

# On the Introduction of Language and Culture in English Teaching in Higher Vocational Colleges

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**ABSTRACT:** *To learn a language is to learn its corresponding culture. Without cultural background, the understanding of language can only stay on the surface of words. The goal of English teaching is to cultivate all-round development talents with cross-cultural awareness. In order to achieve this goal, teachers must vigorously infiltrate cultural education. This paper takes English teaching as the starting point, language and culture introduction as the starting point, and specifically talks about the necessity and implementation strategies of culture introduction.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Higher vocational education, English teaching, Introduction of language and culture, Necessity, Strategy*

## 1. Introduction

English Teaching in higher vocational colleges is very professional, and vocational talents are being vigorously cultivated. But for a long time, knowledge-based teaching mode and recitation learning have become the biggest obstacle to the development of English education. The penetration of cultural knowledge in the classroom is very little, and students' understanding of language is too one-sided. It is necessary to design the English teaching mode of language and culture introduction.

## 2. The Necessity of Introducing Language and Culture into English Teaching in Higher Vocational Colleges

Training professional talents has a high demand for students' oral English communication ability. In today's society, English is indispensable to work in all walks of life. Students should not only master knowledge, but also have high pragmatic ability. However, due to the influence of Chinese language expression, culture and thought, students often make some basic mistakes in English communication, which is ironic. For example, in the culture of our country, people often say "have you eaten?" and "where have you been?" Therefore, many students will directly translate our greeting language into English when communicating with foreign friends and ask them: "have you eaten?", "where have you been?", so as to express their concern and greetings. People in western countries pay great attention to privacy. When we ask others like this, we will not only make them feel respected, but also feel that their privacy has been violated, which is an offence to others. This is a typical example of mistakes in language expression based on different cultural backgrounds [1]. It can be seen that it is very necessary to master certain background knowledge of English culture for the cultivation of English practical talents. Teachers should infiltrate language culture in knowledge teaching for the vocational college students who are going to be employed.

## 3. Strategies of Introducing Language and Culture into English Teaching in Higher Vocational Colleges

### 3.1 Tell Stories and Analyze the Culture Behind Each Word

The tradition, culture, civilization and custom of a nation are deeply branded in the language of a nation, and each word is endowed with distinct cultural color by us. However, there is a common problem in the process of language organization for vocational college students, that is, they only consider the meaning of words, and then directly put words together according to Chinese thinking. However, there are many words with the same meaning, which are not universal. There are inevitably some problems in the literal sentences. Students should understand the culture behind each word and its pragmatic background, and use it selectively. For example,

peasant and farmer both have the meaning of “farmer”. When students translate sentences or communicate with others, they are likely to use these two words indiscriminately. But in the west, peasant has a certain derogatory meaning. When people introduce their families, they usually use the word farmer. If students do not understand the cultural background of this word, they use peasant to introduce it. No doubt others show great disrespect. In addition, in western countries, landlord does not mean derogatory, but in China it is the opposite.

In daily teaching, teachers can collect more stories and videos that make jokes or embarrassing scenes due to misusing words. In this way, teachers can introduce the language and culture behind words to students, impress them more deeply, and make them know which words need to be used carefully in social activities. For example, there is a true story. In the 1980s, an American scholar named Davis came to China to give lectures. During this period, he has been plagued by a problem that people always call him “Mr. Davis”, because Davis at that time had obtained a doctor's degree. In his own country, he has been honored as “doctor” Davis, which makes him feel that the Chinese are deliberately belittling him. In our country, some people who have knowledge and social status will be honored as “Sir”. In the United States, this is only the most common title. Only by adding his title to address others can we show respect. In this way, students can understand the language and culture of English, which is not only interesting, but also memorable.

### ***3.2 Broadcast Video and Learn to Organize Language from a Cultural Perspective***

In leisure time, students like to watch some foreign films, which are all subtitles in Chinese and English. Translators have a high cultural heritage. Many classic translations are amazing. It is an interesting way to learn English language and culture by watching videos, which will surely be loved by students. The teacher can take some fragments from some classic films and explain them to the students in the process of broadcasting, so as to enhance the students' awareness of language and culture and enable them to learn some skills of English-Chinese translation. For example: “I am no stool pigeon, Mr. Devlin.” this kind of sentence can't be translated in the eyes of students. We must analyze the meaning from the perspective of vocabulary culture. Because pigeon means not only “Pigeon”, but also “fool, cheated” in English slang, then “stool pigeon” can be translated into “informer, informer” according to this way of thinking, and the original sentence is translated into “I'm not a informer, Mr. Devlin.” Teachers may as well organize situational performance activities in the classroom, let students recite lines, play the role in the movie, in this way to perceive and understand the language and culture.

Of course, when we communicate with others in English, we should first organize Chinese in our mind and then translate it. This requires us to find out the most accurate English words from the vast vocabulary, so that the listener can accurately obtain the information we want to express. This can also be learned from movies. For example, in the movie Kung Fu Panda, which is very familiar to students, vocabulary is used to interpret each role accurately, such as translating “master” into “Master Shifu”, “master turtle” into “master oogway”, “Dragon Warrior” into “Tai Long”, “The sacred hall of warrior” is translated into “the sacred hall of warrior” [3], so that the excellent translation can make foreigners better understand when watching the movie, and really carry forward the culture that the movie wants to convey. These are what students need to learn. The use of film resources in Higher Vocational English teaching is of great benefit to expand students' vocabulary, vision and cultural knowledge, as well as to add color to boring courses.

### ***3.3 Build a Platform to Accumulate Linguistic and Cultural Knowledge***

It is a long-term learning task to understand English language and culture. There is no end to it. The more students accumulate, the stronger their language expression ability will be. The majority of teachers should establish a platform for knowledge accumulation and learning for students to acquire and store such information at any time, and constantly increase the amount of knowledge. Nowadays, the Internet has completely changed the learning mode of students, and the teaching channels of teachers have been widened. We can set up a website, a forum or a group on the Internet, and upload the language and culture knowledge summarized in recent period to the platform irregularly, including ppt courseware, micro class video, film and television materials, etc., for students to sort out and accumulate. Students can also upload their collected knowledge, exchange information with each other and discuss on the platform. The development of such a learning mode has become the trend of education reform in the network era. By using the richness and diversity of network information, students are supported to obtain various forms of information such as text, video, picture, audio, etc., and to achieve anytime and anywhere learning, which greatly meets their needs.

## **4. Conclusion**

All in all, in order to cultivate professional talents with good pragmatic ability and promote the development of students' career, English Teaching in higher vocational colleges must vigorously infiltrate language and culture education. Only by understanding culture can students understand English to a higher level, so as to express accurately and communicate correctly. The way of introducing language and culture is not fixed. Teachers should not set limits on themselves, find multiple ways of teaching innovation, and use various forms and platforms to improve the effectiveness of English teaching.

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