

Course Features in Peking Tungwen College and Its Enlightenment to Foreign Language Teaching

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Abstract: The Peking Tungwen College, the first official foreign language school in the late Qing Dynasty, was established in August 1862, which marked the modern formal beginning of foreign language education in China, especially in English education. Its teaching mode is still worth learning for reference in modern English education. Based on the study of historical materials, this paper analyzes the curriculum of the Peking Tungwen College, and puts forward some suggestions to seek useful inspiration for the development of modern foreign language teaching.

Keywords: Peking Tungwen College; Westernization Movement; Foreign Language Teaching;

一、Introduction

After the Second Opium War, the Qing Dynasty was compelled to sign unequal treaties with foreign powers. Some treaties even included clauses that discriminate against Chinese. On the record, "the late Sino-foreign diplomatic negotiations treaties were all written in English and can only be attached in Chinese within three years. It also stipulated that English is always used as justice in any dispute from now on." Government's attitude towards English began to change and it remained top priority for government to cultivate the talents who knew foreign languages.

二、Characteristics of Curriculum Design in Peking Tungwen College

2.1 Adapting to physical and mental development of human

The Eight-year Curriculum Schedule of the Peiking Tungwen College was established in 1876, which could be divided into two stages, the first stage: 1-4 years, which belongs to the basic English training course. In the second stage, 5-8 years, it has transitioned from the study of basic knowledge to the professional foreign languages and paid stress on the translation of foreign books. The curriculum Foreign language teaching in Peking Tungwen College presented the feature of from single to complex, and complex to standard.

2.2 Stressing process-oriented approach towards translation

There were two types of translation activities in the Peking Tungwen College. One was the study of interpretation, which is one of basic skills for translators. According to historical records: Students were required to imitate diplomatic translation scenarios in class, learning various translation techniques, and Western culture and etiquette. The other one was written translation. Those who are highly effective in translating would be rewarded.

2.3 Stressing the study of Chinese language knowledge.

Peking Tungwen College was divided into pre-college and post-college based on the Chinese foundation. Students should study Chinese first and then carry out English education. Because officials of Westernization School realized the connection between English learning and Chinese learning. Therefore, students were required to have a certain writing skill in Chinese before they can study English. What's more, Chinese played an important role in deciding whether the students can learn English well.

三、The Enlightenment of Peking Tungwen College to Foreign Language Teaching

3.1 Returning to the instrumental nature of foreign language

The purpose of establishing the Peking Tungwen College was to cultivate diplomatic translator, which was carried out from beginning to end. It is high time for administrators that reconsidered how to make

foreign language return to its instrumental feature and become the carrier of acquiring and spreading knowledge.

3.2 Attaching great importance to Chinese learning

Under the influence of economic globalization, cultures in various countries also present a new pattern of communication and confrontation, cooperation and contest. Culture has become an important tool for western countries to subvert and control other countries and realize their own strategic intentions. Therefore, sparing no efforts to enhance culture soft power in the international mainstream community has reached consensus around the world.

3.3 Combining theory with practice

The contemporary foreign language curriculum pays much attention to the theory research, but neglects practical essence of translation. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance the translation interaction between teachers and students. Universities and colleges should take initiatives to establish a long-term cooperative relationship with translation companies, foreign trade enterprises, primary and secondary school educational institutions, thus providing a great language practice platform for students.

Conclusion

English education of the Peking Tungwen College in the late Qing Dynasty was the beginning of the modern formal English education in China, which has been more than 140 years. It has introduced foreign advanced teaching model and idea into China and has trained a large number of outstanding translators and diplomatists, promoting the development of Chinese English education. The summary of historical development of Peking Tungwen College can give inspiration to our present English education, so as to provide useful reference for our present English teaching and reform.

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