

Significance and Measures of Chinese Culture Implanting Into College English Teaching*

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It is commonly believed that language serves as the carrier of culture and one part of it. And language teaching is inseparable from cultural knowledge impartment. So, teachers should attach great importance to cultural background when teaching English language. Unfortunately, aphasia of Chinese culture occurs when they value Western culture and ignore the infiltration of Chinese culture. Under such circumstances, this paper demonstrates the importance of implanting Chinese culture into college English teaching and proposes corresponding measures for Chinese cultural implantation.

Keywords: college English teaching, Chinese culture, culture implantation, significance, measures

Introduction

According to *Guideline on College English Teaching* (2017), the objective of college English teaching is to develop students' ability to use English in a well-rounded way, to enhance their cross-cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence, so that in their future studies and careers as well as social interactions, they can communicate effectively and at the same time improve their autonomic learning ability and comprehensive cultural literacy so as to meet the needs of the development of our country, society, schools, and students themselves. Therefore, integration of culture into instruction is a must when English teaching is more than passing on knowledge of English language. Unfortunately, the introduction of the material, spiritual, political, and custom culture of English-speaking countries is commonly emphasized while Chinese culture, customs, and value orientation are almost ignored even as the main subject of international communication. There are very few Chinese elements involved in college English textbooks published by major publishers. It turns out that many students are poor in Chinese culture and unable to express it fluently in English. They can talk about Shakespeare fluently but are unable to introduce Li Bai, Du Fu, and Bai Juyi (three Chinese great poets) in English. They can tell the origins of Christmas, but cannot tell the customs of traditional Chinese festivals. They can speak "White House", "April Fool's Day", and "Snow White" in English fluently, but they cannot express the "Great Hall of the People", "Dragon Boat Festival", and "The Cowherd and Weaving Maid"; They can express "Thanksgiving Day" in English and know the ins and outs of the festival, but few can express "Ching Ming Festival", let alone its origin (Weng & Wang, 2012). Professor Cong Cong from Nanjing University published an article in *Guangming Daily*, saying that "Many young Chinese scholars with high

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English proficiency cannot express their mother tongue culture in English during their communication with Westerners” (2002, C01). This “aphasia of Chinese culture” phenomenon in English teaching is clearly caused by the neglect of mother tongue culture in our English education. Under the background of global economic integration, it is necessary to implant mother tongue culture during college English teaching as a way to cultivate students’ cross-cultural communication awareness and ability, providing them critic thinking skills in the world’s multiculturalism.

Significance of Chinese Cultural Implanting Into College English Teaching

The according significance of Chinese cultural implantation into college English teaching can be specified as follows.

Conducive to the Improvement of Students’ Cross-Cultural Communication Skills

American linguist Kramsh (1998, p. 49) believed that “Effective mediation between several languages and cultures is based on the context of knowing one’s mother tongue culture and acquiring and understanding the target language, which is also an important part of comprehensive communicative competence and cross-cultural communication ability”. Samover (2000, p. 113) also held an idea that “Knowing yourself and understanding your own culture is crucial to successful intercultural communication”. Thus, it can be seen that mother tongue culture and target language culture are equally important when it comes to the cultivation of intercultural communication competence, because intercultural communication is a bidirectional communication process between two different parts. Only when both parties understand their own mother tongue culture, mutual unique customs as well as cultural characteristics, and respect the regional customs and habits of the other party, cross-cultural communication can proceed smoothly (Weng & Wang, 2012). Cross-cultural communication that ignores one’s native culture cannot be defined as two-way exchange in a true sense, which means the Western and Chinese traditional culture should be valued at the same time during English language teaching. The latter has proved conducive to understanding of Chinese culture as well as comparative comprehension of Western culture as it seeks to enhance students’ cross-cultural communication awareness and skills.

Conducive to the Cultivation of Students’ Patriotism

China is a great country with an ancient civilization, standing proudly in the family of nations. It has a history of thousands of years. Her vast and profound heritages are marked as the blood, soul, and foundation of our Chinese nation and are also the fundamental symbol of her identity among other nations. Learning Chinese culture while studying English language can help students know more about China and strengthen their national pride and patriotism. Thus, they may study harder and do better in English learning. As we know, patriotism is a deep feeling, love of one’s motherland, and willingness to sacrifice for it. A nation with patriotism can remain invincible among powerful countries and the same holds true for a person to improve himself. A person with patriotism is willing to do everything for his country.

Conducive to the Enhancement of China’s National Soft Power and Influence in the World

At the National Ideological Publicity Conference in August 2013, Chairman Xi Jinping stated that “Chinese traditional essence, defined as the most profound soft power, holds superiority in the whole nation.” In recent years, Chinese culture has drawn increasing attention with the continuous improvement of its overall national strength. Joseph S. Nye, an American scholar, indicated that,

Soft power such as culture and ideology, a kind of soft power resource with low cost and obvious gain, can affect people of other countries from the perspective of concept, feelings and psychology. Although this invisible power is not as fierce as the cargo ship under the missile destroyer guard, it can spread in a vast space around the world, affecting the thoughts and emotions of millions of people, and ultimately changing the ownership of missiles and freighters. (1991, p. 71)

Obviously, cultural soft power has evolved into core competence of national existence and development. China, the cradle of civilization loaded with long history and rich cultural resources, requires that we seize this favorable opportunity to spread Chinese excellent traditional culture as well as advanced modern culture by applying English language, a primary medium with largest users around the world, increasing the national popularity, cultural soft power as well as its influence in the world.

Culture, as a soft power, is inestimable in the increase of influence and development of a country.

Effective Measures of Chinese Cultural Implantation Into College English Teaching

Since the study and dissemination of Chinese culture are of great significance, teachers need to realize the effective ways to implant Chinese culture into college English teaching.

To Enhance the Mother Tongue Culture Awareness of College English Teachers

College English teachers not only undertake the task of language teaching, but also shoulder the historical mission of spreading China's excellent traditional culture, and their mastery of Chinese traditional culture can inspire students to learn Chinese culture (Liao, 2012). Therefore, teachers should first enhance their own mother tongue culture awareness, pay attention to the continuous accumulation, and constantly improve their Chinese cultural level and the ability to express Chinese culture in English. In addition, teachers are required to master relevant skills of integrating Chinese culture into the teaching of English language, introduce Chinese culture naturally and timely, guide students to compare the differences between Chinese and Western culture, and improve students' skills of expressing Chinese culture in English. For example, teachers can ask the students to do oral practice on a topic about Chinese culture. They can also ask the students to translate a paragraph telling Chinese culture into English. In this way, we may achieve great enlightenment insensibly.

To Increase Chinese Cultural Elements in Textbooks

Textbooks serve as the main tool to pass on cultural knowledge to students and a platform to learn knowledge in class and do practice after school. Textbooks, in some sense, determine what to be learned in class. Nowadays, most contents of college English textbooks are selected from original English materials that reflect Western culture and values but contain little Chinese culture, which has caused serious imbalance between Western and Chinese culture and failure in accomplishing the real aim of language education (Guo, 2014). Therefore, proportions of mother tongue culture in various textbooks should be increased as well as the contents regarding Chinese history, arts, philosophy, education, literature, and customs, so that students can learn more about Chinese culture in English textbooks. At the same time, some relevant words and expressions about China's excellent traditional culture and contemporary culture with Chinese characteristics should be introduced to students to make our college English classroom a better platform to spread Chinese culture.

To Increase the Proportion of Chinese Culture in Various English Exams

All kinds of English examinations in our country have been oriented towards listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation for a long time, which has produced a serious illusion among students: Learning

English is to learn the language, and the purpose of learning the language is to improve listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation abilities (Liu, 2012). For example, CET 4 and CET 6, both as the most influential examinations with the largest number of candidates, are designed to test students' basic skills such as listening, reading, writing, and translation. The assessment materials and examination contents of various types of questions are basically involved in the culture and customs of English-speaking countries. Since December 2013, the translation part has been adjusted to paragraph translation containing more information of Chinese traditional culture but still with a small proportion on the whole. It is obvious that the language materials in various English test questions should cover more Chinese culture and materials. Only in this way, can students be encouraged to value Chinese culture during their daily English learning so as to learn to express Chinese culture in English (Pan, 2013).

Conclusion

In short, language and culture are inseparable and culture is an important part of college English teaching. Therefore, language study and culture study cannot be separated from each other. It is important to note that culture includes one's mother tongue culture as well as target language culture. Chinese culture is as important as Western culture in English teaching and learning. So, college English teaching is strongly connected to the task of introducing Western culture and the responsibility of spreading Chinese culture. Under the present background of global economic integration, English is an important tool to tell and explain Chinese culture to foreign friends as China seeks to perform on the world stage and to let the world know more about this country. It is also the need for cross-cultural communication. To realize the teaching objective of college English and improve students' intercultural communication ability, it is of great practical significance to implant Chinese culture into college English teaching.

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