

Integrating Chinese traditional culture into college English teaching from the perspective of cultural self-confidence

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Abstract: College English education is an important part of China's higher humanities education, which is both instrumental and humanistic in nature. Students learn and master English not only to learn advanced science and technology and professional information, but also to understand foreign culture and effectively spread Chinese culture to the world. In the current college English teaching, too much emphasis is placed on the learning of Western culture at the expense of local culture. With the introduction of China's cultural confidence, college English teaching is facing new challenges in terms of talent training. This paper analyzes the factors affecting the integration of Chinese traditional culture into college English teaching from the perspective of cultural confidence, and proposes corresponding teaching reform strategies.

Keywords: Chinese traditional culture, cultural self-confidence, college English teaching

1. Introduction

As an international language in the world, English is vital to scientific, technological and cultural exchange. By learning and using English, people can learn directly about cutting-edge scientific and technological advances, management experience and ideas from abroad, and learn about the world's best cultures and civilizations. Therefore, in China, English education is included as an important subject in school education.

Chinese government has paid special attention to college English education that is an integral part of higher education in China. College English is a compulsory public basic course for most non-English majors in the undergraduate education stage. There are about 30 million college students in China in 2021 who have to study English[1]. It is of great significance to promote the coordinated development of College Students' knowledge, ability and comprehensive quality.

In addition to improving students' language knowledge and ability, college English teaching also focuses on cultivating students' cultural literacy. College English teaching is one of the important ways for college students to learn Chinese and Western cultures. Its cultural content is a big part of how college students decide what they believe in. In fact, Chinese traditional culture has been changed by how strong English culture is, and this has led to something called "Chinese cultural aphasia" in English teaching. In order to build up students' cultural confidence and develop their ability to communicate local culture in English, the guideline for teaching English at university have put forward new requirements. It clearly states that students learn English to understand foreign societies and cultures. Students should improve their understanding of different cultures and their awareness of the similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign cultures, and develop the ability of cross-cultural communication[2].

But when teaching English in college, more time is spent making sure students understand Western culture, especially the culture of the United Kingdom and the United States, and less time is spent introducing local culture. This has led to a great impact on Chinese culture and the phenomenon of Chinese cultural aphasia. Students do not have the ability to use English to express their local culture. The focus on learning the culture of the target language while ignoring the culture of the native language affects students' values and puts them in a weak communicative position, thus failing to develop students' cross-cultural skills.

The Chinese government has repeatedly emphasized the need to learn the excellent Chinese traditional culture, build up cultural confidence, and spread the excellent Chinese culture to the world. Cultural confidence as a new topic has attracted widespread attention in the English teaching community and has become the direction of college English teaching reform. Therefore, a challenge for English teaching reform is how to incorporate Chinese excellent traditional culture and develop students' cultural confidence[3].

2. Literature Review

2.1 Cultural self-confidence

Cultural self-confidence is when a nation, a country, or a political party fully believes in and acts on their own cultural values and is sure that their culture is alive and well[4]. On the one hand, China's traditional culture is a solid cornerstone of cultural self-confidence. Traditional culture is the driving force behind the growth and creativity of a nation and civilization as a whole. The 5,000-year civilization history of the Chinese nation has nurtured China's excellent traditional culture. Traditional Chinese thought and culture embody the worldview, outlook on life, values and aesthetics that have been formed and inherited by the Chinese people for generations. These most fundamental cultural genes define the Chinese nation and people, distinguishing them from other nations. Only by building on the roots of excellent traditional culture can we ensure the continued healthy growth of the nation.

On the other hand, in the era of cultural globalization, it is inevitable that various foreign cultures will collide and rub against our own culture. We should absorb and introduce advanced aspects of foreign cultures while remaining confident in our own culture in order to achieve even greater cultural achievements.

Mei (2018) divides cultural understanding and confidence into three levels. The first level is to develop initial cross-cultural awareness by comparing Chinese and foreign cultures, deepening understanding of Chinese culture, and building cultural confidence. The second level is to have an international perspective, understand the diversity of cultures, and build cultural confidence even more. The third level is to analyze and identify the values reflected by various culture, to comprehend the richness of world culture, and to strengthen cultural self-confidence.

Nowadays, culture has become a valuable component of global economic and social development. International exchange and cooperation among countries is constantly growing, and in order to maintain their international standing, they must have a strong cultural heritage of their own. It is critical that they maintain their own culture while sharing and working together [5].

Language is a cultural transmission tool. College English is taught to a wide range of students, and because of the characteristics of this discipline, it plays a critical role in developing students' cultural confidence. Students learn how to use English to spread Chinese culture, gain cultural confidence, and bring Chinese culture to the world.

2.2 Research on the integration of the local culture in English teaching abroad and at home

Many foreign scholars advocate for the integration of native and target language cultures in English teaching. Emphasis is placed on the native language culture in English teaching. According to Margana (2009), intercultural communication is an interactive process in which cultural absorption and transmission complement each other and occur concurrently. The native culture should be included in English teaching to help students understand its characteristics well. Byrd (2011) conducted a survey of 415 world language teachers and 64 teacher educators to learn more about how much the culture standard is emphasized in the classroom as well as the factors that encourage and inhibit maintaining cultural knowledge. In addition to initially highlighting some benefits of Arab culture in English classrooms, Khan (2017) explored factors affecting local culture integration and teachers' readiness to do so. Arif (2019) believes that teaching English means teaching culture and the values contained in language. Exorbitant sadness for a local value to be lost due to foreign values; thus, English teaching in Indonesia requires a variety of ways to filter from gnawing at foreign values. In fact, teachers may need to make some efforts and follow some procedures in order to incorporate local wisdom into English language teaching in Indonesia[6]. Jalaluddin&Jazadi (2020) argue that in order to be successful in learning English in Indonesian schools, cultural considerations should be given top priority. That is, it is acknowledged that learning English as a second or foreign language cannot be separated from the

target language culture or Western culture. On the other hand, from the perspective of English as a global or international language, students' local cultural backgrounds can be incorporated or used in the teaching materials.

In China, Cong (2000) first introduced the concept of Chinese cultural aphasia. He argues that in the process of teaching English, teachers pay too much attention to the target culture and neglect the native culture. As a result, many Chinese English learners are unable to express Chinese culture appropriately in English. Wang (2018) proposes that learning English national culture can help avoid cultural conflicts and mistakes in cross-cultural interactions, but that learning English national culture must be based on comparisons with local Chinese culture. Lu(2021) Focuses on how to infuse Chinese culture into the teaching of English in colleges and universities. Niu(2021) proposes concrete and feasible ways to promote integration[7].

In conclusion, scholars both at home and abroad agree that native language culture also plays an important role in English teaching. The purpose of English teaching is not only limited to the acquisition of the target language culture, but also to highlight the similarities and differences between the target language culture and the native language culture, so that students can understand different cultures and respect the differences between them. Learning how to express the native culture in English is very important for increasing intercultural competence[8].

3. Factors affecting the development of students' cultural confidence in current English teaching

3.1 Textbook Factor

In existing college English textbooks, there is an imbalance in the importance and proportion of foreign and local cultures. The foreign culture is given prominence, while the local culture is marginalized. The content is primarily focused on understanding the culture of the target language country, with little emphasis on local culture. Although the target language culture is diverse, it is primarily the culture of the United Kingdom and the United States. Aside from that, there is less cultural content that contrasts Western culture with Chinese culture. Traditional Chinese and foreign festivals, major customs, and ways of treating people have received less attention. Furthermore, the majority of existing local culture content focuses on modern culture, rather than the Chinese nation's excellent traditional and historical culture. It fails to reflect cultural identity and heritage. Existing college English textbooks lack the incorporation of students' native cultures as well as the export of excellent Chinese culture to the rest of the world. The lack of representative cultural symbols that can be presented to the world does not help students develop cultural confidence[9].

3.2 The Classroom Teaching Factor

Teachers understand the cultural requirements outlined in the Guide to Teaching English at University and recognize that the English classroom is a critical environment for developing students' cultural confidence. Due to class time constraints, teachers cannot devote more time to teaching traditional Chinese culture in the classroom. In addition, the teaching method is relatively single, primarily narration, with no corresponding teaching activities. The teaching of local cultural content is not planned in advance. The relevance of the content to students' interests is low, and it is difficult to stimulate students' interest in learning. Furthermore, there is no comprehensive planning or step-by-step guidance for teaching local culture. It only goes so far as to explain specific cultural points. The fragmentation of local culture teaching makes it impossible to cultivate students' complete cognition of excellent Chinese traditional culture.

4. Strategies of intergreting Chinese traditional culture into college English teaching

4.1 Reform the content of teaching materials

English textbooks are input materials, which play a crucial role in students' cultural input. First of all, adjust the primary and secondary relationship between local and foreign cultures in the teaching materials. The content of excellent Chinese traditional culture should be added to the textbooks in a large number. The selected cultural materials can reflect the confidence of Chinese culture and highlight the characteristic culture with Chinese representation. The content covers both material and spiritual civilizations, including food, clothing, festivals, architecture, customs and habits, good

traditions and core values. This can strengthen students' knowledge of traditional Chinese culture, which has a very important role in passing on Chinese culture and promoting it. Secondly, the content of contrasting cultures is added to the English textbooks in an appropriate amount. By comparing the similarities and differences of Chinese and foreign festivals, customs and values, students can learn to identify Chinese and foreign cultures, learn the essence of culture, enhance their understanding of local culture and cultural identity, strengthen their national pride, and establish cultural confidence. Finally, textbooks should include information about cultures other than Europe and America. Students' international perspectives are enhanced, their cultural inclusiveness is strengthened, and correct values are formed in the context of globalization, so that they can firmly establish their cultural confidence and are motivated to improve their ability to communicate across cultures and spread Chinese culture.

4.2 Form the teaching team and innovate teaching contents

Forming a teaching team can help promote the integration of Chinese traditional culture into the teaching of college English in an orderly manner. First of all, the teachers in the team can work together to develop the syllabus, plan and clarify the teaching objectives. In addition, teachers in the teaching team can discuss the culture of each unit, expand the content, design teaching activities, and create PPT courseware together. The division of labor can improve efficiency and ensure teaching effectiveness. In addition, the team teachers can improve their own cultural education skills and cultural teaching strategies through regular and systematic study of traditional Chinese culture together and participation in Chinese and foreign cultural exchange meetings. In this way, they can deliver the essence of local culture to students in classroom teaching and achieve the goal of developing students' cultural confidence [10].

4.3 Adopt the blended approach to output-oriented teaching

Teachers should pay attention to the diversity of methods when teaching Chinese local culture. In terms of teaching methods, a blended teaching approach is used online and offline. Diverse teaching methods can mobilize students' interest in learning. Make full use of Internet platforms and teaching platforms. Before class, rich teaching resources and questions for discussion are sent to students in advance according to the unit theme to guide their thinking and advance preparation. In class, teachers lead students in in-depth discussions and exchanges, and students present their results in groups. At the end of the lesson, a variety of tasks are assigned. In speaking, it is required to be able to export Chinese culture, report in English on the excellent Chinese traditional culture, and speak fluently about Chinese culture in English. In writing, writing and translation tasks are completed on the theme of Chinese culture [11].

4.4 Implement new assessment methods

Formative and summative assessment of teaching is an important way to test the quality of teaching and the learning effects of students. Teaching assessment can encourage students to focus on the assessment content and learn actively. As a result, the assessment content must be revised. Learning and mastery of Chinese traditional culture should be integrated into the entire formative and summative assessment process in this regard.

The assessment items can be rich and varied, including examining the English expressions of traditional Chinese festivals, telling a Chinese festival in English, group debates on the similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign cultures, as well as English speeches and writings on the theme of excellent Chinese traditional culture, and translations of Chinese classical culture. In this way, the effectiveness of the integration of Chinese culture into the teaching of English and the students' mastery of it can be tested. It can also motivate students to learn to express their local culture in English. By transmitting Chinese traditional culture to students through the process of learning English, students can deepen their understanding of Chinese culture, improve their cultural literacy, help them build cultural confidence, and learn to spread the excellent Chinese culture to the world.

5. Conclusion

With the development of cultural globalization, the context of college English education in China has changed dramatically. Its goal is to develop students' abilities to spread the excellent traditional Chinese culture through English rather than simply teaching students the language and culture of the

target language country. So, college English teaching now have a new goal and must deal with new challenges. Promoting the reform of college English teaching from the perspective of cultural confidence and integrating Chinese traditional culture into college English teaching is meeting the needs of the times in China. Innovative teaching contents and teaching strategies are required in college English teaching to actively respond to the new challenges faced by college English teaching and to cultivate students' cultural confidence.

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