other cultures and generate appropriate behavior in one or more different cultures".

2.2. Theoretical Models about ICC with Language Learning

2.2.1. A Psychological Development Model—DMIS

M.J. Bennett's (2013) model was a quite dynamic and developmental process. In his study, he found the cooperative and paralleled relations of the DMIS (Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity) and the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Guidelines for Language Proficiency to enhance ICC among foreign language learners. The DMIS classifies 5 stages of development moving initially from denial, minimization, acceptance, adaptation and ending with integration, while the ACTFL Guidelines describe different proficiency levels of four major language skills: speaking, listening, reading, writing, as well as culture in a foreign language. Bennett used a diagram to show various levels of cultural sensitivity to language proficiency levels (from Novice, Intermediate to Advanced). However, this model is generally suitable for curriculum design purpose, which is not accurate for individual students' characteristics. It is possible that some novice students are curious and open-minded towards new culture, without denial of it at the first stage but jump into the second minimization/acceptance stage.

2.2.2 Intercultural Communicative Competence Model

Compared with Bennett's model, Byram's model [11] is relatively different and static. In his framework, ICC is mainly composed of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence. Intercultural competence is not closely embedded in ICC. It includes knowledge, attitudes of curiosity/openness, skill of relating and discovery, but the key is critical cultural awareness. From my study's perspective, critical cultural awareness is to judge one's own culture objectively, without self-centered position of one's own culture or denying other cultures, but to observe and respect them equally.

2.2.3. Integrated Model for Chinese Students' Intercultural Competence Development

Bennett and Byram's model were based on American or European context. But from Chinese researcher Zhang Honglin [4], she built a more localized model for Chinese EFL learners intercultural competence development. According to the theoretical framework support, her paper proposes an Integrated Model for Chinese Students' Intercultural Competence Development (IMCSICD). It includes four perspectives(communicative behavior, interpersonal relationship, cultural conflict, identity), three levels(cognitive understanding, emotional attitude, behavioral skills), two contexts(life context, work context)and one platform: foreign language education. The IMCSICD model is based on a intercultural life and work context, which is guided by the cultivation of global citizens. Facing with the future world, it includes three levels: cognitive understanding, emotional attitudes and behavioral skills. Adjusting the simultaneous development of cross-cultural competence and foreign language competence, and integrate them all into elementary school, junior high school, high school, and university education. That is a pioneering and systematic model for Chinese to improve intercultural competence integrated with language learning.

3. Aims of intercultural Foreign Language Education

To some extent, some foreign interculturalists' education aims are similar, like Byram and Bennett's final effort is for citizenship. It is consistent with the goal of Global Citizenship Education advocated by UNESCO, which is to "help learners increase their knowledge, improve their skills, establish multicultural values, develop positive attitudes, and enable them to contribute to an inclusive, just and peaceful world" [13].

Apart from that, Zhang Hongling and other Chinese researchers like Zheng Xiaohong [3] also strives for cultivating contributors of China, social participators and personal development. Foreign language and cultural learning is not only to communicate and cooperate with people in different cultural contexts, but also to participate in world peace, global environmental governance and other matters of common concern in the world, to better understand and appreciate Chinese cultural values and convey China's voice to the world.

As for citizen identity, Holliday [19] believes that what foreign language teaching needs to cultivate is the "third identity" in cross-cultural communication, that is, it does not force the change of one's own communicative behavior to adapt to the standards of the target language, while retaining certain achievements in your own culture without sacrificing the integrity of personal identity, so that our identity need not to change with the communicative context. But Zhang Hongling's study does not only focus on global citizenship but also emphasize on national cultural identity, and be confident about Chinese culture.

4. Pedagogy of Intercultural Language Education

4.1. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

In order to consider how foreign language teaching might introduce elements of citizenship education into the classroom, we need to consider 'content and language integrated learning' [12]. CLIL is a teaching model proposed by the European Union

to teach subject knowledge while taking into account foreign language learning [8]. Its process is based on social context. Theoretical source was from second language acquisition, constructivism which is about the learner constructing his/her own knowledge and developing skills which are relevant and appropriate [21], and thinking processes (cognition) in terms of their linguistic demands to facilitate development [20].

"Integration" is its defining feature. In CLIL classroom context, it presents 4C principles of learning, namely: content, communication, cognition and culture, and the interaction of the four Contact constitutes the context of the CLIL classroom. Moreover, CLIL can give large amount of language exposure and create basic conditions for (academic) language internalization for learners [17,15], and create a subject context, providing context for complex meaning negotiation and advanced level thinking activities, which is conducive to the development of advanced thinking ability [17]. Most importantly, the CLIL framework puts culture at the core and intercultural understanding pushes the boundaries towards global citizenship, student voice and 'identity investment' [22]. If it is successfully implemented, learners cognitive and linguistic level will be dramatically enhanced, like the empirical study reported by Zhang Lian&Li Dongying [10] that College Intensive reading courses based on the CLIL framework can promote coordinated development of linguistic, speculation and disciplinary competence. However, it requires demanding skill of subject background knowledge and linguistic for teachers. How to train pre-service teacher and in-service teacher to obtain this professional skill is a big challenge, especially in China.

4.2. Intercultural foreign Language Teaching and Learning by Anthony J. Liddicoat

Some researchers reached a consensus that language, culture and learning are fundamentally integrated [18]. Liddicoat & Scarino [18] put language teaching of an intercultural perspective with 5 principles (active construction, making connections, interaction, reflection and responsibility) for developing intercultural language learning. In this intercultural approach these principles can transform to practice of four interrelated processes, which means learners are encouraged to notice, compare and reflect on language and culture, and to develop their own understanding of their own culture as well as the culture of others.Using cultural knowledge facilitates communication as primary goals for language learning, along with the development of language competence and linguistic competence. Liddicoat also put forward framework for designing a curriculum for intercultural language learning: Planning, Teaching, Resourcing, Assessing, Evaluating & Renewing. It is worth noticing that during the teaching session, teacher and student's interculturality and intraculturality construct together to form intercultural sensitivity, which is close to the DMIS model theory of M.J. Bennett.

4.3. Pedagogical Practice Based on IMCSICD Model

In Zhang Hongling's [4] empirical study, she and her team did the teaching experiment of the "Cultural Exploration" English extension course in the sixth grade of a middle school in Shanghai as a case to illustrate preliminary verification of the suitability and effectiveness of the IMCSICD model used in classroom teaching. In the future, the research team will continue to carry out teaching experiments based on the IMCSICD model in each section of universities, middle schools and primary

ITS

schools, obtain more abundant and detailed experimental data, and combine the characteristics and law of cross-cultural foreign language teaching. But there is still a big challenge to develop elaborately classified reference frame intercultural language education covering each school stage, and implement cross-cultural ability training throughout China. With advent of the China's Standards of English Language Ability, this framework will be achievable.

5. Implications

The study of western intercultural communication development was based on their diverse ethnic groups, immigrants tradition, and its motivation mainly comes from practical needs with various accesses. However, since Chinese nation is relatively unified, our cross-culture competence is mostly goal-oriented in the development of intercultural communication mainly through foreign language education. When Chinese researchers introduce and learn from western interculturalists' theory and pedagogical practices, they also adjust these research to fit in local condition.As culture awareness is formed by continuous time, an integrated model that covers the development of cross-cultural competence of Chinese learners in all schooling stages is a must. And the framework needs strong faculty with high level intercultural competence to support.

6. Conclusions

The theory and pedagogy of Michael Byram, Anthony J. Liddicoat, J.M Bennett, ClIL (Content and Language Learning) and Zhang Hongling in intercultural foreign language education are correlated with each other, but every expert has his/her unique perspective because of their different position. Byram's theory based on European context and give a macro blueprint for intercultural communication development around the world. M.J. Bennett's (2013) model was a quite dynamic and psychological developmental process with American language teaching and learning. Liddicoat based on Australian context and focus on social constructive interaction between learners' themselves and teachers within culture awareness.CLIL has been used in North America, Europe and now introduced into China in intercultural teaching and learning. It embeds culture core into language education and make language classroom with cultural and affective meaning. Our Chinese intercultural foreign language education theory and pedagogy are partly learned from abroad, and we also share some common goals with foreign counties as the acceleration of globalization. China and western countries all strive for the goal of Global Citizenship Education advocated by UNESCO. Besides, cultivating contributors of China, social participators and personal development are also Chinese intercultural education goals.The proposal of a community with a shared future requires Chinese to participate in the world and make Chinese voice be heard through languages and cross-culture . Coverage of the development of cross-cultural competence of Chinese learners in all schooling stages will be formed to make a difference in the near future.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.
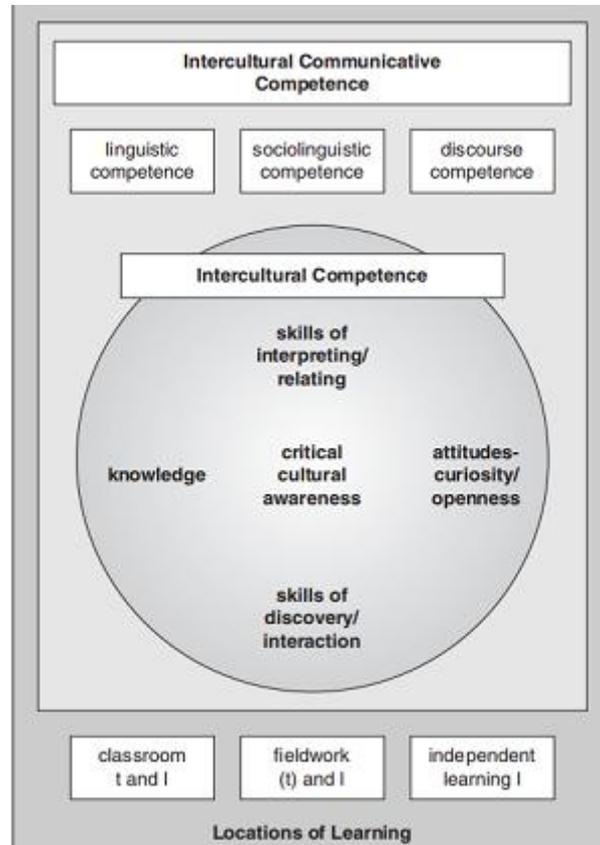
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Appendix A

Figure A1. *Michael Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence (1997).*
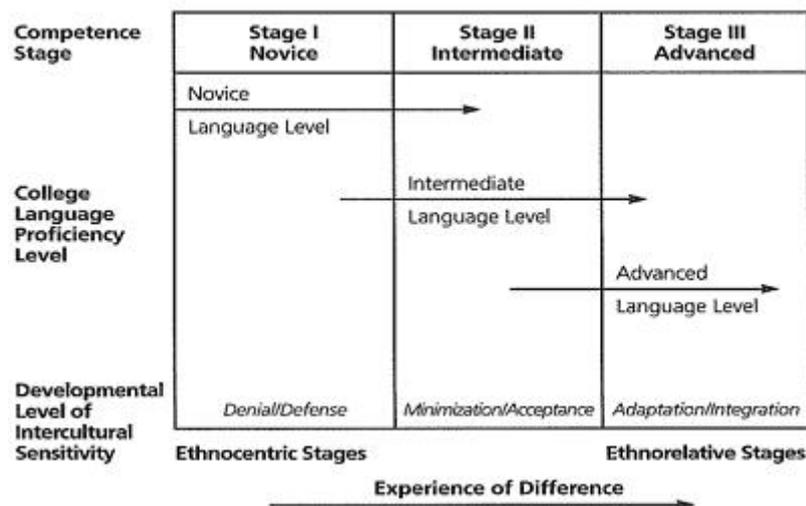

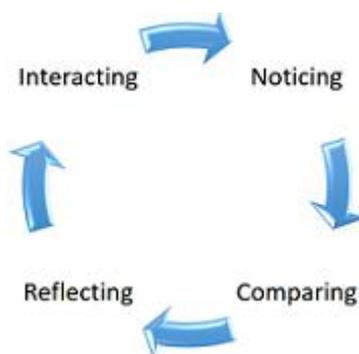***Figure A2.*** *M. J.Bennett& J.M.Bennett's DMIS model (2013).*

ITS

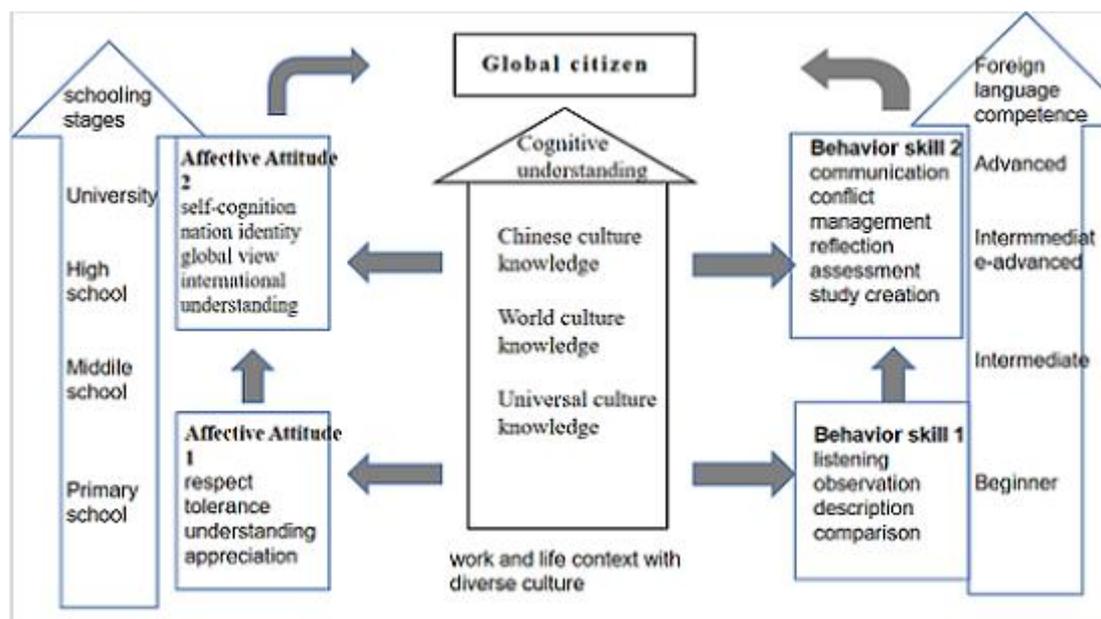**Figure A3.** *Interacting process of intercultural learning [18].*

Figure A4. *Integrated Model for Chinese Students' Intercultural Competence Development (Zhang Hongling, 2020).*

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