

Exploration of the Reform and Innovation of College English Teaching under Humanistic Literacy Education*

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Abstract—Humanistic quality education forms a systematic ultimate thinking of human beings and a comprehensive and profound understanding of culture by digging out the contents related to humanity. It is to link life closely with the culture on which individuals depend for survival, and it serves the growth of individuals, the development of professional students and the expansion and deepening of the connotation of life. At present, in College English teaching, teachers' awareness of humanistic education and humanistic quality are low in many aspects, such as teaching objectives, teaching contents, teaching organization and teaching evaluation. And students' learning methods and strategies are also lack of the inhalation of humanistic quality. To carry out humanistic quality education, we should pay attention to the cultivation of teachers' humanistic awareness and quality, and further enhance the ideological and depth of curriculum content. Meanwhile, we should also pay more attention to students' self-cultivation from learning attitude, learning methods and learning strategies, with the purpose of guiding students to self discovery, self-understanding and self-monitoring in the learning process.

Index Terms—College English teaching, reform, humanistic quality education

I. INTRODUCTION

Guidelines on College English Teaching issued by The National Advisory Committee on Teaching English Language to Majors in Higher Education under the Ministry of Education is an important guidance for colleges and universities to formulate syllabus, build courses and carry out evaluation, as well as a normative document that can not be ignored in college English teaching. *Guidelines on College English Teaching* (2017) clearly points out that the orientation of College English courses is to help students develop a global perspective, cultivate international awareness, improve humanistic literacy, provide a basic tool for knowledge innovation, potential inspiration and all-round development, and prepare for the challenges and opportunities in the era of globalization. In the description of the nature of the course, the guideline further clarifies that there are two ways to cultivate humanistic literacy: First, let students get in touch with foreign societies and cultures, as well as cultural similarities and differences, and then improve their ability of cross-cultural communication. Second, take people as the foremost and carry forward the morally sound values, focus on the cultivation and development of people's comprehensive quality, and integrate socialist core values into college English teaching activities.

II. THE CONNOTATION OF HUMANISTIC LITERACY EDUCATION

Humanistic literacy education is mainly to exploit contents related to people and culture, and then to closely link people and culture, form a systematic and ultimate thinking of people, have a profound understanding of culture in all-round aspects, thus making people's life more meaningful and valuable. In a sense, humanistic literacy education is to bond together the individual life, group life and the culture that individuals rely on, so as to serve the individual growth, career development, and the extension of the meaning of life. It eliminates the utilitarian nature of education and highlights the need for individual development. The essence of humanistic literacy education is the education of ideals, beliefs and values, and the cultivation of people with sound personality and comprehensive development. Through humanistic literacy education, we should foster in the student the morally sound values and the outlook on the world and life, and in the meanwhile let students understand, identify with and practice socialist core values.

The original intention of college English teaching is to improve students' English level, so as to promote their professional or academic communication ability in reality, and thus to improve students' intercultural communication ability. (Wang, 2016). However, the result shows that our students' English level is not high enough, cross-cultural communication often cannot be realized, and the ability and effectiveness of English service majors are far from satisfied. At present, college English teaching mainly focuses on the training of basic skills such as listening, speaking,

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reading, writing and translating, and the learning time, especially the classroom teaching time, is mostly spent on the training of these skills. However, the result has been that college students are still unable to communicate in English. The root cause lies in the lack of humanistic literacy of college students and the weakness of their intercultural awareness and intercultural communication ability. Ge Chunping and Wang Shouren state that "the cultivation of intercultural communication competence demonstrates the humanism of college English." (Ge & Wang, 2016,p.82)Therefore, it is particularly important to integrate humanistic literacy education into college English teaching and to carry on comprehensive reform of college English teaching. The essence of humanistic literacy education is opposite to utilitarian education.

The humanistic literacy education in college English teaching mainly includes the cultivation of students' ability of English application, cross-cultural communication and critical thinking and the establishment of morally sound values by nurturing their outlook on the world and life. In the face of cultural conflicts and different cultural groups, we can seek common ground while reserving differences, and then promote the all-round development of students through college English teaching. College English teaching can realize the all-round development of students, which is also in line with the ultimate goal of education for cultivating all-round human beings. Therefore, in the process of college English teaching, we should not only pay attention to the improvement of language ability, but also emphasize the improvement of humanistic literacy, especially humanistic literacy education.

III. MAJOR PROBLEMS FACING COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

At present, the overall situation of college English teaching is that too much emphasis is placed on instrumentality, and insufficient attention is paid to humanistic literacy. As a result, it is impossible to realize cross-cultural communication and cultivate people that can think in big picture terms. The major problems in college English teaching are reflected in three aspects:

The major problem of teachers is that they who are supposed to cultivate students' humanistic literacy are lack of this quality, which is mainly caused by their unawareness of humanistic literacy and their own dissatisfied humanistic literacy possession. Another problem is that teachers are under pressures of various systems and evaluations during their college teaching, and there is no time and energy for them to fully excavate elements about humanistic literacy in college English textbooks. It is nearly impossible to realize the cultivation of humanistic literacy in well-round person through English teaching. Thus the cultivation of humanistic literacy in college English teaching is systematically deficient.

In addition, under the pressure of teaching evaluation and the current situation that exam-oriented teaching prevails and humanistic literacy is less sought after, the evaluation of the teacher also demonstrate the phenomenon of being eager for quick success and instant benefits. At the same time, teaching evaluation as a whole presents the problems of excessive quantization, insufficient quality and very unscientific evaluation. At present, quantitative and qualitative assessment indicators cannot comprehensively measure and examine students' humanistic literacy level, which is featured by the emphasizing of surface data such as pass rate, average score and excellence rate of the examination, while neglecting the content, goal and approach of students' humanistic literacy education.

The main problems of college English teaching lie in teaching objectives, teaching content and teaching evaluation, etc. In terms of teaching objectives, college English teaching lacks reasonable consideration of the objectives and related strategies of cultivating humanistic literacy, which involves the problems of college English teachers and the design of school system. In terms of the present situation of college English teaching, many college teachers focus on imparting knowledge and skills to students, recognize the teaching of English textbooks as the core of the class teaching, and emphasize the importance of English skills, especially skills about reading and writing. However, the cultivation of students' listening and speaking skills, cultural awareness and morally sound values is insufficient. As a result, college English has not fully played its role in cultural inheritance, let alone strengthening students' understanding of different countries and cultures, so that the cultivation of humanistic literacy in college English education cannot be effectively played.

Another problem is that the content and method of teaching are relatively outdated. In colleges and universities, the English teaching focuses on the instillation of English vocabularies and grammars aiming to develop the students' ability to use English, but the cultivation of students' cognitive and thinking ability is relatively little, especially the humanistic literacy education in English teaching which is rarely seen in college. In addition, many colleges and universities still adopt traditional teaching methods in carrying out college English teaching, taking teachers as the main body of the class, and students only need to accept the knowledge taught by teachers and complete the assignments with few of them questioning their teachers. This kind of teaching approaches to a large extent has hindered the students' personal development and is not conducive to the students' growth and the building of their innovation ability.

As far as knowledge transfer is concerned, college English teachers focus on the delivery of result-based knowledge during the teaching process, ignoring process-based knowledge. Many people think that learning is to accept the previously created knowledge and regard the existing knowledge as insurmountable or even unchangeable. This makes the learners have no clear understanding of the source of knowledge and the future development of knowledge, and a sense of awe is generated in the learner's mind. For example, many college students think that vocabulary is really difficult to learn in English for the learning process is not only boring but also of little effectiveness. The main reason

for this thinking is that the teachers only teach the result-based knowledge like phonetic symbols and words' meaning in the class and don't teach the process-based knowledge, such as the evolution, background and origin of the word, so that the students can only memorize the word by rote. In addition, the neglect of the extension, guidance and refinement of cultural background in teaching leads to the students' lack of cross-cultural awareness and critical thinking.

In terms of teaching organization, college English teaching reform in the context of class-based teaching system has not been achieved much. The root cause is the lack of time and training frequency of each student as well as the lack of self-organization ability of students, which is not conducive to oral English training. Humanistic teaching theory highlights the educational nature and the positive roles played by people in the educational process. However, the class design of teachers often focuses on the completion of teaching tasks, and due to the limitation of teaching time, considerable oral training cannot be organized fully.

With the development of the times, there are many ways for students to acquire knowledge, which are also very convenient. Some students know more knowledge than teachers, and the level of students' learning depends more than the depth and breadth of knowledge possessed by teachers. It can be seen that the ultimate goal of teaching is not to acquire knowledge, but to teach students how to learn. Therefore, colleges and universities need to pay attention to the cultivation of students' learning ability in college English teaching, which includes the cultivation of learning methods, learning strategies, learning habits, etc.

Besides, many college English teachers focus on the teaching of knowledge and fail to pay attention to the importance of education, resulting in a serious separation between teaching and education. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online teaching Apps such as Super Star Learning and Rain Classroom can improve students' self-study ability, but also greatly reduce the psychological and emotional communication between teachers and students. This has a large negative effect on students' learning and on the establishment of a good teacher-student relationship.

More seriously, due to the lack of listening and speaking training and the inappropriate learning method, the students have great problems in speaking and listening and the phenomenon of mute and deaf English has emerged. The psychological barrier of students is that they are afraid of being laughed at, dare not speak English, and don't have enough environment for them to speak English. Oral English training also needs the change of students' consciousness, that is, how to start the self-study monitoring strategy, follow the teacher and master self-study skills. Besides, listening training has two limitations: one is about the language knowledge such as vocabulary and grammar, and the other is about the cultural background. Insufficient training of basic knowledge and basic skills and the exclusion of English culture lead to students' insufficient understanding of relevant cultural background.

The learning method is not scientific and there are little specific learning strategies for adults to learn English. Some students at the lower grades still adopt the exam-oriented learning method in junior and senior high schools, such as the exercises-stuffed learning method, and seldom use the cooperative learning method. The evaluation system of college English teaching aggravates this situation. For example, CET 4 and CET 6 become the main way and even the only way of college English teaching evaluation. Thus the teachers will focus on the training of these tests, especially the training of fast reading and writing, and the training about English speaking and listening will be neglected, which lead to the students' lack of confidence in face-to-face communications. (Liu & Dai, 2003)

IV. THE BASIC POLICY OF COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING REFORM

In college English teaching, humanistic literacy education can be implemented from three aspects: teachers' teaching, students' learning and teaching management system. Teachers' teaching focuses on teachers' awareness and quality, as well as the content of the courses. Students' learning mainly focuses on learning attitude, method, ability, strategy, etc., which emphasize the students' self-discovery, self-understanding and self-monitoring of their learning demands.

Teachers should think highly of humanistic literacy education. They should take people as the foremost, attach importance to the values of the people, and take core morally sound values as the principle to formulate teaching goals that meet the requirements of social development. Under existing conditions, we should improve teachers' awareness of humanistic literacy education and advance their own humanistic literacy, exploit the educational factors in the textbooks, let the students find their own needs and the needs of others and society, and promote the students' ability of critical thinking and innovation by discovering problems, putting forward problems, analyzing problems and solving problems. (Yuan, 2010) In addition, through combining humanistic literacy education with ideological and political courses and practices, we should fully explore the educational factors in college English teaching, and let students understand that the essence of learning is to deal with the relationship, that is, to deal with the relationship between human and nature, human and society, and human and self, and the essence of humanistic literacy is to understand and know the nature human, so as to better survive and develop in human society.

We should attach great importance to the students' learning experience, pay attention to the accumulation, refining and summarizing of the students' life experience. The humanistic literacy education is closely related to the present popular ideological and political courses. In a sense, the humanistic literacy education is to explore the educational content in the teaching materials, realize the reshaping of the outlook on the world and life and morally sound values, and cultivate the students' humanistic literacy by the influence of the environment. Thus the students could internalize their own ways of thinking and their own values in college English learning.

Teaching evaluation is related to teaching management and system design. Main evaluation index of the current college English teaching is the passing rate of CET 4 and CET 6. There is little evaluation concerning humanistic literacy which is hard to be examined due to its nature. Besides, the delay of humanistic literacy education leads to the fact that its educational effect can not be fully displayed in a short time. Therefore, changing the exam-oriented evaluation system and locating the difficulties in college English teaching management are institutional guarantees.

The management of cultural community should be considered as an aspect of teaching management. The sound participating, sound communicating, sound improving and sound achieving in the classroom community and teacher-student cultural community mentioned above take love, or universal love, as its core, which requires the establishment of a management cultural community for students and teachers on the basis of love. The establishment of management culture community should be based on teaching management and humanistic care and love. The core element of the management culture community is the management, which is organized on the premise of accepting and recognizing individual differences between teachers and students. It involves the participation of the country, colleges and universities, and teachers. At the national level, guidance should be provided for college English teaching; colleges and universities should formulate corresponding teaching objectives and requirements according to talent cultivation needs and social and economical demands; teachers, as the implementers and objects of teaching management, should ensure the evaluation is scientific, reasonable, fair and just.

The current management culture in the colleges and universities needs to be optimized. The college should formulate the college English teaching syllabus based on its own characteristics, and construct a dynamic, open, scientific and reasonable college English course system that reflects its characteristics. The management culture among teachers needs to be updated. Teacher management is of great significance because teachers are the executors of teaching and the persons directly responsible for the building of teaching culture. Therefore, in addition to the need to improve their basic quality, the traditional teaching mode needs to be changed. The teacher should set up the teaching philosophy that advances with the time, build an "output-oriented" teaching system, establish the teaching ideas of imparting knowledge and educating people, take the student as the foremost, improve the teaching management in the class, extend the class learning out of the classroom, let the students have access to the language practicing and have the ability to study independently, and ensure the universal love of humanistic literacy in teaching management.

Liu Runqing (2002) states that "Without listening and speaking ability, College English is called "dumb English" and "deaf English" by the society." (Liu, 2002, p.404) This stresses great importance of Listening and speaking in English learning.

Listening and speaking is the first skill and strategy in language learning. With listening skills, speaking turns to be possible, and without it, nothing could be achieved. Listening is both a way and a goal of English learning. The purpose of listening and speaking is to communicate, and the communication is not only about the exchanges of information and emotion, but also about the cultural values behind it.

Reading is a particular way for Chinese students to learn English that doesn't depend on others. The students don't need to care about other people's opinions for a quiet place is what all they need to do the practice of reading. Reading is not the ultimate objective of learning, but a kind of way of learning. Intoning is not the ultimate goal of English learning, but a standard and the final checking of the effect of reading. Through reading and intoning, the students can feel the beauty of English and the power of foreign cultures. Intonation could be achieved through repetitive reading which requires the students to be familiar with the learning materials.

V. CONCLUSION

It is of great significance for colleges and universities to improve the efficiency of college English teaching and to carry out college English teaching reform with humanistic literacy as the core. During the reform of college English teaching, it is necessary to take quality-oriented education as the basis, improve the quality of college English teaching as the main line, cultivate college students' ability of theoretical thinking and critical thinking, and focus on the improvement of innovation ability. In college English teaching, besides listening, speaking, reading and intoning, we should pay close attention to the cultivation of college students' ability of communication and expression. At the same time, we should follow the principles of English teaching, change the traditional English teaching mode and content, and explore and apply English knowledge that meets the needs of contemporary development.

The essence of college English reform from the perspective of humanistic literacy education is to build a class cultural community with the harmonious coexistence of traditional and new teaching modes, humanistic and instrumental attributes as the main content. This cultural community can meet students' learning needs and realize the combination of teaching, managing and humanistic literacy.

The ultimate goal of college English teaching reform is to teach students English knowledge, improve students' English application ability and comprehensive cultural literacy, that is, humanistic literacy, and then the students can form their own ways of thinking and their own values through the internalization in English learning. This teaching goal is basically consistent with the needs of students, fully considering their career orientation. With this, the focus of college English teaching has changed from the teaching purpose to students' learning needs, and the cultivation of ability and literacy has been attached great importance, so that society's demand for English-speaking students could be met and the improvement of English knowledge and humanistic literacy of the students could be achieved.

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