Research on the Cultivation of English Majors' English and American Cultural Cognition in Basic English Teaching Based on Big Data

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Abstract. For keeping in line with the international trend, English major students not only need to exercise their own listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation ability, but also need to have a full understanding of British and American culture to carry out targeted exchanges according to the actual needs. According to big data analysis, in the basic English teaching, the presentation of British and American cultural content can help students understand the basic cultural characteristics of British and American areas to cultivate students' understanding of British and American culture. Based on the characteristics of basic English teaching, this paper discusses the cultivation methods of students' British and American cultural cognition.

Keywords: Basic English, English Major, British and American Culture, Cognitive Training, Big Data

1. Introduction

Basic English is a comprehensive English skill course, which includes reading, grammar and expression commonly used in British and American areas. Through the teaching of basic English, students' comprehensive communicative competence can be improved. It can also have a direct effect on their British and American cultural cognition. Basic English courses are mainly divided into two parts: basic language training and discourse analysis, which enable students to accumulate a large number of vocabulary and grammar in reading, and apply them in oral practice, so as to improve their ability to apply what they have learned into practice [1]. However, in the current basic English teaching, many teachers tend to put their energy into students' listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating abilities training, and ignore the cognition of British and American culture, which will be detrimental to the cultural communication of English majors. The relationship is shown in figure 1.
Students’ cognition of British and American culture

Currently, many college students grow up in different environments, so there are great differences in their British and American culture cognition. The teaching of basic English involves a wide range of British and American cultures, such as British and American people's clothing, food, housing and transportation, literary tradition, folk customs and so on. For freshmen from rural areas with little knowledge of British and American culture, they will easily misunderstand British and American culture[2]. The quality education in high schools does not involve the teaching of British and American culture. Instead, teachers are more likely to teach grammar, reading and writing skills for the examination. As a result, students lack knowledge of British and American culture. Moreover, students' understanding of British and American culture is superficial, without fully understanding the deep connotation of British and American cultural customs. For example, as for the Halloween, many students know it's time to eat apples, send gifts and welcome the Santa Claus, but know little about the origin of Christmas. Although it is impossible to judge whether students are lack of British and American culture of only from a few examples, it is likely to know that some students have a partial understanding of British and American culture[3].

Suggestions on the cultivation of students’ cognition of British and American culture via basic English teaching

3.1. Create an environment to learn English and British culture
In the basic English teaching, in order to improve the language learning environment, teachers are required to give lectures in English in English classes, so as to increase the frequency of using English. When practicing, in order to reduce students' resistance, teachers are required to mix Chinese and English in teaching at the beginning and use more Chinese. As students' listening ability is improved, the Chinese lecturing will be gradually replaced with English teaching to create a better language environment for students. Although the infiltration of English culture is only an attempt to impart British and American cultural background knowledge, it is, after all, the embryonic form of intercultural teaching. Language is the carrier of national culture. If we simply teach pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, emphasizing the accuracy of the language, regardless of the differences in the occasion, the time, the communication object and other factors, it is bound to make students form bad learning and thinking habits, that is, Chinese thinking and English form. Therefore, we should provide students with a more comprehensive English background and create a good atmosphere for them to learn British and American culture.

3.2. Encourage students by organizing contest of English and British culture
In basic English teaching, British and American cultural knowledge contests and games can be adopted to enhance student's study interest, encouraging them to actively participate in, to establish self-confidence, and to cultivate students' the enthusiasm of cultural exchange. Teachers should give
encouragement when students make mistakes, rather than ridicule or criticize students, so as to let the student deepen their understanding of British and American culture in the communication in the process as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Coping strategies.

| Coping strategies                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------|
| British and American culture learning atmosphere       |
| Organization knowledge contest                         |
| Anglo-American culture contrast between Chinese and western culture teaching |

In the classroom, teachers can organize students to guess the British and American cultural knowledge through specific text content, in order to enhance the understanding of British and American culture connotation. Teachers can also timely help students or tell some cool facts about English American culture, to help students improve the cognitive ability of British and American culture. In addition, some English songs contests and text reading competitions can be held to build students' confidence. Various forms such as songs, movies, poems and plays can be used to enhance students' enthusiasm in learning British and American culture, to let them fully understand the basic characteristics of British and American culture.

### 3.3. Leverage the cultural difference to enhance students’ cultural cognition

In the basic English teaching, teachers should be good at exploring the similarities and differences between Chinese and western cultures to deepen students’ understanding of British and American cultures. At the same time, teachers should focus on the analysis and extension of the cultural knowledge in the textbook, so that students can better understand the cultural differences between China and the western countries. For example in the western wedding customs, there is full of simplicity and romantic atmosphere, but in China, it is more lively, joyful with the customs of bringing dowry, and going back to the married woman’s parents’ home three days after the wedding, from which students can be more able to find the differences of Chinese and western culture, at the same time also can better understand the characteristics of the custom of British and American region. Moreover, there is a big difference in the daily life. For example, people are more inclined to rent a house, also more use offline payment, but in China, many people prefer to buy apartments, and use the online payment methods such as Alipay, WeChat. It is because of those difference in cultural aspects that we should actively use the comparison of British and American culture in basic English teaching, in order to improve the vitality of cultural teaching. Moreover, it is necessary to appropriately apply the current multimedia technology to improve students' impression of British and American culture through video or animation, so as to enhance their cognition of British and American culture.

### 4. Conclusion

In a word, only by fully understanding the culture of British and American areas can English majors have a better cultural exchange. Therefore, in the basic English teaching, teachers should not only cultivate students’ listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating abilities, but also strengthen their cognition of British and American culture. According to big data analysis, in the basic teaching of English, teachers can provide vocabulary and grammar for students through modularization, offer students more environment to practice so that students can perceive the cultural differences between British and American regions, correctly grasp the situation to language use, and strengthen the cognitive ability of British and American culture.
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