

College English Pragmatic Teaching from the Perspective of Pragmatic Competence

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Abstract: Under the tide of globalization, intercultural communication becomes more and more frequent, the scope of application of English is expanding, and the importance of pragmatic competence is becoming more and more prominent. How to cultivate students' pragmatic competence in college English teaching has become the focus of scholars' attention. Pragmatic competence includes pragmatic knowledge, pragmatic awareness and pragmatic expression. This paper will explore ways to enhance students' pragmatic competence and integrate pragmatic teaching into college English teaching by increasing pragmatic knowledge, enhancing pragmatic awareness and expanding positive pragmatic performance so as to improve college English teaching level and strengthen cultural exchanges between China and the West.

1. Pragmatic competence and its system

In the 1980s, Leech and other researchers pointed out that pragmatic competence includes pragmatic linguistic competence and social pragmatic competence. Domestic scholars defined pragmatic competence in detail from the perspective of foreign language learners, that is, "pragmatic competence is the communicator's ability to recognize the current context and to extract pragmatic knowledge stored in long-term memory through certain cognitive processing, thus producing an appropriate discourse and serial reactions.". It can be seen that pragmatic knowledge, pragmatic awareness and pragmatic performance constitute a pragmatic competence system, that is, learners with certain pragmatic knowledge can produce pragmatic output (pragmatic performance) under the guidance of pragmatic awareness. Pragmatic competence system is the deepening of the study of pragmatic competence. Due to the obvious differences in the attributes of knowledge, consciousness and expression, it is more appropriate to call it Pragmatic Competence System as a whole which is interrelated and composed of them.

2. Pragmatic teaching is the key to improving pragmatic competence

For a long time, the emphasis of English teaching in China has been on grammar, which leads to students' low pragmatic competence, which is manifested by inappropriate oral communication or various pragmatic failures, and the inability to output authentic and contextual sentences in English writing or translation.

Pragmatic teaching refers to the appropriate teaching contents and methods under the guidance of the basic theory of pragmatics in order to improve the pragmatic competence of foreign language learners. In recent years, pragmatic teaching research has been refined and deepened. For example, Li Min found that extroverted students have higher pragmatic competence and lower grammatical competence. On the contrary, introverted students should focus on pragmatic teaching. Wang Xiaoyan advocates individualized English pragmatic teaching, in which teachers should consider learners' age, personality, foreign language proficiency and learning needs. Generally speaking, teachers should integrate meta-pragmatic rules and other pragmatic knowledge into teaching according to the pragmatic competence system, so as to enhance students' pragmatic awareness and help them achieve better pragmatic performance.

Some textbook writers also pay attention to the orientation and practice of pragmatic learning in foreign language textbooks. For example, Xu Jinfen's "Audio-visual Course" (New Target College English Series), "Listening as Acquisition" requires learners to complete English sentences according to Chinese cues first, then compare the original listening text, or two learners to complete word collocation and sentence-making together, which is beneficial. To enhance learners' pragmatic competence, the "Further Development" part guides learners to use English daily questions and start/end conversations to improve their social pragmatic competence.

3. Pragmatic Teaching Practice

In the past decade or two, there are two remarkable characteristics in the study of pragmatic teaching methods at home and abroad. One is the controversy over the choice of teaching methods, such as explicit and implicit, induction and deduction, and the other is a large number of empirical studies. Explicit teaching requires teachers to explain meta-pragmatic information and guide students to discuss, understand and train. Implicit teaching attaches importance to immediate practice or group activities so that students can discover and experience pragmatic rules without emphasizing the explanation of pragmatic rules. The deduction method is more direct, immediate effect is obvious. Law can help learners to improve their pragmatic awareness effectively. Generally speaking, the selection of teaching methods should be based on teaching objects and teaching contents.

3.1 Step by step with context

Understanding and mastering the relevant context is an important factor for smooth cross-cultural communication. Because only in the specific language application environment, can we adopt the most appropriate way of communication according to the actual situation and objective conditions. It is easy to achieve twice the result with half the effort to carry out English pragmatic teaching from the following two aspects. Firstly, we should focus on the cultivation of students' basic contextual comprehension and pragmatic competence in specific texts. Secondly, on this basis, the students' contextual comprehension and pragmatic competence are further guided and trained with specific content and knowledge. There is a gradual relationship between the two aspects, students are easy to accept, teachers are easy to receive teaching results.

3.2 Focusing on Pragmatics and Spreading Culture

Language itself is a part of its corresponding culture, which is closely related to culture. If we want to master and use a language proficiently, we must have a better understanding of the cultural soil that language is rooted in. By doing so, we can not only use the language correctly in different contexts, but also expand the learning content with language learning as the core, and have a better understanding of the regional culture, institutional culture and historical culture behind the language. Teachers should fully incorporate cultural factors into college English teaching, skillfully introduce cultural content into various teaching details, so that cultural teaching and skills teaching can be organically unified, so that students can always feel the flavor of English culture, be deeply influenced by culture in the process of subtle influence, and improve English pragmatic ability.

3.3 Get rid of the influence of mother tongue

At the stage of pre-school education and primary education, many students do not receive good cultural English education. It is difficult for them to get rid of the influence of Chinese or mother tongue habits in all aspects of English learning, especially in the cultural aspect. Because of these problems in the basic English learning stage, they will intentionally or unintentionally apply the skills and pragmatic habits of Chinese or mother tongue to English learning, which will have a very negative impact on English learning, especially in the aspects of English cultural cognition and pragmatic competence. Therefore, in the stage of College English learning, teachers must vigorously strengthen the teaching of English culture, fully embody English culture in all aspects of teaching, create a pure English learning environment, and timely correct the bad Chinese-style English pragmatic habits and cultural thinking that students have developed in the past in the thinking of Chinese or mother tongue.

To sum up, the second language pragmatic competence system provides a theoretical framework for pragmatic teaching, and pragmatic teaching is an important way to improve the pragmatic competence of second language learners. Second language teachers should be familiar with pragmatics theory and the latest pragmatic corpus, improve their second language pragmatic competence, and then select appropriate teaching methods and content according to the characteristics of learners.

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