

The Lack of Media Literacy Education and Countermeasures for Foreign Language Majors in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract:

There is a general lack of humanities literacy knowledge, especially media literacy, among foreign language majors in colleges and universities. This deficiency is mainly reflected in the following aspects: the lack of media literacy education subject; single function of media information utilization; unclear understanding of media characteristics. We should strengthen the concept of media literacy education, implement the goal of professional training, reform the content of professional education, make full use of the function of media information, establish the concept of media critical discourse, and improve the innovative ability of professional students.

Keywords:

Media Literacy, Lack of, Media Information, Media Characteristics

1. Introduction

For a long time, news information, film and television literature provided by radio and television, newspapers and magazines, film networks and other media have been an important part of foreign language education in colleges and universities. However, the function of these media information in the education of foreign language majors is only as the material for language learning, but the content of media and culture and other humanistic literacy has not been explored. Influenced by the “language tool theory”, students of foreign language majors in domestic universities generally lack humanistic knowledge, especially media literacy. [1] In the context of the “linguistic turn” proposed by the Western philosophers who criticize the “linguistic instrumentalism”, many scholars in China also reflect on and criticize the “linguistic instrumentalism” that is prevalent in foreign language teaching. Some scholars have also reflected on and criticized the “instrumentalism” of language teaching. Some scholars have also suggested that the penetration and enhancement of humanistic literacy in foreign language teaching should be strengthened from the perspective of media literacy, and have made preliminary attempts to do so. On the basis of the above scholars’ research, the author will discuss in depth the performance types and causes of the lack of media literacy among foreign language majors in colleges and

universities, and then propose a few measures to strengthen media literacy education for foreign language majors in colleges and universities in a targeted way

2. The Necessity of Strengthening Media Literacy Education in Foreign Language Majors in Colleges and Universities

Media literacy is a kind of human ability, and the possession of this ability is an important condition to cope with the current “media frenzy” in the world. [2] In the face of mass media, people who lack the ability of media literacy will be at a loss as to what to do with media information, gradually lose their sense of autonomy and self-awareness, and eventually get lost in the “prosperous intention” constructed by mass media. Therefore, in the current complex media environment, media literacy is essential for college students, especially foreign language majors, whose worldview and values are gradually being established and their ideological consciousness is gradually maturing.

In his review of foreign language education in Chinese colleges and universities over the past 30 years of reform and opening up, Mr. Dai Weidong pointed out that Chinese foreign language education has indeed made remarkable achievements, training millions of foreign language talents for economic construction, foreign communication and social development. However, if we look at the current situation of foreign language education in China calmly and objectively, there are still problems, such as the lack of breakthrough and internationally influential landmark achievements in basic theoretical research on foreign language linguistics; in teaching practice, foreign language teaching emphasizes the transmission of language knowledge but not the cultivation of language communication skills, and the long-standing “time-consuming and ineffective” and “dumb English” problems. The long-standing problems of “time-consuming and ineffective” and “dumb English” have not been completely solved; in terms of talent training mode, many foreign language talents have narrow knowledge, single skills and poor social adaptability, etc. Mr. Dai Weidong's analysis of the quality of foreign language talents in Chinese universities is detailed and thorough, and he also clearly points out the path of cultivating foreign language talents in the future.

In the new historical period, excellent foreign language majors should have the following abilities: the ability to think in foreign languages, the ability to use Chinese and foreign languages to adapt to economic globalization and various social challenges, the ability to reason critically and systematically, the ability to communicate across cultures, the ability to innovate and work independently in foreign languages, the ability to adapt to foreign-related work, the ability to compete and cooperate with foreign countries, the ability to judge and discriminate between foreign cultures, the ability to learn foreign languages, and the ability to learn foreign languages. The ability to judge and discern foreign cultures, the ability to observe and integrate different disciplines, cultures and ideas, etc.

With the rapid development of internationalization and informatization, the political, economic, cultural, technological and military exchanges between countries in the world are becoming more and more frequent, and the competition in cross-cultural communication between the media of foreign countries is fierce, the importance of senior innovative foreign language talents is becoming more and more prominent. This poses a challenge to the foreign language education in China, which requires us

to pay attention to the education of foreign language majors and strengthen the education of humanistic literacy at the same time.

3. The lack of Media Literacy Education in Foreign Language Majors in Colleges and Universities

Influenced by the “foreign language tool theory”, foreign language majors in China’s colleges and universities have been focusing on the cultivation, training and application of language skills, focusing on the training of basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. This has led to the lack of students’ ability to acquire knowledge and think independently. Although foreign language majors use a lot of media information as teaching materials, they only pay attention to its function as a language tool, but ignore its humanistic function. This is undoubtedly one of the major regrets and shortcomings of professional education. This deficiency is mainly reflected in the following aspects.

3.1. The Absence of the Main Body of Media Literacy Education

The lack of educational subjects is mainly manifested in the lack of media literacy education goals in the training objectives of foreign language majors, the poor and weak media literacy of teachers, the weak humanistic literacy of students, and the lack of media literacy learning goals and awareness. [3]

In the past 30 years of reform and opening up, universities have been aiming at cultivating foreign language talents as “complex talents” and have made a lot of efforts, but the quality of talents still cannot meet the current needs of their abilities: “The English majors in higher education institutions are trained to cultivate complex English talents who have solid English language foundation and broad cultural knowledge and can use English skillfully in translation, teaching, management and research in foreign affairs, education, economic and trade, culture, science and technology, military and other sectors.” However, there is still a gap between the goal of talent training and the implementation of specific talent training programs in many universities. Both teachers and students are the subjects of education. However, for many years, the foreign language talents training system has lacked the guidance and cultivation of humanistic literacy including media literacy, which makes the teachers and students of foreign language majors generally lack media literacy. Therefore, teachers and students as the main educational subjects are also absent in media literacy education.

Of course, in the specific teaching process, there is also a weak awareness of media literacy guidance in the preparation of teaching materials, teaching methods, and the handling of teaching contents. The lack of the main body of media literacy education is the fundamental problem of media literacy education in foreign language majors in colleges and universities, and only by solving this problem can we achieve the goal of training composite talents.

3.2. Single Function of Media Information Utilization

In the research and practice of composite talents cultivation, the courses of “international news”, “foreign affairs translation” and “film and audio-visual” have been gradually added to the training program of foreign language majors. The textbooks of foreign language courses also adopt various news genres and film scripts. In the process of language learning, students mostly use various texts from radio,

Internet, TV, newspapers and other media as learning materials. However, the information function of the media in the education process of foreign language professionals is limited to the learning of language skills, which shows a single function. Most of the students still do not know much about the media and its deeper information, not to mention the ability to

The majority of students still have little understanding of the media and its deeper messages, let alone the ability to effectively filter, analyze, and criticize these messages. This has a great negative impact on the direction and quality of talents.

3.3. Lack of Understanding of the Characteristics of the Media

When teachers and students, who are the subjects of education, use media materials for language teaching, they have a poor understanding of the characteristics of the media and a lack of understanding of the nature of the media, which makes it impossible for teachers and students to see the media bias that exists deep in the materials when they use them. Although the news in media messages is true, it is also subjective and biased. As a user of information, it is important to understand the characteristics of the media, and to use media information to understand the tendencies of the media, so that we can remove the falsehoods and keep the truth and maintain our position.

The lack of humanities literacy, especially media literacy, is one of the major reasons why the quality of foreign language professionals cannot be improved. We should learn to understand the nature of media, make full use of media information, strengthen media literacy education, and optimize the teaching methods of related courses, so as to improve the media literacy of foreign language majors.

4. Measures to Strengthen the Media Literacy Education of Foreign Language Majors in Colleges and Universities

4.1. Strengthen the Concept of Media Literacy Education and Implement the Goal of Professional Talents Training

Over the past twenty years, the foreign language field in China has done a lot of concrete and solid work in the research and practice of foreign language complex talents, and has put forward many specific and feasible ability requirements and training methods for this talent training goal. However, due to the lack of media literacy among foreign language teachers, this goal has not yet been truly realized in terms of media literacy in the specific curriculum, course teaching and material application. [4]

Therefore, it is imperative to strengthen the concept of media literacy of education subjects at all levels and to truly implement the goal of training foreign language majors by the Ministry of Education. Firstly, it is necessary to let education subjects at all levels have a full understanding and awareness of the current media environment; secondly, it is necessary to understand the new concepts and effectiveness of media literacy education in foreign teaching institutions at all levels; thirdly, it is necessary to study in depth the fitting point and specific operation strategies between the implementation of professional training objectives and the strengthening of media literacy education concepts; fourthly, it is necessary to strengthen the construction and training of foreign language teachers with strong media literacy, and to do a good job in guiding and educating students about media literacy. Fourth, we should strengthen

the construction and training of foreign language teachers with strong media literacy, and do a good job in guiding and educating students' media literacy. Only in this way can we really strengthen the concept of media literacy education in this major and implement the goal of talent training.

4.2. Reform the Content of Professional Education and Make Full Use of Media Information Function

The courses in the professional training program, the various media available for professional education, and the selection, interpretation and analysis of materials in the preparation of teaching materials should be carefully studied, and the teaching methods of foreign language professional education based on media literacy should be researched, so that the curriculum can be reasonably set, the media can be fully utilized, the materials can be properly selected and the teaching methods can be diversified. We should integrate the basic theoretical knowledge of media information (characteristics, structure, and tendencies) into the teaching materials scientifically, and lead students to carry out various types of practical activities to understand and know various media, such as seminars, reviews, lectures, field trips, etc., so that students can have extensive contact with media, understand the operation of media, and recognize the essence of media. [5] Only in this way can students use media information in a multidimensional way, improve their media literacy, and prepare for the complex media environment. Only in this way can we use media information in a multidimensional way and improve our media literacy in our studies, so as to lay the foundation for external communication and dissemination activities in the complex media environment.

4.3. Establishing the Concept of Media Critical Discourse and Improving the Innovative Ability of Foreign Language Majors

Language is not only a tool, but also an object for us to identify, analyze, criticize, and accommodate the ideology, cultural attributes, and social conditions contained in linguistic information. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a media critical discourse and a concept of media criticism. The ideology implicit in media messages is expressed in words, phrases, sentences and text structures. In the process of learning, it is necessary to be guided by the concept of media criticism in order to accurately identify, scientifically criticize, and correctly absorb it.

The establishment of the concept of media criticism is essential for foreign language majors to form critical and systematic reasoning ability, cross-cultural communication and communication ability, and to form good ideological and moral qualities for foreign-related work, as well as the ability to judge and discriminate foreign media information.

5. Conclusions

Currently, language education in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and other countries pay great attention to the integration of media literacy education, which is a scientific talent training strategy under the characteristics of the contemporary "media carnival". In China, after the linguistic turn, it is an important step to re-conceptualize the function of language, and to introduce and strengthen media literacy education under the correct goal of foreign language training.

Conflicts of Interest

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