

Chapter 358

On Aims and Contents of Intercultural Communicative English Teaching

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Abstract: In the context of globalization, people of different cultural backgrounds need to have effective communication. However, the status quo of China's college English teaching is that the students have very strong linguistic competence and practical skills, but lack social cultural competence and intercultural competence. Language knowledge and skills are emphasized while cultural factors are neglected. Therefore, this paper will analyze College English Teaching aims and contents based on intercultural communication to give some hints to the college English teaching.

Keywords: Intercultural communication · English teaching · Aim · Content

358.1 Introduction

Nowadays, with the rapid development of the globalization, being an organization of cultivating talents, universities must pay attention to equip students with international horizon, master English as a tool and the international communication principle, and understand cultures of different countries and peoples so that they can shoulder the responsibility to achieve communication between cultures. College English is an important tool for cross-culture, where culture teaching should be strengthened to enable students to achieve cross-cultural communication.

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358.2 College English Teaching Aims

In the light of the principle of intercultural communication, the ideal objective of college English teaching is to help students use English to communicate in the context of the target culture [1], that is, cultivate the students' intercultural communicative competence. Aims of intercultural communication college English teaching can be subdivided into the following aspects:

358.2.1 To Cultivate Students' Comprehensive Practical Ability

As far as English language teaching is concerned, we should cultivate students in terms of language competence, language skills and language use. In six aspects such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation and vocabulary, teaching contents, strategies and methods should be determined to offer corresponding courses and improve students' comprehensive practical ability.

358.2.2 To Cultivate Students' Intercultural Communication Cognitive Ability

The ultimate goal of college English teaching is to develop students' intercultural communicative competence, which is necessary for successful cross-cultural communication. Intercultural communication cognition refers to the process in which a person handles and processes language and culture information in a particular communicative environment. Intercultural cognitive ability is the basis to obtain cross-cultural knowledge and communication rules and improve cross-cultural awareness. In college English teaching based on intercultural communication, we should give priority to develop students' cross-cultural cognitive abilities.

358.2.3 To Cultivate Students' Intercultural Emotional Competence

Dictionary of Psychology defines emotion as people's attitude when experiencing whether objective things meet their own needs. In the process of communication, cultural and emotional ability mainly refers to the capacity for empathy communication and self psychological adjustment ability.

358.2.3.1 Empathy Ability

Cultivating empathy ability refers to the cultivation of students' ability to overcome ethnocentrism, empathy and the ability to form appropriate communication motivation. As a member of cultural groups, communicative individuals are ethnocentric and harbour cultural thinking stereotype, prejudice and resentment towards other cultures. The curriculum system based on cultivation of intercultural communication competence can increase the students' understanding of other cultures, improve intercultural communicative awareness and overcome the negative impact of ethnocentrism.

358.2.3.2 Self Psychological Adjustment Ability

In the context of intercultural communication, communicative subjects will have psychological anxiety or feel psychological pressure because of cultural differences such as culture shock. Therefore, to cultivate students' self psychological adjustment ability to accept the uncertain factors in the culture of the target language and maintain self-confidence and tolerance is the important goal of culture teaching.

358.2.4 To Cultivate Students' Intercultural Behavior Ability

Intercultural behaviour ability refers to the various kinds of abilities people use to make effective and appropriate intercultural communication such as the ability to use language appropriately, the ability to exchange information by nonverbal means, the ability to use communication strategies flexibly, the ability to build relationships with each other, and the ability to control the conversation, way and process. Comprehensive language application ability is an important target of cross-cultural teaching, which can be achieved through cross-cultural communication course system.

358.3 Culture Teaching Contents

Cultural contents are complicated, so teachers need to make the appropriate adjustments and classification to the cultural contents and combine with language teaching and science in teaching practice. In English classroom teaching, culture teaching content can be summarized into five aspects:

358.3.1 English Words and Their Cultural Connotations

Words carry a large amount of information on cultures, which is a clue for foreigners to understand national cultures. The cultural connotation of words in English includes the reference category, emotional and associative meaning of English words and the figurative meaning and extended meaning of idioms, proverbs allusions and idioms. The cultural differences between Chinese and English words are one of the main obstacles in English learning.

358.3.2 British and American Cultural Background Knowledge

Background knowledge is an important part of English culture. In the process of reading comprehension, the key is to activate the readers' knowledge schemata, which allows students to use their background knowledge correctly to fill some discontinuous implementation gaps so that other information in the article can become a unified body [2].

358.3.3 English Syntax, Discourse Structure and Thinking Way of British and American People

An English sentence is normally longer than a Chinese one, with verbs as the core and having clear tree structure. It focuses on analysis while a Chinese sentence has no strict linguistic constraints and emphasizes parataxis. English discourse structure is generally straight while Chinese discourse structure is spiral or curved. The theme of an English article is clear and logical while a Chinese article is euphemistic. In the process of language acquisition British and American people form a habit of logical thinking while Chinese form a habit of prominent image thinking.

358.3.4 English Communication and Behavior Style

Communication style differences can be summarized as difference between direct and indirect, difference between linear and circular type, difference between confidence and humility, difference between being scanty of words and speaking with fervor and assurance, difference between being detailed and compact. Only the two sides are aware of the differences in advance and consciously make adjustment can they communicate smoothly. Moreover, teachers should guide students to understand the performance of British and American people in the aspects of verbal behavior performance and nonverbal behavior performance.

358.3.5 British and American Values

Values related to intercultural communication mainly include the relationship between man and nature, interpersonal relationship, attitude to “change”, dynamic or static, being or doing and time orientation. In British and American cultural context, people advocate individualism including personal struggle, independence, privacy protection, the pursuit of freedom and difference nonverbal behavior performances.

358.4 Conclusion

All in all, relationship between the language and the culture being the source, linguistic theory and constructivism the base, the author builds the thought of intercultural teaching and discusses in details the aims and contents of college English teaching to provide some references for English teaching reform.

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