Culture Introduction and Cross-Cultural Communication Competence in College English Teaching

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Abstract

Language is closely related to culture, language learning is dependent on the culture introduction. This article discussed the importance and necessity of cultural import and its principle and method. And how to import the culture content in English teaching, improve students' sensitivity to the culture, cultivate cultural awareness, so as to cultivate the students' communicative competence, especially cross-cultural communication ability.

Key words: Cross-cultural communicative competence; Culture introduction; College English teaching

INTRODUCTION

With the development of society and the speeding up of economic globalization, the communication and cooperation between nations becomes more and more frequent. The goal of college English teaching is to improve the students' intercultural communicative competence, preparing our students for a rapidly changing world. Cross-cultural communication refers to the communication between the native speakers and non-native speakers, namely, the communication among people of differences in language and culture background.

There are different beliefs, values among different groups of people, cultural differences are objective reality. It's formed a certain conventional communication rules in every culture. Therefore, the human communication is conducted under the guidance of the rules of communication. From different cultural groups, people are used to explaining others with their own culture and deducing inaccurate communication rules. It's hard to avoid misunderstanding and even cultural conflict.

Language and culture are inseparable. For many years, the foreign language teaching in Chinese college has always been focusing on grammar and vocabulary and neglecting the cultural factors and the cultural differences of the target language and native language. It is not to mention to the cultivation of students' cross-cultural communication ability. Language is the communicative tool and the carrier of culture. Modern foreign language teaching pay attention to language as the tool, language as a means of teaching, to cultivate students' ability to communicate in the target language.

Hence, culture introduction is necessary in modern foreign language teaching.

1. THE IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURE INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Relationship Between Language and Culture

As early as in 1921 the American linguist Sapir in his writings noted that language cannot exist without culture. Social linguists believed that language is the carrier of culture and culture is rooted in language. Therefore, culture import cannot be ignored in language teaching. Language is an important part and form of the culture. Any languages are used by people who communicate with each other through the spoken or written language form with a certain words in a certain area. At the same time, a specific

language is always connected with the people and nation of the language and history, culture, society background. Language and culture has always been to study together.

English teaching is to foster the students' ability to use the language. In order to get the ideal language application ability, the teacher can't teach English as a tool, but teach language as the carrier of culture to the students. Only when English teaching introduce culture, can it make up the lack of students' language knowledge and cultural background, thus effectively improving the students' language application ability. Linguistic educationalist Lado pointed out: If we don't master the cultural background, it is impossible for us to teach language successfully. If we do not understand the cultural pattern and standards, it is impossible for us to really learn the language.

There are differences in different culture value orientation, a way of life, and ways of thinking. In the different societies, people abide by their own code of conduct and social norms in the process of communication with the corresponding social expectations with their own culture. Foreign language teaching should pay attention to the penetration of cultural background knowledge and cultivate the students' cross-cultural communication consciousness to make the students understand the cultural differences of different nations, which is a key point in the new historical period of foreign language teaching. Therefore, we not only explain the language knowledge and train language skills, but also teach the relevant cultural background.

1.2 Differences Between Chinese and Western Cultures

Chinese culture and western culture derive from two very different civilizations. Both cultures have its generality, so-called cultural overlap，but cultural differences are more frequent and can be called the cultural conflict. Above-mentioned differences are only the appearance of cultural conflict, whose root lies in the difference of a way to thinking as the social cultural products. Chinese and western culture has its own tastes on abstract thinking and image thinking in the way of thinking. When Chinese explain the problem, they prefer image and metaphor method. Even if the problem involves logical reasoning, Chinese also choose to imaginable thinking. Relatively speaking, westerners have preference for abstract thinking. The difference in language is obvious. The order of the two languages is just the opposite on the expression of the concept of time and space. The reason is that Chinese preference is comprehensive thinking, focusing on the overall effect and dialectical thought. In contrast to Chinese, English people prefer analytical thinking and logical thought. Westerner think personal value is supreme, stressed self-control and self-control widely, so little paper in humble and self-effacing expressing. They accept with pleasure faced other people's praise. However, Chinese people have a dialectical understanding on personal honor. They are modest and prudent in front of the outstanding result.

1.3 The Significance of Culture Introduction

1.3.1 Cultural Introduction Helps to Understand Correctly and Use Accurately English Language

In the field of foreign language teaching, culture teaching is to serve language teaching, which ultimate goal is to improve the learners' intercultural communication abilities. Learning and mastering of English means that make use of the English language as a tool to understand their political economy, religion, geography, history and local conditions and customs. As a result, learners use the language accurately in intercultural communication, to more deeply understand the profound and rich cultural connotation through language.

1.3.2 Cultural Introduction Help to Deepen the Understanding of Textbook Knowledge

The effect of classroom teaching is closely connected with the students' attention. However, new and unique cultural introduction activities make students involve into learning quickly, and concentrate to the knowledge, maintaining this state in a long time. All in all, it can improve the efficiency of classroom teaching. Importing culture can trigger the students' interests in learning, which is the key factor o stimulate students learning motivation.

Importing culture skillfully can trigger students' interest in learning and stimulate students' learning enthusiasm, making them explore learning actively. At the same time, the students' ability can be improved to use the language correctly. The purpose of learning a language is applying them in our daily life. Thus cultural knowledge is essential to use the language correctly. In the process of teaching language, it can lay a good foundation for the students to importing culture.

1.3.3 Culture Introduction Help to Cultivate Students' Cross-Cultural Communicative Competences

Facing the exchange of the Chinese and western in various fields, Chinese are also facing more and more intercultural communication. Inevitably, it exists some obstacles of cross-cultural communication. The cultural differences of different ethnic groups are the major cause. For example, when Chinese meet with each other, they used to the greeting that "where are you going? Or have you eaten yet?" In fact, he or she does not really want to know where are you going or have you eaten. It is just the greeting. But the westerner thinks that it is impolite involving personal privacy. Thus it can be seen if Chinese impose their habits and cultural pattern to westerner during the communication; it will lead to the deviation of understanding and misunderstanding. Only when English teaching pay attention to cultural differences and introduce culture, can reduce students' committed "cultural mistakes" in English.

2. THE PRINCIPLES OF CULTURE INTRODUCTION

2.1 Communicative Principles

The purpose of cultural introduction is to cultivate and improve students' comprehensive abilities, avoiding obstacles in the process of communication. Therefore, it follows the principle of communication, introducing culture in the language teaching to make students understand and use language.

2.2 The Principle of Step by Step

Cultural introduction follow the principle of step by step, namely, from simpleness to complexity, according to the actual language levels and understanding abilities of students. At the primary stage, the purpose of cultural introduction aims at the most common cultural phenomenon, introducing language forms in the daily life, such as addressing, greeting, phone, shopping, entertainment, arrange time and say goodbye etc..

To the students of middle stage, they should focus on differences of meaning and using in idiom, in order to help them communicate properly with these words. As for the advanced stage of language learning, the deep reason of cultural differences should be explored, including both Chinese and western ways of thinking, social relations and the grammatical differences in expression. Students not only improve the abilities of language, but also learn more deep patterns of interpersonal relationship and communication about western.

2.3 The Principle of Practice

Cultural introduction should follow the principle of practice, which should be aimed at the needs of the content of teaching materials and the students' daily communication. Language content should be closely related to the daily communication and improving competence. In order to better master and use the language, Understanding of culture is the key, better using the language into the practice.

2.4 The Principle of Appropriateness

Contents and methods of the teaching abide by the principle of appropriateness, which requires us to select the teaching content carefully and moderately. It requires teachers to elaborate cultural content that relate to language content and daily communicative functions. Teaching these terms should explain pragmatics and the cultural connotation instead of Chinese understanding and imitation. It is unfavorable to instill too much at the beginning, because the normal teaching should not be affected. Cultural introduction should be taken from perceptual knowledge to rational knowledge. Due to the limited class hour, the input of culture in foreign language teaching is carried out within the framework of foreign language teaching, which serves language teaching and promote the students to better grasp the language

knowledge and communication skills. Therefore, the teachers ought to select the interpretation of cultural content and pay attention to the principle of moderation, rather than the more the better.

2.5 The Principle of Subjectivity

As the learning subjectivity, students give full play their subjective initiative and pay attention to their self-improvement and development. Teachers cultivate students' sensitivity to the different culture, and tolerance for cultural differences, the flexibility of dealing with cultural differences.

2.6 Interesting Principle

Under the state of active thinking, College students are sensitive. If the selected material has strong interest, learning effect will be ideal. Teacher should try to create a real language culture atmosphere, which can make the students immersive; as a result, students understand the target language and culture as soon as possible. The understanding of the cultural knowledge is relatively easy, but it is not easy to students to use English flexibly in the intercultural communication. According to different teaching requirements and teaching contents, teacher adopt to flexible teaching methods to stimulate students' interest in learning and arouse the enthusiasm of students' learning.

2.7 Comparison Principle

Due to the uniqueness of every culture, Culture has similarities and differences. Comparison principle is that the learners compare their own culture with the target culture, in order to find similarities and differences of culture. Accepting and understanding the difference and common, we can better evaluate our own behavior and tolerate the behavior of the other culture. Only when we understand the other's culture, can we explain the different cultural behavior, respect each other's language customs and habits and historical background to avoid explain the other culture according to our own standard. Only when we enhance our discriminability to acceptable and unacceptable culture, Can we prevent total and uncritical acceptance other's culture. As mentioned above, culture is a component part of communicative competence; through the comparison we can improve our communication skills. Why do many learners make the practical mistake, the reason is that they cannot handle properly the relationship between language and culture and they are lack of understanding of their own culture and the target language culture.

When we make misunderstandings and conflicts in the communication with foreigners, we accustomed to our way of thinking and use our own cultural mode instead of other's cultural patterns. Different cultures have different point of view, different way of life and moral standards, and ways of thinking, social norms. If we pay more attention to the differences of different cultures, we can deepen mutual understanding between each other, to remove the misunderstanding between each other. But

on the contrary, we will not only cause misunderstanding but also hurt feelings, and may even lead to failures of economic cooperation and cultural exchange, and even cause huge economic loss.

3. THE CONTENT OF CULTURE INTRODUCTION

This is a disputed topic. Many scholars have their own opinions in China. Some scholars think that the content of culture teaching in the process of foreign language teaching should be divided into two categories, communicative culture and cultural knowledge. Communicative culture refers to the language and non-language factors, which directly affect passing information accurately (i.e., cause errors or misunderstandings) in the communication of the two different cultural background people. Cultural knowledge refers to the language and non-language factors, which does not directly affect passing information accurately in the communication of the two different cultural background people. The main purpose of this division makes the teachers and students in the foreign language foundation stage focus on the factors of communicative culture, which influence the accurate communication.

The other scholars summarized the content of culture in foreign language teaching into three categories: the culture of Language structure, semantics culture, and pragmatic culture. The culture of Language structure refers to the language structure differences caused by different cultural backgrounds. Semantics culture refers to the cultural content and cultural spirit of semantic system. Pragmatic culture refers to the cultural conventions of language, that is to say, we should follow the rules by combining Language social background with interpersonal relationship. Including: name, say hello and greetings, thanks and appreciation, honorific and self-depreciatory expression, say goodbye, and so on. We can handle the different cultural factors with different methods in the specific language teaching.

4. THE STRATEGIES OF CULTURE INTRODUCTION

The final purpose of culture introduction is to improve students' sensitivity to the culture, cultivate their cultural awareness and make them become the modern talents with abilities to cross-cultural communication

Exposition，Comparison and Contrast is the most common methods in college

English teaching. Exposition method is a way annotation for the different cultural meanings of vocabulary idioms as well as the proverb, cultural background knowledge of the text.

In vocabulary teaching, teachers' pay attention to the cultural background knowledge besides teaching the meaning of words communication function and cognitive function. Vocabulary contains all kinds of cultural information, the word provides the information of the cultural development with the word producing, dying, and renewing. At the same time, in the process of cultural development, different cultural awareness can affect the meaning of the word; the same word may have different connotations in different languages. Then the grammar learning sprocket culture background knowledge. Every language has its unique grammatical system, and it is very different. The inner factors of developing grammar system also contain the abundant cultural factors.

Comparison and Contrast is a way method to reduce interlingual errors. Compare the similarities and differences between foreign and native culture. It starts with salutation, say goodbye, greeting, apology, and praise. Finally, teachers summarize the form and the using performance of the language. It plays a role in promoting students' communicative ability.

Culture contrast should be focusing on the differences and conflicts, focusing on solving practical problems. For example, in the cross-cultural communication, to eliminate the cultural barriers and conflicts in different culture communication, the most important way is to find out the differences of two language culture factors, namely, adopting the method of comparison.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, language cannot be separated from the culture. Culture introduction is an important content of English teaching. To cultivate the students' communicative competence, especially cross-cultural communication ability, it is very important to understand the cultural background. Teachers should be realizing the importance of teaching cultural knowledge. In the teaching of language knowledge, we should be pay attention to teach cultural knowledge as much as possible and contrast between Chinese and western culture in order to strengthen students' sensitivity to cultural differences, to better train the students' ability to cross-cultural communication.

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