

## A Chinese Scholar's Perspective of Cultural Differences

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On the night of Dec. 21, We attended a lecture on the connection between the American culture and English learning which had a great effect on our English study. It was given by Professor Jiang from Zhejiang University. As an experienced professor, Professor Jiang has been doing research in English for many years and won a great many prizes. We felt so lucky that we had an interview with her at the end of lecture.

The following are main points of the interview which impressed us deeply.

### 1. The differences between American and Chinese family education.

Her experience tells her that American children are more independent because they have part-time jobs to pay parts of their tuition. When they are in the high school, they have part-time job, so not to mention in the college. However, Chinese children always depend on their parents for their tuition. So that's a big difference and there is also a difference in freedom. She thinks American children enjoy more freedom than Chinese children. Chinese parents are more protective, they are often afraid that their children will meet problems, so they want to take care of children. But American parents prefer their children to solve problems by themselves. Another difference is date. In china, if a high school student is dating, then the parents will get so nervous and worried, but in the USA, if a high school child has not dated, the parents will get worried instead.

### 2. The difference between American and Chinese school education

She thinks it's quite a big question. In the primary school, children in the USA don't have to write homework. Besides, they go to school very late, like at 9:00 in the morning and they go back home very early, like at 3:00 pm. But in china, little kids have to go to school at 7:00am or 8:00am, and stay until 4:30pm, so children kids stay longer time in school than American kids, as to the college, people mistakenly think that college students in the USA lead a very leisure life, but as a matter of fact, they still work very hard. So it's only the atmosphere that seems relaxed. In fact, they have to read a lot of things and have plenty of work to do.

### 3. The connection between learning foreign culture and English study?

In her opinion, culture and language are related. If you don't know the culture, sometimes you can not understand the interior meaning. For example, in the USA, when you meet some problems, you can call the fire agent; they will help you. So if you don't know the culture, you will feel very surprised. And also in the USA, if the fire alert Bell rings, everybody must go out, if you don't, it's illegal. So if you know the culture background, it's easier for you to do the reading comprehension.

4. Is it necessary for many parents in china to send their children abroad since they were very young?

Pro. Jiang obviously doesn't advise the Chinese parents to do so. The children are too young and they are not independent. When they go to the USA, they can't take care of themselves. One story was that some of Chinese students didn't study well there, as they didn't have a good self-discipline. And finally, they failed in some courses. And then the professor asked them to leave the USA. So the children were very sad, they cried and cried, not knowing what to do.

### 5. Examples of American customs that differs from Chinese?

When pressed for some examples to show the differences between Chinese and American customs, she thinks the most impressive is the pray. Many American people will say something to the God

before the meal. She admits that she is not used to that. So once she was having a lunch together with an American family, the host began to pray, and she didn't know what to do, she just sat there quietly and waited him to finish. After he had finished, they started to eat. Another is going to church. Every Saturday especially on Sunday, a lot of shops and stores in the USA are closed. Lots of Chinese are not used to the atmosphere in the church, it was particularly serious.

6. How does she think of her education career?

As far as teaching is concerned, there aren't many difficulties, but of course, there are challenges. Nowadays, students are more demanding, they'd like some useful and interesting language learning methods. Besides, they hope teachers can give them some tips to learn English better and fast. But sometimes, there is no shortcut of learning English well. And challenge comes from Students' evaluation. They will give you a score saying how well you can teach. Then teachers have to work hard to satisfy students' need. However, different students have different needs.

7. Opinion on a few children who speak English much better than Chinese.

She considers it a shame if one does not know his own language. As a Chinese, the first language should be Chinese, not English. If somebody likes English, he can learn latter after he has quite a good command of Chinese language.

8. Suggestion on being a good English learner?

Firstly, be active in class, especially in spoken acuities. Listen carefully not only to the teachers but also your classmates. Then be a contributor, share your idea and experiences with the class. What's more, Do not be shy of making mistakes; just take the initiative in learning. Practice more and you can be a successful English learner.

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