Developing Innovation Skills in Second Language Education

Cultivation of Creativity and Intercultural Communicative Competence

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Abstract—**The rapid development of globalization requires teaching innovation skills in second language education. It is assumed that second language education fosters two capabilities (creativity and intercultural communicative competence) as the innovation skills. This paper proposes a curriculum to switch from traditional courses centered on language knowledge to the innovative courses that can cultivate learners' creativity and intercultural communicative competence. First, the curriculum focuses on how to develop creative-thinking skills through vocabulary free association practice, vocabulary compulsory association practice, and vocabulary association writing. Second, the curriculum presents teaching methods by integrating the target cultures into courses, such as learning by video, encounter project, and simulation. In addition, the curriculum for the two capabilities will promote learners' motivation and their expertise, and then will lead to the integrative development of the innovation skills in the age of globalization.**

Keywords—second language education; globalization; innovation skills; creativity; intercultural communicative competence

I.   INTRODUCTION

Creativity is a force that is required to live in a rapidly changing globalized and knowledge-based society. And it is an essential ability for innovation skills. Therefore, in second language education, efforts to cultivate learners' creativity are becoming important. Creativity is a function of three components: creative-thinking skills (creativity-relevant skills), expertise (domain-relevant skills), and motivation (task motivation) [1][2]. The foundational component is creative-thinking skills. In order to cultivate rich creativity, the development of creative-thinking skills is important. This paper focuses on how to develop creative-thinking skills by proposing an educational curriculum consisting of vocabulary free association practice, vocabulary compulsory association practice, and vocabulary association writing.

Additionally, second language education does not only teach a foreign language but also teaches the target cultures at the same time [3]. The cultivation of intercultural communicative competence is closely tied to learning the target cultures. By integrating the target cultures into second language education, learners will deepen their understanding of the target cultures and enhance intercultural communicative competence. Therefore, this paper presents teaching methods of learning by video, encounter project, and simulation to integrate the target cultures.

Based on the above problem awareness, this paper proposes a curriculum for second language education that cultivates creativity and intercultural communicative competence. It is expected that this curriculum will lead to the cultivation of innovation skills in the globalization age.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the preceding researches as basic knowledge related to this paper.

A.   Method Theory based on Association

1) Associative Method

There are two main methods of association, free association, and compulsory association. The free association is a way of thinking about a certain theme one after another when associating. The compulsory association is a way of thinking about a certain theme by directions to think [4].

2) Mind Map

Mind map [5] is a free association tool. It is an exteriorization of divergent thinking and it is regarded as representing the natural function of the brain. It is often created around a single concept, drawn as an image in the center of a blank page, to which associated representations of ideas such as images, words. Major ideas are connected directly to the central concept. It develops thinking by using association and it is useful for the development of creative-thinking skills and the application of language knowledge.

3) Associating

Nurturing associating is also important to cultivate creative-thinking skills. Associating is the ability to correlate unrelated questions, problems, and ideas well [6]. By forcibly limiting the scope of association, the compulsory association

can concentrate thinking and conceive specific things [4]. It is often conducted with the compulsory association, which can combines things that are not usually combined, to extend the ability of associating [6].

B. Language, Culture, and Communication

1) The Relationship between Culture and Language

Language and culture complement each other. Language is the most essential element in any culture [7]. It is used to participate in the culture, describe the culture, interpret the culture and respond to the culture [8]. The relationship between language and culture can be summarized by [9]: "A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one can not separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture." The current trend in second language teaching is to take the relation of language and culture into account [10].

2) The Relationship between Culture and Communication

Without the understanding of the target cultures, intercultural communicative competence will not be improved well. Culture is communication, and communication is culture. Through communication, cultures are handed down from one generation to the next, created and modified [11]. In order to communicate successfully across languages and cultures, one must understand culturally different norms of interaction and people's values and thought [12].

3) Target Cultures Teaching and Learning

It is impossible to teach a language without its culture for "culture is the necessary context for language use [13]". Target cultures learning can contribute to the success in language learning, as [14] puts it: "success in language learning is conditional upon the acquisition of cultural knowledge: language learners acquire cultural background knowledge in order to communicate, and to increase their comprehension in the target language." Although it is impossible to disregard the language education itself, it is possible to acquire a language in a guidance that puts emphasis on teaching culture [15].

4) Intercultural Understanding and Intercultural Communicative Competence

Intercultural understanding deepens learners' understanding of the target language and promotes the selection of more natural words and expressions [16]. Second language learners need to improve intercultural communicative competence through intercultural understanding [17]. The components for intercultural communicative competence are attitudes, knowledge, and skills [18], as is shown in TABLE1.

Attitudes refer to the ability to abandon ethnocentric views and attitudes toward foreign languages and cultures, and knowledge includes general knowledge about the target cultures [18]. Skills include the ability of comparison, interpreting, and relating between two cultures [19]. In all, it is necessary to integrate relevant target cultures knowledge in second language education to develop the intercultural communicative competence.

TABLE1. Factors in intercultural communication
(Byram,1997, p34)

	Skills Interpret and relate (savoir-comprendre)	
Knowledge Of self and other; Of interaction: Individual and societal (savoirs)	Education Political education Critical cultural awareness (savoir-s' engager)	Attitudes Relativising self Valuing other (saviors-êlre)
	Skills Discover and/ or interact (savoir-apprendre/faire)	

III. CULTIVATION OF CREATIVITY AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

In modern second language education, in order to foster innovation skills, it is necessary to switch from traditional courses centered on traditional language knowledge to innovative courses that can cultivate learners' creativity and intercultural communicative competence. Based on the studies mentioned above, this paper focuses on proposing a curriculum to cultivate creativity by fostering creative-thinking skills, and to present possible teaching methods to enhance the intercultural communicative competence through intercultural understanding. With this curriculum, learners' motivation and the expertise will be promoted, and the effects of developing innovation skills in the age of globalization are to be expected(Fig.1).
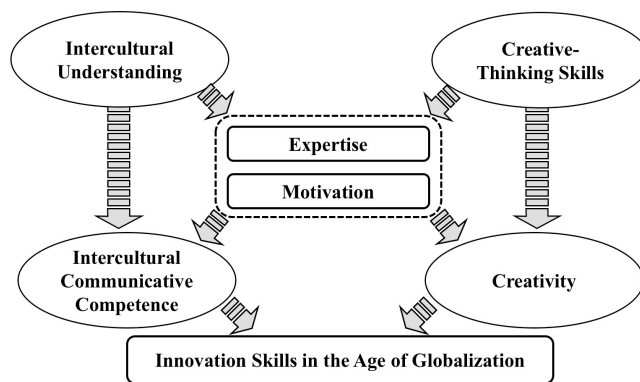

Fig.1. Development of innovation skills

A. Cultivation of creativity

1) Basic design

This part describes the instructional curriculum that captures the relation between the cultivation of creative-thinking skills and the mastery of language knowledge. As is shown in Fig.2, this proposal mainly utilizes vocabulary free association practice, vocabulary compulsory association practice, and vocabulary association writing practice. The

curriculum aims to improve learners' expertise in vocabulary abilities, grammar abilities, writing abilities, and at the same time enhancing creative-thinking skills and learning motivation to get the effect of the cultivation of creativity.
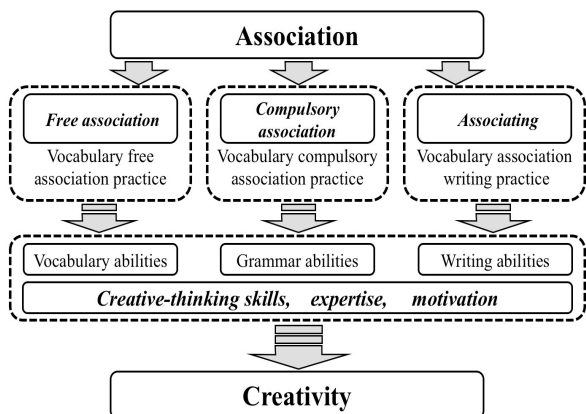

Fig.2. Cultivation of creativity

First, vocabulary free association practice allows learners to write vocabularies by free association. By freely associating, one develops thinking and one learns new expressions and vocabulary in the language world. This method is expected to improve learners' creative-thinking skills and vocabulary abilities.

Next, the vocabulary compulsory association practice gives direction by focusing on certain categories such as grammar knowledge to learners. It also allows learners to write associative vocabularies. This practice is trying to cultivate creative-thinking skills, and at the same time to improve the grammar abilities of learners.

Furthermore, the vocabulary association writing practice forcibly associates unrelated figures with each other, and allows learners to summarize the contents to write an essay. It can draw out information that is hard to associate, and will train writing abilities.

2) Vocabulary free association practice

This exercise allows learners to write vocabularies in a free associative way. Mind map is a free association tool, so the mind map shown in Fig.3 is the worksheet of vocabulary free association practice.

Starting from the central word presented on the worksheet of vocabulary free association practice, learners write within a given time limit, those words that immediately come to mind on the empty lines surrounding the central word. For example, suppose that the word "fish" is presented. Speaking of fish, some people associate with the ocean, others associate with sushi, fishing and so on. And people who associate with the sea will continue to associate with "swimming".
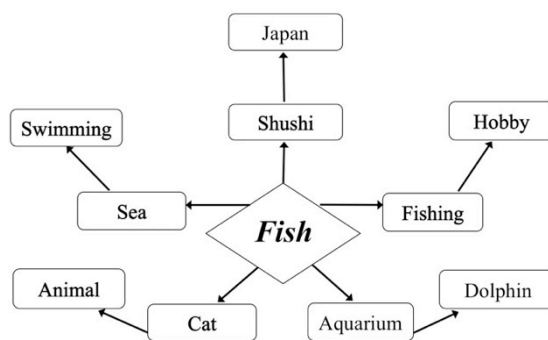

Fig.3. Vocabulary free association practice worksheet(e.g.)

3) Vocabulary compulsory association practice

This exercise guides the association by focusing on specific items such as grammar knowledge and allows learners to write associative vocabularies. The worksheet shown in Fig.4 is used for the vocabulary compulsory association practice.

Based on the word presented on the vocabulary compulsory association practice worksheet, learners write as many associative vocabularies as possible within a given time limit. For example, suppose that the word "student" is presented by its antonym relation (e.g. student-professor), synonym relation (e.g. student-pupil), category relation (e.g. student-education), syntagmatic relation (e.g. student-teach) and so on.
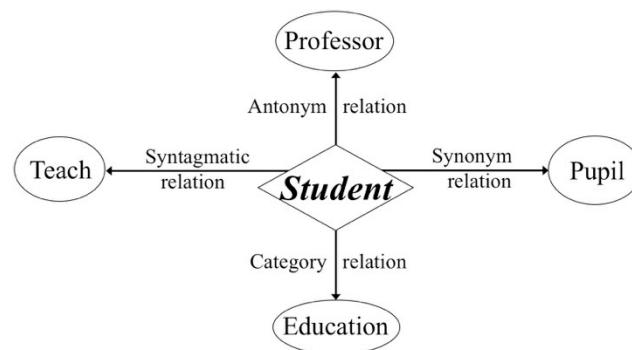

Fig.4. Vocabulary compulsory association practice worksheet(e.g.)

4) Vocabulary association writing practice

The aim of this exercise is to write a creative foreign language essay by combining compulsory association and free writing. The figures shown in Fig.5 are used to guide the vocabulary association writing practice.

At first glance, there is no relationship among the figures. Show learners three figures simultaneously and ask them to associate based on their existing knowledge. By associating, learners will summarize the contents to write an essay.

Fig.5. Vocabulary association writing practice figures(e.g.)

B. Cultivation of intercultural communicative competence

1) Basic design

Culture teaching and language teaching are inseparable, as culture is always embedded, integrated into the language learning context [20]. As is shown in Fig.6, the proposal provides a theoretical foundation for the development of intercultural communicative competence. This chapter presents teaching methods of learning by video, encounter project, and simulation as to integrate the target cultures. Each teaching method is designed to improve the intercultural communicative competence. While learning language knowledge, learners' intercultural understanding and learning motivation will be enhanced by integrating relevant target cultures knowledge into a course. So that the effect of cultivating intercultural communicative competence is expected.
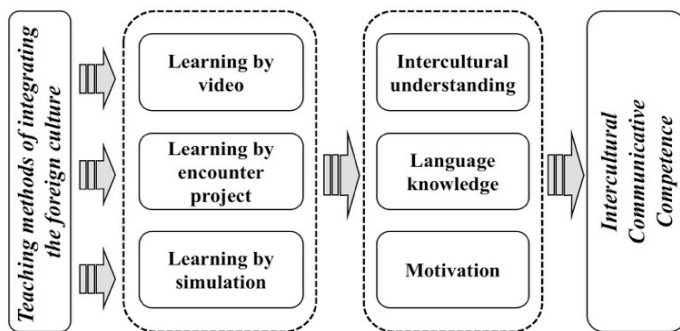

Fig.6. Cultivation of intercultural communicative competence

First, learning by video. Through the video, learners can observe the target language society culture closely, and realistically understand the way native target language speakers think. What is more, it can enhance learners' intercultural communicative competence.

Next, learning by encounter project. The encounter project creates opportunities for learners to positively interact with native target language speakers. It is expected that this project will have a positive effect on improving intercultural understanding and enhancing intercultural communicative competence.

Last but not least, learning by simulation. Through the creation of an environment that is close to reality, learners can feel the atmosphere of the target cultures. Even if they do not actually enter the target language area, learners can understand the target cultures better and enhance intercultural communicative competence.

2) Learning by video

Traditional thoughts of teaching the target cultures tend to only transmission knowledge and information about the target culture through textbooks [21]. However, teachers should consider the target cultures teaching as a tool to expand learners' perspectives and possibilities [22]. It can be said that video is the best material for language teaching and cultural understanding. For example, there are drama, animation, news. Before the class starts, the teacher examines the video and decides which part will be the topic.

For example, incorporating video in listening lessons. The goal of listening lessons is to train "listening and speaking" abilities. Language learning is not only about learning knowledge transmitted from textbooks, but also about understanding the target cultures, such as customs and lifestyle, comprehensively and realistically. The latter can be transmitted through video. Video can stimulate linguistic, visual, and auditory functions that conventional text-based teaching materials cannot. By observing the customs and lifestyles of the target language country closely, "listening and speaking" abilities will be improved, and the effect of enhancing intercultural communicative will be expected.

3) Learning by encounter project

One of the goals for learners to learn a foreign language is to communicate with the target language users, either native target language speakers or those who use it as a second or foreign language [23] [24]. Learners do not have the social culture and language environment of the country when learning outside the target language country, and there is little chance to communicate directly with the native target language speakers.

In encounter project, learners can actually meet the native target language speakers in the classroom. It creates opportunities to interact with native target language speakers face to face. Native target language speakers can introduce knowledge that is not in textbooks by explaining their traditional culture, lifestyle, and so on. By communicating directly with a native speaker of the target language, something that is not possible on a daily basis, it becomes possible to cultivate expressiveness and intercultural understanding, both important elements of intercultural communicative competence. Learners can think and act as a native speaker in their interaction with a native target language speaker and improve their intercultural communicative competence. In addition, since learners can communicate with native target language speakers, they become eager to learn

the target language, and motivation for learning will be enhanced.

4) Learning by simulation

In order to deepen learner's understanding of culture, instead of teaching culture as knowledge to be presented, it is necessary to let learners experience the culture of the target language and to effectively acquire it through a more realistic environment. Learning by simulation sets simulation communication scenes to provide a place for learners to realize how to enjoy the target language and the culture. It emphasizes the cultural specific use of words and expression. It also enables a better understanding of the culture and enhances the intercultural communicative competence.

For example, in a conversation lesson, when learning conversational sentences for shopping at a foreign shop, if learners only learn from textbooks, they often produce unnatural conversations. At that time, it is effective to create situations that match situations at shops in the target language country. In this way, learners' area able to practice conversation in simulation communication environment. Also, like in role play, learners can play the role of a store clerk or customer at a shop. By using language in a more realistic environment, learners can deepen their understanding of the target cultures and actively exercise intercultural communicative competence.

IV. DISCUSSION

In second language education, there are preceding researches on developing creativity and intercultural communicative competence. Here we use a new perspective to propose a curriculum that captures the relation between the cultivation of creativitivity and the mastery of language knowledge. And combine the development of creativity and intercultural communicative competence together to cultivate innovation skills in the age of globalization. First, we focus on how to develop creativity through association practices, which are effective to enhance learners' creative-thinking skills, and at the same time, improve their language expertise and motivation for learning. Second, we present the teaching methods by integrating the target cultures into courses, such as learning by video, encounter project, and simulation, which can encourage the development of both culture knowledge and language knowledge, and improve learners' intercultural communicative competence.

Although we propose a curriculum to cultivate creative-thinking skills, it remains necessary to list relevant items to evaluate the effects of the achievement of creative-thinking skills. Additionally, it is necessary to create a draft indicator to measure the achievement of foreign language expertise including intercultural communicative competence. Furthermore, the change in motivation for learning needs to be mapped as well.

V. CONCLUSION

In this globalized and knowledge-based society, innovation skills have become extremely important. Creativity and intercultural communicative competence are the concrete forms of innovation skills. This paper proposes a curriculum to cultivate creativity and intercultural communicative competence in second language education. In order to cultivate creativity, we focus on how to develop creative-thinking skills through free association and compulsory association. As to develop intercultural communicative competence, teaching methods by integrating the target cultures into courses are presented. With this curriculum, learners' creativity and intercultural communicative will be enhanced，and their motivation and expertise will be promoted. It is expected the effect to develop innovation skills in the age of globalization.

In the future, by using this curriculum for second language education, we plan to demonstrate the effect of cultivating creativity and intercultural communicative competence. This will be the future research direction of this paper.

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