

# Exploration on the Teaching Path of Integrating “Telling Chinese Stories” into College English

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**Abstract:** *As its international influence is increasing, China tries to establish a new international discourse system to expand consensus with other countries on the purpose of promoting harmonious and common development of mankind. Cultivating college students to tell Chinese stories well in foreign languages is the key intersection of national strategy, talent training and foreign language teaching in colleges and universities and an effective way of cultivating college students' political virtuous awareness. To tell Chinese stories well, the construction of pedagogical textbooks should be strengthened to provide ample language materials with Chinese stories. Meanwhile, training programs must be offered for college English teachers to complete their knowledge structure and enhance the evaluation mechanism of teaching quality by incorporating elements of Chinese stories into evaluation indicators. Telling Chinese stories well can not only spread Chinese culture and values to the world, but also improve the narrator's intercultural communication ability and build their national cultural confidence.*

**Keywords:** *Telling Chinese Stories Well, Cultural Awareness, Cultural Confidence*

## 1. Introduction

Telling Chinese stories well is a good way to make Chinese values clear to the world. The strategy of “well telling Chinese stories” will support the country’s revitalization and national interest and underscore the Chinese dream. By telling Chinese stories, China can promote the construction of international communication capacity and national cultural soft power as well, showing the world a true, three-dimensional and comprehensive China. With the implementation of the “going global” strategy of Chinese culture and the trend of world globalization, it has become the sacred mission of college students to tell Chinese stories in English to carry forward the spirit of Chinese culture to the world.

In such context, College English Teaching Guide (2020 Edition) points out that the construction of college English pedagogical textbooks should consciously strengthen cultural confidence and fully show Chinese characteristics and styles on the principle of adhering to the subjectivity and the discourse power of Chinese culture [6]. As college English education bears the important task of spreading and inheriting China's excellent cultural traditions. Today, with the high development of global integration, it is necessary to let the world know more about China, showing China's growing soft power and the unique charm of Chinese culture. In this way, we can enhance China's image in the international community, increase cultural confidence of Chinese people, strengthen cultural competitiveness, and carry forward Chinese culture to the world. However, due to regional, cultural and linguistic differences, many of our ideas and thoughts have not been accepted and understood by the world. Therefore, to publicize Chinese culture to the world and enhance its international discourse power, great efforts should be made in establishing a powerful and effective cultural communication channel, by selecting positive and appropriate Chinese stories to convey to the world, and cultivating high-quality cultural publicity talents.

This paper aims to analyze the current situation of Chinese culture teaching in college English, and explore the teaching path of Chinese culture in English class in the context of “telling Chinese stories well” in the new era, in hoping of offering some help in cultivating professional compound talents who can introduce Chinese culture and tell Chinese stories well in English, and providing services for improving the soft power of Chinese culture and realizing the “going global” strategy of Chinese culture in the world stage.

## 2. Current Research of “Telling Chinese Stories” in College English

The researches on “telling Chinese stories well” has grown from scratch and is in the ascendant. Domestic scholars have made fruitful research achievements from different dimensions and angles around the contents of investigation and research, current situation analysis, realization of difficulties, solutions and so on, mainly focusing on the significance of telling Chinese stories well to enhance Chinese international image and diplomatic soft power, and how all walks of life can tell Chinese stories well in combination with their own life. But problems still exist. Chang (2021) found that among the researches, more attention was paid to international communication and foreign exchange or political theory courses than college English courses [1]. Meanwhile, most researches were trying to explore the realization of “telling Chinese stories well” from a theoretical perspective, not even considering its current teaching situation. And their findings were not so convincing due to the limited research scope and objects, which could not reflect the real situation of current college English classes [1]. Obviously, there is no specific training path on how to give full play to the advantages of English teaching on telling Chinese stories well.

## 3. Current Teaching of “Telling Chinese Stories” in College English

### 3.1 Imbalance of Teaching Ecology

The ecological imbalance of efficient college English teaching in China is mainly manifested in two aspects. On the one hand, many colleges and universities have begun to reduce the credits and teaching hours of college English courses. As a general compulsory course, college English is now facing marginalization that leads to students' neglect of English learning and the reduction of learning time. On the other hand, although the Chinese foreign language community has already realized the importance of culture teaching and has increased the proportion of culture teaching in foreign language teaching, they have only strengthened the learning of social and cultural content of English speaking countries. Chinese culture teaching is still basically ignored and has not received enough attention. College English Teaching Guide (2020 Edition) proposes college English teaching is to develop students English application ability in well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking. So that in their future studies and careers as well as social interactions they will be able to communicate effectively, and enhance their ability to study independently and improve their general cultural awareness so as to meet the needs of the development of the country and society for qualified personnel in the new era [6]. While college English course credit compression and serious shortage of teaching hours make it extremely difficult to integrate Chinese cultural elements and knowledge into college English teaching in college English compulsory course system, so say nothing to systematically select and teach excellent Chinese stories in college English class.

At present, college English teaching still mostly focus on English grammar, words, reading comprehension and other knowledge. Colleges and universities also lack attention to Chinese culture in setting up English courses. Even if some colleges and universities take teaching cultures of different countries into consideration in English elective courses. They mostly focus on the culture of western countries, ignoring the combination of Chinese culture and Western culture, which limits the way for students to gain the knowledge they need to displaying Chinese culture and telling Chinese stories in English, indirectly causing students lacking the ability and interest of cross-cultural communication. In general, college English teaching pays more attention to western culture than Chinese culture, which cause local cultural aphasia. Cultural ecological imbalance is inevitable.

### 3.2 Lack of Supporting Teaching Materials

College English textbooks are important materials for college English teachers to organize courses and implement teaching. They are also the main sources of students' language input for cultural learning, world outlook shaping and channels of life values building. According to College English Teaching Guide (2020 Edition), college English textbooks should fully reflect Chinese characteristics and styles, and make shaping students' world outlook, outlook on life and values, strengthen cultural self-confidence as teaching goals [6]. Therefore, college English textbooks should cover both Chinese and foreign cultures.

When interviewing college English teachers on their investigation. Zhang et al. (2021) found that most college English teachers are not satisfied with current teaching materials in general [9]. Some said

the current college English teaching materials are out of date and unattractive, and the suitability needs to be further improved. Some believed that teaching materials are not only in short of curriculum ideological and political elements but also lack authentic English articles that tell Chinese culture and Chinese stories, and the absence of Chinese elements make it impossible for students to learn how to speak for Chinese culture. A considerable number of teachers believe that teachers and students have not reached a consensus on "appropriately add Chinese excellent traditional culture and contemporary development achievements in Chinese story-telling, so as to enhance their cultural self-confidence and national pride, and better tell Chinese stories to other countries" [9].

The key to tell a good Chinese story is to keep practicing. College students must undergo corresponding exercise and practice to truly master the ability. However, colleges and universities lack relevant platforms to provide students opportunities with proper exercise. Although colleges and universities have begun to pay attention to the application of internet technology in education and set up relevant websites and official microblogs for English teaching, there is no special section for telling Chinese stories. And college students also lack the opportunity to practice telling Chinese stories in English in their daily activities. In a word, in colleges and universities, students lack the necessary opportunities to tell Chinese stories, which easily leads to the phenomenon that students dare not say and dare not speak, which seriously hinder students' ability of telling Chinese stories.

### ***3.3 Imperfect Development of Both College Teachers and Students***

The development of both teachers and students, two main teaching subjects in college English class, needs to be improved.

College English teachers lack the sense of professional identity. Due to the reduction of college English class hours, they say that they have no sense of achievement and have lost their sense of identity as they used to in English teaching. Moreover, there has always been a problem of discipline attribution. As a general compulsory course, not a specialized course, English teachers don't know which discipline college English belongs to, which makes it really difficult for curriculum construction and teacher development. College English teachers don't have the sense of belonging, and they haven't gained respect as they deserved.

As another subject of teaching practice, college students are the key to telling Chinese stories. Their language proficiency, cultural literacy and narrative ability will directly affect their language expression, which need special and systematic training. Otherwise, effective cross-cultural communication will not happen. Li and Wu's research (2012) showed college English teaching and practice didn't give enough attention to college students' narrative ability which has been proved to be not so good as a whole. Even when using their mother tongue, students couldn't deal with cohesion and coherence well in story-telling, and they failed to construct their stories perfectly both in macro and micro level, let alone telling stories in English [3]. Wang Ting et al. (2018) found that problems exist in what communication attitude students possess, and how they deal with the discourse relationship and consensus trust with their interlocutors in story telling [8]; According to Lin (2018), in terms of using English to express their own culture, students are incapable of making themselves understood by foreigners in an acceptable way [4]. Nowadays, college students are willing to accept the information and knowledge on the internet, and few students take the initiative to learn the profound connotation of Chinese culture and its contemporary forms of expression, which leads to the fact that college students' cognition of Chinese culture is not in-depth, and their cognition of the contemporary forms of Chinese culture is also relatively vague. All the results show college students are not good story tellers, they need further training to word Chinese stories to be internationally understood to effectively disseminate Chinese culture.

## **4. Exploration on Teaching Path**

### ***4.1 Strengthen the Construction of College English Textbooks and Optimize the Teaching Resources of Chinese Stories***

Working as important carriers and means, teaching materials serve teaching practice to achieve teaching goals. The compilation of teaching materials should meet the needs of diversified teaching methods and teaching modes; Textbook publishing institutions and textbook developers can work together to offer teachers with curriculum teaching resources in feature of diversified, three-dimensional and interactive, to construct a series of textbooks with its unique characteristics for

application-oriented colleges.

In the compilation of English textbooks, knowledge of linguistics, such as: applied linguistics, pedagogy and second language acquisition should be used as theoretical support. And the stories chosen should be rooted in Chinese culture and based on historical and current actualities, rich in topics and discourse types as well. On following Chinese cultural thoughts of “love, people-oriented, integrity, justice, and harmony”, attractive Chinese stories should cover those happened around ordinary people and those concerned national affairs. When telling the stories, approaches shall be innovated, new concepts and wording shall be used so that Chinese stories and voices could reach out to the international community.

In language teaching, English teachers should deeply excavate the connotation and context of teaching materials, find a right way to introduce Chinese stories and permeate Chinese culture in teaching to cultivate students to treat Chinese and Western culture objectively and fairly, and have a spontaneous sense of pride in Chinese culture, encourage students to follow the news so they can know those touching stories happened around them, which can help them fully understand Chinese culture and well explain them to the foreigners. For example, when explaining China's four great inventions and the changes they brought to common people's life, students can tell the story by integrating the new four inventions (high-speed rail, Alipay, bike sharing, and online shopping), discussing the great contribution of the four great inventions to history. Thus the story will be historical accumulation and thought-provoking. In a word, the chosen Chinese stories should be targeted, realistic and practical.

#### ***4.2 Cultivate Teachers' Teaching Material Construction Ability and Improve Teachers' Quality in All Around***

Teachers bear the important task of spreading knowledge, ideas, truth, and shaping students values, etc. And teachers' knowledge structure must match with the requirements. In addition to the provision of professional knowledge such as English language, literature and translation skills, colleges and universities need to provide English teachers with training related to Chinese cultural knowledge, encourage and attract English teachers to actively participate, and effectively enrich English teachers' Chinese cultural knowledge reserves. Only in this way can college English teachers deeply excavate and understand the connotation of "Chinese stories", draw spiritual nutrition from “Chinese stories”, constantly improve their own literacy, enrich their knowledge structure, and make themselves an inexhaustible source for students to absorb the nutrition of Chinese culture. Thus, to effectively solve the problems that college English teachers attach importance to the study of English national culture and ignore local culture.

Besides knowledge storage, the skills to integrate teaching resources and materials into a systematic one are also required as a talented teacher. Tomlinson (2018) once defined the subject of textbook construction as “the author and user of textbooks in language teaching” [7]. In other words, textbook builders include both editors and users as teachers. Teachers can revise the existing teaching materials to adapt to the dynamic teaching process according to the curriculum objectives, students' language proficiency and the actual teaching situation. Prabhu (1989) pointed out that there is no perfect textbook in teaching. The important thing is that teachers can make the most use of the existing textbooks to achieve their teaching goal [5]. Colleges and universities should also issue corresponding supporting policies to provide English teachers with relevant training so that teachers can improve their ability of material evaluation, development, adaptation and usage. In the information age, with the popularizing of intelligent teaching, foreign language teachers should have the capacity to actively integrate high-quality teaching resources, effectively use hybrid teaching, flipped classroom, MOOC, micro class and other ways to realize the effective supplement of face-to-face classroom teaching, and better introduce, present and disseminate Chinese stories.

#### ***4.3 Make Students Understand the Responsibility of the Mission and Strengthen Cultural Awareness and Cultural Self-confidence***

At present, quite a lot of students learn English only to get a communication skill or to broaden their international vision, they haven't taken “telling Chinese stories well” as a mission. Colleges and universities should actively guide students to fully understand the development process, forms of expression and contemporary values of Chinese culture to form a deep recognition of Chinese culture and establish a firm cultural confidence. Only when having a comprehensive cognition of Chinese culture can students carry out activities to express Chinese cultural in English, and promote the

improvement of their cultural confidence. Therefore, in English teaching, on fostering students' political virtuous awareness, teachers should make it clear to students that it's their duty to introduce China and Chinese stories to the world, to make use the advantage of English speak for Chinese culture, to let the world hear the voice of China, and to enhance China's image in the world, hoping that China can better integrate into the international community.

To tell Chinese stories well, students should maintain a high degree of cultural awareness and cultural confidence. Xi emphasizes that enhancing cultural self-awareness and cultural self-confidence is the proper meaning of strengthening self-confidence in road confidence, theory confidence and system confidence. Fei Xiaotong (2003) defined cultural awareness and confidence as that students should first know the characteristics of Chinese culture and can compare it with western culture to tell the differences between them [2]. And then they can explain the essence in Chinese culture clearly and make them world-wide. Telling Chinese stories is cultural dissemination, it's largely one-way to display the best or unique elements of Chinese culture and put foreword them into worldwide. To achieve this goal, students must strengthen the independent ability of cultural transformation and obtain the independent status of adapting to the new environment and cultural choices in the new era, making the stories are well received by the world. This requires colleges and universities to guide students to compare Chinese culture with other cultures, especially with the culture of English-speaking countries. By doing this, college students can fully understand cultural differences, clarify cultural evaluation standards, and deeply experience the unique characteristics and excellent traditions of Chinese culture, which makes it easier for them to form the paradigm of English expression of Chinese culture at the ideological level. And in the process of continuous comparison and narration, students can deepen the understanding of their own culture, find the progressiveness of Chinese culture, so as to understand Chinese culture, form a deeper sense of cultural pride, and develop the habit of correctly spreading Chinese culture around the world, showing stronger and more powerful cultural confidence. This will realize the goals of cultivating students' values and shaping their moral qualities, as well.

Only by maintaining a fully understanding of Chinese culture and foreign culture can students maintain self-esteem and self-confidence in Chinese culture, and respect and appreciate foreign culture, which is conducive for students to establishing a pleasant and good cooperative relationship with others in international exchanges in economy, trade, science and technology, logistics, etc., and act as the disseminator of Chinese excellent culture.

#### ***4.4 Enhance the Evaluation Mechanism of Teaching Quality by Incorporating Elements of Chinese Stories into Evaluation Indicators***

According to scientific standards, and using all effective technical means, teaching evaluation is a process of measuring the teaching process and results and giving value judgments based on the teaching objectives. Evaluation can supervise and strengthen teachers teaching and students' learning by measuring, analyzing and evaluating the quality of their work. Modern teaching evaluation advocates multiple subject evaluation, which not only requires experts to participate in the evaluation and guidance, but also need peers, teachers, and students' participation, and their evaluation opinions should be reflected in the evaluation conclusions. Evaluation index, evaluation method and evaluation effect are the baton of college English teaching, which has a directional effect on the content and method of college English teaching. College teaching evaluation indicators should be all-round and multi-dimensional, which include not only how much students acquire Chinese culture, but also how they build their personality and morality, and shape the core values of Chinese socialism.

The evaluation of college English curriculum objectives should be the combination of process evaluation and summative evaluation. Relying on modern teaching technology, such as the U campus, smart cloud platform, "I write writing review system", itest intelligent test platform and so on, guided by the ability training of "telling Chinese stories well", and combining online and offline evaluation, a multi-element assessment system of "uniting learning and evaluation in one" is established. Process evaluation should run through all links of teaching. Pre-class evaluation promotes students to search Chinese stories and increase their input and interpretation of Chinese excellent culture. In-class evaluation guides students to actively discover the essence of Chinese culture, encourages students to face challenges and try to "tell Chinese stories" in English. After class evaluation promotes the reflection of teaching and learning, guides students to actively read classics and practice in and out of class according to their own actual situation and needs, and

exercises the ability to fully express Chinese culture and socialist core values. Thus a all-round and multi-dimensional evaluation system is established.

## 5. Conclusion

“Telling Chinese stories well” in college English teaching is still in the exploratory stage. There is no perfect path for reference, and there is no unified teaching standard as a norm. This requires college teachers and educational institutions work together to give full play to the advantages of college English teaching. By revising teaching syllabus, and adjusting teaching objectives, Chinese culture that involve Chinese philosophy, literature, culture, history, religion and so on should be put into the teaching content in teaching resources building and practice. So that teachers can, in new era, cultivate college students with international vision and humanistic quality who can introduce Chinese culture in English and tell Chinese stories well to the world. Through China's own voice, We will promote cultural exchanges and mutual learning between China and the rest of the world, so as to achieve self promotion.

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