

Cultural Context and College English Reading Teaching from the Perspective of Relevance Theory

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Keywords: Relevance Theory; Cultural Context; English Reading Teaching

Abstract: Relevance theory holds that the process of understanding dialogue is a reasoning process that depends on context. Readers can get the most relevant information and context to understand the text information they are reading. To seek the best relevance is to follow the principle of relevance in reading, and relevance comes from contextual effects. From the perspective of relevance theory, this paper explores the importance of cultural context in College English reading teaching and the ways to cultivate students' cultural context awareness.

1. Introduction

Reading is an important way to acquire knowledge, understand things and develop intelligence and emotion [1]. English reading ability is the basis and premise of developing other language skills, one of the important signs to measure a person's English level, and also an important goal of English learning. However, reading comprehension is not a passive literacy process, but a psychological process of interaction between active language and thinking. The contents of the reading materials cover history, geography, economy, politics, science and technology, sports, health, environment, life, customs, customs, customs and other aspects [2]. Therefore, readers' cognition of the world and their understanding of specific knowledge of a certain aspect will directly affect reading speed and comprehension. Therefore, in the process of College English reading teaching, textual teaching should be emphasized, that is, taking texts as the basic unit, explaining words and sentences around the basic content of texts, analyzing the causes of characters or events, and summarizing the main ideas and writing skills of articles [3]. In discourse teaching, students' listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities, especially reading abilities, are comprehensively trained. Linguists Beaugrande and Dressler believe that as a communicative activity, a text must have seven criteria: cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, contextuality, informativeness and intertextuality. This paper will focus on the role of cultural context in reading and the ways to cultivate English learners' awareness of cultural context [4].

2. Correlation Theory

In the 1980s, Dan Sperber, a French cognitive psychologist, and Deirdre Wilson, a renowned pragmatist at the University of London, proposed relevance theory. Relevance theory holds that the process of understanding dialogue is a reasoning process that depends on context, a process of recognizing the speaker's intention and a process of reasoning and communication [5]. In order to understand the text information read, the reader must incorporate the information into explicit reasoning and deductive reasoning. The main basis of deduction and reasoning is to obtain the maximum relevance of information and context [6]. To seek the best relevance is to follow the principle of relevance in reading, and relevance comes from contextual effects. The more successful people think about texts and contextual assumptions, the clearer the internal relevance of texts; the clearer the internal relevance of texts, the better contextual effect people can achieve, so that they can correctly understand information [7].

Context is simply the environment of speech, and the first time to put forward the concept of "context" is in the 1920s, human linguist Malinowski [8]. He pointed out that if there is no linguistic environment, words will have no meaning, and words can only have a certain meaning if

they are in a situation. He divides context into two categories: cultural context and situational context. In the 1960s, with the rise and development of sociolinguistics and pragmatics, the study of context has made great progress. Many linguists (such as Firth, Hymes, Halliday, etc.) have studied context from different perspectives and expounded their respective contextual perspectives [9]. From the perspective of verbal communication, context can be divided into intra-textual context and foreign-textual context. Context in a text refers to the context created in the text; foreign context in a text includes situational context and cultural context related to the producer and receiver of the text. Professor Hu Zhuanglin classifies context into three categories: linguistic context, situational context and cultural context. Cultural context refers to the history, culture and customs of the language community in which the speaker or author belongs [10]. To be familiar with the cultural context is to understand the country's "spiritual language", that is, to understand their social culture. In English reading, students' understanding and mastery of the differences between the cultural context in which they live and the cultural context in which the text producers live, as text receivers, has become an important factor for students to improve their reading speed and understanding ability.

3. Ways to Cultivate Students' Cultural Context Awareness in College English Reading Teaching

3.1. The role of cultural context in English reading

Chinese linguist Hu Zhuanglin divides context into three categories: linguistic context, situational context and cultural context. Linguistic context refers to the internal environment of the text; situational context refers to the situation when the text is produced, the characteristics, nature of events and the theme, time, place and manner of conversation; cultural context refers to the cultural reality and people's living habits as the basic source of language, which is similar to Nunan's empirical context. Language is the product of culture and the highest form of culture. Cultural context is a social phenomenon formed in the course of long-term historical development, which is subconscious and thinking coupling. Therefore, the difference of cultural context easily leads to the deviation of understanding, so the input of cultural context is helpful to the correct understanding of the reading text. From the perspective of Relevance Theory, pragmatic inference needs to consider context in order to reach a logical conclusion with relevance. Vocabulary in a text is the main bearer of meaning. It is of great significance for understanding a text to derive lexical meaning in a specific cultural context.

According to schema theory, language schema, content schema and formal schema determine the reader's reading ability. The content of an article is a major factor in the difficulty of the article, and the knowledge of foreign cultural background is an important part of the content schema. Many studies have shown that background knowledge of different cultures plays an obvious role in foreign language reading comprehension and memory. Therefore, in order to improve English reading comprehension, readers need to master appropriate cultural knowledge. When reading a text, the reader should be able to use the cultural knowledge he has mastered, clearly understand what kind of meaning he expresses in what context and what kind of linguistic features he has.

3.2. Constructing a culture-oriented context teaching model

Relevance theory holds that context has a great influence on the understanding of semantics and plays a restrictive role in the understanding of semantics. Therefore, teachers must consider students' knowledge structure in preparing lessons, provide students with background knowledge and cultural knowledge needed to understand the text, and use the form of questions to lead out the content of the text, so that they can be prepared in knowledge, psychology and language. In the process of teaching, we should guide students to pay attention to the social background of the works, reveal the social and cultural significance of Keywords, constantly guide students to grasp the differences of cultural connotations and broaden students' cultural horizons.

Cultural learning is an interactive process. Establish a student-centered model, including

classrooms where other students are peers, as shown in Figure 1. Teachers'role is to give students the center on the stage of the classroom, provide an environment for students to play a positive role, and play the role of inquiry in their own learning. Teachers, as instructors, consultants or mentors, are expected to acquire students'personal interests and understanding, as well as the common skills and knowledge of society. What teachers can do is to help create conditions for students to learn. Teachers not only understand the theme, but also need to be good at using the current teaching methods, focusing on the psychological learning atmosphere and the internal process of learning. In this process, teachers may become “guides” or “consultants” or “information resources when needed”.

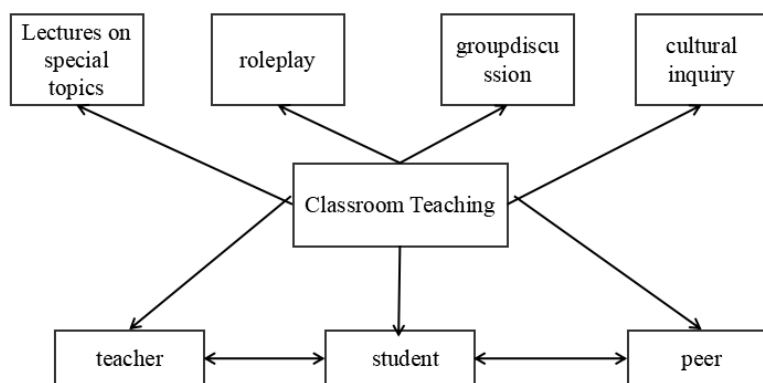


Fig.1. The cultural context construction model

In order to construct a reasonable cultural context in classroom teaching, teachers should pay attention to the following aspects: there are great differences between target language culture and mother tongue culture, and when target language culture enters mother tongue culture, it will cause conflicts in communication. If teachers can make good use of this cultural conflict and guide students to make cross-cultural comparison or comparison of language items in different cultural contexts, students can avoid pragmatic failures caused by cultural misreading in practical communication. The presupposition, Retrospect and Prospect of the cultural context of the target language should not be confined to the introduction of classroom teaching, but should combine a language project and its related items in the target language culture with appropriate teaching methods and activities, so as to extend it to all aspects of classroom teaching so as to enable students to teach in class. In the process of classroom teaching, “immersion” is always in the cultural context of the target language, and acquisition of the target language culture is imperceptible. Teachers should play various roles flexibly according to the teaching environment, teaching objects and teaching contents, design Participatory and interactive classroom activities, so that students can fully mobilize various senses such as listening, speaking, reading and writing to acquire, observe, analyze and process various language information in the process of participation and interaction, and exercise in “real” language. Ability of oral expression and intercultural communication in context. In addition, teachers should timely evaluate and feedback students'classroom performance to ensure a virtuous circle of teaching effect.

3.3. Enriching the knowledge of cultural context through extracurricular reading activities

As Chinese and English-speaking people live in different cultural backgrounds, there are great differences in customs, religious beliefs, thinking patterns, moral values and so on. Language is the reflection of the objective world. The differences in cultural connotations between China and the West inevitably lead to the differences in language phenomena such as word meaning, sentence meaning, associative meaning and metaphorical meaning, which will inevitably become an important interference factor for students to improve their English reading ability. By carrying out extracurricular reading activities, students can read relevant magazines, newspapers, books and so on. This can not only improve students'reading comprehension ability and reading speed, but also broaden their knowledge and enhance their comprehensive ability of understanding, analysis and

problem solving.

The process of learning a language is the process of recognizing culture. Extracurricular reading can organically combine cultural learning with language learning. Therefore, teachers should actively and actively guide students to carry out extracurricular reading activities. By arranging bibliographies of extracurricular reading related to English-speaking countries, including ancient Greek and Roman myths, biblical stories, general knowledge of English-speaking countries, society and culture of English-speaking countries, teachers should help students understand and understand these contents through extracurricular reading. Understand the society, family, culture, education, history, geography, customs and daily life of English-speaking countries. These cultural knowledge and background knowledge not only enrich students' knowledge of cultural context, but also cultivate students' awareness of cultural context, thereby improving students' reading comprehension ability.

3.4. Strengthen the contrast between Chinese and western cultures to overcome cultural disturbance in English reading

Relevance theory holds that context is systematic knowledge, and readers can consciously or unconsciously use existing cultural knowledge for reasoning in a certain cultural context. Due to the great differences between Chinese culture and English-speaking countries' cultures, this difference leads to the differences in form, content system and pragmatic conditions between English and Chinese. Therefore, in reading teaching activities, if students have differences in reading comprehension caused by the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, the author makes a comparative analysis of the two different cultures. It is very necessary to reveal the differences. Teachers can consciously strengthen the comparison between Chinese and Western cultures and analyze the different language phenomena determined by different cultural factors.

Choose appropriate reading materials and ask students to read quickly within the prescribed time in order to grasp the theme or theme of the article. If students have difficulty in independently generalizing the topic, they can choose a correct answer in the form of a choice question. This will help students grasp the general idea of the article as a whole, improve their contextual awareness and avoid the drawbacks of word-by-word reading. Firstly, students should be trained to predict the whole article, such as guessing the main idea and content of the article by looking at the title; secondly, they should be trained to predict and infer the content that the author wants to express by constantly asking them to think about what the next content of the article will be. The acquisition of cultural background knowledge is a process of continuous learning and accumulation. Teachers should use elective courses and cultural lectures to expand students' relevant knowledge. We can choose the content belonging to the mainstream culture to let students understand the Western cultural customs and traditions, accumulate certain knowledge of cultural context, and improve their contextual response ability. In addition to cultural background knowledge, the lack of common knowledge among students is also one of the reasons for reading difficulties. Teachers should guide them to read books in other fields, broaden their horizons and broaden their knowledge. The more common knowledge students have, the more they can help them quickly construct relevant contexts.

4. Conclusion

Nowadays, many people advocate using pure English to teach in English classrooms. They think that one of the difficulties in Chinese learning English is the lack of influence of language environment. Teachers using pure English to teach can create a good context for students' learning and thus achieve good learning results. However, this view ignores the students' uneven English proficiency. Teaching in pure English will bring psychological pressure to some students and discourage their enthusiasm for learning. In the course of teaching, teachers should also choose the appropriate teaching methods according to the characteristics of the content itself. Therefore, teachers' proper use of Code-switching in classroom teaching plays a vital role in students' concentration, improving learning efficiency and deepening their knowledge acquisition and understanding.

Acknowledgement

- 1) Higher Education Research Project of Jilin Institute of Higher Education in 2018: Cultural Context and College English Reading Teaching from the Perspective of Relevance Theory;
- 2) The 13th Five-Year Plan of Educational Science of Jilin Province, 2018: Research and Practice of the Teaching Model of “Classification+Segmentation+Gradation” in College English under the Background of Internationalization of Talent Cultivation;
- 3) The Ninth China Foreign Language Education Fund Project: Research and Practice of the Model of “Classification+Segmentation+Stratification” in College English under the Background of Internationalization of Talent Cultivation.

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