

Research on College English Vocabulary Teaching Reform from the Perspective of Culture Introduction

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Keywords: Culture introduction, College english, Vocabulary teaching

Abstract: Vocabulary is the basic unit of language. Vocabulary learning plays an irreplaceable role in the whole English teaching system. Vocabulary teaching should also be concerned by college teachers and students. However, in the actual teaching process, College English vocabulary teaching seems to be paid little attention. Many students feel that vocabulary is part of learning from primary school, and they are familiar with it, so they don't pay too much attention. On the contrary, vocabulary teaching is of rich cultural connotation. If vocabulary learning is ignored, it will have negative effect on the cultivation of cultural literacy and thus the improvement of the quality of vocabulary teaching. On basis of this phenomenon, this paper focuses on the reform of College English vocabulary teaching from the perspective of culture introduction, seeking to provide some references and shed some lights on relevant work.

1. Introduction

Vocabulary learning is an important part of language learning. It is not only one of the direct considerations for students' effectiveness in learning English and the improvement of their English level, but also highly related to the smooth realization of College English teaching objectives. To put it in another level, vocabulary itself is the carrier of culture, which is closely relevant to English culture. Therefore, teaching vocabulary is also teaching culture. For a long time, the ignorance of the theoretical research and practical training of students' vocabulary has resulted in the marginalization of vocabulary teaching in the acquisition of foreign language, and the learning of vocabulary has been based on the mastery of pronunciation, spelling and part of speech changes to a large extent. It is thus natural for students to have a superficial and partial knowledge of vocabulary, which is not conducive to both the introduction of and the improvement of the effectiveness of College English teaching.

2. Connotation of College English Vocabulary Teaching

2.1 Concept

According to the definition of foreign scholars, the meaning of vocabulary can be divided into several different types, such as the meaning of concept, the meaning of connotation, the meaning of style, the meaning of emotion, the meaning of collocation and the meaning of association. Among

them, conceptual meaning is the most basic one in vocabulary learning, and it is also what students should master most. If there is no conceptual meaning, there is no need for vocabulary to exist and no way to transmit and communicate language through vocabulary as well. The meaning of connotation is attached to vocabulary and can be changed due to the different times and the transformation of ethnic regions. It is precisely because of this that the meaning of connotation is often the most unstable. With the development of society and the change of times, the meaning of connotation may be eliminated and new connotation may also be produced. In different nations and countries, the words used to express the same meaning will also be given additional meaning under the influence of culture and customs. The new given connotative meaning has no necessary relevance to the original one, and readers or authors may give vocabulary a new context and different feelings. However, under the influence of cultural knowledge, if they do not understand the Connotation Differences and meaning of words, they cannot understand the whole picture of words and record all the information of the existence of words [1]. From the perspective of cross-cultural communication and cultural introduction, we must properly understand the overall picture of language and culture in order to make vocabulary means of communication and thus achieve the goal of communication.

2.2 Differences between General Vocabulary and Cultural Vocabulary

From the perspective of language elements, vocabulary and culture are inextricably related, especially the relationship among vocabulary, pronunciation and culture, followed by the relationship between grammar and culture, which can not be ignored, but in any case, only vocabulary is most closely related to culture. Some scholars divide vocabulary into cultural vocabulary and general vocabulary, and hold the belief that that cultural vocabulary refers to the language of specific cultural categories. It is the most direct reflection of different national cultures. The vocabularies of cultural types are different from the general ones. Both of them can be defined in terms of the following two standards. Firstly, cultural vocabulary carries relatively clear national cultural information and implies a deeper level of national cultural connotation. Another feature of it is that cultural society is directly related to national culture, material culture, institutional culture and different cultural psychology. For example, China's Dragon and Phoenix Chengxiang is a direct vocabulary reflecting culture [2]. The second standard is in terms of the indirect reflection of vocabulary, such as the words expressing color in Chinese and the ones symbolizing the three friends of winter, pine, bamboo and plum, which have connotative symbolic significance. There are also some words that have historical origins with different types of cultures. The most typical are some religious words and words of cultural allusions. In this way, experts and scholars thus can pick out some words for specialized research because they have rich cultural connotation, which is of great significance and helpful to foreign language teaching. However, once these words are separated and labeled with the slogan of cultural words, it is easy to produce a stereotype, that is, people think it is not a general word. However, in fact, the particularity itself contains generality, and these cultural words also have the common ground of general words. For this kind of vocabulary, we can start with the general idea of the word in the process of learning and mastering.

3. Necessity and Significance of Vocabulary Teaching Reform

From the perspective of culture introduction, College English vocabulary teaching reform is of great necessity and significance. As we all know, language is the material shell of culture. Language itself has rich cultural connotation and is the reflection of cultural phenomena. Among the many elements of language, the relationship between vocabulary and culture is the closest. It is also the most expressive and flexible part of language with huge cultural storage load. Even when

expressing the same concept, different types of language and mood will have different lexical ways, which adds different connotative meanings to the vocabulary, showing the differences of different cultures in religion, geographical environment, psychological factors and many other aspects [3]. Therefore, the reform of English teaching must put that of vocabulary teaching in the first place. Vocabulary teaching runs through the whole process, so it is not only an important link in English teaching but also a means that can not be ignored. Although many teachers can realize that vocabulary teaching and culture teaching must be integrated together, in the process of actual implementation, vocabulary teaching is often superficial and superficial, which leads to the lack of effectiveness of teaching. At the same time, many teachers believe that vocabulary teaching should not be treated as the main part of College English classes, and compared with vocabulary teaching, grammar teaching, discourse teaching and English application teaching are the more important. However, vocabulary teaching should not be isolated. If students have been in the position of passive acceptance and learn words by nothing more than rote memorization, they can't correctly understand the cultural meaning of the vocabulary. Under the influence of the above background, College English vocabulary teaching must strengthen cultural introduction. Only by skillfully integrating the part of vocabulary into cultural factors, can students understand the cultural knowledge behind it, spy on the cultural truth behind it, expand their vocabulary and improve their ability of cross-cultural communication and application in the process of vocabulary recitation and vocabulary learning.

4. Domain of College English Vocabulary Teaching from the Perspective of Cultural Introduction

From the perspective of culture introduction, the reform of College English vocabulary teaching has to explore what should be taught to students. Although there are differences among national cultures, they also share some similarities. Therefore, some words are of similar cultural connotation. It is relatively easy to master these words, which thus should not be the focus of teaching. On the contrary, teaching focus should be put on the different expressions and connotative meanings of words with the same concept. The differences among cultures are the right core part of vocabulary teaching.

Firstly, the reform of College English vocabulary teaching should focus on the words with the same conceptual meaning but different or even opposite connotation meaning. In different languages and cultures, the same thing may cause people's different imagination, that is, the same word has different cultural connotation. Here, take the words of animals and colors as examples [4]. In many Chinese words, dogs are traditionally regarded as a disgusting thing with poor conduct in spite of its cuteness. Almost all words with dogs in Chinese are derogatory, such as dog gall, dog legs and dog head soldiers. However, in western countries, dogs are good friends of human beings, so most of the words and phrases about dog in Western English vocabulary are commendatory words, such as lucky dogs, dogs like, and top dogs; In terms of color, yellow is one of the noble colors for the Chinese people as the Chinese nation has an indissoluble bond with the Yellow River Basin and the Yellow River is also the mother river of the Chinese nation. The land is yellow, and the color of clothes used by ancient emperors is also yellow. Therefore, yellow is naturally noble in China; there is "yellow robe plus body" in ancient Chinese idioms. But yellow. By contrast, yellow is a commendatory word in English. The majority of words with yellow have some derogatory meanings. For example, the phrase "a yellow bell" refers to coward.

Secondly, vocabulary teaching should focus on vocabulary with the same conceptual meaning and the same connotative meaning. Among different cultural types, this type of vocabulary is easy to make people have different associations. In the same way, different vocabulary will reflect the

differences of social systems and customs of different nationalities. Different vocabulary differences also explain the differences between cultures of different nationalities, that is, there are personality but also differences between cultures, Such words are widely distributed in English and Chinese. For example, “Rose” symbolizes love in the East and West, but the words related to rose are not. Under the rose symbolizes silence and secret. It refers to hanging roses at an ancient meeting. All personnel must keep the meeting secret. This is an embodiment of an ancient habit. The meaning behind this word can be traced back to ancient Greek mythology, But in China, people always have the idiom of “rose with thorns”, which is used to express those tall and cold women who are good-looking but hard to get close to [5]. For students' learning, from the perspective of cultural introduction, the cultural connotation of these words has similarities, which is easier to grasp, but we should also pay attention to comparing their differences, and we should not pay attention to commonness and ignore individuality. Thirdly, attention should also be paid to words with the same conceptual meaning but can not be converted in another language in vocabulary teaching reform. Numbers can be taken as examples. In western languages, 13 is rejected much and considered to be unlucky, as on Friday, the 13th, Judas betrayed Jesus and Jesus suffered a lot. 13 is thus an ominous symbol in western countries. Whether it is marriage, engagement or the opening of office buildings, we deliberately avoid the the date of 13th and Friday. Under the influence of western culture, the end of the world is usually scheduled at 13:00 on the 13th in many film and television works. Whereas, the cultural meaning of numbers is different in Chinese culture. Chinese people enjoy even numbers instead of singular numbers. For example, 666 and 888 are considered auspicious numbers in traditional Chinese society. After subsequent publicity and rendering by film and television media, many Chinese regard 8 and 6 as symbols of “going well” and “being wealthy”, but for western languages, they are just numbers without special meaning.

5. Reform Strategies of College English Vocabulary Teaching from the Perspective of Cultural Introduction

5.1 Narrow the Cultural Gap and Make Comparisons among Compare Vocabulary

At the beginning of establishment, different nations and countries are in the running in period of culture and language. Gradually, they have their specific systems of language and culture. The language and vocabulary of countries and nations are relatively stable, both for Chinese, Spanish and English. However, in addition to stability, a series of new things will also be newly produced. These new things and traditional words will blend with each other, making the words have a series of variability, which shows that although the language backgrounds of different nationalities are different, there are also intersecting parts. In the process of vocabulary teaching reform, we should pay attention to narrowing the cultural background of various countries and make comparison of the cultural similarities and make contrast of the different ones. For example, “donkey” or “ass” means stupidity in both Chinese and English, and “dove” symbolizes peace and purity in both Chinese culture and western social culture. However, differences can not be ignored as well[6]. For example, western countries hate dragons and think that they are symbols of cruelty and blood, but in China, they stand for dignity and auspiciousness. Chinese culture can be said to be the culture of the dragon, and the Chinese people can also be said to be the descendants of the dragon. The Dragon has a high sense of national identity in China. Similarly, dogs can be used to express loyalty or inferiority in China, but in the English system, they are very loyal and reliable animals. In addition to the phrases described above, the praise of dogs in western countries is far more than that. “To help a lame dog over” is a good example, which refers to helping people out of danger.

In addition, the Chinese language family will also absorb English vocabulary under the the influence of cultural communication and exchange, so the intersection of vocabulary can be yielded.

For example, “sofa” in Chinese system is sofa in English, which is the embodiment of the absorption of English words by Chinese.

Besides sofa, there are cloning, romance, neon lights, microphone and coffee, which are translated directly from English words. In the process of translation, they should be sorted according to the habitual syllables of Chinese and the characteristics of language expression. On the contrary, we should also pay attention to the transformation of Chinese in English. For instance, the ceremony of “three kneeling and nine tapping” in Chinese is counterpart of “kowitz” in English. A number of words such as Kung Fu, tofu and kung pao chicken in English are the absorption of Chinese into English. It can be seen from here that due to the differences of cultural background and language system, words are endowed with special emotional colors, and these emotional colors show both similarities and differences as well. In the process of learning, students must strengthen cultural introduction and understand the background behind words from the perspective of culture, so as to make vocabulary learning get twofold results with half the effort.

5.2 Grasp the Characteristics of Vocabulary and Design Teaching Activities

According to the thinking habits of Westerners, it is a frequent occurrence for writers use non-personal expressions in relatively formal occasions, such as the translation of news manuscripts, business letters and literary works. This is because in the thinking ways of western countries, more attention is paid to the impact of objective things on people, but in that of Chinese people, more emphasis is placed on subjectivity. The way of Confucius and Mencius and Confucianism have a great impact on China and even East Asia. Confucianism emphasizes benevolence, love and people-oriented, which also denotes and results in the difference between Western English words and Chinese characters. In view of the difficulties of Chinese and western language transformation under the background of cultural introduction, the reform of College English vocabulary teaching needs the changing ideas of teaching and the attention paid to the overall design of vocabulary teaching activities. Teachers should try their best to make students feel that vocabulary learning is interesting, valuable and interesting. They should design activities for vocabulary teaching and let students learn vocabulary in a good atmosphere. They can choose some words with fresh and distinctive cultural characteristics according to the content of the textbook and carry out word guessing activities, such as the phrase go Dutch. Teachers can ask students not to consult the dictionary or look up information on the Internet and guess the meaning of the word blindly. Once students have questions in the process, they will better collect information and understand the meaning of the word later. Teachers can also provide necessary learning materials for students to learn vocabulary differences and cultural differences, so that students can understand the cultural differences behind words through comparison. For example, teachers can take Valentine's day as an example to introduce the differences between Chinese Valentine's day and Western Valentine's day, and tell the origin of the two Valentine's days and the differences in the ways of celebration, so as to make students have a strong cultural desire and background when learning vocabulary and further facilitate their impression on and mastery of vocabulary.

5.3 Master Correct Vocabulary Teaching Methods in Combination with Cultural Connotation

In vocabulary teaching, the correct method can be more effective in promoting learning. It can be seen that there are rich historical cultures behind the vocabulary. If these cultures only rely on what the dictionary or the Internet tells, they will not be fully understood. In view of this, students needs a lot of reading and accumulation of practice if they want to master the cultural connotation behind the vocabulary. Thus, in English teaching, educators can take vocabulary teaching as the core and starting point to explain vocabulary and expound language culture at the same time.

In practice, it is possible for educators to adopt some ways to explore the changes of vocabulary teaching. The first way is annotation. In the process of textbook compilation, due to the limitations of practical conditions, it is impossible for textbook writers to compile in full accordance with students' understanding habits, which is easy to cause errors or difficulties in vocabulary understanding, so educators can annotate in a special space during teaching. The second one is the vocabulary fusion, which refers to the teaching of combined language materials, cultural content and vocabulary itself; cultural allusions and historical facts behind the vocabulary can be introduced and students' interest can also be aroused in the story-telling. Another way is practice, meaning that students can understand relevant language and cultural knowledge through specific language practice, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing; students can also be led to participate in practical activities, such as special lectures, English movies and English videos. In addition, we can also identify words through comparison, through which students can understand the similarities and differences between Chinese and Chinese characters in language structure, mode of thinking and cultural expression habits, and better improve their sensitivity to words from the perspective of cultural introduction and cross-cultural communication.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, from the perspective of cultural introduction, College English vocabulary teaching needs to be further reform and adjustment, and clarify the contents that should be involved in college vocabulary teaching reform. At the same time, educators should narrow cultural differences and carry out vocabulary comparison. They can also scientifically design teaching activities on basis of the characteristics of vocabulary, have a good command of the correct teaching methods in combination with cultural connotation, and lead students to roam in the ocean of culture when learning vocabulary.

Acknowledgment

This study, a periodical production of *Research on the teaching reform of college English under the Concept of Curriculum Ideology and Politics*, was supported by a grant from Teaching Reform Research Program of Pingdingshan University with the approval number 2021-JY16.

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