

## A Study on Differences between Chinese and English Based on Linguistic Environment Factors

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**Abstract:** A nation's tradition and culture shape its unique thinking mode, which is inevitably reflected in its language. It is very important for English learners that the expression of English language is completely different from that of Chinese, especially in the process of reading English and communicating in English in real life. In the past, English teaching always focused on the acquisition of language structure and language ability, and cultural teaching was often neglected. Because of the different geographical environment, historical culture and other factors, Chinese and English use their own unique ways to understand and transform the world, forming their own unique national language system. This paper analyzes the cultural differences between Chinese and English, the learning behavior of English learners and the influence of English teachers' teaching behavior on English learning.

### 1. Introduction

Language is an indispensable part of the world, and Chinese and English are two widely used language systems in the world. Language environment plays an extremely important role in human language learning. The learning of mother tongue language cannot be separated from the living language environment of learners <sup>[1]</sup>. Similarly, the acquisition of a second language is closely related to the learning environment of language learners. It is very important for English learners that the expression of English language is completely different from that of Chinese, especially in the process of reading English and communicating in English in real life <sup>[2]</sup>. The language systems of Chinese and English have certain differences, and it is difficult to use the two languages together under the influence of the language environment. Therefore, it will be difficult to learn the language.

In language learning, learners tend to understand the meaning of foreign languages with their own native language thinking. However, due to the different development processes of their respective languages and the differences in the language, culture and customs of different countries, many foreign language meanings we understand in our mother tongue are different from themselves. The meanings are quite different, and even run counter. For Chinese students, the Chinese language environment has become a major obstacle in their English learning process, and they often learn English according to the language rules of Chinese <sup>[3]</sup>. In the past, language teaching always aimed at the acquisition of language structure and language ability, and cultural teaching was often ignored. Some teachers are not very sensitive to this issue. Students' cross-cultural communication skills are far from being cultivated, and cross-cultural awareness needs to be strengthened <sup>[6]</sup>. Through a deep analysis of SLA theory, we can find that there are different strategies for teaching or learning a language. Due to the political and cultural exchanges and contacts between nations, languages of different origins inevitably influence each other and may have similarities in some aspects. Based on this, this paper analyzes the cultural differences between Chinese and English, the learning behavior of English learners and the influence of English teachers' teaching behavior on English learning. So that students can fully understand the differences between the two languages, so that they can master the knowledge of the two languages.

### 2. The Relationship between Language and Culture

The society's demand for foreign language talents is no longer that they can only know many

words and read several articles, but also that they should be practical talents who can communicate and spread culture in real time. There are many words in Chinese and English, which point to the same thing, but there are some differences in the essence and connotation of their expressions. Language is a unique communication tool for human beings and a direct expression of one's thinking consciousness. There are great differences in people's way of thinking under different cultural backgrounds. The differences in the objective world and subjective understanding of different nationalities are also fully reflected in their language use<sup>[8]</sup>. As a language phenomenon, language is closely related to human society. It is a tool of communication and thinking for the whole people, and also a repository of cognitive achievements. The history of a nation's language and its culture go hand in hand. Therefore, in the study of linguistics, the analysis of the relationship between language and culture has been the focus of the relevant scholars in recent years.

### **3. Differences between English and Chinese**

#### **3.1. Cultural differences**

Any national language is an important component and carrier of the national culture. Students' lack of cross-cultural awareness will lead to pragmatic failure in daily language application. Culture is unique to human society and is the main symbol to distinguish human beings from animals. It has the characteristics of universality and difference, stability and flexibility. Cultural factors have a profound influence on English teaching. It is impossible to really learn English without understanding the culture of English-speaking countries. In a sense, language is a part of culture and plays an important role in culture. Language is the foundation of culture. Without language, there is no culture. On the other hand, language is influenced by culture and reflects culture. Language embodies the characteristics of a nation. It not only reflects the historical and cultural background of the nation, but also reflects the way of life and thinking of the nation. Without a certain cultural background of the target language, it will also have a negative impact on students' language learning, including the understanding of discourse and conversational meaning. There are synonyms, synonyms and so on in Chinese vocabulary. There is almost no big difference in the use of words with the same meaning, but it is difficult to learn synonyms in English learning. The main reason is that English requires different synonyms to be used in different contexts, so students will have some trouble in learning.

#### **3.2. Differences in thinking patterns**

Language and way of thinking belong to the category of culture, but they are also influenced by national culture, philosophical concepts and other factors. Traditional Chinese thinking focuses on the overall concept of language, which has a great impact on the language environment. Judging from the differences in emotional expressions between the east and the west, the influence on language expression can be demonstrated from the aspects of the subject or the object of the problem in the process of Chinese-English language conversation. The difference between Chinese culture and English culture determines the difference between Chinese thinking and English thinking, making the expression of Chinese language and English language very different. Ancient Chinese philosophers believed that the subjective world and the objective world could not exist together, which played a certain dominant role in our language. Western countries advocate individual thinking more for thinking mode, so western countries have strong individualism, which also has a certain impact on their language environment, and their use of language is often individualistic. The Chinese language embodies a holistic way of thinking, while the English language embodies an individual way of thinking that emphasizes some parts. Although there is no difference between the two, it brings people misunderstanding in actual language communication.

### **4. The Influence of Cultural Differences between Chinese and English on Language Teaching**

Language has both national and regional characteristics. Due to differences in living environment, ideology, social development, customs, religious beliefs and other aspects, language

has distinct national characteristics, which is also the reason why nearly 10,000 languages exist in the world. Because of the close relationship between language and culture, cultural background knowledge must be integrated into the teaching of language knowledge in English teaching. In English and Chinese, the same sentence may have different pragmatic functions and effects due to cultural differences. For example, praising women's beauty when meeting in western countries is a kind of etiquette and gentlemanly manner, but in China it will be regarded as a frivolous and disrespectful remark. Under the influence of examination oriented educational thinking, English teachers in our country focus on the theoretical knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, sentence pattern and other languages as the focus of teaching, and seldom involve the instillation and infiltration of cultural factors in English language areas. From the perspective of foreign language teaching, culture can be divided into knowledge culture and communication culture. The so-called knowledge culture refers to the linguistic and non linguistic cultural factors that do not directly affect the accurate transmission, while the communicative culture refers to the cultural factors implied in the learned language. The existence of cultural differences in English and Chinese, in English teaching links such as pronunciation, vocabulary and sentence, will have a certain impact and trouble on students.

## **5. Conclusion**

English and Chinese have different historical backgrounds, different cultural development, different language expressions and different ways of thinking. Therefore, it is difficult for the two languages to have the same environment, which makes learning the two languages equivalent to learning the culture and thoughts of another country and difficult for students to understand. The language environment of English and Chinese is quite different, mainly reflected in different historical backgrounds, different cultural development and different ways of thinking. When learning a language, one should first understand the historical background and culture of one's country so as to master the part of speech and meaning of the language, thus being able to accurately master English and Chinese. The difference between Chinese culture and English culture determines the difference between Chinese thinking and English thinking, which makes the expression of Chinese language and English language very different. If there is no real language environment for learning a foreign language, it will take time and effort to participate in the actual language training, and the learners can not skillfully use the language, which is the real situation of English learning in China. In the process of learning a language in the future, it is very helpful to understand the thinking of the language from the cultural level and appreciate the expression of the language from the way of thinking.

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