College English Teaching Strategies from the Perspective of Cultural Self-confidence

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ABSTRACT

In current international cultural exchange and college English teaching, compared to the prevalence of Western culture, China’s fine traditional culture has not obtained due emphasis. Based on an analysis of reasons for the adverse situation, this paper puts forward college English teaching strategies from the perspective of cultural self-confidence, including: strengthening cultural awareness in intercultural communication, systematizing the content of China’s fine traditional culture teaching, applying effective teaching strategies, and promoting teachers’ ability to disseminate China’s fine traditional culture.1

INTRODUCTION

With the deepening of economic and cultural globalization, the role of culture in international communication has been increasingly valued. However, while most studies emphasize the importance of western culture, in international cultural exchange and college English teaching the value of China’s fine traditional culture has not received due attention. In view of the “aphasia” of Chinese culture in college English teaching [1], it is necessary to propose college English teaching strategies guided by cultural self-confidence.

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CURRENT SITUATION OF CHINA’S FINE TRADITIONAL CULTURE BEING NEGLECTED

With the increase of intercultural communication, a large number of Western literary works and film and television products have been introduced, and the western values, religious beliefs, customs, lifestyles contained in them come into our view. Meanwhile, in college English teaching, to ensure the authentic nature of the language, many textbooks select articles from British and American publications, and teachers will also explain the knowledge of English in detail to introduce the cultural connotations of English language. The students are full of longing for the western festivals and customs.

Compared with the understanding and enthusiasm for western culture, teachers and students’ understanding of the Chinese nation’s long and splendid traditional culture is obviously insufficient. In cross-cultural communication, the strong and one-way input of Western culture has aroused the attention of our academic circles, and Chinese scholars have begun to add the content of Chinese traditional culture to language teaching. But at present, the small amount of Chinese traditional culture teaching content is concentrated in Chinese kung fu, paper-cutting, national song and dance, Yin and Yang, Feng Shui and other “novel and unique” external forms [2], the cultural information is fragmented and unsystematic, the introduction of the information is superficial, only limited to language learning, which leads to the misunderstanding that Chinese culture is only embodied in Taijiquan, Jasmine, Chinese knot and so on, and lacks deep understanding of Chinese nation’s values and cultural tradition.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE REASONS FOR CHINA’S FINE TRADITIONAL CULTURE BEING NEGLECTED

Incorrect Understanding of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication, as a communication and connection between different cultures, emphasizes two-way understanding and interaction. However, due to the history, economy and thinking patterns, many people in our country have a partial understanding of intercultural communication that is we tend to treat the western culture as an object of respecting, learning and mastering, while at the same time ignoring, belittling or negating Chinese culture, and lacking equal communication consciousness.

Partial Understanding of Culture Teaching in English Teaching

As a carrier of culture, languages can express, spread, and influence culture [3]. Language teaching contains the culture teaching. However, in current college English teaching in China, there are serious deviations in the understanding of
culture teaching. When designing culture-related teaching content, teachers either focus on the differences between Chinese and western culture or ignore the value of China’s fine traditional culture and just focus on western culture.

**Teachers’ Deficiency in Disseminating China’s Fine Traditional Culture**

College English teachers are both learners of English language and communicators of culture. However, it must be acknowledged that most college English teachers’ cultural knowledge reserve and intercultural communication consciousness are not adequate [4]. Due to the superficial and fragmented understanding of China’s fine traditional culture, it is hard for the teachers to shoulder the responsibility to disseminate the relevant cultural knowledge.

**COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING STRATEGIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CULTURAL SELF-CONFIDENCE**

**Strengthening Cultural Consciousness in Intercultural Communication**

The serious imbalance of cultural input and output cannot be underestimated. In this respect, we must strengthen the consciousness of equality in cross-cultural communication, reduce the superstition and obedience to the Western culture, eliminate the self-denial of China’s fine traditional culture, take the initiative to excavate, draw the essence of, and highlight China’s fine traditional culture. We should follow the principle of “seeking harmony in difference”, maintain our own characteristics, so as to show the world the essence of Chinese culture, values and national wisdom with a broad mind and cultural self-confidence.

To promote China’s outstanding traditional culture in various forms, we should not only resist the erosion of Western cultural hegemony, ensure the important status of Chinese culture in the world cultural structure, but also promote the diversified and healthy development of world culture.

**Systematizing the Content of China’s Fine Traditional Culture Teaching**

The following are criteria concerning the choice of cultural resources in school curricula: First, the selection should be international in nature, and its views are of all humanity; secondly, the visual image, story and knowledge provided by teachers should embody all kinds of cultural groups in culture comprehensively; thirdly, students should have access to true knowledge of the similarities and differences between ethnic groups and cultures; lastly, teachers should give an objective introduction to the cultural communities of immigrants and ethnic groups. To this end, China’s education authorities should actively organize experts and educators in the field of culture, based on the principle of value, objectivity and pluralism, establish the teaching content of China’s fine
traditional culture as soon as possible. The content should cover the core values of socialism with Chinese characteristics, China's basic national conditions, China's unique national culture, traditions, etiquette culture and festival culture, and so on.

Applying Effective Teaching Strategies

Culture teaching cannot be simply understood as a static process of imparting cultural knowledge, but should be regarded as the process of dynamic creation, is the individual's existing cultural knowledge and new values of the integration of the construction process [5]. On the one hand, we should adopt an equal and tolerant mentality to carry out cultural contrast and identify the differences by comparison. The application of cultural contrast strategy is to put Chinese culture in the context of other cultures and to understand the similarities and differences between Chinese culture and other cultures through a lot of systematic and scientific contrastive analysis of cultural phenomena. The purpose of making the contrast and comparison is to prevent the tendency of regarding the values and customs belonging to only one particular ethnic group as the universal belief and behavior norms of mankind [6]. In applying this strategy, we should focus on solving the problems in cross-cultural communication, with the emphasis put on synchronic contrast. It is extremely necessary to overcome the one-sided, stereotyped and narrow “cultural stereotypes”, and to avoid replacing the rich cultural connotations with the superficial cultural forms. Teachers should guide the students to see the essence through phenomena, so that the students can develop a more objective, insightful, and rational attitude to identifying the similarities and differences of different cultures. On the other hand, teachers should endeavor to provide students with more opportunities to experience China’s fine traditional culture. The application of the cultural experience strategy is to combine the classroom environment with the social environment to strengthen the organic relationship between culture and society, culture and life, students and society, and students and life.

Promoting Teachers’ Ability to Disseminate China’s Fine Traditional Culture

Language teachers’ own cultural background and cross-cultural communication experience have direct effects on the organization of teaching content, and teachers’ability and teaching attitude also play an important role in culture teaching. In view of the weak knowledge structure and inadequate culture knowledge reserve of college English teachers in China, the following measures should be taken to improve teachers’ability. First of all, teachers should be encouraged to improve their knowledge structure, to learn Chinese excellent traditional culture, to understand the historical origins and development process of Chinese culture, to form a holistic and comprehensive grasp of Chinese excellent traditional culture, and to understand and grasp the core values of Chinese excellent traditional culture in particular. Secondly, enhance the teacher's
cultural sensitivity. College English teachers should be provided with overseas training, as the opportunity of studying and exchanging abroad can offer foreign language teachers the opportunity to be in the context of cross-cultural communication, so that they can realize the cultural differences through hands-on practice, strengthen the consciousness of intercultural communication and cultivate the ability of intercultural communication. Finally, improve the teachers’ comprehensive ability of teaching. Teachers should also have a wide range of pedagogical and psychological theoretical knowledge and grasp the modern teaching technology to achieve a satisfactory teaching effect.

CONCLUSIONS

In the context of the increasing frequency of intercultural communication today, while understanding and respecting the Western culture, China’s foreign exchange and college English teaching should, uphold the excellent traditional culture of China, promote and disseminate Chinese culture in the world with high cultural self-confidence, and give priority to China’s fine traditional culture in the cultural arena worldwide.

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