

# Reform and Innovation of English Teaching under the Cultural Conflicts between Chinese and Western Civilization

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**Abstract:** Language is the carrier of culture. In English teaching, students are exposed to not only English language knowledge, but also English culture. How to deal with the negative effects of cultural conflicts in English teaching is an important task for English teaching for a long time. This paper analyzes the forms of cultural conflicts between Chinese and western civilization, including the conflicts of privacy view, time view, family view and body language. The paper puts forward the countermeasures of strengthening cultural guidance, enriching teaching methods and opening up the second class to help students solve the problems caused by cultural conflicts in English learning and improve their intercultural communication ability.

## 1. Introduction

Both Chinese and English have a long history of development. Due to different regions, histories and customs, the national characteristics and cultural information carried by Chinese and English are quite different [1]. In cross-cultural communication, different cultures will become difficulties in communication, thus affecting the understanding and application of language. Culture is a complex of various ideologies, social phenomena and historical factors in human communication activities. It contains various material and non-material factors, such as value system, traditional customs, thinking concepts, behavior norms, life style, religious beliefs, local customs, etc. In a broad sense, cultural conflict refers to a kind of pressure or conflict felt by two organizational cultures in the process of interaction due to a certain state of conflict or opposition. When two cultures contact and communicate in the same environment, there will inevitably be conflicts between cultures. Cultural integration refers to the process that different cultures with different characteristics absorb, infiltrate and learn from each other through contact, communication and communication. Language and culture are related to each other. Good English learners should also have a certain understanding of English culture. Culture refers to the sum of material and spiritual civilization created by a country and a nation in the development of social history, involving history, geography, literature and art, customs and habits, local customs, lifestyle, behavior habits and values. Language is the medium of culture. Culture influences and restricts language communication. The relationship between language and culture is inseparable. How to face up to the cultural conflict, guide it correctly and set up scientific and effective teaching methods in English teaching is worth exploring. This paper focuses on the cultural conflict between English and Chinese in English teaching and the related teaching methods.

## 2. Expression Forms of Cultural Conflicts between Chinese and Western Civilization

### 2.1 Conflict of Privacy View

Privacy is a cultural phenomenon. It is a concept restricted by nation, history and culture. In countries with different historical and cultural backgrounds, the understanding of the meaning and scope of privacy, the awareness of privacy protection, namely the concept of privacy, are also different. Westerners attach great importance to individual privacy, and their concept of individual

privacy covers a wide range of areas, including private time, private space, private activities, as well as safeguarding the private rights of such things. For example, in order to respect other people's personal time, Westerners will inform others in advance to invite them to dinner or participate in social activities, and give them enough time to make arrangements. In the same way, visiting relatives and friends should also be informed in advance, otherwise, in the eyes of Westerners, it is an invasion of other people's privacy. Westerners have a strong sense of boundaries and never enter other people's territory without permission. The Chinese will directly ask about the price of the goods bought by others. In the eyes of Westerners, it's impolite, and they think it's the economic conditions to ask each other. Therefore, it's also the privacy of Westerners, and it's not suitable to ask directly. Chinese also have privacy, but focus on group privacy. For example, the Chinese use walls to protect the territory of families or groups from invasion, while the interior of families or groups is open. The awareness of individual privacy is very weak, and the requirement of protecting individual privacy is not strong.

## **2.2 Conflict of Time View**

Western time view and money view are linked together. The idea that time is money is deeply rooted, so they cherish time very much [2]. As the English proverb time is money says, this sentence has been deeply rooted in the concept of British and American. Therefore, they measure their life and work by time in any situation. Punctuality has also become one of the great advantages of Britain and America. In the west, if you want to visit someone, you must give prior notice or agreement, and state the purpose, time and place of the visit. You can do it after consultation. They often make careful arrangements and plans for their time in life, and form a good habit of meeting on time. But in contrast, Chinese people's attitude towards time is quite casual, so is their communication. Chinese people belong to a country with multi-directional time habits. They have great randomness in the use of time. Generally, they do not follow the plan as strictly as Westerners do. Westerners often feel uncomfortable with this.

## **2.3 Conflict of Family View**

The important feature of Chinese society is family standard. In the relationship between individuals and families, more attention is paid to families, family interests and their survival and development are emphasized, and individuals are required to obey families. Once an adult, a Chinese basically lives with family as the center. The important characteristic of Western society is the individual standard. In the relationship between individual and family, we pay more attention to individual, emphasize individual survival, individual interests, individual will and individual development, advocate individual independence and freedom, and require family to obey individual. A few Westerners will give up their personal goals for the benefit of their families. Even if their families are powerful, they are more willing to create wealth and value through their own labor. Chinese people have a strong family concept, consanguinity and family ethics, which are deeply rooted in their minds. Parents and children are always one family, even if they start a family and set up another door, they are still inseparable from their parents. They regard it as their own responsibility to support and serve their parents. Americans are different. As soon as their children reach adulthood, they will leave the nest and fly away, and their parents will no longer support them. Once their children are independent, they will no longer care about their parents' family affairs, let alone support their parents or their generations. The differences between Chinese and Western cultures are especially obvious in China city. Western parents and their children are separated from each other in financial management. When Chinese people with strong family and kinship come to foreign lands, their traditional concepts and virtues of respecting the old and loving the young will inevitably not be impacted by foreign culture [3].

## **2.4 Conflict of Body Language**

Body language is also different in different environments [4]. In China and the UK and the US, people express their attitudes and emotions in different ways. In the American cultural environment, people will express their love for others by kissing. It can be said that kissing is a common etiquette in

American culture. But in China's cultural background, kissing is the behavior of intimate lovers. In different cultural backgrounds, the same body language has different meanings. In the cultural background of our country, the intimate behaviors of young people of the same gender, such as hugging the shoulder and waist, are a way to express their cordial and friendly relationship, but they will not appear in the contact between the opposite sex. In China, most people's contact patterns are relatively implicit, but in English speaking countries, heterosexual contact is relatively open, but there are few hook ups between the same sex. This is the difference of body language in different cultural backgrounds.

### **3. Reform and Innovation of English Teaching under the Cultural Conflicts between Chinese and Western Civilization**

#### **3.1 Strengthen Cultural Guidance**

Teachers should not ignore, avoid or answer the cultural conflicts between English and Chinese in English class. They should answer a series of questions of students. If the differences in concept, language and behavior between Chinese and English culture are simply described, students will inevitably feel too theoretical to have a strong interest. English teachers should make students understand the cultural differences. The class hours of English teaching are limited, so teachers can't train intercultural communication ability only by teaching in class. Teachers should guide students to make full use of their extracurricular time to widely explore English cultural knowledge and information, broaden their own cultural horizons, so as to improve their cultural communication ability. At the same time, they should also give full play to the role of foreign teachers. Students can listen through direct communication with foreign teachers' Foreign teachers' lectures or reports can improve the understanding of Chinese and Western culture in a subtle way, and better avoid cultural conflicts. When encountering various cultural conflicts between English and Chinese in English class, teachers should strengthen the guidance of students, avoid ignoring and avoiding them, and answer the doubts of students in various effective ways. Teachers should avoid summarizing the cultural differences between English and Chinese in the way of concept and theory, strengthen the guidance of students in various interactive ways, so as to enhance students' enthusiasm for learning and let students understand the cultural conflicts between English and Chinese in their own participation process. In practice, teachers can carry out various interactive teaching activities through various game teaching modes, situational teaching modes and problem teaching modes, so that students can understand various cultural differences in practice, so that students can carry out learning through English thinking mode in the process of English learning, and then fundamentally improve students' English comprehensive quality and ability.

#### **3.2 Enrich Teaching Methods**

In China, traditional English teaching tends to pay more attention to grammar and vocabulary learning, ignoring the importance of cultural background. In such a teaching mode, it is difficult for students to apply the language knowledge they have learned in practical communication, or even to acquire intercultural communication ability. Therefore, English teachers should change their ideas, regard the cultivation of intercultural communication ability as an indispensable factor in English teaching and learning, effectively combine English language knowledge with cultural background, and pay attention to the cultivation of students' intercultural communication ability. In addition, teachers should make full use of modern teaching methods, such as video, projection and Internet, to stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm in learning through different teaching methods. In the process of social development, various kinds of social and cultural knowledge are constantly optimizing and improving, and various new problems, new things and new phenomena are constantly emerging, which makes English learning face more opportunities and challenges. In practice, teachers can flexibly use various kinds of online video materials, learn English knowledge through various intuitive ways. In practice, teachers can intuitively feel the language and culture conflicts and

problems under different cultural backgrounds through the application of network resources and multimedia technology, and obtain various kinds of information at all levels and channels, so as to fundamentally improve students' understanding to master and apply English knowledge. Flexible application of various English films and video materials to assist teaching, so that students can understand all kinds of English knowledge and the existing cultural conflicts between English and Chinese in an intuitive way. Influenced by the social environment, there are certain differences between Chinese and Western cultural values, which will have a certain impact on cross-cultural communication. In western culture, it embodies a kind of personal values, so in social communication, it pays more attention to the protection of personal privacy. Therefore, in cross-cultural communication, if the topic of personal privacy is involved, attention should be paid to avoiding, such as personal economic situation, political tendency, marriage situation, etc. In our society, the individual value is often diluted, and the value of others or the collective is often valued. Therefore, in the process of cross-cultural communication, we should pay attention to the embodiment of the communicative object or social collective value, and make appropriate changes or adjustments to the communicative language according to the change of the social identity of the communicative object or the change of the communicative environment. In the process of watching the video, students can understand the actual customs and social values of different environments and countries, and improve their overall perception and application ability of English.

### **3.3 Open Up the Second Class**

The second English classroom is not only an entertainment-oriented student activity, but also an interactive subject education activity with life, human culture and practice. Specifically speaking, the second English classroom is closely around the English teaching objectives. It is a multi-form teaching activity with the core of improving the comprehensive ability of English use and improving the students' English language and culture knowledge system. It is an integral part of the expansion of classroom English teaching and the English teaching system. In the process of designing extracurricular activities and guiding learners to participate in them, teachers should consciously encourage students to feel the difference between the two cultures in the comparison of English humanistic knowledge and Chinese traditional cultural knowledge, and at the same time appreciate and absorb English humanistic knowledge and human spirit in an objective and equal manner, so as to develop their awareness of cross-cultural communication. Teachers can improve students' understanding and cognition of various English resources and cultural backgrounds through regular lectures on English cultural knowledge, and encourage students to learn about the actual culture and customs of British and American countries in various ways. Teachers encourage students to carry out various kinds of English cultural activities in the classroom practice, at the same time, they can hire foreign teachers to participate in, so that students can effectively develop their language communication ability in the process of knowledge learning. Through the appreciation of various English songs, English plays and English movies, students can feel the actual cultural customs and historical development of different English application countries in practice. When students use language to communicate, they are prone to "cultural errors", which are inappropriate language or behavior in language communication. In order to communicate successfully, we should not only have the necessary language ability, but also be able to correctly judge the occasion and purpose of communication, understand and master the cultural background of the other party. Teachers can organize the service work of students' large-scale meetings, and cultivate students' proper speech and behavior in communication through face-to-face contact with foreign guests.

## **4. Conclusion**

It is an important task for English teachers in the new era to think about the reform and innovation of English teaching from the perspective of cultural conflict between China and the West. Teachers should pay more attention to the conflicts between English culture and Chinese culture. In practice, teachers should have a certain awareness of English and Chinese culture, apply various effective

teaching modes according to the actual situation in the actual classroom. English teachers guide students to accept various cultural conflicts reasonably, and truly make students understand English culture and background.

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