

Research on College English Teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity in Higher Vocational College in Zhejiang Province

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Abstract — The purpose of the study is to explore higher vocational college English teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity in Zhejiang Province in an attempt to find proper ways to improving their Intercultural Communication Competence. The research uses a questionnaire as an instrument. The data are analyzed by SPSS software and the following are the major findings: These college English teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity is on an average level which is distant from the requirement of college English teaching. They are weak in. Different demographical variables had different effects on ICS. Gender, education background, professional qualification, and major background of students do not have significant effects on ICS as hypothesized. While both intercultural communication experiences and ages are proved to be significant variables in ICS. The investigation of vocational college English teachers' ICS is significant both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research study provides a variety of insights into Chinese college English teachers' ICS, hence an insight into Chinese college English teachers' Intercultural Communication Competence. Practically, it makes feasible suggestions on English language teaching and English teachers' education.

Keywords - *Language; college English teachers; Intercultural Communication Competence; Intercultural Sensitivity, English language teaching*

I. INTRODUCTION

It is noted that technological advances, especially those in transportation and the communication system, the increase of cooperation and negotiation between nations due to the increase of world population and the development of the world economy have greatly accelerated intercultural contact. With the expansion of globalization, multinational corporations grow rapidly in size and number and "people are increasingly communicating across cultures (Harris & Moran, 1996, p.18)." "Individuals with differing cultural backgrounds come together in varying degrees of formality, involvement and intimacy (Kim, 1991, p.259)".

Thanks to the high development of information technology and transportation technology, the distance between nations is being shortened and shortened. The world is becoming smaller and smaller. Our planet is increasingly evolving into a "global village." No one can be immune from the tide of "globalization", everyone is involved in the tide to various extend. Frequent exchange between cultures is a daily occurrence. When cultures confront one another, they collide. How can we steer our boat of communication between cultures clear of breakdowns and voyage smoothly? Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) is the answer and the general focus of this thesis.

Because of the innate relationship between language and culture, language teachers are pushed forward in the tide of frequent international contact. They are some of the ones who experience the tide most acutely. So here I have selected them as the core group to analyze their competence to manage intercultural communication in their work, lives and how they apply this to teach their students. But Intercultural Communication Competence is a wide topic; it can't be well-

dealt with in a 15,000-word thesis. Intercultural Sensitivity, as one of dimensions of Intercultural Communication Competence, is an important indicator of Intercultural Communication Competence.

II. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

A. *Intercultural Sensitivity*

As has been noted in the previous section, intercultural sensitivity is regarded as one of dimensions of intercultural competence, and is of particular relevance to this thesis. Here we will expand our discussion on this domain.

In the studies of intercultural sensitivity, scholars proposed different theories. For instance, R. Hanvey raised Four Levels of Cross-cultural Awareness for us to discriminate between different degrees of intercultural sensitivity (Hu Wenzhong, 1990).

Chen and Starosta (1997) conceptualized intercultural sensitivity as a person's "ability to develop a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication." They further specified six elements that account for intercultural sensitivity: self-esteem, self-monitoring, open-mindedness, empathy, interaction involvement, and non-judgment.

Chen and Starosta (1998) went further to conceptualize intercultural sensitivity to be a "positive drive to accommodate, understand, and appreciate cultural differences in promoting an appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication." They also pointed that intercultural sensitivity is a dynamic and a multidimensional concept describing an individual's active

desire to motivate himself/herself to understand, appreciate, and accept differences among cultures; such motivation springs from the expectation of positive outcomes from intercultural interaction.

According to Bennett, intercultural sensitivity is the construction of reality as increasingly capable of accommodating cultural difference that constitutes intercultural development (Bennett, 1993). In one way, intercultural sensitivity can be expressed by the continuum from ethnocentrism to ethno relativism. Milton Bennett created the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) in 1986 and further developed it in 1993 (with Mitchell Hammer). Bennett puts "ethnocentricity", the idea that one's own culture is superior, at one end of a spectrum with "ethno relativism", a successful blending of more than one culture, at the other end (Bennett, 1993). The model has many stages and people often move subconsciously through these stages as their international and intercultural experiences grow. He divided the developmental process of intercultural sensitivity into six stages (Bennett & Hammer, 1998).

In another set of studies, intercultural communication scholars also have advanced many components of intercultural sensitivity. These might include ethnorelativism, respect for cultural differences, adaptability, perspective taking, open-mindedness and acknowledgement of other's needs.

However, intercultural sensitivity is not natural. It is not part of our primary past, nor has it characterized most of human history. Education and training in intercultural communication is an approach to changing our "natural" behavior (Bennett, 1993, as cited in Cushner & Brislin, 1994).

B. Measurements of intercultural sensitivity

While intercultural sensitivity has considerable theoretical significance for the study of intercultural communication, researchers have failed to develop a sound and universal measure of the construct. There are two reasons for this difficulty: One is the fact that researchers have failed to adequately specify the range of behaviors that reflect an individual's sensitivity to other cultures; another reason for this comes from the confusion of the seemingly overlapping concepts of intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness, and intercultural communication competence.

Chen and Starosta (1996, 1998) pointed out that the main problem of the confusion is embedded in the long time misperception of the three concepts: intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness, and intercultural communication competence. One reason for the contradiction between the rated importance and actual attention to intercultural sensitivity is that there are few reliable and valid instruments available to measure the construct (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). But scholars dedicated to this field have tried unceasingly to develop a satisfying instrument. Along the development of intercultural communication, history saw various proposals on assessing the intercultural sensitivity: The Intercultural Sensitivity (ICSI) or Individualism-

Collectivism Construct, which was developed by Bhawuk & Brislin (1992), the Universal Value Construct was proposed by Kapoor, Blue, Konsky, & Drager (started in 1996 and finished in 2000), the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) was constructed by Mitchell Hammer (1998) based on the DMIS and in cooperation with Milton Bennett (started in 1986). The Behavioral Assessment Scale for Intercultural Communication (BASIC) developed by Olebe and Koester is to assess levels of intercultural communication (Olebe & Koester, 1989). The Cross-Cultural Sensitivity Scale (CCSS) by Pruegger and Roger seeks to measure cross-cultural sensitivity in the Canadian context for undergraduate students (Pruegger & Rogers, 1993), and recently, the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), formulated by Chen & Starosta (1993).

Of these, Bhawuk & Brislin's (1992) Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory Scale (ICSI) was among the earliest attempts to address limitations in the literature. It can be used to distinguish those who have high intercultural sensitivity from those who do not. One way to measure intercultural sensitivity is to determine whether people can appropriately and successfully modify their behavior when moving from one culture to another. To guide the development of an instrument, it is essential to find a dimension that groups cultures and is associated with specific behaviors. Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) selected individualism-collectivism as that dimension for categorizing cultures. To test intercultural sensitivity, they selected 46 Likert-type items for the ICSI designed to assess one's flexibility and open-mindedness when interacting with members from other cultures. Individualism and collectivism are by far the best investigated and least controversial of the five dimensions presented by Hofstede. The items presented in the ICSI are explicit and can be used by individuals as guidelines for behavioral changes.

Kapoor and Comadena (1996) after using the test in a study of American and Mexican students concluded that the measure is rather ineffective in assessing "other" culture's typical behavior patterns. Kapoor, et al (2000) held that one way to rectify this deficiency is to substitute the items used by Bhawuk & Brislin (1992) with value items as developed by Schwartz and Bilsky (1990). They proposed a new instrument named the Universal Value Construct, consisting of 56 individualist, collectivist and mixed values which have been tested in more than 30 diverse cultures. The Individualist-Collectivist Value or Universal Value Construct measurement has been shown to be effective in distinguishing the characteristic traits of various cultures and this concept has the potential to contribute effectively in the area of intercultural sensitivity (Kapoor, et al 2000).

In 1986, Milton J. Bennett developed the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) which shows a progression of stages people may go through in developing intercultural competency. The DMIS was created as a framework to explain the observed and reported experiences of people in intercultural situations (Bennett, 1993). The underlying assumption of the model is that as one's experience of cultural difference becomes sophisticated, one's competence in intercultural relations

increases (Landis, Bennett & Bennett, 2004). They also point out that each stage is indicative of a particular worldview configuration, and certain kinds of attitudes and behavior are typically associated with each such configuration. The great specificity of this model will allow trainers and educators to diagnose stages of development for individuals or groups, to develop curriculum relevant to particular stages, and to sequence activities in ways that facilitate development toward more sensitive stages (Paige, 1993).

Bennett later collaborated with Hammer to develop the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI, 1998) which has been widely regarded as a statistically reliable, cross-culturally valid measure of intercultural competence. It is a 50-item instrument that allows an individual to assess his/her developmental stage of intercultural sensitivity as conceptualized in the DMIS theory. This tool is valuable because it can generate profiles of an individual's or groups' predominant stage of intercultural development and textual interpretation of that stage and associated transition issues and can also measure people's ability to experience difference in relatively complex ways.

The leaders of the world renowned Intercultural Communication Institute (ICI) highly value the IDI and figure that the validity of the IDI was established in several ways: Content validity was established by using actual statements drawn from interviews, along with the reliable categorization of these statements by both raters and the panel of intercultural experts. Construct validity was established by correlating the five IDI scales with the World-mindedness scale (Sampson & Smith, 1957; Wiseman, Hammer & Nishida, 1989) and with the Intercultural Anxiety scale, a modified version of the Social Anxiety scale (Gao & Gudykunst, 1990). Correlations between the individual IDI scales and the World-mindedness and Intercultural Anxiety scales were in the direction predicted (e.g., the DD scale was negatively related to World-mindedness and positively related to intercultural anxiety while the AA scale was positively related to World-mindedness and negatively related to intercultural anxiety). Finally, the assumption that the DMIS stages are sequential is supported in both the construct validity tests and the internal correlations among the five IDI scale. Additional analysis indicated that no systematic differences were found by Gender, Age, or Educational Level, providing additional support of the robustness and generalizability of the measures. In conclusion, the IDI provides a valid and reliable measure of those cognitive states associated with certain stable orientations toward cultural difference and can be useful for "assessing training needs, guiding interventions for individual and group development of intercultural competence, contributing to personnel selection, and evaluating programs" (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003, p.441).

The DMIS has been used with great success for the last fifteen years to develop curriculum for intercultural education and training programs. Content analysis research has supported the relevance of the stage descriptions and has suggested that a more rigorous measurement of the

underlying cognitive states could yield a powerful tool for personal and group assessment.

The only problem is that the DMIS was developed as a profit-making and carefully controlled research tool. Its complexity requires that a user go to ICI in the US pay to, undergo graded supervision, and first become a certified DMIS user. These restrictions of course limit both access and use in developing countries and make it unavailable to graduate student research. So for all the merits of the DMIS (which we will further discuss in Chapter 5), the author had to look elsewhere to an available and adaptable tool to evaluate Chinese students.

C. According to the research questions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis one: Since college English teachers had a certain period of study and training in major English, their Intercultural Sensitivity is hypothesized to be on a higher level.

Hypothesis two: Demographical variables (gender, age, education background, professional qualification, major background of their students and intercultural communication experiences) should have positive or negative effects on their ICS.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research purpose and Research Questions

The present study intends to unveil college English teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity, focusing on the following two research questions:

- 1) How is college English teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity?
- 2) What variables have effect on college English teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity?

B. Rationale of ISS (the instrument)

Intercultural Sensitivity Scale

The Scale is a 24-item scale, which is based on Chen and Starosta's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (1996). The 24 items are separated into five factors: interaction engagement (items 1, 11, 13, 21, 22, and 23), respect for cultural differences (items 2, 7, 8, 16, and 18), interaction confidence (items 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10), interaction enjoyment (items 9, 12 and 15), and interaction attentiveness (items 14, 17, 19). Items 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20, and 22 are reverse-coded before summing the 24 items. Interaction engagement is "concerned with feelings of participation in intercultural communication and behavior in particular situation"; respect for cultural differences is "concerned with how participants orient to or tolerate their counterparts' culture and opinion"; interaction confidence is the dimension "concerned with how confident people feel in an intercultural setting"; Interaction enjoyment is the dimension "concerned with positive or negative reaction toward communicating with

people from different cultures"; and interaction attentiveness is the dimension "concerned with participants' effort to understand what is going on in intercultural interaction"(Pritchard & Skinner, 2002: 344-345).

Chen and Starosta(2000)believe that six elements account for intercultural sensitivity. They held that with an optimistic outlook and confidence in interaction, high self-esteem persons not only establish a sense of self-value and self-worth, but also are more able to deal with the feeling of alienation, frustration, and stress caused by ambiguous situations in the process of intercultural communication; meanwhile, this, in turn, will lead these persons to develop a positive motivation and emotion to recognize and respect situational differences in intercultural encounters. Self-monitoring, the ability to detect situational constraints in order to regulate and change one's behaviors for being competent in communication, is particularly related to sensitivity regarding the appropriateness of one's social behaviors and self-presentation (Snyder, 1974).

Open-minded persons are willing to explain themselves and accept their counterparts' explanation in intercultural interaction (Chen&Starosta,2000).They possess an internalized and broadened concept of the environment that makes them sensitive to the multiple ways and multiple realities of intercultural communication due to the involvement of cultural differences(Alder,1977;Bennett,1986).

Empathy has been considered a core component of intercultural sensitivity. According to Guo-Ming Chen (1998), empathy refers to the ability to step into one's culturally different counterparts' mind to develop the same thoughts and emotions in interaction.

Interaction involvement represents a person's sensitivity in interaction. Interaction involvement comprises three concepts that are related to the ability of sensitivity: responsiveness, attentiveness, and perceptiveness (Chen&Starosta,2000).

Finally, non-judgment reflects the quality of a sensitive person by allowing him or her to listen sincerely to his or her culturally different counterparts, instead of jumping into conclusion without sufficient information. A non-judgmental person is one who can enjoy interacting and establishing relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds (Chen&Starosta,2000).

Based on the above conceptualization, Chen and Starosta formulated the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale(ISS),a 24-item assessment of concurrent validity from 162 participants that isolated dimensions of attentiveness, impression rewarding, self-esteem, self-monitoring, perspective taking, intercultural effectiveness, and intercultural communication attitude(Chen & Starosta,2000).For this study we have decided to use this instrument.

There are some advantages about using the instrument. First, it is economic, because the questionnaire could be distributed to lots of subjects within a short time. Second, the collected data from the questionnaire is more convincing because it is anonymous so that subjects would not be nervous at sensitive items. Third, answers representing

different levels of related rate are labeled in numbers, therefore it is convenient to process and transcript the collected data statistically.

The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part concerns the demographical information, such as gender, age, professional qualification, education background, major backgrounds of their students, and intercultural communication experiences. Some items require the subjects to fill in information, while others provide multiple choices for subjects to choose. The demographical information is regarded as variables which may have effect on college English teachers' IS. T-test results for subjects having or devoid of these demographical information answers Research Question 2.

C. Research procedure

Subjects

The target sample is chosen because they are considered to be one of the groups in China who have the best mastery of foreign languages and have the most experience in learning foreign languages and in communicating with foreigners.

The subjects for this study were chosen from three colleges in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province. These colleges include Wenzhou Vocational College, Wenzhou Science and Technology Vocational College, Fifty college English teachers of different age, gender, education background, professional qualifications, teaching English majors and non-English majors were asked to complete the survey. The subjects were randomly sampled. Such a choice is based on the following reasons. First, an investigation of English teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity in all or most colleges in China is unavailable. One possible solution is to choose some colleges as representative cases. Second, the chosen colleges are of different categories and levels, which may represent other colleges in this region.

Method of analysis

The author employs ISS as the measurement of the survey. A Five-point Likert scale was used to respond to each item:5=strongly agree,4=agree, 3=uncertain, 2=disagree, and 1=strongly disagree. Among the 24 items, items 2, 4, 7, 12, 15, 18, 20, and 22 are reverse-coded before summing the 24 items. Using Chen & Starosta's design and their core dimensions.

Data collecting

Fifty copies of the Questionnaire were distributed to the subjects in four colleges in Quanzhou in December, 2007. The subjects were asked to complete the ISS. Forty copies of the questionnaires were returned, so the return rate is 80%. However, two of them were not completed in a proper way. As a result, thirty-eight copies were used for data processing and analysis.

Data analysis

The average score for each statement, the total score and average score for the whole ISS were calculated. The higher is the score, the more positive is the subject's attitude toward intercultural communication and the higher level is their IS. Three procedures were used to analyze the ISS.

First, general descriptive statistics were presented to give a whole picture of the result of the assessment. Second, more detailed descriptive statistics were made on each variable to get in-depth understanding of the results. Finally, each variables and their respective influence on ISS were calculated using T-test analysis.

D. Results

It is hypothesized that demographical variables (gender, age, education background, professional qualifications, major background of their students and intercultural communication experiences) have an effect on subjects' ICS negatively or positively. This section will present the statistics of effects of each variable on ICS.

TABLE I T-TEST RESULTS: GENDER AND MOTIVATION
Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ISS	Male	10	72.1	2.343	1.862
	Female	28	72.357	6.177	1.525

TABLE II T-TEST RESULTS: AGE AND ISS
Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ISS	≤34	20	71.65	5.092	1.764
	≥35	18	73	5.716	1.821

TABLE III T-TEST RESULTS: EDUCATION BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION
Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ISS	Bachelor's	11	74.091	3.777	1.324
	Master's	27	71.556	5.827	1.453

TABLE IV T-TEST RESULTS: STUDENTS' MAJOR BACKGROUND AND TEACHERS' ISS
Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ISS	English majors	10	73.1	5.594	1.651
	Non-majors	28	72	5.352	1.648

TABLE V T-TEST RESULTS: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCES AND MOTIVATION
Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ISS	Occasionally	33	72.515	5.706	1.017
	Frequently	5	70.8	2.713	1.823

E. Findings

According to the reported results, the subjects' IS was on an average level. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is denied. In terms of the effect of demographical variables on each aspect of IS, there were some regular patterns among the effect of these variables. In these variables, gender, professional

qualifications, education background, and major background of subjects' students showed consistency in IS. All of the differences caused by these variables were not significant according to t-test findings. In terms of education background, bachelor's degree holders showed an advantage over master's degree holders in IS. In terms of major background of subjects' students, subjects teaching English majors showed a tiny advantage over those teaching non-English majors. Intercultural communication experiences showed relatively high significance in IS. Therefore, part of hypothesis 2 is partly denied.

IV. DISCUSSION

In the present study, vocational college English teachers' ICC in Zhejiang Province is measured through a questionnaire. A total score of more than 80% of the possible maximum would be considered to be on a higher and qualified level of ICS.

Further analysis of the results indicates that the insufficiency of their intercultural knowledge lead to college English teachers' average ICC competence. Such knowledge can only be obtained efficiently through education. College English teachers' weakness in intercultural knowledge of their ICC competence proves that there is great defect in the knowledge structure in English language teaching in China. In other words, only grammatical knowledge of English language has been emphasized, while knowledge concerning the improvement of ICS has been greatly overlooked.

A. Suggestions One

That vocational college English teacher' ICS are on an average level indicates that the ICC competence of college English teachers do not match their status and work and they should spend more time and energy in developing their ICC competence. Vocational college English teachers are a special group in that they are both English language teachers and English language learners. Being such a special group, college English teachers are supposed to be on high levels of ICS which means that their mean value of the total scores should exceed 80% of the possible maximum in order to meet the need of their responsibility to present knowledge and skills to the students in reality. A key way to developing and improving college English teachers' ICC is to arm them with intercultural knowledge, frequent IC communication and receive all kinds of IC training.

If we consider it with the knowledge structure defects of English language teaching, such results would be rational. These defects are further analyzed as follows:

Firstly, English teachers continue to put an emphasis on the explanation of grammatical knowledge rather than delivering cultural implication involved in the language itself, which leads to the fact that English language teaching has been restricted to grammatical structure and function teaching. Actually, what English teachers teach is language and culture or culture in the language instead of teaching language as its culture. A direct result of teachers' weak

awareness towards language culture is to make English language teaching into the so-called English "language" teaching. Within the boring teaching of dull contents, culture has been separated from language teaching. Students are only capable of passing various levels of tests, but are powerless in intercultural communication.

Secondly, the various current English proficiency tests have been a dilemma for students in China. The inclusion of cultural contents in foreign language testing can hardly be found. Although most foreign language teachers do not deny the importance of developing cultural knowledge and skills in their course curriculum, few of them have actually tried testing whether students are attaining their culture teaching goals. This is not because of the teachers' irresponsibility, but is rather due to the negligence on the part of the educational administrators who have failed to enforce favorable nation-wide culture teaching and culture testing syllabuses. The students' whole educational background has conditioned them to study for examinations as covering the important objectives of the course. Most students are aware of their weakness in culture learning, but they are also unwilling to take seriously the study of culture unless culture learning is evaluated. Foreign language teaching and testing will be bent on if things continue this way.

Thirdly, the layout of various English course books is also against culture teaching concept. The selection of the texts, explanation of the vocabulary, illustration of the grammar, and arrangement of the exercises in the course books are distant from culture. Generally speaking, the layout of course books is guided by the delivering and training of language skills and neglects intercultural conceptions. Grammar and pronunciation are highlighted in elementary education; secondary education is college-entrance-examination-oriented; college English language teaching moves its emphasis towards various tests. The enhancement of ICC competence seems beyond education. Though grammatical mistakes make people unpleasant, pragmatic errors may be regarded as a natural revelation of rudeness and malice. Therefore, a lack of culture knowledge has serious effect on English learners' communication and interaction.

Due to the above facts that the contents concerning with intercultural communication knowledge are not fully involved in English language teaching, longer time of studying English(education background),teaching English or doing related researches(professional qualifications)and teaching in English(major background of their students)will only lead to a better command of vocabulary and grammatical ability. Undoubtedly, such knowledge and abilities will be beneficial to the improvement of their ICC competence, for they are the fundamentals of intercultural communication events. However, it is admitted that such knowledge is just one part of intercultural communication knowledge instead of all. An individual with competent language proficiency may not be on a higher level of ICC competence without learning other knowledge of intercultural communication.

B. Suggestions Two

Firstly, a reform of English language teaching should be carried out, including the current education system and teaching methods in order to strengthen the enhancement of ICC competence in English language teaching. In other words, an addition of intercultural knowledge to the contents of English language teaching is strongly suggested, while maintaining characteristics of the current English language education. Correspondingly, such contents should be reflected in the syllabus, the course books and all kinds of English proficiency tests. In addition, English teachers should be encouraged to improve their ICC competence through their self-teaching and to immerse them into their teaching. As a result, the students will be benefited from this reform and their teachers with a good command of rudimentary knowledge, which will lead to their more effective and appropriate communication with foreigners and in doing so, English language teaching achieves its essential goal. Vocational college English teachers should become the pioneers in this respect.

Secondly, this reform is suggested to begin from graduate education of English majors for two reasons. (1)English-major graduates are supposed to have a good command of linguistic knowledge, which is a prerequisite for the improvement of ICC. It is believed that the reform in graduate education would achieve good results. Such experiences of both advantages and disadvantage would be the basis and guidelines for further reforms in other educational levels. (2)Most English-major graduates would choose to be a teacher after graduation. Therefore, only if they are benefited from the reform can they implement the good results into their future English language teaching. Consequently, such changes would be a series of chain reaction in the English language teaching in China.

It proves that a systematic education be an essential way to improving ICC, and intercultural communication experiences is complementary to classroom teaching. Frequent contact with native English-speakers will result in a strong motivation and high communicative skills instead of a significant increase in intercultural knowledge. This aspect should be improved by study in schools.

Due to the development of science and technology, teaching, learning and living conditions were greatly improved, which might be the possible reasons. Advanced teaching information and materials became available. Audio-visual aids were employed in class, which provided more effective way to improving students' language skills. An improvement of the living conditions is another advantage of subjects of young age. Good nourishment and comfortable environment was a guarantee for their study.

Suggestions Three

It is strongly suggested that college English teachers improve their ICC competence through certain proper measures to reduce such difference. In order to have a teaching staff with higher ICC competence, culture cathedras, theoretical seminars, and academic activities among college English teachers are encouraged. They are supposed to learn from each other's strong points to compensate for their own weaknesses.

V. CONCLUSION

With the increasing international and intercultural events and activities, effective intercultural communication in both global and domestic contexts becomes more and more important. As a result, study of intercultural communication has evolved into a complex amalgam of various theoretical and methodological approaches.

As a somewhat less emphasized and ineffective aspect in English language teaching, college English teachers' ICS should draw great attention to meet the high demand of college students in their future work. The present study attempts to find effective ways to enhance college English teachers' ICS by evaluating their ISS. The study investigates 38 Wenzhou vocational college English teachers' ICS through a questionnaire. The main findings are: These vocational college English teachers' ICS is on an average level, which is distant from the requirement of college English teaching.

T-test results show that different demographical variable have different effects on ICS.

Firstly, gender, education background, major background of the students and professional qualification do not have significant effect on subjects' ICS. Secondly, the differences caused by age are statistically significant. Finally, "intercultural communication experiences" is proved to have significant effect on subjects' ICS.

The average level of college English teachers' ICS demonstrates the effectiveness of English language teaching to some extent. However, such a level is not satisfied and distant from the need of college English teaching. The drawbacks in Chinese college English teachers' ICS lie on the fact that intercultural communication knowledge and training of ICS are not reflected to a full extent in English language teaching contents, methods, and teachers' attitudes. In other words, the current English education system has its defects which need to be improved. Therefore, Intercultural knowledge should be added to the various aspects of English language teaching in China when carrying out reforms in English language teaching, which is a guarantee for English learners to communicate with foreigners effectively and appropriately; at present, all kinds of academic activities concerning with the improvement of English teachers' ICC are strongly suggested, such as culture cathedras, theoretical seminars, and academic activities; Both English teachers and

learners should be encouraged to have more intercultural communication events, which is a complementary way to improving their ICC. College English teachers' high level of ICC competence might be a guarantee for the improvements of their students' ICC.

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