

The Essential Nature for Chinese Students' Cultural Awareness

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Abstract: *With increasing cross-cultural communication, college English teaching should be essential. While this practical teaching would guide students to understand both Chinese traditional culture and Western culture, thus in the process of communication, cultural aphasia could be avoided.*

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I. Introduction

Language learning is inseparable from both interpersonal communication and social environment. Globalization is the trend of development in present world, with the acceleration of the globalization process, people from all countries are more closely connected. People from different cultural backgrounds inevitably have cultural differences. In the diplomatic field, if people do not understand the culture of other countries, it is impossible to use foreign languages for effective communication.

To communicate in a foreign language, Chinese students must understand foreign cultures, learn foreign languages and cultural knowledge, as well as understand Chinese and foreign cultural differences to improve their language, social, and intercultural communication skills. Only in this way can we ensure that both parties can effectively express and understand information in the process of communication, that is, to ensure the effectiveness and smoothness of communication. If students just pay attention to the study of language grammar and ignore culture of the target language, there will be difficulties in communication. If you see an English and start with some privacy issues, such as "How old are you?", "What's your salary?", "Where do you live?", etc., although these words are right to you even though the grammar is correct the English would be indifferent and would not talk to you further. This is a serious cultural mistake in communication for the English are reserved and conservative.

At the same time, language learners are also the disseminators of the national culture. The English teaching in China focuses on the cultural penetration of the target language countries, and ignores the expression of the native language culture, so that Chinese students do not pay much attention to learning of Chinese culture. So either when they are at home or abroad there is a lack of peer interaction in cultural exchanges. Especially in Inner Mongolia, due to the particularity of the ethnic region, the local culture needs to be spread to the outside world. Many valuable national arts have become representative projects of the United Nations or intangible national cultural heritage, such as Mongolian long-tune or paper-cutting. If students are unfamiliar with the English vocabulary of art, they cannot spread traditional folk arts. As a communicator of culture, how can we introduce foreign culture well, and at the same time spread the excellent national culture is what English learners should do.

II. Current Situation of English Reading Teaching

At present, the choice of reading materials in English reading class is to adapt to the level of most students. Many students think that reading materials should be related to examination. If types of materials are what they would come across during the examination they will get a high score. At the same time, the teacher focuses on articles of textbooks and question-answering. Therefore, the reading course is to some extent in order to solve the passing rate of the test rather than learning knowledge. In addition, the design of reading materials in some reading textbooks often considers the level of the candidates, so the materials are simplified. Therefore, if students only study through reading exercises, they will not achieve the goal of improving the language level and learning cultural knowledge.

Nowadays, because of few reading students' interest in reading is gradually lost. English communication content is poor as well as knowledge is narrow, so their ability to think is poor and their professional status is challenged. What is the root of the problem? College students should not rely on classroom reading to enrich themselves, and should read more independently. What's more students' self-reading ability is poor. Most students think that they have no majors, they don't know what kind of books to read, how to read, and they rely too much on classroom teaching. The extracurricular reading time is short and insufficient and the sphere is narrow. If the purpose of reading is only for the examination, students would be lack of autonomy in reading and learning.

In facing with various problems, it is necessary to select a scientific and rational teaching concept model for teaching, which would improve students' reading ability, thinking ability, language using ability, and independent learning ability.

III. Performance of Students in the English Reading Class

In the class, the teacher conducts a questionnaire in the form of a test question. Among them, there are five questions about English and American culture and six questions about Chinese culture. Students are required to answer in English.

A total of 120 students in two grades participated in the survey. Among them, 95 students accounted for 79% gave at least four right answers when answering the English and American culture questions. Five students accounted for 4% gave at most three right answers when answering the Chinese culture questions. No one is right when answering questions about the Mongolian culture.

Through the test, students said that they never thought about introducing their own culture in English, nor have they read any relevant English books, and they are eager to learn how to tell their own culture in English. Students can accept Western traditional festivals, such as Christmas, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, etc., and know the birth of Jesus. The Thanksgiving Day was acquired by the Puritans after they landed on the United States from the Mayflower to harvest and celebrate the harvest festival. However, they don't know the origin of China's "year" or the tradition of "Qi Xi". They don't know how to talk about the splendid civilization of China.

IV. How Should Teachers Guide Students to Read Widely?

Successful English teaching should bring students from the cultural surface to a deeper level of thinking, so that students can enhance their recognition of the mother tongue culture. When students communicate with Westerners in English, they can show the profound cultural heritage and independent cultural personality. In the reading class, the teacher used materials of Chinese traditional culture introduced in English, such as "Confucius", "The Analects of Confucius", "Mencius", "Journey to the West", "Dream of Red Mansions". Students showed a strong interest in the class. According to the survey by end of the semester, all students liked the Chinese culture expressing in English. Students believe that interest is the most important factor in learning. After reading Chinese culture in English, students feel that these articles are very interesting and they have learnt many unexpected expressions, such as Monkey King called "Handsome Monkey-king", Monkey's somersault called "cloud somersault", which are usually familiar, can be expressed in English. At the same time, it also increases confidence when communicating with foreigners.

Therefore, students gradually have a habit of reading extensively on the basis of the class, and began to understand the English version of Chinese classics and poetry. They also tried to translate poems by Chinese poets Du Fu and Su Shi, and introduced these poems and outstanding poets to foreign friends.

China has a vast territory, not only Han culture, but also the culture of ethnic minorities. Mongolian Hoomii(a Mongolian singing method), Morinhuur(a Mongolian musical fiddle with a horsehead), Mongolian Medicine, etc. can reflect the profound history and culture of the Chinese nation. Introducing national excellent traditions to Westerners can stimulate college students' interests in learning English, avoiding cultural aphasia while foreign languages.

V. Conclusion

In college English reading class, most textbooks are mainly based on the introduction to American and Englishspeaking cultures. In particular, the main contents of reading textbooks are scientific and technical texts, explanatory texts, and sometime containing too many uncommon words in the text. Students often lose interests in these articles gradually. The articles introducing Chinese traditional culture in the classroom is in line with today's trend of "going out of traditional Chinese culture" and at the same time enhancing students' national self-confidence and pride. At the same time, it can make up for the negative impact of the lack of culture in college English teaching and avoid whole Westernization. Students must have a sense of national pride in order to take responsibility for inheriting and carrying forward traditional culture.

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