Research on Across-cultural Communication in College English Teaching based on Cloud Platform

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Abstract

Cross-cultural communication is a field of study that looks at how people from differing cultural backgrounds communicate. It is applied in college English teaching more and more. Cloud computing has an important value and significance to solve the problem of college education resource sharing and construction. The construction of cloud platform in universities is to integrate all sorts of educational resources and it can provide rapid and convenient resource storage, sharing, learning and computing services. In this paper we analyse the advantages of cloud platform in the college English teaching, further build a college network English teaching system based on cloud computing, and probe into the construction of an autonomous learning mode in the light of the problems existing in across-cultural communication.

Keywords: Cloud Platform, Across-cultural Communication, College English Teaching

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is an important mean of expressing yourself because it exists different ways of expression and so different kind of communication depending on the culture you belonging to.

Cross-cultural communication refers to communication between people with different cultural backgrounds, namely what was going on between people of different cultural backgrounds interact (Ochieng et al., 2010).

The way of communicating will not be the same as other countries and it is important to know some values of other cultures and so of other ways of communicating for, first of all, avoiding some misunderstandings and then knowing better some aspects of different cultures. Language is a tool for human communication, so people cannot leave the language of communication. The language differences also brought some obstacles to the communication. Sentences and word standard features determines the differences of syntactic structure between Chinese and English. In addition, there are differences between Chinese and western in the way of thinking. That is why cross-cultural communication is an essential exercise to do; a person who come from a certain country does not necessarily get the same ideas about time, death, identity, as the other one from a different country because each person has its own identity. Sometimes, your own identity can be modified or influenced by different factors, for example religion, your environment, your family. This influence can replace your previous vision of life and changing your way of expressing yourself and so your way of communicating but you can also adapt this influence to your own way of thinking and it can be resulted in a different way of communicating.

As the development of globalization, more and more people have opportunities to communicate with each other from diverse cultural background. Therefore, it is essential to understand some cultural factors which affect the teaching in college English.

The main goals and contributions of this paper are the construction and use of a college English teaching cloud platform, which can improve student’s autonomous learning ability. Moreover, across-cultural communication method is introduced into the autonomous learning mode. By combining with the cloud platform, good teaching effect has been obtained.

This work is organized as follows. In Section 2 we explain cultural differences and cross-cultural communication in college English teaching. In Section 3 autonomous learning mode in college English teaching
based on cloud platform is proposed. In Section 4, we analyse college English teaching cloud platform construction and give practice effect of the platform. In Section 5 we conclude this paper.

2. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

As globalization and localization intensify in every corner of the world, however, the field is increasingly confronted by more fundamental issues of identity, community, and humanity. In effect, cross-cultural communication is the only way to mitigate identity politics, social disintegration, religious conflicts, and ecological vulnerability in the global village. Human survival and flourishing depends on our ability to communicate successfully across differences.

2.1 Explore the causes of cultural differences

Cause of the differences between Chinese and western culture phenomenon is because the two sides have different cultural traditions of Chinese and western different historical background, it will bring people thought behaviour for the differences, even conflict. The main cultural differences between Chinese and western culture as follow:

Differences between thinking mode. Notice to logic, and analysis the western mode of thinking, and thinking mode, show the intuitive wholeness of the east, so Chinese people tend to be particularly heavy depending on intuition, pay attention to experience and feeling in the process of understanding, often in contact with experience and feeling to his motivation. This kind of thinking mode, has obvious general and fuzzy and form a mind-set that can identify and simplify the process of the classification of the external perception, ignoring the difference of individual things, exaggerate and the other related to a particular social group cognitive attitude, often with emotion, accompanied by fixed creed.

Conduct not identical. In communication, people often to use it's social norms to judge the rationality of the each other behaviour, due to the differences between both sides of the code of conduct, often produce misunderstanding or unhappy, the best way to understand each other's code of conduct is to do as the Romans do. Such as the Chinese pat young children head said a friendly, but in the west. This is a kind of respect children.

Different orientation value. Every culture value system can help people distinguish between beauty and ugliness good and evil. In Chinese culture, people respected modest and polite, pursue the happy-go-lucky, don't like competitive, line above all, a person will not, the collective orientation dominate. While western culture advocate individualism, let it is a sign of lack of enterprising spirit, is lazy incompetent synonym, advocate independent thinking independent judgment, think personal interests supreme.

Pragmatic transfer. The phenomenon of things and behaviour evaluation and interpretation is built on the basis of culture itself, communication in intercultural communication people tend to ignore the pragmatic migration. A kind of cultural standard specification can only be explained according to its specific conditions in their own and not to describe another culture, the deep cause of the failure of the cross-cultural communication is that people lack of sensitivity to the social language differences.

2.2 Cross-cultural communication strategies in college English teaching

In order to achieve effective communication, we must follow certain principles as a guide in the communication process. Some authoritative communication experts agree that to achieve effective management of cross-cultural communication must adhere to the following principles:

Completeness, which includes three aspects: First, provide each other with all the information he needs so that each can be completely and accurately understand the information. The second is to answer all the questions raised by the other side. Third, would like to offer each other additional information he needs.

Simplicity or conciseness is without prejudice to other aspects of the information under the premise of using as few words to convey the message that the information necessary to complete and no extra modification ingredients.
Care, which means in the communication process always take each other on the mind, put yourself in conversation with each other, not angry, not abuse, you cannot accuse each other for no reason.

Concreteness, the message refers to the two sides are not vague, general, but should be clear and definite and vivid.

Clarity, which requires your mind to accurately convey the information to the other's mind. Since the use of words by personal experience, knowledge, values and other effects, so one should accurately convey the information to the other party is not easy.

Politely, which refers to the communication process to care about each other and respect each other.

So some cross-cultural communication strategies should be used.

3. AUTONOMOUS LEARNING MODE IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING BASED ON CLOUD PLATFORM

In China college English teaching, there are many problems as follows:

Students’ individual needs are not met, and they lack enthusiasm and motivation in English learning. Learning needs are people’s desire for the unknown, a series of reactions driven by learning motivation for the sake of the needs in production, living and development. Needs are the driving force of all behaviours, so are they to foreign language learning.

Students’ personalized learning is not guaranteed, and their English learning efficiency is unsatisfying. College English teaching reform should not be the transformation in teaching media and teaching method only, and it should be the transformation of teaching concept. Because of the lack of scientific and reasonable learning methods and personalized instruction, it results in the low learning efficiency and insignificant learning effect.

Students’ ability in autonomous learning is not cultivated effectively, and their ability in English learning is insufficient. In the present environment of information technology, the progress of science and technology and the renewal of knowledge are speeding continuously, and the importance of autonomous English learning has been paid more and more attention to. “Learning is a life-long process, and the ultimate goal of education is to cultivate the students’ learning autonomy, and make them autonomous learners.” (Young et al., 2014). But because of the profound influence of the exam-oriented education, the cultivation of autonomous English learning abilities has always been neglected. In the present case, the demand for students’ autonomous learning is high, while we are not effective and successful in cultivating students’ autonomous learning abilities which lead to the widespread phenomenon of “the alleged autonomous learning” (Xiong, 2014). Students who have been accustomed to traditional classroom instruction lack the awareness and ability in autonomous learning. Their time and resources for autonomous learning have not been fully taken advantage of and learning effect can not be guaranteed. The outcome is that a large percentage of students can pass the exam, but they are poor in comprehensive ability in English application, especially the ability in listening and speaking, and they are also poor in autonomous learning abilities.

3.1 The application of cloud computing in college English teaching

Cloud computing, also on-demand computing, is a kind of Internet-based computing that provides shared processing resources and data to computers and other devices on demand. It is a model for enabling ubiquitous, on-demand access to a shared pool of configurable computing resources (e.g., networks, servers, storage, applications and services), which can be rapidly provisioned and released with minimal management effort (Marston et al., 2011).

Now, learner-centered personal learning environment has been the trend of the development of college network learning. Learners control and manage individual learning, select learning resources and services, for different learners, they can choose different learning content and tools to create their own learning environment. With the support of cloud computing, the basic elements of the personal learning environment, such as text, audio and video and so on will be controlled and managed by cloud service. Learners can get data and services required to build learning environment only need a browser, they can create flexible and agile learning method, establish
rich learning situation without complex software operation, thus cloud computing greatly reduces the demand of building the network learning environment.

For colleges and universities, the inputs and maintenance of hardware facilities for teaching and research are a huge expenditure, most of the invested heavily equipment need to update or upgrade some time later, this means a waste of hardware resources. Cloud computing model can be a very good solution to these problems, do not need configure a high-performance computer equipment in early time, and equipment replacement task is completed by the service provider.

The college's computer room is almost universally considered the viral distribution center, due to the cross and frequently used of computer and storage devices, led computer viruses spread widely in the campus teaching network and the computer room, even teacher's computer may become the birthplace of the virus and the source of infection. In cloud computing, student data store in server-side, application program running on the server-side, and calculation processed by the server-side. Cloud computing services are distributed in different servers, a node will be terminated while it fails, and another node will automatically be started, which ensures the normal operation of the application and the calculation.

It is found during the research process that foreign countries attached importance to the cloud computing education earlier than China. China started to study and think about how to apply the cloud computing platform to education only after 2008 (González et al., 2015). The relevant cases for the following years since then indicate that considerable achievements, especially in college teaching, have been made in China through various attempts and exploration (Huang et al., 2014).

Generally, college English teaching cloud platform as a kind of network environment, and build a network teaching system. The basic design of its architecture is shown in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. College English teaching cloud platform structure diagram](image)

From Figure 1 we can see that User interface layer provides web interface for users to access college English teaching system on the client side. All kinds of users can access the teaching system through different terminal equipment, they can enjoy mass storage and unlimited computing power of cloud computing. Software as a service layer (SaaS) provides all kinds of applications software about teaching, as well as applications program that can be used directly. Platform as a service layer (PaaS) is built over the infrastructure layer, located in the middle layer of the architecture, for developers to develop various types educational applications based on cloud computing, this layer provides development environment. Infrastructure service layer (IaaS) provides computing, data storage and network communications resources for the high layers, it is divided into physical hardware sub-layer and virtual sub-layer, physical hardware sub-layer is composed of real physical hardware and covers servers, storage and network equipment, virtual sub-layer is built over the physical hardware sub-layer, using virtualization technology to manage the underlying hardware and provide computing, data storage and network communications virtual resources for upper layers, IaaS is Located in the bottom of the system architecture.
3.2 Autonomous learning mode based on cloud platform

In the comprehensive lesson, the advantages of online teaching and traditional classroom teaching are combined and brought into full play, with students being the center of class while teachers playing the controlling role. At the same time, more time and efforts are spared on the elaboration of autonomous learning strategies and students’ autonomous learning strategies are strengthened.

Through the test module of our college English teaching cloud platform, teachers assign test regularly. Students must accomplish their test and submit them through the network in time, while teachers review the test, feed back through the network, record their performance and include them as a certain proportion into students’ semester grades. At the same time, through the management module of the platform, teachers can recommend learning materials for students and students learn according to their actual needs and interests. Under the inspection and monitoring of teachers, semi-autonomy is achieved. The semi-autonomous learning mode bridges the classroom instruction and after-class autonomous learning naturally. At the same time, by strengthening the monitoring and guidance for autonomous learning via the network, students’ abilities in autonomous learning have been gradually elevated.

At present the college English teaching is faced with the reality of reduction in credits and class periods, and more and more limited classroom instruction can not guarantee the fulfilment of the teaching target. Consequently, the role of autonomous learning is becoming increasingly significant. Similarly, for the students’ after-class autonomous learning, teachers should give full play to the role of guide, supervisor, co-operator and facilitator, ensuring a desirable effect. By strengthening the guidance and supervision of students’ autonomous learning through the college English teaching cloud platform, the effect of autonomous learning has been guaranteed and personalized cultivation has been realized.

4. COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING CLOUD PLATFORM CONSTRUCTION

The college English teaching cloud platform mainly includes: data resource centre, cloud computing hardware layer, general service layer and application service layer.

Through the independent practical teaching private network, a MB desktop, gigabit backbone, unified outlet connection college network and Internet can be formed. The outside network can use the VPN or leased line to access cloud, and ensure the smooth and reliable of cloud network. The practical network structure is shown in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. The practical network structures](image)

Data resource centre is the core of college English teaching cloud platform. In data resource centre, construct the special cloud server. By integrating the computer, software and hardware system, construct the basic cloud platform. The data resource centre is shown in Figure 3.
Figure 3. Structure of data resource centre

Application service layer is the universal service layer of education cloud, mainly including: cloud virtual desktop service, cloud storage service, tool software support services. Its structure is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Structure of application service layer

Where, cloud desktop is based on distributed cloud computing storage technology, and it integrates the essence applications on Internet, relies on high encryption algorithm, to provide the most convenient, abundant, and secure service for all levels of Internet users. Cloud storage is the system that can use the application software to get various types of storage equipment work together and externally provide data storage and business access function.

The across-cultural communication in college English teaching cloud platform is tested in two universities. Half a year passed, it has achieved the desired effect: substantially reduce the hardware and software’s management and maintenance cost; reduce the repeated construction; improve the sharing of resources, and achieve the resources “on-demand distribution”; it is convenient for the whole process of autonomous learning mode realization, and the effect of autonomous learning has been guaranteed. The practice effect is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Practice effect comparative of the college English teaching cloud platform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Before the construction of platform</th>
<th>After the construction of platform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the number of beneficial students</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>study time per day of supported students</td>
<td>8 hours</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>degree of students’ satisfaction</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supportive degree of across-cultural</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student-teacher interaction rate</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>95.6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5. CONCLUSIONS
College English is an important foundation course for student of all college students in China. Students of various majors have differing foundations, learning abilities and career directions. Traditional teaching method and mode can’t adopt for the teaching of the course. We designed and put into use college English teaching cloud computing platform based on artificial intelligence, which caused reform of teaching method and teaching mode. According to tracking data during several years, the platform has greatly improved teaching quality and English abilities of students.

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