

Analysis on Cultural Awareness of Senior English Compulsory Textbooks by the People's Education Press

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ABSTRACT

Culture is an important part of language learning and it has a great influence on students. "General High School English Curriculum Standard (2017 edition revised in 2020)" this book mentioned that cultural awareness had become one of the four key elements in English disciplinary core literacy, so the status of cultural awareness in the English discourse had been recognized. English textbooks are important resource in high school English teaching, which is the bridge to transmit the language knowledge and the main carrier to reflect cultural awareness. As the curriculum standard is adapted and affected, different editions of high school English textbooks had been applied across China, but the People's Education Press high school English textbooks are still widely used in China, playing an important role in most area of China for student's English learning. The authors selected the widely used teaching textbooks which is the compulsory high school English textbooks of the People's Education Press. The purpose of the study is to analyze the contents of cultural awareness in the textbooks from the perspective of the transmission of cultural knowledge in the content of cultural awareness. The People's Education Press of compulsory high school English textbooks focuses on the dissemination of the target language culture, for the output of the native culture is relatively lacking, and the understanding of contrast culture is even less. The study shows that the discourses of People's Education Press of the compulsory high school English textbooks reflect the contents of the cultural awareness to meet the requirements of the English disciplinary literacy and cultural awareness goals of the English subject, but the compilers of the textbooks still need to improve and perfect the content of the native culture and strengthen the self-confidence in the native culture, so as to make students form a good character of the self-esteem, the self-confidence, and the self-reliance, and make them communicate and spread Chinese culture through their cross-cultural ability. Finally, there are some suggestions to the textbook editors and teachers.

Keywords: *People's Education Press, High school English textbooks, Cultural awareness.*

1. INTRODUCTION

With the development and progress of the time and in the context of globalization, the students' cross-cultural consciousness and ability had become the focus all around the world. China is a language learning power, from 2001, for the first time, the Ministry of Education of "The Ordinary High School English Curriculum Standard

(experiment)", cultural awareness was put forward. From 2003, cultural awareness was put forward for the first time as one of the five teaching targets in "The Ordinary High School English Curriculum Standard (experiment)" and in the "General High School English Curriculum Standard (2017 edition revised in 2020)", cultural awareness already become one of the four key elements in the English disciplinary core literacy, and the importance of the cultural awareness be strengthened. There has a role in the basic English education of high school. High English teaching that cultivates and develops students' cultural awareness should have two

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aspects at least: one is the teaching cultural knowledge. Teachers not only teach language knowledge but also teach cultural knowledge; another is the excellent culture that permeates all the English teaching process. Teachers need to teach students how to use the language knowledge, at the same time, teachers need to transmit and teach the excellent language, with the background knowledge being deeply recognized by students, making the students know more English knowledge [1]. In the backgrounds of the English curriculum reform, the paper aims to realize the conditions of the teaching textbooks' cultural awareness and optimize the English textbooks. The research also aims to offer better reference opinions and feedback for the general textbook editors. The research aims to provide suggestions that English teachers should combine the locations and students of the specific learning, to choose and use English textbooks to improve the teaching quality. The study can also promote the ability of students' comprehensively and cultivate students' cultural awareness from the English curriculum correctly.

2. THE DEFINITION OF THE ENGLISH MATERIALS

The definition of the English teaching materials has a broad sense and a narrow sense. The broad sense of the teaching materials is referred to as the "teaching materials". These materials include all teaching materials used in and out of class by the teachers and students, such as textbooks, exercise books, activity books, storybooks, supplementary exercises, learning books by yourselves, the tapes and the teaching materials which have the shapes and so on, teachers who adapt and design materials by themselves also can call them teaching materials, using learning materials from the internet which also call them teaching materials. All in all, the broad sense of the teaching materials is not a binder or published books necessarily. No matter what they are, only the materials that there are good for the students can improve their knowledge or develop their skills, and all the materials can be called teaching materials. The narrow sense of the teaching materials is the textbook [2]. In the study, this paper only discusses about the narrow sense of studying teaching materials, referred as textbooks.

3. CULTURE AND CULTURAL AWARENESS

3.1 Culture

The sorts of culture, different researchers have different opinions. Cortazzi, M & Jin's culture was divided into the native culture, the target language culture, and the world culture [3]. In the basics of the Cortazzi, M & Jin' culture analogy, Ge-cheng Zhang, Hong-yan Zhang added the contrast culture and the other culture. From the culture analogy, the researchers can know that the native culture refers to the Chinese culture, the target language culture refers to the country which speaks English, the world culture is the culture except the target language culture and the native culture, the other culture means that no clear corresponding national and ethnic background culture, and the contrast culture refers to the different cultural comparison [4].

3.2 Cultural Awareness

In High school English teaching, the teachers aim to cultivate and develop student's cultural awareness, which should include two aspects at least: one is the teaching of the cultural knowledge, teachers not only transmit the language knowledge but also transmit the cultural knowledge, and the other is to integrate and penetrate the excellent culture into the whole process of English teaching. When teachers transmit the language knowledge to students, at the same time, they need to spread and penetrate excellent culture, firstly, teachers should realize the cultural background knowledge to deepen the understanding of English knowledge [1]. From the perspective of the international language, English is tied with a specific culture such as the British or the American culture. The related textbooks should conclude the content of the world culture across the world and the Chinese culture. English textbooks include Chinese and foreign cultural knowledge, China should encourage language learners to learn multicultural, which is referred to the culture of the country speaking English, or any other country's culture and Chinese culture [5]. The researchers pointed that learn cultural knowledge from textbooks aims to cultivate the students' cultural awareness and improve students' cross-cultural communication consciousness and ability [6].

4. CULTURE RELATED DATA STUDY IN MATERIALS

The study achievements are rich in high school English teaching textbooks analysis, from the Knowledge China Journal Full-text Database data statistics. Researches on high school English teaching materials are very rich, so far as, cultural research of China and foreign regions and countries, can be added up to a total number of

about 3,136. From the Knowledge China Journal Full-text Database on "high school English teaching textbooks", "high school English teaching textbooks + cultural awareness", "the People's Education Press high school English textbooks + cultural awareness" the authors searched that topics, from 2010-2020 (2021 is not over, statistics will be changed, so they haven't been added in), dividing the five years into a group to calculate, the specific results are as the following "Table 1":

Table 1. The materials data study

Topics	2010-2015	2016-2020
High School English teaching textbooks	1236	1286
High School English teaching textbooks + Cultural awareness	31	72
the People's Education Press High School English Textbooks + Cultural awareness	4	17

From "Table 1", the authors of this paper can conclude that the research of the high school English textbooks nearly decade maintaining steady growing trends, but the research still maintains high attention. The study of high school English textbooks on cultural awareness is less than high school English textbooks, one over ten less than the study of high school English textbooks research. On the study of high school English textbooks on cultural awareness, the research trends are still rising, and the researchers pay much attention to the study of the high school English textbooks on cultural awareness gradually, focusing on the importance of cultivating the cultural awareness that is good for high school English teaching, and then the researchers studied the cultural awareness of English textbooks for high schools. The cultural awareness of the teaching materials research is gradually specific, but the articles are relatively less but comparing with 2010-2015. Recently, cultural awareness researches are increasing gradually. On one hand, the study suggests that researchers pay much attention to culture awareness study, on the other hand, the study also shows that the paper on cultural awareness of English textbooks for high schools' attention is still insufficient, but the People's Education Press high school English textbooks are one of widely used around China, the researchers still worth of paying our attention to the importance of the study. In the context of globalization, education researchers, teachers, and students pay attention to the Chinese and foreign cultural background knowledge for better learning English concept have been advanced. The compulsory modules are designed to make students get the basic English language skills and form the active English learning attitude, so that students can

flexibly use the English learning strategies and cross-cultural communication consciousness and ability. As a foundation for all life-long learning, therefore, the study is necessary to analyze compulsory modules in five books.

5. THE BRIEF CONTENTS OF THE CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE PEOPLE'S EDUCATION PRESS HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

For the sorts of the People's Education Press high school English textbooks from the compulsory one to compulsory five, according to Cortazzi, M& Jin, culture was divided into, the native culture and the target language culture and the world culture. [3] Based on the culture classifications and Ge-cheng Zhang, Hong-yan Zhang supplied the contrast culture and the other culture [4], which can be seen in the "Table 2" and "Table 3" as following:

Table 2. Teaching Materials' cultural classification

	Unit	Reading 1	Reading 2
Module1	Unit1	the target language culture	the target language culture
	Unit2	the target language culture	the target language culture
	Unit3	the world culture	the world culture
	Unit4	the native culture	the native culture
	Unit5	the world culture	the world culture
Module2	Unit1	the world culture	the other culture
	Unit2	the world culture	the world culture
	Unit3	the other culture	the other culture
	Unit4	the other culture	the other culture
	Unit5	the other culture	the other culture
Module3	Unit1	the contrast culture	the contrast culture
	Unit2	the other culture	the other culture
	Unit3	the other culture	the other culture
	Unit4	the other culture	the other culture
	Unit5	the target language culture	the target language culture
Module4	Unit1	the world culture	the native culture
	Unit2	the native culture	the other culture
	Unit3	the target language culture	the target language culture
	Unit4	the contrast culture	the contrast culture
	Unit5	the target language culture	the target language culture
Module5	Unit1	the other culture	the other culture
	Unit2	the target language culture	the target language culture
	Unit3	the other culture	the other culture
	Unit4	the other culture	the other culture
	Unit5	the other culture	the other culture

a Including the reading 1 refers to the contents of the reading part in the teaching textbooks, reading 2 refers to Using Language part.

Table 3. Cultural classification total quantity list

Totally	The native culture	The target language culture	The world culture	The other culture	The contrast culture
Quantity	4	12	8	22	4

6. THE ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE IN PEOPLE'S EDUCATION PRESS HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

According to Cortazzi, M & Jin, culture was divided into, the native culture and the target language culture and the world culture, based on the culture classification and Ge-cheng Zhang, Hong-yan Zhang added the contrast culture and the other culture, and from the five parts, the authors can conclude that:

Module1, Unit1, all of the reading parts tell students the friendship, which includes the target language culture; Unit2, all of the readings are about the target language culture; Unit3, all of the reading parts are about travel in the Mekong River, which includes the world culture; Unit4, all of the readings are about Tangshan Earthquake, which includes the native culture; Unit5, introduces the condition of South Africa and the contribution of the Nelson Mandela, which includes the world culture.

Module2, Unit1, the first reading is about the world cultural heritage, which belongs to the world culture; the second reading is about the concept and the fact are difference, belongs to the other culture; Unit2, all of two readings introduce the Olympics and the origin of the Olympics, belonging to the world culture; Unit3, all of the reading parts introduce the technique, belongs to the other culture; Unit4, all of the two readings are animal protection, belongs to the other culture; Unit5, all of the two reading parts are about music, belongs to the other culture.

Module3, Unit1, all of the two reading parts introduce the festival about China and another foreign country, belongs to the contrast culture; Unit2, all of the two reading parts introduce the balanced diet, belongs to the other culture; Unit3, all of the two reading parts introduce a story about Mark Twain, belongs to the other culture; Unit4, all of the two reading parts introduce the stories about the Earth, full of the creation, belongs to the other culture; Unit4, all of the two reading parts introduce the main character traveling through Canada, belongs to the other culture.

Module4, Unit1, the first reading part introduces the wildlife protection, belongs to the world culture, the second reading part introduces a doctor about her achievements, belongs to the native culture; Unit2, the first reading part introduces the father of rice-Yuan Longping, belongs to the native culture, the second reading part introduces the fertilizers, belongs to the other culture; Unit3, the reading part introduces famous comedy actor-Charlie, belonging to target language culture; Unit4, all of the two reading parts introduce the difference among the different country for their behaviors and express their feelings, belonging to contrast culture; Unit5, all of the two reading parts introduce the theme parks and the space, belongs to the target language culture.

Module5, Unit1, the first reading part introduces the great doctor and the great scientist, belongs to the other culture; Unit2, all of the two reading introduce the UK, belonging to the target language culture; Unit3, all of the two readings introduce the Space experiment, belonging to the other culture; Unit4, all of the two reading introduce the experience about the news reporter, belonging to the other culture; Unit5, all of the two reading introduce the first aid, belonging to the other culture;

The cultural content types of the People's Education Press are biased towards the other culture and the target language culture, the specific contents are the way of life, tradition, history and geography, and so on. The characteristics of cultural contents are imbalanced, students learning styles are limited, and the contents are unfavourable required for students' English disciplinary core literacy with development of integration and comprehension. But from the perspective of cultural contents coverage, the People's Education Press cultural contents contain from the substance contents to the spiritual contents, but substance contents occupied the main contents. From the aspect of historical sites to modern science and technology, the textbook should conclude the content of introducing the main English speaking countries, including the five countries, such as Britain, the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. From the aspect of art content to sports content, it should also include the content of the celebrities and their contributions in different genders, such as Nelson Mandela, such great male, and Jane, so selfless dedication the female, letting students have a preliminary understanding of the culture in English speaking countries, including sports, art, politics, society, etc., making students

know the glamour of English culture from different aspects and accomplishing students' requirements in high school English learning needs, so as to cultivate the students' cultural awareness or cross-cultural communicative competence and ability.

7. CONCLUSION

According to the Curriculum Standards, cultural awareness includes five dimensions: the cultural knowledge, cultural awareness, cultural attitude, cultural character, and intercultural communicative competence. From the study of the People's Education Press high school English textbooks from Module 1 to Module 5 about the cultural knowledge to analysis, the authors can find that:

Firstly, the People's Education Press high school English textbooks have different cultural contents benefit students to better understand the culture from around the world, which can broad the sightseeing of the students in their cultural aspects. Otherwise, in the People's Education Press high school English modules textbooks, the world culture is less than the other culture and the target language culture, and contents of the contrast culture and the native culture are lost almost. In the introduction to China's long cultural history, textbooks mentioned some civilized achievements, such as the Tang and Song poetry and the four remains, but the contents scattered in different sections of the English textbooks, having no relationship among them. When the students learn the target language culture, at the same time, it is hard for students to deeply recognize native culture systematically, and the students are hard to compare the world culture and the other culture. The students should firstly use the excellent culture they learned before to develop and spread their excellent the native culture.

The Chinese and Western cultures have many difference points, but the culture product of human civilization. The authors study the contents of the Chinese and Western culture and display contrast of differences among different cultures, the authors show the richness and diversities of the Chinese and the Western cultures. In the environment of English-speaking to learn the culture, the researchers can able to see from different perspectives to show the glamour of the culture, which guides students to learn and respect the different contents and cultural difference, from this way, students can improve their learning ability to face the multicultural background.

Language learning must be based on the contents and meanings. In the English disciplinary teaching, cultural knowledge and cross-cultural awareness are the basis. Language is the carrier of the culture. Language learning cannot be far away from the cultural knowledge acquired, and it should contain the learning progress of analyzing and judging the attitude and value in the back of the language culture. Students acquire cultural knowledge through language learning, students develop logical thinking, critical thinking and creative thinking through comparison and analysis. Students aim to learn to criticize and do a good choice, which is a great challenge for all English teachers. English teachers must enrich their cultural knowledge and cultural ability, and the authors of this paper can see that English textbooks editors already focus on the English teacher's behaviour to opt for the diversity of the culture items.

The People's Education Press high school English textbooks were concluded all topics that the curriculum standards were mentioned, including travel and transportation, technique, literature, history, geography, value, entertainment and interrelationship, etc. If the teachers can choose other editions of textbooks supply to the students to expand students learning contents, teachers can add some topics about student's daily life. Teachers should intimate students learning interests, such as personal information, and interests, etc. Using this way, teachers can help students to recognize the cultural knowledge, at the same time, can also cultivate students' cultural awareness.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Xiaodan Zhang is responsible for the Paper framework design, wrote the manuscript and analyzed the teaching materials, Yan Li contributed to revising and editing.

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