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Motivation of learning Chinese as a foreign language in Russia: Chinese dining manner as an example to explore the relation between learning motivation and cultural awareness

Panel: Motivation of Chinese language learners in Europe

Motivation plays a significant role in Chinese language learning. It is not only relevant to language learning efficiency but cultural awareness. Based on the cognitional aspect of motivation theory, motivation is a learning process which related to surrounded environment. Language learning environment should be able to provide leaners sufficient cultural stimulation and language input to facilitate the motivation of leaners. To Chinese language learners in Russia, cultural stimulation of Chinese is insufficient to support their learning process. Thus, how to promote the cultural awareness in Chinese language learning process is a pivotal issue to discuss.

According to the relevant theory, learners connect the new assumption with previous knowledge, which is the old assumption. If the new assumption is similar or extending the old assumption, the new assumption will be accepted. On the contrary, if the new assumption in conflict with the old assumption, either the new assumption replaces the old assumption or the new assumption be refused to accept. The assumption is based on the maximum of relevance in utterance. It can be referred that Chinese language learners need sufficient cultural inputs to reach the aim of comprehending Chinese learning materials. The process has a huge impact on their motivation facilitation.

Chinese dining manner is a significant symbol of Chinese culture. Chinese language learners are able to explore Chinese culture and custom through learning Chinese dining manner. Via the process of learning Chinese dining words such as ‘勸酒’, ‘做東’ and ‘入座’, learners attempt to connect the culture awareness between Chinese and Russia. By comprehending the meaning of Chinese dining manner, the new assumptions are built. It is referred that motivation of learning Chinese may be promoted as well.

The research is based on the relevant theory aspect to discuss cognitive motivation of Chinese learning in Russia. There are some words related to Chinese dining manners are selected to test the cultural awareness of Russian students who learn Chinese as a foreign language. These Russian students also attend the interview. According to the result, the research will discuss the relation between Chinese learning motivation and cultural awareness.