

A Study on the Teaching Practice of English Culture Introduction from the Perspective of Applied Linguistics

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Abstract: As a kind of international language, English is widely used in people's work and life, as well as some business activities. From the perspective of the development of communication theories, introducing English culture has been gradually highlighted by the teachers. Culture, an important symbol of a country or a nation, is a very important element when people study languages. On the basis of understanding and mastering the culture of a country or a nation, it is beneficial for students to master the language of the country. Moreover, to combine and integrate the culture with the students' study can improve their abilities of understanding and appreciating the differences of languages and cultures. In order to develop students' intercultural communicative competence and improve their English proficiency, this paper studies the teaching practice of English culture introduction from the perspective of applied linguistics.

1. Introduction

As the rapid development of China's economy and the strengthening of the opening up policy, English, as one of the universal languages in the world, is of great significance in the fields of economic development, business negotiation, academic exchanges, and so on. Every stage of education in China attaches great importance to English teaching; the students in primary schools should begin to learn English. As the increase of their age, the English knowledge that the students have to learn becomes more extensive^[1]. As language subjects, English and Chinese have some similarities in teaching, but for Chinese students, the Chinese language has been integrated into their daily lives and works as they come to the world, so it is easier to learn. However, English, as a foreign language in non-speaking English countries, is hard for them to achieve good learning results by means of "force-feeding". Therefore, it is an effective teaching method for the students to understand and learn English through teachers' the English culture introduction.

2. The Origin and Development of Applied Linguistics

Applied linguistics was put forward by Polish linguist Baudouin de Courtenay in 1980. At first, the concept of applied linguistics was not noticed, and it developed slowly until the 1940s when it had become an independent system and an independent subject in linguistics^[2]. Since then, applied linguistics has been paid more and more attention. It is between the description of human language theory and language education, and has a great influence in the field of education. Applied linguistics emphasizes the application of language, and Gui Shichun, a famous linguist in China, has made a more detailed division of the subject. Up to now, the concept of applied linguistics has had a certain influence in all countries in the world. In the field of Chinese education, the relevant concepts and contents of applied linguistics are also effectively applied in the teaching of language. In broad sense, applied linguistics contains more contents and involves a wide range, which refers to solve problems in other disciplines by using linguistic theoretical knowledge. In narrow sense, it can refer to the application of a language. Nowadays, it is more frequent for different countries to interact and communicate in the world. So it is necessary for every student to learn a second language in addition to one's mother tongue.

3. The Teaching of Culture Introduction

The teaching practice of culture introduction is not a new topic. American applied linguist Sapir once said that “A kind of language exists with a certain environment, it cannot exist without culture, and it also cannot be divorced from traditions and beliefs inherited by the society.” Language is a symbol of social progress and a tool for people to communicate and interact in the world. It is based on the cultural foundation and develops together with the development of culture. In the subsequent language education and teaching, it is very feasible to carry out language teaching by means of cultural introduction. English, one of the universal languages in the world, is also an important part of Chinese education at all stages. Good English attainment could not only promote the development of the students themselves, but also enhance the overall English ability in China, and strengthen the communication and interaction with other countries, so as to provide support for the further development of China's economy and the construction to some extent^[3]. From the perspective of applied linguistics, it is an effective way to improve the teaching and learning results by introducing culture into English teaching and combining English teaching with the construction of students' language framework. On the basis of mastering the basic knowledge of English, teachers should introduce the language culture, history culture, social culture of some countries, such as United Kingdom, the United States and etc., which is to let the students experience different learning situations, and feel the cultural customs of foreign countries, as well as the historical backgrounds in the classroom. In this way, students can establish the awareness of English intercultural communication, and explore more English language knowledge independently and actively. They can understand and master English well. From the perspective of applied linguistics, the introduction of English culture can exert a positive influence on English listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation and so on.

4. The Practical Methods of Introducing English Culture in Teaching from the Perspective of Applied Linguistics

Listening is the basic content of English teaching. From the perspective of applied linguistics, the introduction of English culture has a great influence on English listening teaching^[4]. In practical English teaching, most English teachers are Chinese. Their own habits, such as pronunciation, abstract thinking of language and intonation, have a great influence on the students. It is very difficult to change the students' habits in the "Chinese style" English pronunciation environment for a long time and it is not easy to complete the listening test in pure British English and American English. Being able to understand is the first step in English listening teaching and is also difficult for students to overcome in their study. The teachers should introduce English culture into daily English listening teaching by means of pure English pronunciation documentaries, films and television program via network and multimedia broadcast, etc., so that the students could feel and experience the environment of native English. What's more, by listening, remembering and understanding good English learning materials, they can try to figure out the right usage of a same word or phrase in different contexts, as well as the correct usage of the grammars in the imperceptible process of English learning. In the long run, the students can have a certain understanding of the environment of the native English and also have a certain understanding of the pronunciation characteristics of English so that they can better understand the English listening materials.

Oral English is very important in English teaching and is the basis of English pronunciation. In the past teaching, the Chinese students' oral English is weak, which leads to the unbalanced development of their English language ability. Although many students have large vocabulary, accurate grammar and strong writing ability, their oral English is the poorest. Under the influence of Chinese exam-oriented education, the students pay too much attention to the theory and written knowledge in the process of English learning, which can help them to deal with all kinds of written questions, but once they speak English, the biggest problem comes out. In the process of the communication between Chinese students and foreign friends, it is very difficult for some students

to express their points flexibly in oral English. Instead, they communicate with others following the language thinking of Chinese, for example, “Have you had your meal or not ” when greeting. Although there is no grammatical error in this sentence, but foreigners may regard it as being impolite and even a sense of invasion of privacy. After all, these problems are derived from cultural differences. So, to introduce the English culture in the teaching, and to have a good understand about the foreigner’s linguistic conventions, the daily syntactical structures, and the characteristics can help the students practice their oral English efficiently ^[5]. For instance, there are great differences between Chinese and Western meeting ceremonies and table manners. Only from the perspective of foreign culture can the Chinese communicate with the other side more smoothly, so as to enhance the impression of foreign friends on the Chinese.

Reading is an important part in English teaching. The introduction of English culture in reading teaching is an effective way to expand students’ cultural horizons and promote students’ further study. In reading teaching process, teachers should pay attention to the introduction of original English cultural materials. As we all know, in China, although English textbooks have a large proportion of reading materials, most of the actual contents of reading materials are related to famous international scenery, famous people, historical stories, including biography, history, scenery, festivals and so on, and these materials are always lack of pertinence. In addition, the English teaching materials in China include many Chinese elements, that is, introducing Chinese history and culture, characters, scenery, scenes, etc., such as the Great Wall, Spring Festival and so on. As a result, it is difficult to learn English from the historical and cultural background of English speaking countries. Therefore, the teachers should introduce the original teaching materials to the students, so as to guide the students to understand the cultural backgrounds of the foreign countries, such as the national spirits and the religious believes. On the basis of having a good understanding of the profound cultural backgrounds, the students can learn English with a heart of respect and understand the reading materials, and then they can integrate themselves into the English culture and appreciate the beauty of English.

In the writing teaching, the English culture introduction has the obvious function. In the past when the students learned to write in English , they focused on the topics which were in the textbook or given by their teachers. Generally speaking, if the students have the following solid English foundation, such as the rich framework of the English, good English grammar, large English vocabulary, there is no problem in completing a high-quality English article. In order to improve their writing ability, some students even develop the habit of writing English diary every day. However, from the perspective of applied linguistics, the study of English is not only translating Chinese into English, but eventually applying English to work and life ^[6]. In the process of writing, in order to avoid the past writing practice mode, teachers can assign students the task of understanding English culture. For instance, let students understand English culture via library, network and other resources. After the understanding and learning, the teachers could ask the students to write articles about their feelings for the English culture that they are interested in, or to express their opinions in English. In this way, the students could present their feelings and understanding on English culture in English words and sentences. It is helpful for students to cultivate their English thinking habits and to promote their ability in accumulating the knowledge of English culture.

Translation is an important part in English teaching. It is also a systematic process, which is based on the understanding of the cultural differences between the East and the West. There are many differences in the expression of different things and situations between the East and the West. In particular, in the commercial negotiation, an error in translating a word may lead to the failure of the whole negotiation. If the culture and the etiquette of the other party have not been fully understood, it is easy to make a mistake in the translation, then an awkward situation would be occurred. On the basis of fully understanding the English culture, we can get rid of the restriction of the cultural differences, so in the English teaching, the teachers should not only pay attention to the accumulation of the grammar and the basic knowledge, but also the cognition and understanding of the foreign cultures. The translators must master the key points that foreigners often care and

concern and know the cultural background behind the translation so that the content to be expressed can be translated accurately, and the other party can enjoy the feelings of being respected and understood.

5. Summary

From the perspective of applied linguistics, It is an important issue for the teachers to introduce English culture into the teaching activities and explore teaching modes that are conducive to students. English culture introduction should be highlighted in teaching process . The ultimate goal of English education is to improve students' English ability, to be able to use English flexibly, to communicate with others in English in their lives and works. However, it is difficult to achieve the expected teaching goal by simply learning the knowledge in English textbooks. By means of broadening the cultural horizons, and learning English on the basis of understanding the cultural background and cultural history, the students can understand and apply English from the perspective of the national culture, which is more helpful for them to learn and develop the foreign language. In the future, the influence of English and Chinese will be further expanded, and the intersection of the two will be more and more extensive; in the future it is also an inevitable task that teachers must explore a variety of effective teaching modes in English teaching.

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