

The Study on English Critical Thinking Skills of Agricultural Students Based on Chinese Traditional Culture

Xin Zhang¹ and Shide Li^{1,*}

¹ Department of Basic Science, Tianjin Agricultural University, Tianjin, 300384, China

*Corresponding author. Email: shideli@tjau.edu.cn

ABSTRACT

In the context of globalization of economic development, there are higher requirements for the English international exchange level of agricultural talents in China, which means that the new situation has a higher demand for agricultural students' English critical thinking skills. This paper expounds on the cultivation situation of English critical thinking skills of agricultural college students, and analyzes the problems in the cultivation of these skills. The research is analyzed from three aspects: college English classroom, humanities general education and English teachers' speculative ability. According to the problems in English critical thinking skills, this paper studies from the point of view of Chinese traditional culture, from the point of view of improving the quality of college English classroom teaching and increasing the humanities general courses to improve the cultural confidence of teachers and students, hoping to provide reference for improving the English thinking ability of teachers and students.

Keywords: *College English teaching; critical thinking ability; Traditional Chinese culture*

1. INTRODUCTION

With the progress and development of society, countries in the world are increasingly connected and economic development is increasingly globalized. At the same time, with the development of "the Belt and Road" in China, the English applied ability of agricultural talents has a higher requirement. They will face more challenges in English ability after graduation. When college students go out of the university and into society, the degree of adaptation to this situation depends on the degree of cultivation of English speculative ability. In the current college English teaching, the attention of teachers and students is generally focused on the cultivation of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, but not focused on the cultivation of English critical thinking skills. Therefore, English teachers need to strengthen the comprehensive quality of English in the course of college English teaching and cultivate students' English speculative ability. This research introduces Chinese traditional elements and analyzes the cultivation of English speculative ability in order to improve the cultural confidence of Chinese teachers and students and improve their English thinking ability.

2. CURRENT SITUATION OF THE CULTIVATION OF CRITICAL THINKING

2.1. Definition of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking ability refers to the ability of thinking and discrimination. It refers to the ability to make judgments and guide one's behavior after repeated thinking process on the basis of cognition. It includes critical thinking, critical thinking mode and critical thinking skills, etc. Critical thinking ability is a relatively advanced ability formed with the development of modern society. It is "the ability to make a reasonable decision about what to believe or do" [1]

2.2. The Importance of Developing Critical Thinking Ability in English

The *Higher Education Law* of China stipulates that "the task of higher education is to cultivate specialized talents with innovative spirit and practical ability", whose foundation is the cultivation of critical thinking ability [2]. Critical thinking ability can not only reflect the level of a person's thinking ability, but also highlight the modern humanistic spirit. The person with good critical thinking skills can fully integrate and utilize critical thinking skills to become a confident, self-aware, and judicious modern citizen." [3]

The cultivation of critical thinking ability is very important in the cultivation of agricultural college students under the new situation. *The national medium and long-term education reform and development compendium (2010-2020)* "of higher education, requirement of higher education to cultivate a large number of to participate in international affairs and international competition of international talents. In the context of China's economic and social opening to the outside world, international talents can actively promote cultural communication and carry forward excellent traditional culture. As an instrumental basic compulsory course in higher education, college English course plays a vital role in the process of cultivating high-level international talents [4].

English is language which carries the culture of all countries which used English as the national language. College English class is a place where Chinese and Western cultures meet. College English class is influenced by other cultures and ideologies in the teaching process of college English. How to make students maintain cultural confidence and think between Chinese and English is the problem we have to solve in English class. Therefore, our teachers should change the teaching concept, innovate the ways and methods, cultivate students as the main body, students take the initiative to learn the classroom thinking, and the cultivation critical thinking ability into the course learning.

3. PROBLEM EXISTING IN THE CULTIVATION OF ENGLISH CRITICAL THINKING ABILITY

3.1. College English Education is Out of Step With the Cultivation of Critical Thinking Ability

At present, the college English classroom usually pays more attention to English knowledge and language skills, and Ignore the importance of the practical application of English language and general education of humanities. As a result, the main teaching activities are in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The main content of a teacher's lecture is comprehensive tutorials and audio-visual course teaching, and some have online classroom communication sector. On the other hand, agricultural university students often regard college English as a course. Their short-term learning goals are to learn texts, memorize words, memorize grammar, pass the final exam, and pass cet-4 and CET-6. They tend to overlook the fact that English is a language used to communicate information.

This suggests that the teaching process of college English is still at the level of low-level thinking, and students are still in the stage of mechanical imitation. This kind of English class produces students who pay more attention to the training of language skills and ignore the role of culture. The students cultivated in this way have poor cross-cultural

understanding and communication skills, and even less professional critical thinking ability.

College English is not only a compulsory course for agricultural college students, but also have a major responsibility to cultivate students' critical thinking ability. In the past, college English classes often did not involve the cultivation of critical thinking ability, which was generally combined with ideological and political courses. Other courses, such as public courses, basic courses and specialized courses, also pay more attention to the imparting of knowledge.

3.2. The Liberal Arts Education of Agricultural University Students is Insufficient

General education aims at improving students' cultural quality and humanistic spirit. According to *the Outline of China's National Medium - and Long-term Plan for Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)*, the long-term development of education needs to "focus on the combination of learning and thinking". *The Delphi Report* published in 1990 divided critical thinking ability into two levels: cognitive skills and affective intention. These two dimensions are inseparable and mutually reinforcing: even if a person has mastered a lot of critical thinking skills, he will not become a critical person without the emotional intention of critical thinking [5].

In the cultivation plan of agricultural college students, liberal arts courses are few, except English, Chinese and political courses, they are basically specialized basic courses, specialized basic courses and specialized courses. Some students take elective courses through elective courses, but there are few classes in elective courses, so they do not have a high requirement for students' mastery. Moreover, most students do not pay enough attention to liberal arts courses. In other words, the cultivation of agricultural college students pays more attention to the cultivation of professional quality. However, with the economic globalization and the development of "the Belt and Road" in China, the national exchanges of agricultural college students are increasing, and they have higher requirements for English ability. As a foreign language, English is very different from Chinese in form and usage. How to treat it correctly, learn it well and use it well has a higher requirement on the English critical thinking ability of agricultural college students.

However, due to the influence of credits and class hours, there are few liberal arts courses for agricultural university students when they enter the university, while there are basically no courses explaining Traditional Chinese culture. In a survey of agricultural colleges and universities, only 38.9 percent of students were able to choose all the options that represented "traditional Chinese cultural symbols." This shows that although agricultural university students have a certain degree of Chinese excellent traditional cultural literacy, but most of them are shallow and shallow, understanding is not deep and transparent.

As an international language, English also contains the culture of English-speaking countries.

How to learn the language and realize good international communication depends on the students' English thinking ability. Chinese traditional culture has a history of more than 5,000 years. It is the foundation of the inheritance and development of the Chinese nation. It has imperceptibly influenced the world outlook, values and outlook on life of every Chinese. The addition of liberal arts courses and Chinese traditional culture courses will help guide students to think positively and help them form cross-cultural critical thinking, as well as to equip agricultural college students with critical skills and emotional intention, establish cultural confidence and better participate in international communication activities.

3.3. English Teachers' Critical Thinking Ability Needs to be Improved

English teachers are those who teach English knowledge to students. Their words and actions, even their way of thinking and their views on things have a direct impact on students. English teachers should not only master the relevant theoretical knowledge of critical thinking ability, but also actively explore effective ways to cultivate critical thinking ability. However, some college English teachers' understanding of the significance of college English teaching is not enough, also as the students' cross-cultural communication ability training and the cultivation of ability. They not only focus on imparting knowledge and the cultivation of listening, speaking, reading and writing ability and improve on, but also ignore the cultivation of students' cross-cultural communication ability and thinking ability. Such kind of college English classes may produce students who are good at vocabulary, grammar, listening and speaking skills, but who are faced with cross-cultural communication barriers and may behave inappropriately in future international communication. Therefore, college English teachers must face up to the cultivation of students' intercultural critical thinking ability in college English teaching.

College English is a part of higher education. It should take the cultivation of teachers' critical thinking ability as the fulcrum, from improving teachers' critical thinking ability as the starting point, so that English classroom can truly integrate instrumental and humanistic nature into the classroom, and gradually improve the current situation of "critical absence" [6]. Therefore, it is more necessary for all foreign language teachers to have a deeper understanding of the connotation and cultivation of critical thinking ability of agricultural university students and gradually integrate it into the classroom teaching of college English.

4. WAYS TO CULTIVATE STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING ABILITY IN ENGLISH IN AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

4.1. Relying on College English Classes, Expand Learning Approaches and Enhance the Effect of Cultivating English Critical Thinking Ability

With the continuous reform of the new curriculum standard, college English is an important part of teaching. It is not only necessary to teach basic English knowledge, but also to cultivate students' critical thinking ability[7]. College English class, as the main teaching place of English language, has a great significance in the cultivation of English critical thinking ability. In class, students' English learning ability should be evaluated in a process based on exam results. On the basis of understanding students' interests and needs, attention should be paid to the evaluation of students' cognitive ability, emotional ability and behavioral ability, and the examination of students' critical thinking ability should be highlighted. Teachers should give more opportunity to think and practice college English learning, in order to integrate the promotion of knowledge, culture, skills and the cultivation of open, critical and creative personality.

Outside the classroom, English teachers can also provide students with a variety of learning materials through online learning platforms. The students can choose learning methods according to their own abilities, master knowledge, change their thinking patterns, and develop their critical thinking skills. The English teachers can use modern teaching methods to expand the way of cultivating students' critical thinking ability, such as MOOC, micro class, virtual simulation experiment and other modern teaching means. English teachers can make full use of modern teaching means, reasonably set relevant English courses, change the thinking pattern of teachers and students in classroom teaching, create a good teaching atmosphere for students, let students feel the interest of English learning, so as to stimulate students' critical thinking ability.

4.2. Learning Chinese Traditional Culture, Strengthening the Liberal Arts Education of Agricultural College Students, Enhancing Students' Cultural Confidence, And Laying a Solid Foundation for Cultivating Students' English Critical Thinking Ability

In the context of globalization, the clash of cultures, thoughts and values forces every conscious nation to understand, learn and inherit its own excellent culture [8]. According to the research survey of agricultural colleges and universities, 97.9% of agricultural college students

believe that they should learn traditional Chinese culture. This shows that the students of this institution of higher learning have a high degree of recognition of Chinese traditional culture, which also lays a good foundation for students to learn Chinese traditional culture.

The Chinese nation has created a long and splendid traditional Chinese culture. *The book of Rites*, a traditional Chinese book, says, "Learn from the facts, interrogate them, reflect on them, distinguish them clearly, and practice them earnestly." The intellectual elite in ancient China always took "analyze mentally" as their motto in life. After the October Revolution, the combination of Traditional Chinese culture and Marxism formed two theoretical systems of MAO Zedong Thought and socialism with Chinese characteristics, explored a new road in cultural construction from the new democratic culture to the development of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics, and greatly promoted the modernization of traditional Chinese culture.

In today's multicultural world, learning Chinese traditional culture can enhance college students' cultural confidence and cultivate their cross-cultural critical thinking ability. When encountering different cultural environments, they can consider problems in a critical way. It can avoid unnecessary misunderstandings or conflicts caused by cultural differences between countries.

College English teaching, as an important course to cultivate students' critical thinking ability, is highly targeted. By learning Chinese traditional culture, increasing the learning of general education courses and cultivating students' Critical English ability in college English teaching, it is conducive to enhancing the cultural confidence of agricultural college students and cultivating their emotional intention of critical thinking.

4.3. Improving English Teachers' Critical Thinking Ability

The teaching ability and teaching mode of teachers are related to the degree of education received by students, and the process of receiving education is also the process of developing the way of thinking. Therefore, in the first place, the establishment of liberal arts courses should be added in the training of English teachers, so that English majors can learn English and culture of English-speaking countries, and at the same time, they can have a wide range of Chinese knowledge and traditional Chinese culture, so that they can master Both Chinese and English, and have a profound understanding of the two cultures. The target language culture and native culture, equal dialogue, also could promote English teachers on the one hand, from a different perspective for reflections on mother tongue culture, on the other hand, a more comprehensive and objective understanding the target language culture, thus, compared to find the unique value of different cultures, cultural consciousness and cultural self-confidence, cultivate their English ability. At the same time, the cultivation of critical thinking ability of English teachers

should permeate the whole teaching career. Through online course training, online MOOC courses, and the cultivation of the critical ability of the teaching and research Office, English teachers can constantly improve their cross-cultural communication ability and English critical ability, so as to make preparations for better teaching Of English knowledge and cultivating students' English critical ability.

5. CONCLUSION

After the new situation of global internationalization and the launch of "the Belt and Road" policy in China, agricultural colleges and universities need to cultivate a large number of cross-cultural interdisciplinary talents who are professional, proficient in foreign languages and familiar with international rules. Only by strengthening English critical thinking ability, innovation, positive thinking and problem-solving ability based on Traditional Chinese culture can help agricultural university students have the ability to solve practical problems in international communication, adapt to the different workplace environment and enhance their competitiveness.

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