

Cultural Infiltration in College English Teaching From the Perspective of Input Hypothesis and Output Hypothesis

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Abstract

From the perspective of language input and output, this study analyzes the existing problems of cultural input and output in College English teaching and suggests several strategies in cultural infiltration, with the aim at promoting students' cultural consciousness as well as the classroom dynamics.

Key words: Input Hypothesis and Output Hypothesis; college English; cultural infiltration; classroom dynamics

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INTRODUCTION

At present, the student' English ability is more reflected in the ability to take exams, and the students' speaking and writing ability and so on are always on the low side. What the traditional English class focuses is the practice of language ability, the importance of culture input is more or less ignored. While it is known that language is the carrier of culture and it reflects culture. As the development of the society and the demand of internationalization on the talents, cultural infiltration has already been the focus in college English education. The aim of English learning is cross-culture communication, but cultural difference is a great barrier, so cultural infiltration in English-teaching is very important.

Therefore, English learning ought to be equipped with culture learning. With the progress of the society and the increasing requirements of the international community for talents, culture penetration is highly necessary in order to meet the demands of the reform and development of College English teaching. What's more, the purpose of culture teaching is to foster cross-cultural awareness and enhance cross-cultural communicative competence.

Under the guidance of Input Hypothesis and Output Hypothesis, this paper analyzes the problems existing in cultural infiltration of college English learning and teaching and proposes several suggestions on improving the teaching effect of college English cultural infiltration, so as to enhance students' language proficiency and provide reference for college English teaching.

1. INPUT HYPOTHESIS AND OUTPUT HYPOTHESIS

The related theories of second language acquisition have important instructive significance for foreign language teaching, the input and output theories are two important interrelated factors in the process of language acquisition. Many linguists and language instructors are devoted to the exploration and research of the theory of second language acquisition, aiming at realizing the "teaching" and "learning" of foreign language and improving the proficiency of the English learners. In the field of foreign language teaching in China, the comprehensible input theory of Krashen (1982) and the understandability output theory of Swain (2005) have always been a topic of concern for English learners and educators, and also a key field in the study of second language.

The input hypothesis explains how a language acquirer develops competency over time. It points that a language acquirer who is at "level i" must receive comprehensible input that is at "level+i". We acquire, in other words, only when we understand language that contains structure that

is ‘little beyond’ where we are now. One result of this hypothesis is that language learners should be given an initial “silent period” where they are building up acquired competence in a language before they begin to produce it. This study uses input and output theory as a guide to explore the input characteristics of culture teaching and the output ability of students.

2. “APHASIA” IN CHINESE CULTURE

The teaching of College English in China has undergone a series of reforms, but the effect of teaching is far from being satisfactory. The students have strong language ability and profound proficiency in language skills, but their social and cultural ability and intercultural communication ability are relatively poor. In order to achieve the goal of “easy to understand and open one’s mouth,” some people emphasize the learning and improvement of listening and speaking and ignore the learning of the language background and its cultural knowledge. We want to try every means to make students interested in Chinese and foreign language and culture, but there is also a one-sided understanding of intercultural communication and cultural teaching in the teaching practice, and the lack or neglect of the introduction of the national culture. For example, some students could not express their own traditional culture in English very well. This phenomenon, known as “Aphasia” in Chinese culture, will inevitably hinder the smooth progress of cross-cultural communication.

In practical teaching, College English teaching pays more attention to the education of English and American literature and culture, and does not pay enough attention to the teaching of native language (Chinese) culture. This leads to the low level of the students’ mother tongue culture, and the lack of the ability to use the target language to express the native culture in intercultural communication. For example, they can’t use English to express Chinese cultural features such as Confucius and Mencius, poetry, proverb and many contents with Chinese characteristics such as Dragon Boat Festival. Many English learners have become one way and passive communicators in intercultural communication, that is to say, in intercultural communication, it is more passive to provide the general information needed to communicate with each other, or to understand and acquire British and American cultural knowledge in a single way instead of publicizing the excellent native cultural tradition actively, effectively and equally. The phenomenon of aphasia in Chinese culture is obvious, resulting in cross-cultural communication barriers.

Of course, considering the linguistic and cultural differences between Chinese and English, it is rather difficult to find English equivalence for words with Chinese characteristics. Due to different ideology factors, we are expected to retain more Chinese elements in the

translation, as a result independency and characteristics of Chinese culture can be maintained through translation. It is suggested that both literal translation with notes and liberal translation are applied during the process so as to translate such words properly. In addition, discourse difference in these two languages should be considered before students can make appropriate adjustments in their translation, which will help students find a mutually satisfactory balance and enter more smoothly into the target language context. Hence, the exact translation on one hand can effectively reflect the characteristics of Chinese language, on the other hand enrich English as the universal language vocabulary system, so that cross-cultural communication can be carried out smoothly.

In the current college English teaching, Chinese culture is obviously in a weak position, and classroom teaching is almost for target language culture teaching. It is suggested that by adjusting the content of English teaching materials, improving teachers’ cultural consciousness and improving test standards, we are likely to change the current situation of Chinese culture loss under the traditional teaching mode and improve the students’ cross-cultural communication ability bilaterally.

3. A CASE STUDY

3.1 Objective and Methodology

Enhancing students’ language output proficiency has always been playing an essential role in College English teaching. This paper aims to conduct a research on infiltrating English culture in college English teaching by means of cultivating students’ western and Chinese cultural values and improving class dynamics by using the input and output theory as a guide.

In order to prove the feasibility and validity of the experiment, the author investigated and interviewed 80 non-English majors from two specialties in Grade 2016 of Qingdao University of Science and Technology and six teachers who teach College English in Grade 2016. Among them, 43 students studied English culture under the experimental teaching mode, and the other 37 students were tested after the traditional teaching and learning of New Horizon English (3rd edition). During the experiment, the author conducted the students’ classroom performance and carried out an empirical study on the strategies and effects of cultural infiltration in one semester. In addition, some of the students in the experimental class were interviewed to find out their attitudes and true feelings towards this teaching method.

The tools of this study are two questionnaires - teacher’s paper and student’s paper. Teacher’s paper adopts multiple-choice questions and simple answers, mainly investigating and collecting valuable and practical cultural teaching content; student’s paper is composed of blank-filling questions, multiple-choice questions

and simple answers, mainly investigating students' understanding and interest in English culture. The design of the two questionnaires mainly refers to the college English syllabus and previous research results on cultural infiltration, and combines the author's understanding of cultural infiltration theory and the situation of College English teaching. Through the questionnaire survey and the comprehensive assessment of students' comprehensive ability at the end of the term, combined with interviews and other research methods, a comparison and analysis is made to draw the conclusion of the experiment. The questionnaire mainly measured students' satisfaction with the learning methods, learning effects and expectations and suggestions for teaching. At the end of the semester, teachers will randomly select students to have an informal discussion. The discussion is mainly about learning enthusiasm, classroom attractiveness, learning satisfaction and so on.

Through the analysis of the questionnaire, we can understand the situation of the students' mastery of the cultural knowledge and their language learning. At the same time, we tend to know the degree of the students' language loss in English learning, and help the students understand the role of Chinese and foreign culture in language learning and put forward the strategies for improvement.

3.2 Design and Findings of the Study

This research mainly investigates how to infiltrate culture into college English teaching through various channels. This study chooses the New Horizon College English as the unified teaching material, and selects six units as the content of classroom teaching. The control class adopts the traditional multi-media classroom, followed by classroom introduction, vocabulary explanation, article explanation and text structure, exercise mode. The experimental class adopts the computer-assisted mode of pre-class design, assignment of group tasks, classroom presentation, teacher's task instructions, oral output of students and groups, and word output. The two groups took the final exam with a unified set of questions. The experimental class adopts the formative evaluation method in everyday performance, carries on the quantitative evaluation to the group and the individual student, the comprehensive achievement is counted into the total achievement.

After one semester, the teachers made a statistics on the final grade of the class and found that the average score of the experimental class was significantly higher than that of the control class. Statistical analysis of the results of the CET-4 grades in June 2017 shows that the actual passing rate of the experimental class (72%) is significantly higher than that of the control class (58%). In addition, the learning motivation and learning concept of the experimental class is obviously better than that of the control class.

In a word, by comparing the results of the two classes, it is found that the teaching mode of computer-aided

cultural infiltration has been proved to be effective and feasible. As the cultural penetration of computer-assisted English learning can provide students with more vivid resources, students can easily learn more knowledge from it, and naturally have a deeper understanding of culture. Teachers should pay more attention to the effective combination of cultural infiltration and network resources, students could make full use of network resources to learn cultural knowledge independently. Only in this case can students have a deeper understanding of culture and ultimately achieve the teaching objectives of college English.

This study is based on the theory of input and output and intercultural communication theory, through the analysis of the relationship between cultural infiltration and the construction of classroom vitality, the students' language skills and cultural knowledge are combined. We are concerned about how to transform the learning process into the following three aspects: input, memory and output, the research findings will provide valuable reference data and information for College English teaching and learning. In addition, the teaching practice will be beneficial to the training of students' active learning, improve students' output consciousness and output proficiency, enhance their autonomous learning ability and improve their comprehensive cultural accomplishment.

4. CONCRETE CULTURE PENETRATING STRATEGIES

The scientific teaching requires teachers to pay attention to the combination of learning and thinking, teachers will initiate a variety of teaching methods, such as heuristic and discussion to help students learn to study on their own and stimulate their curiosity and autonomy. The combination of "learning" and "thinking" will be effectively realized through the combination of "input" and "output", which is based on the teachers' input to students or the students' independent access to the input. The output serves as the ultimate driving force, which helps the students deeply reflect the acquired knowledge, so as to establish a language habit and truly learn English well.

Therefore, some major cultural penetration strategies will be put forward to explore and analyze the effective implementation of culture teaching, which aims to enhance the students' cultural awareness and improve the vitality of the classroom. Specific strategies include: comparative analysis of cultural differences by making full use of the advantages of modern education technology, so classroom and extracurricular life can be enriched. Besides, an instructor is supposed to comprehensively use various kinds of teaching methods and strengthen Chinese culture elements input and so on. By listing the main differences between Chinese and Western cultures, we will deepen the

students' understanding of the deep pattern of interpersonal relationship and communication between China and foreign countries, and explore the deep sources that lead to the lack of intercultural communication ability of Chinese students. In the actual teaching, according to the students' situations, these strategies could be used selectively to improve the teaching effect. For instance, in order to help students experience more of the foreign culture and promote cultural transmission, during the ten minutes class break, appropriate learning materials such as English programs of various topics are introduced, such as TV series, "Big Bang", BBC documentary, World landscapes, the latest CNN news and so on. Of course, this arbitrary activity aims at making full of the class efficiency, it's up to the students to choose whether to watch it or not. Another example is the practice of English report before class has been conducted for one term and encouraging results have been achieved. It is believed that English class report is one of the best measures to enhance output.

The cultural penetration under the guidance of the input and output theory can make the learners master and use English better and improve the intercultural awareness of the learners as a whole. In addition, the cultural penetration based on the output practice method can effectively promote the learner's autonomous learning in English and improve the learners' English learning and class vitality.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the relationship between the culture infiltration and the classroom dynamics and proposes how to improve the quality and quantity of Chinese and foreign cultural input and output, because cultural penetration has an important impact on the vitality of College English classroom. In this study, the teaching idea of "input based and output driven" can stimulate students' autonomy, arouse their learning initiative, promote the vitality of the class and improve their thinking ability. Besides, this study suggests that mother tongue culture teaching should be strengthened in College English teaching.

Language input and output have achieved a virtuous cycle of mutual promotion and complement in College English teaching. At the same time, it is helpful to improve the level of language output by improving the input environment and carrier under the existing teaching mode, adding and refining the content of input and carrying out hierarchical language input. As learners, we should cultivate self-learning consciousness, overcome emotional anxiety and improve the quality of input. As teachers, we should create a better input environment on the basis of ensuring the quality and quantity of input, make bold innovation in the input content and form, so as to achieve the teaching effect of the fundamental purpose of output.

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