

Study on Problems and Countermeasures of College English Cross-cultural Teaching

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Abstract. With the advancement of science and technology and rapid development of globalization, cross-cultural communication activities have become more frequent, and developing cross-cultural communicative talents has become one of the important objectives of university education. Our university English syllabus has emphasized the need to train students' cross-cultural communicative competence. However, the real situation is that it has long been a delay in the passage of the traditional teaching model centered on the language knowledge in college English teaching. have been focusing on students' language skills, but did not pay sufficient attention to cultural teaching and learning, seriously affecting the cultivation of students' cross-cultural communicative ability. Now, in teaching practice, we find that many students do not know how to communicate in English, let alone cross-cultural communication. This paper, from the perspective of intercultural communication, combined with the practice of college English teaching, identifies and analyzes problems about cross-cultural communication awareness training in the process of college English teaching, and further explores the corresponding solutions in order to call attentions to college English cross-cultural teaching and research.

Introduction

Nowadays, it has been more and more frequent in communication and cooperation among different countries. Economic globalization and cultural diversity has become features of this era. Whether you like it or not, almost no one can avoid interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. Cross-cultural communication is becoming a more and more common daily reality. For language learners, learning a language also means learning a culture. So when it comes to college English teaching, under the premise of respecting different cultures, it is necessary to promote mutual understanding between different cultures and learn from each other to contribute to the implementation of cross-cultural education.

With the development of China's economy and society, the college English teaching reform is deepening; cultural teaching has increasingly become the teachers' consensus and concerns. In 2007, the Ministry of Education issued a "College English Curriculum Requirements" which clearly states, "the objective of College English is to develop students' ability to use English in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future studies and careers as well as social interactions they will be able to communicate effectively, and at the same time enhance their ability to study independently and improve their general cultural awareness so as to meet the needs of China's social development and international exchanges".^[1] College English course" is not only a language course that provides basic knowledge about English, but also a capacity enhancement course that helps students to broaden their horizons and learn about different cultures in the world".^[1] Therefore, the focus of college English courses should be transferred to the culture teaching and cultivate high-quality students with not only the language knowledge but also the language proficiency. However, due to the traditional teaching model, there are still many problems in college English cross-cultural teaching. So how to emphasize cultural features in the teaching process, how to effectively guide students to foster the cross-cultural awareness through learning the language and then achieve the combination of language teaching and culture teaching, are yet to be explored.

The Current Situation and Problems of College English Cross-cultural Teaching

With the continuous development of college English teaching, the cross-cultural teaching has

some improvements already, but influenced by the traditional teaching model, there are still some problems in the teaching process, which are specifically presented in the following aspects:

The policies and measures are not well-directed. In September, 2007, the Ministry of Education announced the "College English Curriculum Requirements",^[1] which requires major college English teaching to divide into three stages, namely the general requirement, higher and highest ones. These three levels were made clear requirements on listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating abilities and formulate the corresponding vocabularies. But in this "Requirements", there are no clear rules for cross-cultural education. Although the "Requirements" sets forth in the listening and speaking ability, it all talks in generalities, not be defined from the perspective of cultural exchanges, which brings a certain degree of difficulty to the college English cross-cultural teaching. Besides that, due to the ambiguity of guidelines, the implementation of cross-cultural teaching is not so directed that the college English teachers are in lack of specific guidance on what exactly to teach, how to teach and what extent of teaching would be, and eventually the teachers have to explore the related teaching methods by themselves. This also resulted in cultural differences between English majors and non-English majors in the same universities, as well as the differences in cultural teaching among different schools. In a word, because of no unified and clear syllabus in cross- cultural teaching, it is difficult for the teachers to bring in the cross-cultural English teaching effectively as well as the same case for the students to get correct and proper cultural input during their English study.

Teachers' cross-cultural abilities are not strong; the effect of cross-cultural teaching is not obvious. Many English teachers are generally aware of the importance of cross-cultural knowledge and intercultural teaching. They widely believe that the language skills and cultural knowledge are equally important, realizing that English teaching is not only to cultivate the students' language ability, but to cultivate students' intercultural communicative competence. And as is known to us all, only the perfect combination of language and cultural skills can help the students get a good understanding of the target language and culture, and then use the language better. However, compared with their increasingly enhanced cross-cultural awareness, the English teachers' abilities and levels of cross-cultural education are relatively low. An effective college English cross-cultural teaching cannot be implemented. Moreover, these factors, such as the limited teaching objective and content, a large cross-cultural knowledge gap between teachers and students, the restricting language environment, all result in an unsatisfactory cross-cultural language teaching.

There are less Cross-cultural contents in College English textbooks. As we know, textbook plays an important role in the classroom teaching, both students' learning and teachers' teaching are all based on the teaching material. The proportion of cultural content in teaching materials will affect the cultural teaching. Nowadays, "the teaching materials which are widely used in college English teaching are "College English " for English majors , edited by Dong Yafen and " New Horizon College English "for non-English majors, edited by Zheng Shutang, these two sets of textbooks are fully aware of the role of English culture in language teaching.^[2] But in the actual teaching process, the teaching content is still on the language knowledge, which focuses on grammar, vocabulary and other linguistic knowledge, but less involving culture. Even if there is some cultural information involved, it is just the tip of the iceberg, and cannot enable students to form a comprehensive understanding of western culture, let alone the proper use of the language. And it also brings a certain challenge to the teachers' cross-cultural teaching. In addition, we know that the cross- cultural communication refers to the interaction between two or more than two different cultural groups. But all the texts adopted in the existing English textbooks are articles concerned about western culture, especially English or American culture, and there are no or less articles about Chinese culture, especially the expression of traditional Chinese culture. In practical teaching, if teachers and students only depend on the study of teaching material, on the one hand, it will be difficult to enable students to fully understand the characteristics of the English language and culture, resulting in the misuse of language; on the other hand, although some of the students have learned some English and American culture, they may fail to express themselves fluently in introducing Chinese culture in oral or written English form, not to speak of further communication

at a broader and deeper level, which is so-called "Chinese Culture Aphasia" phenomenon. Therefore, the college English textbooks urgently need to be reformed.

Test and evaluation methods are single. At present, the test evaluation of college English learning is mainly the CET4 and CET6. For a long time, these tests focus on language knowledge, such as vocabulary, grammar, or text. The potential guiding role of examination makes most students focus on dealing with the examination itself in learning English. They prefer testing contents and skills to English or Chinese cultural understanding. In the process of teaching, teachers' teaching is also influenced by the testing methods, rarely involving cross-cultural knowledge, but focusing on the teaching of language knowledge in order to help students deal with the exam. In fact, this is wrong that learning a language is not to focus on the culture behind the language, only to learn the language itself. The single test and assessment method has an impact on the students' learning and teachers' teaching, affecting the cross culture teaching. Although, from a recent test reform on CET4 and CET6, we can see an increase in the content of culture test, especially the English expression of Chinese traditional culture. In a sense, it will cause teachers and students pay more attention to the cultural knowledge, but the long-term language learning habits still exist, and in a certain period, it will remain solidly. Moreover, due to the lack of corresponding and systematic teaching materials, the English introduction of Chinese traditional culture only appear in the materials for preparing the CET4 and CET6, while it is difficult to concern in the practical teaching.

The Countermeasures of Improving Cross-cultural College English Teaching

Improving the education policy and strengthening its guidance. As a programmatic document of education and teaching, education policy plays a key role in teaching. The setting of curriculum, the arrangement of teaching content and teaching methods are all affected by education policy. Thus, we should further improve the education policy and strengthen its guidance. There has been already the requirement of cross-cultural teaching in "College English Curriculum Requirements ". However, there is no defined corresponding regulation on specific lesson arrangement, teaching content, teaching mode and teaching evaluation of cultural teaching. Thus the "Curriculum Requirements" is lack of relevance and operability. So in the implementation of university English teaching reform, we should further clarify the relevant requirements of English cultural teaching, so as to make it a guiding role in the practical teaching.

Raising the teachers' quality and improving their cultural training. College English teachers play an important role in college English cross-cultural teaching. Thus, the modern college English teachers should keep pace with the times, abandon the irrational educational concept, take in the new philosophy of education, and foster cross-cultural awareness. In the teaching process, teachers should fully inspire the students by using a variety of teaching methods, so as to make students participate in cross-cultural teaching. In cross-cultural teaching process, teachers should also continue to learn and constantly improve their own quality, fully understanding the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western cultures and gradually penetrating them to the students in the teaching process. Besides, schools and education authorities should provide more training opportunities for English teachers, especially the cross-cultural training in English teaching. Through training, we can improve teachers' cultural awareness and their teaching abilities and improve teachers' knowledge structures.

Refining the compilation of teaching materials, and making a multiply involvement. The current college English teaching has been focused on Western culture. However, as part of cross-cultural communication, oriental culture especially Chinese culture, seldom involved in teaching. According to this situation, the universities can organize teachers and students to participate in composing school-based curriculum and some cross-cultural teaching materials combined with their teaching practice. By doing such cannot only mobilize the cultural enthusiasm of teachers and students, but also compose better-targeted cross-cultural teaching materials for college English teaching. It is believed that the specific cross-cultural teaching materials will be more conducive to the implementation of college English cross-cultural teaching, and will also be conducive to further students' learning and the formation of cultural creativity.

Reforming the examination system and forming a multiple evaluation. CET4 and CET6 are

affecting the college English cross-cultural teaching and learning to some extent. Therefore, it is imperative to realize the reform of the examination system and the implementation of a wide range of evaluation. In education and teaching, " the establishment of various aspects of the evaluation system , such as the evaluation index system of classroom teaching , practice teaching , graduation design , all-round education quality assurance " ^[3] can combine the formative assessment and summative assessment together and put more emphasis on students' performance in the teaching process, which is focusing on the formative evaluation. It has already appropriately added cross-cultural content in CET4 and CET6. "Increasing cultural knowledge assessment in the English examination will promote integration of traditional grammar and vocabulary knowledge into cross-cultural knowledge."^[4] By increasing the content of the examination can further enhance the degree of students' attention to culture, thus ensuring cross-cultural teaching be implemented.

Conclusion

College English cross-cultural Teaching is becoming increasingly important at the background of today's global political and economic integration. On the one hand, it will provide various kinds of political and economic talents for the exchanges between China and other countries; On the other hand, it will also build up a cultural bridge between China and the world. Through cross-cultural teaching, students' cross-cultural awareness will be increased; their English expression of Chinese culture and the cultural creativity will be improved. Enhancing this capacity will promote the further transferring and development of Chinese culture worldwide.

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