

# The Application of Language Awareness in College English Writing Teaching

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## Abstract

Language awareness refers to the understanding of language forms and functions, which is gradually formed by learners in the process of internalizing specific language knowledge. It is a mental activity that is not only abstract but also complex. English writing examines students' comprehensive application of English knowledge, and is an indispensable part of English learning. The deficiency of students' English writing part can be attributed to their lack of corresponding language awareness. This paper first expresses the importance of language awareness in English writing teaching, and then analyzes the main factors that influence the cultivation of college English language awareness, and finally puts forward the new model of college English writing teaching under the drive of language awareness.

## Keywords

Language Awareness, College English, English Writing Teaching

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## 1. Introduction

Any language learning is inseparable from the five aspects of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating. English learning is no exception. They are the five important indicators of measuring the levels of English learners. The low level of English writing has always puzzled Chinese teachers and students. First of all, from the perspective of teachers, there are too many students, while they only have limited class hours. Additionally, English writing is not taught as an independent course. In most cases, teachers tend to give only a score when the workload is relatively large, and do not fundamentally help the students to enrich the content of their article, which makes it difficult to enlighten the students' writing thinking. In the long run, the English writing level of students is more difficult to improve, and the teaching process is only in the form. From the

perspective of students, there are many problems in grammar and culture. They are mainly manifested in the absence of the ability to layout the whole composition, the cohesive devices, and in the articles with beginnings and endings not coordinated, limited vocabulary, fuzzy ideas throughout the entire article, Chinese style thinking influenced by mother tongue, and so on. So, in the English writing teaching, teachers should reasonably use the related theories of language consciousness to change teaching methods, so that the students can get more correct language input, reinforce their own writing ability and eventually achieve the goal of improving the students' English writing levels (Huang, 2010).

## **2. The Importance of Cultivating Language Awareness in English Writing Teaching**

Language is an important tool for expressing emotions and communicating ideas between people. In English writing learning, cultivating students' language awareness is the first step to teach students how to use language. In English teaching activities, teachers should help students to establish a new sense of language learning and carry it throughout the daily teaching.

In recent years, with the growing of the international process in our country, various cultures penetrated into our lives and learning. English is no longer a profound problem, but a daily communication tool. English also can adapt to our custom and can contribute to the long-term development of our country's economy and the whole nation. Therefore, college students are required to master not only the vocabulary and English grammar's application, but also to pay attention to their cultivation of English language awareness. With the continuous reforms of English teaching, the importance of language awareness is becoming more and more prominent. However, in the actual teaching process, many teachers are still not aware of this. They often neglect the cultivation of language awareness, and even confuse language consciousness and language sense. Many English teachings in colleges and universities have the most direct relationship with students' language awareness. It appears as the problem of knowledge on the surface, but the root cause is lack of language awareness. Therefore, the importance of language awareness is self-evident.

Throughout the current English teaching, more attention should be paid to the appropriateness of the language. Only by mastering the proper English can we really learn English. All these demands challenge students' language awareness. Therefore, it is of great importance to change the traditional teaching methods to enable students to truly participate in English learning and cultivate their English language awareness (Liu, 2013).

## **3. Several Factors that Influence the Cultivation of College English Language Awareness**

### **3.1. The Factor of English Teachers**

In the English teaching activities, the teachers are the main body of the teaching,

who play the role of the guides and is very important role in the teaching. In the course of teaching, English teachers' own English level has the most direct impact on the quality of teaching, which also affects the cultivation of students' language awareness.

In most cases, the teaching process of many teachers is still on the level of imparting knowledge to students just as that in the past. They are only concerned with finishing their teaching tasks, but pay little attention to how to learn, why students learn and how to cultivate their students' language awareness. In the long run, due to the lack of inculcation and guidance of students' English application ability and consciousness, the students' enthusiasm will be gradually eroded, which as a result make the main goal of college English study is for credit.

### **3.2. The Factor of English Students**

In the process of English learning, students are the main body of learning. Students' mastery of basic knowledge of English and their emphasis on learning have the most direct relations with their English learning achievements. In the actual process of learning, if the students lack learning activeness, and learn just for the sake of learning and learning, and even appear resistance for learning English, which will all influence their learning effects without doubt. And all these need the teacher's correct guidance and the student's active cooperation. Therefore, apart from emphasizing the awareness of language learning, teachers should also help students to persevere and have a correct understanding of the importance of language awareness (Wu & Li, 2011).

### **3.3. The Factor of Environment**

Environment is the final product of changing people. In certain circumstances, the environment will change students' internal thinking and shake their learning enthusiasm. At present, in colleges and universities, English is only a basic course for non-English majors, and there are no hard and fast rules. So many students learn English just to get credits, and not really realize the importance of English learning. Under the control of such consciousness, many students don't like to take English classes, which leads to a lot of sleeping students in the class and even many students skipping classes, as a result the exam results are a complete mess. In addition, the English activities organized on campus have not formed a certain scale and thus have no influence.

## **4. A New Model of College English Writing Teaching Driven by Language Awareness**

The teaching characteristics and objectives of *College English Course Teaching Requirements* in our country clearly defined that college English is a teaching system that is guided by the theory of foreign language teaching, with the English language knowledge and application skills, intercultural communication and

learning strategies as the main content, and it combines various teaching modes and teaching means. It can be seen that the nature and goal of college English teaching in our country coincide with the theory of language consciousness. First of all, the outline clearly indicates that the college English course should be guided by the theory of foreign language teaching. The theory of language consciousness is a kind of teaching mode, which has theoretical basis on the macro level. Secondly, the main content of college English is integrated with the teaching mode of language consciousness. Finally, the teaching system of college English is a collection of various teaching modes and teaching methods, which is not limited to which teaching mode, and the teaching mode of language awareness meets this requirement. In college English writing teaching, because students have studied English in primary and middle schools, they usually have a certain amount of knowledge accumulation in English language. However, due to the influence of their mother tongue, their active use of language is weak. Therefore, it is of great significance to cultivate their English language awareness and the subjective initiative of learning in the process of writing. In the process of combining language awareness with college English writing teaching, teachers and students should raise their language awareness.

#### **4.1. Improve the Teachers' Language Awareness**

As a qualified college English educator, they should have two language awareness and a good sense of English. Because only when the teachers have the good sense of language, can they create the reasonable teaching atmosphere according to the teaching contents, and can students be exposed to this good atmosphere and use the language awareness to write English and improve their language awareness through writing. Based on that, we should improve teachers' language awareness from the following three aspects. First, English teachers should constantly improve their professional knowledge. In addition to English vocabulary and grammar, teachers should have a certain sense of English culture and language. Teachers can improve the teaching quality of college English writing by constantly improving their professional knowledge. Second, teachers should constantly improve their English communication skills. In the course of English writing teaching, teachers should be able to communicate effectively with students in English, and can impart their professional knowledge to students to the maximum extent, which enables students to achieve the maximum comprehensible input so as to achieve the purpose of teaching. In practical teaching, if the teachers' communicative ability is weak, it will directly affect the language awareness of the teachers themselves, which will affect the input quality of the students. Third, raise the consciousness of improving the teaching methods. In the course of actual teaching, teachers should consciously train students' English consciousness and cultivate their sense of language through subtle influences. In teaching, we should discard the traditional "cramming" teaching method. Learning should be based on students, guiding them how to collect data, how to

realize the cultural differences between east and west, to carry out effective interaction between teachers and students, and pay equal attention to applying language knowledge teaching and language teaching. In a word, improving the language awareness of teachers can provide more favorable help and source for college English writing teaching (Yan, 2012).

## **4.2. Cultivate Students' Language Awareness**

### **4.2.1. To Exert the Subjective Initiative of Students' English Learning and Cultivate Students' Language Awareness by Increasing the English Vocabulary**

In the process of English writing, abundant vocabulary plays a very important role. When writing in practice, many students only know the meaning of English words, or understand English words only on the grammatical level, and do not really know how to use them. Although some students have mastered a certain amount of vocabulary, they do not know how to use them flexibly or carry out reasonable extensions, so they are helpless in the specific contexts. The main reason for these problems is that they have low language awareness and lack effective training. Based on this situation, teachers need to make full use of vocabulary as the starting point, and guide students in a targeted way in order to make the students' learning for vocabulary doesn't just stay on the cognition of the sound, form and meaning, and they should also master the connotation and extension of the meaning of English words through the specific context, abandon the influence of native language, and get into the habit of thinking in English way.

### **4.2.2. To Maximize the Students' Enthusiasm for Learning and Improve Their Language Awareness by Increasing Their English Practice**

People who mastered a certain level of language knowledge and pragmatic knowledge does not mean that they have completely mastered the language, and they will also have to transform the language knowledge into language ability, and consciously use it and gradually form the habit. The theory of modern language learning tells us that a lot of language input can create the possibility of language output. In other words, language output can be acquired through accumulation. The improvement of English writing ability is not achieved overnight, but requires a long-term accumulation process, which requires students to listen more, speak more, read more and write more. Therefore, in addition to English teaching materials, teachers should also guide students to take part in the extracurricular activities. Teachers should encourage their students to practice more and make the practice of language to be a habit in their lives. The cultivation of students' language awareness must be obtained through two channels, namely, acquisition and learning. Teachers should ensure that they have sufficient input of language materials and strengthen language practice training., they should also try to enlarge the language input, optimize the language acquisition environment, and guide students to participate in the language practice activities so that students can contact English as much as possible. Teachers can

ask students to listen to English radio, speak English freely, and read a lot of English books and English classics, to improve training students in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating, ensure that there are a large number of authentic language input and adequate preparation for language output. In specific writing teaching, teachers could help students to combine learning with using, and consolidate their language awareness and English writing skills in writing practice (Zhang, 2012).

#### **4.2.3. Cultivate Students' Intercultural Consciousness, So that Students' Language Awareness Can Be Further Sublimated**

The famous English literary scholar Wang Zuoliang once said, "Without understanding the social culture in the language, no one can really master the language." Huang Bo, a famous scholar, also believes that the cultivation of English language awareness must be rooted in culture. Any language is closely related to its environment and culture. There are great differences between English language awareness research and related research in China. If there is no English culture as a prerequisite and pillar, the study of English consciousness will be too formal and will only be studied as one of the points in the English vocabulary system, which will not reach the level of research. The cultivation of language awareness is inseparable from the establishment of cultural consciousness. Language is the carrier of culture, and culture is the core of language. In order to establish a true sense of language, it is necessary to be inseparable from its cultural background. Therefore, in college English writing teaching, teachers should be good at guiding students to pay attention to and understand the differences between Chinese and western cultures and language expression habits, let the students understand the essence of culture in the cross-cultures, feel the beauty of language, so as to improve their language skills, aesthetic tastes and cultural qualities, integrate the cultivation of the consciousness of culture and language, penetrate language consciousness in the cultural consciousness, and feel the cultural differences in language consciousness. Therefore, in college English writing teaching, it is very helpful for them to cultivate their sensitivity to English culture, learn English language knowledge and improve their language application ability (Zhu, 2011).

### **5. Conclusion**

In a word, it is necessary to cultivate students' language awareness, and it is more practical. Only when students are equipped with language awareness, can they understand the language in a specific language environment more profoundly, exert their language potentials, and use various languages more flexibly and creatively. Of course, to achieve this effect, the premise is that English teachers should be brave enough to break through the traditional teaching philosophy, dare to innovate, dare to explore, and find the right path. As long as we make unremitting efforts, we will improve their language skills and improve their English writing ability while cultivating their language awareness. To sum

up, language awareness plays an important role in teaching college English writing. It can let teachers and students learn the essence of language, so that the students can learn effectively, understand the cultural differences between their mother tongue and English, and better promote the use of language. At last, the teaching quality of college English writing will be improved.

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