

Studies on Culture Introduction in College English Class Based on the Whorf Hypothesis

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Abstract

College English learners make a large part of English learners in China. Considering the present situation of cultural introduction in College English teaching, it is far from satisfactory. Due to the close relationship between language and culture, it is necessary and applicable to introduce cultural elements into English teaching. On the basis of the Whorf hypothesis, this study did a series of experimental researches to explore the relationship between language and culture. The aims of this thesis are to prove the necessity of cultural introduction, to decide the content of cultural introduction, and to choose approaches of cultural introduction in College English teaching.

Key words: Whorf hypothesis; College English teaching; Intercultural communicative competence; Culture introduction

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INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the world is getting smaller and smaller with the fast development of science and

technology. The intercultural communication becomes more necessary than ever, with the improvement in transportation technology, development in communication technology and the globalization of the economy. Brook has said that “of the several meanings of culture, two are most important for us: culture as everything in human life and culture as the best of everything in human life” (1975, p.20). However, the intercultural communications seldom go smoothly while misunderstandings in communications sometimes do occur. It has been gradually realized that the intercultural competence should be improved in cross-cultural communication.

Since 1999, a revised College English Syllabus has clearly stated that the goal of foreign language teaching is to cultivate Chinese students’ communicative competence. Language teachers have been sensitive to realize the important cultural effect on foreign language teaching. Both western and Chinese culture researchers have done a lot of studies on the cultural teaching. Their views of culture introduction methods are still on the perfection. Therefore, the culture introduction into foreign language teaching has become the topic of the present paper.

Then how to enhance students’ cultural awareness and introduce cultural knowledge into English language teaching has become the new challenge to College English teachers. In recent years, more and more Chinese teachers have gradually realized the importance of culture introduction in foreign language teaching both at home and abroad, while they haven’t made satisfactory achievements in the teaching of culture. Many teachers have not found the proper way to introduce culture into their teaching process.

On the basis of the Whorf hypothesis, a series of experimental researches is conducted to explore the relationship between language and culture. Whorf hypothesis consists of two parts, linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity. Linguistic determinism refers to the notion that learning a language changes the way

a person thinks. Linguistic relativity refers to the claim that speakers of different languages are said to think in different ways. Therefore, in order to communicate smoothly with the foreigners in cross-cultural context, the learners should not only master the knowledge of the language, but also the cultural knowledge of that language. The objective of the present research is to emphasize the necessity of cultural introduction in College English teaching by analyzing the relationship between language and culture, as well as the relationship between language teaching and cultural teaching. With the analyzed results of the investigation and experiment, the thesis aims to prove that College English teaching should hand in hand with culture teaching because culture introduction can help to cultivate the students' intercultural communicative competence. The present research also aims to supplement the previous views on culture introduction and offer some available approaches for cultural introduction to college English teaching.

1. CASE STUDY

1.1 Objects of the Case Study

The Whorf hypothesis states that the structure of a language determines a native speaker's world view. Different languages are assumed to lead to different world views. This hypothesis indicates that a study of linguistic issues in a cultural setting can greatly promote understanding of motivation and directionality in language. Based on such a notion, the objectives of the case study are listed as follows:

- (a) To find out the close connection between the Whorf hypothesis theory and culture introduction and its influence on foreign language teaching.
- (b) To make the subjects fully realize the importance of cultivating the communicative competence in college English teaching
- (c) To explore the effective approaches and methods of culture introduction, this can help the teacher to cultivate the students' intercultural communicative competence.

1.2 Subjects of the Case Study

The participants in studies consist of two classes of 90 students enrolled in Henan Polytechnic University in September of 2015, whose major is non-English and who choose *Application-Oriented College English Course* published by Shanghai Jiao Tong University Press as their textbook. Each class has 45 students. The subjects of the two classes are almost at the same English level, without considering their age and gender. Class one is experimental class and Class two is controlled by class.

1.3 Instruments of the Case Study

1.3.1 Simulation Classroom Teaching

During the 14 weeks' experiment, the author did as a teacher to conduct the research. In the experimental class,

the author merged cultural introduction into language teaching, while the traditional teaching approach was still used in the controlled class. Two approaches of cultural introduction are given as example cases to show how the culture introduction was conducted in the experimental class during the experiment.

1.3.1.1 Introducing Target Culture on the Basis of the Text Book

Since Whorf hypothesis has emphasized the interdependence of language and thought, the teacher should pay more attention to the relationship in teaching, and make the students know the target culture about the ways the native speakers think and behave. The teaching is usually conducted on the basis of the textbooks, for they are the guidance of teaching. Adding some background knowledge according to the texts is a good way of cultural introduction.

In their textbook *Application-Oriented College English Course*, one of the texts is *The Story of Steve Jobs*. The text says that Steve Jobs stayed at the university for only six weeks until he decided to drop out. After quitting, he chose a subject which he was interested in to carve out his career. The students asked with misunderstanding and curiosity: "How could he decide to drop out by himself? Why did not his parents interfere him?" The questions are about the differences between Chinese and Western culture. In the western countries, especially in the USA, the status of the family members is equal. Every member has the power of decision and speaking. The parents pay greatly attention to cultivate the spirit of independence of the children. Therefore, in their mind, the choice of the career is the children's own business. The parents won't interfere. However, in traditional Chinese culture, the concept of family has a very strict system. The parents are the core of the family. All the members should obey the householder. The parents consider the children as their private property. They like to impose their own idea on the children and make the decision for them. If the children don't obey, they will be considered to be impious.

With the introduction of cultural difference the students understood the context of the American culture and got the answer of their questions. In this way, they did not only learn the content of the textbook, but also master the background of target culture on the text.

1.3.1.2 Introducing Target Culture by Watching English Movies

Of course, textbooks are the guidance of teaching, and the conduction of teaching should be on the basis of them. However, it does not mean that the teacher should only be limited within the textbook range. Teaching activities can use any extra-textbook means, and go beyond the limitations of textbook. As long as it can promote the teaching of language, any ways can be

introduced into English teaching. Watching English movie is effective in English learning and popular with the students.

Here, taking a Chinese movie *Gua Sha* for example, the author will demonstrate how to teach culture by watching movies.

Gua Sha is directed by Zheng Xiaolong, and the language is English. This movie is about the story of a young Chinese couple—Xu Datong and Jian Ning. They immigrated to Middle America and had a son there. They were wrongly accused of child abuse because of W.A.S.P. American miscomprehension of *Gua Sha*—an ancient medical practice that releases toxins from the body by scraping the skin with jade or horn blade at relevant acupuncture points. The movie conveys the difficulties the immigrants met in the United States and the effort they made to adopt themselves to the culture there, and reflects the cultural differences between the American and Chinese culture.

After watching the movie, the author organized the students to have group-discussion. The discussion was conducted about two topics: What differences can be identified between the American and Chinese culture reflected in this movie, and how the culture shocks can be avoided.

This film is a good representation for study, for it embodies the shocks from many aspects which are thought-provoking to most of the students. What's more, they are interested in learning western culture in this way. The more and deeper the students know about the differences, the easier they will understand their culture and avoid shocks in communication.

1.3.2 Culture Test

Since the Whorf hypothesis has formed, Whorf provided a number of examples designed to show that linguistic determinism and relativity were valid concepts. A lot of researchers have done many experimental tests to verify this hypothesis. The present study has also tried to verify this hypothesis in the experimental research. After 14 weeks' teaching, a culture test paper was given to the students to test the result.

The culture test was designed by imitating the one designed by Wang Zhenya (2005), a famous scholar in the field of foreign language education. Some necessary alterations were made to meet the need of the objectives of this research. The culture test was to test the subjects' cultural knowledge about English culture, especially about the communicative culture. It included two parts: part one

was about the verbal behavior and part two about non-verbal behavior. The test included 30 items with each item scoring one point. Each item presented a short description of the situation, specifying the setting, the social distance between the communications and their status relative to each other. Then an underlined communicative behavior was given. The subjects had to judge whether these dialogues or behaviors were appropriate or not in target language culture. All these items were presumed to be directly related to the activities of high frequency in real life cross-cultural encounters. The test was in English and the statistics were analyzed with SPSS 18.0. After analyzing the data collected from the culture test, the author compared the scores of experimental class with those of controlled class to see whether there was any improvement.

2. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF THE RESULTS

2.1 Analysis of the Culture Test

After the fourteen weeks' experiment, the author distributed culture test papers to both of the classes, and made specific explanation about the items. After collecting the papers, the author made necessary numerical statistics and analyzed the statistical results. The data was processed by the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 18.0)

2.1.1 Data Collection

The aim of the culture test was to prove that a language determined nonlinguistic cognitive process, and further to show that culture introduction in college English teaching can help the students improve their communicative competence. A hypothesis was made before the culture test was that the higher the culture test scores are, the higher his/her cultural competence and communicative competence are. In order to prove this hypothesis, the author made comparison of the results of culture test in the experimental class and controlled class to see whether there was any improvement through 14 weeks' culture introduction in the experimental class.

2.1.2 The Analysis

After collecting the data, the author input the data into the software, using the function of "compare means" to have data processing. The results are shown as follows:

Table 1
Group Statistics

Class	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
1	45	23.69	2.913	.373
2	45	21.38	3.148	.548

Table 2
Independent Sample Test

		Levene's test for equality of variances		T-test for equality of means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std.error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
									Lower	Upper
Test	Equal variances assumed	3.801	.055	3.412	78	.002	2.310	.662	.962	3.661
	Equal variances not assumed			3.412	69.259	.002	2.310	.662	.960	3.660

The mean of their scores in the culture test from the experimental group is much higher than that from controlled group. In the Independent Sample *T* test, $t = 3.412$, and $p = 0.002 < 0.05$, which indicate that the distinction between the mean scores of the two classes is significant. It means that, the mean score of the experimental class is significantly higher than that of the controlled class. This results prove that the experiment on the experimental class have made much more progress in their cultural awareness. The culture introduction in English teaching can do to help the students to improve their intercultural communicative competence.

In conclusion, we should reemphase the chief premise of the present study: the culture teaching should become an integral part of College English teaching and it is appropriate and productive to introduce cultural information in the English teaching processes, for the students' communicative competence and English proficiency are both improved.

2.2 Discussion on the Necessity of Culture Introduction

Since the interdependence of language and thought has been emphasized by Whorf in his notion and has been proved by the present study, the teacher should pay more attention to the close relationship between language and culture in the teaching process. Language plays a very important role in culture. Learning a foreign language well does not only mean mastering the pronunciation, idioms, grammar, and words, but also mean learning the ways that the language reflects the ideas, learning to see the world which is as its native speakers do, learning to understand its language of mind, and behavior, and customs of its society.

Learning the culture of the target language is an inseparable part. College English is widely important as a basic curriculum. As *College English Syllabus* (1999) states: The aim of college English is to develop students' high level of competence in reading, a competence in speaking, listening, translating and writing and to enable them to use English to exchange information. College English teaching should help students lay a solid foundation of language, and cultivate their cultural awareness in order to meet the needs of economic

construction and social development (*College English Syllabus*, 1999, p.1).

In modern society, with the rapid development of science and technology, the world has become smaller. More and more Chinese have the opportunity to interact with the foreigners that have the different cultural backgrounds. Having a good target language knowledge foundation can guarantee the intercultural communication to be effective to a large extent. An important task of foreign language teaching is to cultivate the students' cultural awareness. Therefore, in the teaching process culture introduction becomes an indispensable part.

2.3 Discussion on the Content of Culture Introduction

To know another culture is a rather difficult job. Culture is a very complex entity. It involves almost every aspect of human life. Therefore, choosing the content of culture instructing is a very difficult question to deal with. The scope of culture is so wide, and it is really hard to decide what content should be included in the culture teaching.

Whorf provided a number of examples designed to show that linguistic determinism and relativity were valid concepts. Most of the experimental tests of the hypothesis fell into two groups: Those that examined the lexical level and those related to grammatical level. On the base of the research by scholars in the past years, the present study tries to find the appropriate content for introducing culture; a survey was made in the form of questionnaire to know about the students' interest in learning culture. 74% of the subjects thought that most of them learn Western culture from readings, films, and videos.

According to the results of the research, the content of culture introduction can be summarized as follows: Culture related to words and phrases, culture related to social conventions, and culture related to values.

2.3.1 Culture Related to Words and Phrases

The Whorf hypothesis has pointed out that languages "carve up" reality in different way. There are clear cross-cultural differences in a number of lexical categories and the differences might be related to language differences. Words and phrases have the closest relationship with culture, and they are the carrier of culture. On the connotations and affective colors, the influence of

religions, customs, and political system mostly displays on the meanings of words and phrases. Take the word “politics” for example, there is no difference between Chinese and English language in its surface meaning. “Politics” means political affairs or life, or political views, belief in English, and it is usually translated into “政治” (pronounced as zheng zhi) in Chinese. In fact, zheng zhi and politics have different connotations. The word politics in English usually has the derogatory sense. It can refer to the rivalry between political parties for power or advantage within a group or organization. In western countries, in order to get the votes, the candidates always adopt any method they can do in the election. Once they get the goal, they will use their authority to engage in malpractices for selfish ends. Therefore, when people use this word, they will inevitably associate its derogatory sense. In Chinese culture, when people use the phrase zheng zhi, it is usually commendatory. Some learners may equate politics with zheng zhi in Chinese, without understanding the differences of the word between the Chinese and western culture.

Generally, the content of verbal culture contains: a) words or phrases which can describe concepts or things specialized in a culture; b) different words and phrases which are used to describe the same phenomena in different cultures; c) words and phrases that are with different connotations; d) words and phrases which have the same denotative meanings but different connotative meanings in different cultures; e) idioms and phrases that embodying certain cultural content (Yan, 2007, p.35).

Culture differences may lead to different understanding of the same words or phrases. Otherwise misunderstanding in cross-cultural communication may occur.

2.3.2 Culture Related to Social Conventions

The central notion of the Whorf hypothesis is that individuals with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds think differently. Therefore, the structure of language people habitually uses influences the ways they think and behaves. Every culture has its own background. Every cultural background has different language patterns and habits of behavior. Social custom influences its people’s behavior as the basic rules of daily communications. The learners should pay more attention to people’s behavior and know how people of the target culture would behave in emergency circumstances and in ordinary situations. For example, in the daily communications, the western people prefer to the topics of weather, not of age. That may be considered as taboo topics. Chinese people think that talking about these topics can show their care. And in Chinese customs, “courtesy demands reciprocity” is a very important aspect. People pay great attention to the value of the gifts. Generally speaking, the more expensive the present is, the more respect they show to people. In western countries, people don’t care about the value of the presents, but the

meanings. When receiving the gifts, Chinese people are accustomed to accept the gift after many times of refusal. They seldom unpack the gifts in the presence of the guest. Unpacking the gift in the presence of guests is considered as bad manners in China. However, in the western culture, people usually open a gift in the presence of the guest and give compliments.

It’s unrealistic for all the foreign language learners to learn the social customs in the real communicative circumstances although the best way to learn the social customs is to experience the way of life the westerners in person. Therefore, watching English movies is a good way of introducing the customs of target culture to the learners. The cultural knowledge can be presented from many aspects by the films and TV dramas. In order to make the students communicate better with the people who have western cultural background, the teacher should pay more attention to the details of life reflected in the films or TV dramas, and make the learners know about such aspects of the western culture.

2.3.3 Culture Related to Values

Getting to know the westerners’ values should be placed in a dominant position in learning the English culture. A value system represents what is expected or hoped for, required or forbidden. Getting to know the value differences between Chinese culture and English culture can help the learners to avoid culture shock in cross-cultural communication. The teacher should guide the learners to know about this kind of knowledge. Besides the value differences reflected from the textbook, the teacher could also add more information from other ways. For example, the students were given a movie *Gua Sha* in this study.

Gua Sha told a story of Chinese migrants who had to face the cultural conflict with the Americans. The necessity of understanding the value differences between two cultures was discussed in this movie. After watching the film, the students were introduced with value differences from three aspects: friendly value, family value, and face value.

2.3.3.1 Friend Value

In this movie, Danis fought with John’s son Paul. In order to show respect, Xu Datong punished his own son Danis in front of his friend John. In Datong’s mind, it was rude for Danis to fight with Paul, and it’s impolite not to apologize to Paul, so he beat Danis. While in John’s opinion, it was common for child fighting, which could not influence their relationship. This scene reflects the differences in friendly values between Chinese and American Culture.

Americans use the word “friend” in a very general way. They may call both companions and also casual acquaintances friend. Americans have sports friends, work friends, school friends and neighborhood friends. Common interests are the base of friendships. At first

the people from the United States may seem friendly. They often chat with strangers easily. They exchange information about their families, hobbies and work. They may smile warmly and say "See you later" or "Have a nice day!" Schoolmates may say "Let's get together sometime." But the American people's friendliness is not offer of true friendship. American is one of rapid change. Studies show that one out of five American family moves every year. The friendships of the American people develop quickly, and they may change just as quickly.

For the Chinese people, friendship means a strong life-long bond among people. They build the relationships for lasting long, so they develop friendships slowly. Friends should treat each other with sincerity. Once people do things against his or her friend, he or she will be cursed and spitted on by all the people and deserted by his followers, such as rendering good for evil or being ungrateful. Therefore, it is easy to understand why Xu Datong was angry when John attested in the court that Datong hurt Danis. Because of John's testimony, the court formally accepted and headed the case. Xu Datong quitted his job and John tried to stop him and explain: "I'm very sorry. I'm trying to tell you. I couldn't lie, they know everything." Datong said: "I don't have time and intonation to hear you to justify your action. I just want to get my son home and get my life back." John couldn't understand Datong's reaction: "That's why more than ever you need this job." Datong's explanation is: "I consider you as my friend, but you show me out. How dare you expect me to work with you again?" "I just told the truth." This is John's excuse. Datong used Confucius' words to show his disappointment: "With those who follow a different way it is useless to take counsel."

In Chinese friend values, the most important thing is the loyalty to friend. People sacrifice everything for his friend. The westerners' are more rational, being opposite to the values. China is a country with long history. It formed a steady system of values during the thousands' year's developing. They hope this friendship could last long once they make friends with some people. However, American is one of rapid change society. They don't want to bear so much duty for the friend. So they depend on law (Hu, 2004, p.142). American society has a perfect law system. All kinds of laws concern every aspect of daily life, with education, economy; public welfare, politics, and marriage were included. American people firmly believe in law. They are sure to find solutions in law.

2.3.3.2 Family Value

Family values also held high in the film, transcending nationality and culture. The setting of Chinese culture development is the family and clansman. Family is the basic unit of development. It has a close relation with the Chinese concept of inspiration, and mutually supporting. A main part of Chinese culture is the intimate relation between the children and their parents. This is

exemplified in *Gua Sha* when Xu Datong said in court that he administered Gua Sha to his son in order to protect his father who was actually to blame. When John knew the truth, he could not understand and asked "why". Jian Ning's answer was the best explanation: "Because he is Chinese." The concept of defending father had been engraved on Datong's mind when he was born. This is the logical reaction on this occasion for a Chinese. However, American can't understand this. Americans advocate liberty and equality. This is why the child could call their parents' name directly. That is unbearable for Chinese. It is not respectful to the elder in Chinese culture. One of the Chinese traditions is respecting the old and cherishing the young. That has been passed on from generation to generation for thousands of years.

In Datong's mind, he loved his son; he had the property right over Danis. He took it for granted that he loved his son and nobody else had the right to own his son. For grandfather, in order to ease Datong of the trouble, he decided to go home. He knew Datong's American dream. He could forsake the reunion just for the son and grandson's future. When Datong decided to go home with him, the old father refused. He knew that Datong had bearded so many hardships to succeed. It's pity to give up all the achievement of Datong. For Datong, family was the mainstay of his will. All he had done wad for the happiness and reunion of the family. He worked his way just because he hoped that the three generations could live under one roof and all the family members could be greatly delightful. The family was in the first place. He could sacrifice everything to defend the family members.

Americans also love their family. The difference is the way they show their love. In American society, the concept of liberty and equality runs through the family values. They think that every person is a dependent individual. The child is the treasure of the society, as well as the old. This is why the Child Welfare Agency accused Datong of child abuse and neglect when they saw the bruise on Danis back. They though it's their duty to protect the children. It's wrong for Xu Datong to hurt his son and leaved him home alone. Danis was the property of the whole society, they should make it sure that the child was far away from the dangerous home environment and was free of fear and pain. On the other hand, most American old people like to be free; they don't live with their children or relation. They like to do things as they like, and they think their children have their own lives.

2.3.3.3 Face Value

In this movie, Datong hurt his son Danis in order to show respect to John. But John couldn't understand: "You shouldn't have hit Danis." Datong explained: "Why I hit him? Why? My own son? I hit him to show my respect for you, to give you the face, you know?" John was confused: "What kind of twisty Chinese logic exact! You hit your

son so that you can show your respect for me?" This is the different concept of "face" between Chinese and American culture.

Face is a multi-faceted term with its meaning and implications closely linked with the culture and, therefore, constitute an integral part in intercultural communication. We talk about "saving face" or "losing face" in either day-to-day or business interactions between people from divergent cultures sub-cultures. The concept of face is external, focusing on how you believe others perceive you.

Why should concern for face have such high importance for the Chinese? There are two principle reasons.

Firstly, China over the centuries has been an extraordinary steady society. The Chinese have to take face-saving to a significant place so as to protect the integrity. Xu Datong hurt his son to give his friendly face. Such a behavior showed his will which can save John's face to protect the integrity of their friendship. However, John couldn't understand Xu Datong's behavior and feel confused. This is because the differences between the face value of the two cultures.

Virtually from the earliest days, because of European colonization, the life in North American has been mobile. If certain kind of locality did not suit for living, the colonial people would not hesitate to move on. Therefore, during one's life time, the composition of his or her friendship and community groups changed often. If one wanted to search for a better life, he or she even would leave relatives. Because of the constant shifting of group memberships, people only focused on their attention on individuals, not on the groups or communities. As the result of that, the group integrity' maintenance and the harmony seldom had the significance for the Americans, which is customarily common for the Chinese people.

Secondly, Confucius emphasized that the relationships between people were unequal. Confucius found no fault with inequality because, in his view, the obligations between senior and junior ran in both directions.

These reciprocal obligations were expressed in the Chinese virtue known as *li*, which means "right conduct in maintaining one's place in the hierarchical order". *Li* is now used by the average Chinese to mean decorum.

Typically Americans try their best to deemphasize the social distance which is implied in super subordinate relationship, and to promote an ethic of egalitarianism, though people were involved in hierarchies. Americans know the identities which are above them if it is expedient or necessary. However, in the main, they depend on the all-encompassing habit which is of informality to blur the distinctions of authority and status in order to pretend, as that all people are the same fundamentally.

The qualitative differences between Chinese culture and English culture in the face value are related to the

notion of integrity, which is lack of internal contradictions wholeness. Individual integrity is very important in the USA. For the Chinese, in order to give their group the identity and the sense of security for the members, people can lose the face by undermining the relationships which are established long.

In most ordinary social situations, Americans value directness highly, so they are hindered in coping with face-saving behavior effectively. They like to state matters accurately and straightforwardly if others can understand them. Americans will say no directly if it is necessary for a negative response. If the Americans really don't know, they will say "I don't know". If the requests are really not in their grant or in their power, they will say "I can't do that". Occasionally they tell white lies, however, they "tell it like it is" more often. Even if they will cause unpleased things to the other person, they like to give a truthful and straightforward response.

Americans like to assume that every person would better to advance their self-interest if the situation is understood thoroughly by the ways of verbal communication directly. That is not mean that American doesn't value sensitivity and politeness. They also care about that. If other people's feelings are at stake, they usually recognize the sensitivity and politeness. But they feel that it is their task to give complete information in direct ways if it is gentle to be direct, because they more highly value directness.

Americans like to think that everybody is committed to directness equally in interpersonal communications in the world. Such an assumption is huge, especially when considering the Chinese. The Chinese will be direct on the occasion that no people will lose face.

Thus, it's easy to understand the different attitudes to "face" between Xu Datong and his friend John. Xu Datong hit Danis just for giving John the face just as a Chinese saying goes that: "A child untaught is father's fault". That is to say, it's wrong for Danis to fight with Paul. It was the father's duty to give Danis a lesson. In this way, he could give John face, saving his own face.

After analyzing these differences of values between Chinese and Western culture, the learners understand the film and construct the intercultural communicative awareness to some extent.

2.4 Discussion on the Influence of Culture Introduction on the Students' Ways of Thinking

As college students, they have already acquired the communicative competence in the mother tongue and internalized native culture. That is closely related to the language use. Under such conditions, the learner may misunderstand what is embedded in the English language. It may cause negative transfer in English teaching because of what they have acquired about native culture.

In Whorf's notion, individuals with different linguistic and cultural background think differently. This is not far

from our everyday experience. If you have had the chance to engage in a conversation with a person that his or her native language is not English, you may have found that the communication were very easily broken down some times, you may also find that some concepts are not easily translated into another language. Or, if you happen to be a fluent multilingual or bilingual, you may agree with those multilingual and bilinguals who insist they think differently in each of their languages.

2.5 Approaches of Culture Introduction in Foreign Language Teaching

In China, College English teaching has been developing for several decades, and has made great contributions to the improvement of the Chinese learners' English levels. However, College English teaching needs modifications to satisfy the development of society. The chief goal of the traditional College English teaching is to cultivate the learners' linguistic competence, so the emphasis of English teaching is put on the vocabulary, syntax and Grammar. With the international communication has been increasing, only possessing linguistic competence is not able to meet the needs of the ever-increasing communication. Cultivating the learners' communicative competence gradually becomes the important task of College English teaching. In order to cultivate the learners' cross-cultural communicative competence, culture introduction should be introduced into the college English teaching process.

According to Whorf hypothesis, different languages offer people different ways of expressing the world around, they think and speak differently. Language filters people's perception and the way they categorize experiences. Because of the differences between Chinese and English language on cognition, the teacher should try to get the students familiar with culture differences, help the students transcend their own culture and see things as the members of the target culture will, and emphasize the inseparability of understanding language and understanding of culture through various classroom practices.

2.5.1 Strengthen the Culture Comparison

It is known to us that cultivating the learners' intercultural awareness is recognition of the ways in which two cultures differ as well as the ways in which they resemble one another. Resemblances always surface through an examination of the difference. General discussions and theories related to cultural differences are necessary for consideration of specific cultures in their relationship to the target culture. The contrast of the culture with the target language opens great vistas for the teachers and helps the learners understand the target language better from the background.

2.5.2 Create Authentic Communicative Environment

Since the importance of the interdependence of language and thought according to the Whorf hypothesis, making

the learners experience the ways that the native speakers think and behave can help them mastering the language. Creating authentic communicative environment is very important for the learners in the teaching process. The culture introduction conductor should focus on the diversification of the teaching strategies and try to stimulate the learners' interest in learning.

2.5.3 Introducing Culture in Language Tests

As we know that testing has close relationship with teaching. Testing is a very useful way to check up the result of teaching and learning. It can stimulate students to work hard, and also help teachers to find out whether students have a command of what should be mastered and what aspects they should pay more attention to. Testing plays an important role in the developing of students' intercultural awareness, for tests can guide the students' learning.

CET-4 and CET-6 are two main testing forms of college English for testing non-English majors' proficiency in the four language skills. Now more and more students are trying hard to pass the exam in order to find well-paid jobs because of an increasingly higher demand for English proficiency in modern society. Since CET is held on a nationwide basis, the examination passing rate is important for colleges. So the performance of both the teachers and students is judged by the examination results. Therefore, the focus of the English teaching is more on test-taking tricks than on cultivating the students' intercultural communicative competence. The students are required to do a lot of exercises oriented to CET. In this case, the students are good at grammar and vocabulary, and good at doing tests, while their communicative competence is very weak.

Therefore, in order to develop students' intercultural communicative competence, we should introduce the cultural knowledge of the target language and its appropriate use into authentic communication along with linguistic knowledge in CET.

We can add this kind of knowledge into the listening test or reading comprehension part. That information which contains the listening or reading materials can enlarge the students' knowledge of intercultural communication and improve their communicative competence.

CONCLUSION

College English learners make a large part of English learners in China. Considering the present situation of cultural introduction in College English teaching, it is far from satisfactory. Due to the close relationship between language and culture, it is necessary and applicable to introduce cultural elements into English teaching. All the college English teachers have realized the importance of

culture teaching and are trying to find out the effective approaches of cultural introduction.

College English teachers possess the bilingual competence as well as bicultural competence. They must widen the range of cultural introductory content and make the culture introduction involved in many aspects as possible. So teachers need to make the best use of the textbooks and conduct available teaching techniques of the culture teaching class. They can learn from the teachers of the foreign countries to improve their teaching techniques. What's more, the teachers should combine the different approaches of the cultural introduction together into teaching process in order to raise the efficiency of cultural introduction to a higher level.

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