

An Investigation of Integrating Shaanxi Red Culture into College English

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Abstract: This study investigates the integration of Shaanxi red culture into college English courses, focusing on its impact on students' cognition, attitudes, and willingness. Using Xi'an Shiyou University and four other universities in Xi'an as case studies, the research highlights the educational and cultural value of combining red culture with language learning. The findings reveal that incorporating red culture enriches English courses by deepening students' understanding of China's revolutionary history, enhancing cultural identity, and fostering national pride. Students expressed strong interest and acceptance, supported by innovative methods such as task-based learning, multimedia tools, and extracurricular activities. The study underscores the importance of teacher competence, professional training, and comprehensive evaluation systems in achieving effective integration. By aligning language education with cultural values, this approach cultivates culturally confident and globally competent students, providing a model for promoting China's cultural heritage in a global context.

Keywords: Shaanxi red culture, College English Teaching, Cultural Integration

1. Introduction

In recent years, red culture, as an essential part of traditional Chinese culture, has become a prominent topic in higher education. Shaanxi, known as the cradle of the Chinese revolution, possesses distinctive regional characteristics and rich historical connotations, providing a unique perspective for innovation in college English courses. Existing research indicates that integrating red culture into college curricula not only enhances students' patriotism and cultural confidence but also promotes the organic combination of language teaching and ideological and political education. The core values of red culture, including patriotism, collectivism, and revolutionary spirit, offer abundant teaching materials and educational functions for college English courses.

2. Literature Review

The application of Shaanxi's red culture in college English courses holds significant educational value. Incorporating resources like the Yan'an Revolutionary Sites and Xi'an Incident Memorial Hall enhances students' understanding of revolutionary history and its cultural implications. Holliday^[5] noted that integrating learners' local culture with target language contexts improves language acquisition and cultural awareness. Similarly, Byram^[1] proposed that embedding cultural elements fosters intercultural communicative competence and cross-cultural skills. Kramsch^[6] also emphasized the importance of context and culture in language teaching, arguing that understanding the cultural context enriches language learning experiences.

Li Jieying^[7] emphasized that integrating Shaanxi's red culture with ideological and political education enriches cultural understanding and ideological depth. Yue Na^[8] highlighted that combining red culture with language teaching creates meaningful learning contexts, enhancing students' comprehensive abilities and cultural identity. Cortazzi and Jin^[2] stressed the effectiveness of using cultural stories to improve engagement and sensitivity, aligning well with red culture integration. Fang Hui^[4] argued that incorporating classic stories and historical events enriches the teaching content, combining language learning with cultural education to boost cultural confidence.

Effective pathways for integrating red culture include curriculum design, content innovation, and improved teaching methods. Thematic discussions and case analyses stimulate interest, while Cui Wei et al.^[3] suggested task- and project-based learning to enhance critical thinking and cultural recognition. Li

Jieying^[7] advocated for comprehensive evaluation systems to assess both language proficiency and cultural competence.

However, most studies focus on curriculum design rather than empirical research on students. This study addresses this gap by surveying first- and second-year students at Xi'an Shiyou University, exploring their acceptance and interest in integrating Shaanxi red culture into English courses. The findings provide valuable insights for enhancing red culture empowerment in college English teaching.

3. Research Design and Methodology

The research was expanded to include five universities in Xi'an: Xi'an Shiyou University, Xi'an Polytechnic University, Xi'an University of Technology, Xi'an University of Science and Technology, and Xi'an University of Posts and Telecommunications. The investigation focuses on first- and second-year students, as these are the only students in universities who study College English, and explores various aspects, including course content, teaching methods, and cultural awareness. To gather data, 1,000 questionnaires were distributed, and 987 valid responses were collected, resulting in a high response rate of 98.7%. The questionnaire consisted of questions related to the integration of Shaanxi red culture into English teaching and its effects on both teaching and learning outcomes. The broad sample and high response rate enhance the reliability of the data, which underwent rigorous statistical analysis to identify patterns and draw meaningful conclusions about the effectiveness of integrating Shaanxi red culture into university English courses.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Participant Demographics

The survey results indicate that 74.97% of the participants were male, while 25.03% were female. Of the respondents, 79.43% were first-year students, and 20.57% were second-year students. The demographic distribution reflects a diverse range of perspectives from early-stage undergraduate students across multiple institutions.

4.2 Awareness of Shaanxi Red Culture and Related Landmarks

As presented in Table 1, the findings reveal a high level of awareness among participants regarding Shaanxi red culture, with the Yan'an Spirit (68.49%) and Yan'an Revolutionary Memorial Hall (67.48%) being the most recognized landmarks. Other landmarks, such as the Pagoda Hill of Yan'an (58.97%) and Xi'an Incident Memorial Hall (59.88%), also showed strong recognition. However, sites like the Malan Revolutionary Memorial Hall (21.47%) and the Anwu Youth Training School Site (18.44%) had lower recognition rates, suggesting the need to increase their visibility.

Table 1: Cultural Landmark Recognition Rate.

Cultural Landmark	Recognition Rate (%)
Zhaojin Spirit	19.86
Nanniwan Spirit	29.52
Yan'an Spirit	68.49
Eyu-Shaanxi Soviet Government Gepaizhen Memorial	16.28
Xi'an Incident Memorial Hall	59.88
Office of the Eighth Route Army in Xi'an	28.42
Shaanxi-Gansu Border Zhaojin Revolutionary Base	32.17
Anwu Youth Training School Site	18.44
Malan Revolutionary Memorial Hall	21.47
Yangjialing Revolutionary Site	34.21
Pagoda Hill of Yan'an	58.97
Yan'an Revolutionary Memorial Hall	67.48
Hanyuan Revolutionary Site	45.34

4.3 Analysis of Understanding Levels of Shaanxi Red Culture

As shown in Figure 1, among the respondents, 60.49% reported a "moderate" level of understanding

of Shaanxi red culture, while 22.18% had a deeper understanding, and 17.33% had limited knowledge. These results indicate a need for further dissemination of red culture among university students.

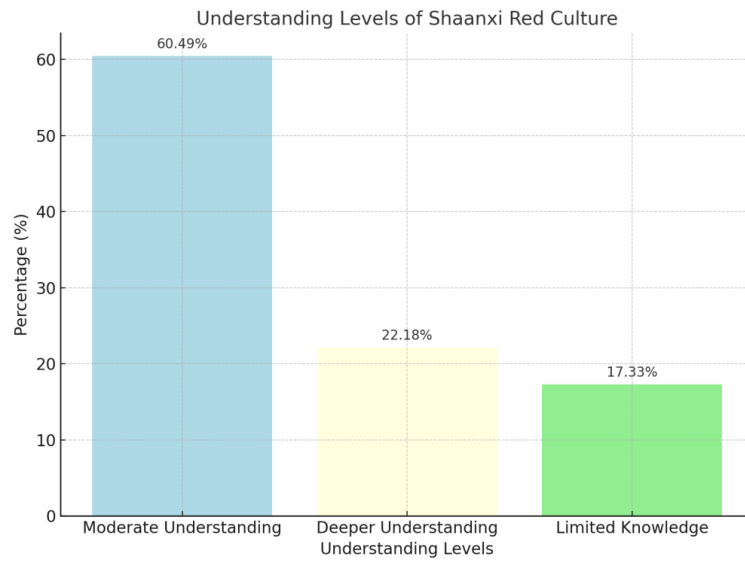


Figure 1: Understanding Levels of Shaanxi Red Culture.

4.4 Perspectives on the Significance of Learning Shaanxi Red Culture

As depicted in Figure 2, the survey results indicate that 85.32% of participants believe learning about Shaanxi red culture is highly significant, while only 3.86% consider it less important. This reflects a broad consensus among students regarding the educational and cultural value of red culture. Specifically, 92.47% of respondents emphasized the role of Shaanxi red culture in cultivating patriotism, and 89.47% recognized its importance in enhancing historical knowledge. Additionally, 85.62% agreed that learning about red culture strengthens social responsibility, showcasing its relevance in shaping socially conscious individuals. These findings demonstrate the significant impact of Shaanxi red culture on students' educational experiences, highlighting its potential to enrich university curricula and promote cultural and social development.

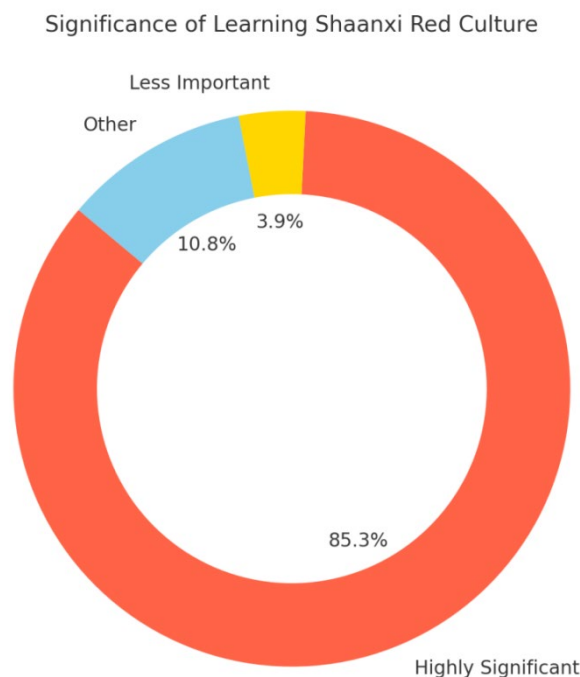


Figure 2: Significance of Learning Shaanxi Red Culture.

4.5 Attitudes toward Integrating Chinese Cultural Elements into College English Courses

As illustrated in Figure 3, the survey results show that 92.32% of participants support the integration of Chinese cultural elements into English courses, with 94.26% expressing strong interest in learning Shaanxi red culture specifically through English classes. Only 5.74% showed no interest in such integration.

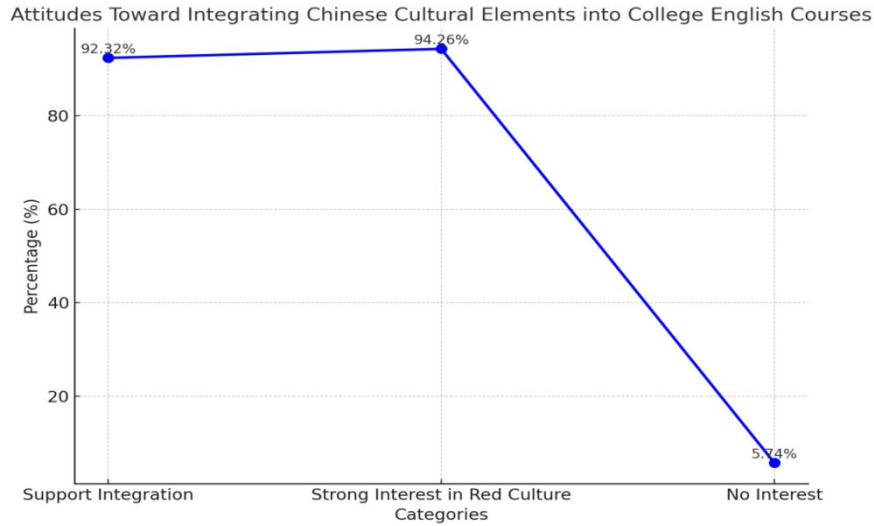


Figure 3: Attitudes Toward Integrating Red Culture into English Courses.

4.6 Integration of Shaanxi Red Culture Elements into College English Courses

As shown in Figure 4, based on the data analysis, the vast majority of participants (94.26%) expressed interest in learning and understanding Shaanxi red culture elements in university English courses, while only a small number (5.74%) showed no interest. This indicates that the introduction of Shaanxi red culture elements is widely accepted among students and has received positive feedback.

Interest in Learning Shaanxi Red Culture in University English Courses

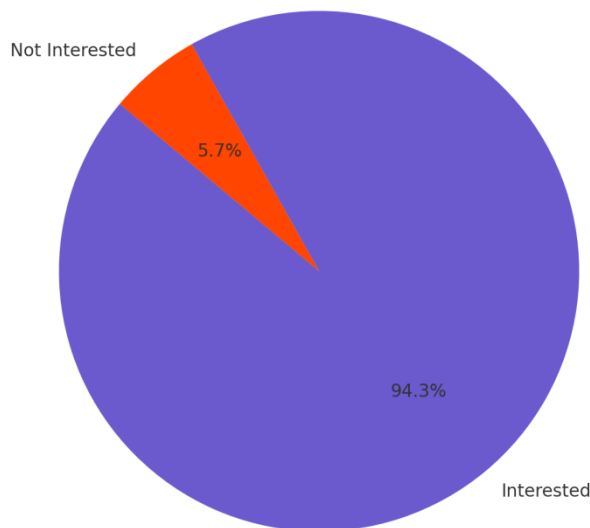


Figure 4: Integration of Shaanxi Red Culture Elements in University English Courses.

4.7 Effective Methods for Integration into English Teaching

As illustrated in Figure 5, participants identified multimedia resources, especially video materials (87.62%), and textbook content (78.93%) as the most effective methods for integrating red culture into English teaching. Discussions (65.41%) were also popular, while role-playing (48.12%) was less favored, suggesting a need for more innovative approaches to engage students in active learning.

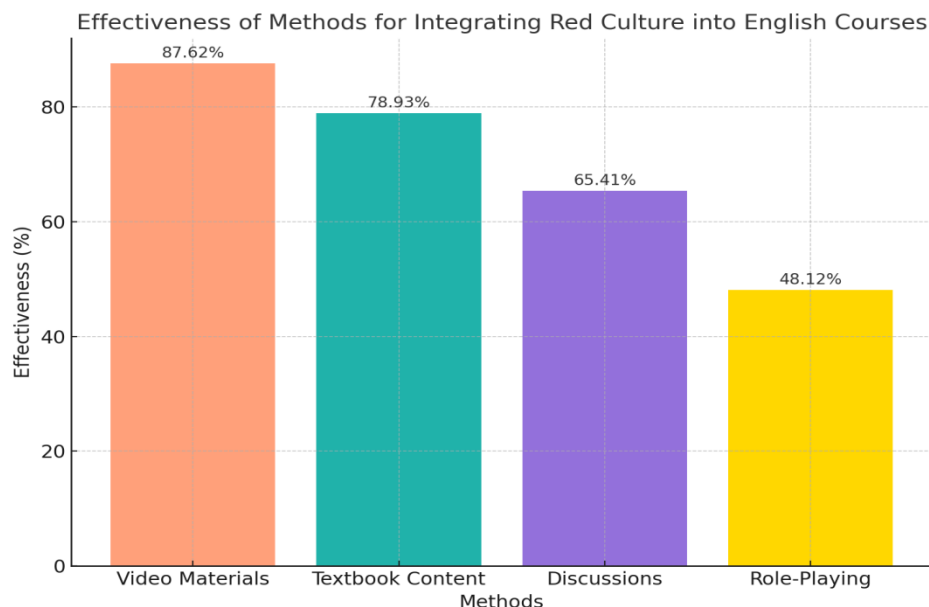


Figure 5: Effectiveness of Methods for Integrating Red Culture into English Courses.

4.8 Impact on English Learning

As shown in Table 2, the majority of participants (85.13%) stated that integrating red culture into English teaching increased their interest in learning English, and 76.88% reported improved understanding of Chinese culture. However, 27.64% raised concerns about increased learning burden, and 17.28% noted no noticeable impact, highlighting the importance of balancing integration with academic workload.

Table 2: Impact of Red Culture Integration on English Learning.

Impact Category Percentage (%)	
Increases Learning Interest	85.13
Improves Understanding of Chinese Culture	76.88
Concerns About Increased Learning Burden	27.64
No Noticeable Impact	17.28

5. Measures and Strategies for Integrating Shaanxi Red Culture into College English Courses

5.1 Enhancing Listening Skills with Red Culture Audio Materials

In listening instruction, various types of audio materials related to red culture can be used to enhance students' listening comprehension skills. For example, excerpts from documentaries such as The Yan'an Spirit and The Xi'an Incident can be played in class, accompanied by subtitles to aid understanding and help students extract key information. Historical speeches by leaders like Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai also serve as valuable resources, focusing on identifying core ideas and keywords. Additionally, interviews and stories related to Shaanxi revolutionary sites can create an authentic language environment, enabling students to both understand the content and deepen their awareness of red culture. Tasks such as answering questions, completing information gaps, or participating in group discussions based on the listening materials can further strengthen students' listening skills.

5.2 Improving Speaking Skills through Interactive Activities

In speaking instruction, interactive activities such as role-playing and group discussions can provide opportunities for students to engage with Shaanxi red culture while practicing their spoken English. Students can role-play historical figures, such as delivering Mao Zedong's speech at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art or Zhang Xueliang's perspective during the Xi'an Incident. Group discussions on topics like "The Contemporary Value of the Yan'an Spirit" or "How to Introduce Red Culture to the World" encourage students to express their ideas while fostering critical thinking and cultural interpretation skills. Team-based projects, such as creating an English promotional video about red culture, can further enhance both language proficiency and collaborative abilities.

5.3 Developing Reading Skills with Selected Works of Mao Zedong and Red Star Over China

In reading instruction, Shaanxi red culture provides a wealth of textual resources that help students improve their language skills while gaining deeper cultural insights. Classic texts like Selected Works of Mao Zedong and the English version of Red Star Over China can serve as primary reading materials, offering in-depth analysis of revolutionary history, personal stories, and cultural context. Supplemental materials, such as excerpts from The Story of Nanniwan or The Xi'an Incident Chronicles, can provide additional perspectives. With vocabulary explanations and background knowledge, students can overcome comprehension barriers. Teachers can design tasks such as comparing historical narratives across texts, analyzing authors' cultural perspectives, or discussing the role of red culture in international communication.

5.4 Enhancing Writing Skills through Creative and Analytical Tasks

In writing instruction, Shaanxi red culture can inspire both creative and analytical writing tasks. Students can write reflective essays exploring the modern relevance of the Yan'an Spirit or create short stories set against revolutionary events, demonstrating their linguistic creativity. Additionally, writing assignments can be linked to reading materials, such as analyzing the narrative techniques used in Red Star Over China. Bilingual writing tasks, such as creating bilingual guides for Shaanxi revolutionary sites, not only refine language skills but also cultivate cross-cultural communication abilities.

5.5 Integrating Red Culture through Comprehensive Strategies

To achieve holistic integration of Shaanxi red culture into listening, speaking, reading, and writing, a combination of classroom instruction and extracurricular activities is essential. Textbooks can incorporate revolutionary stories, historical events, and cultural analyses, complemented by multimedia tools such as documentaries, virtual tours, and digital resources to enrich students' learning experiences. Outside the classroom, students can participate in field trips to revolutionary sites, red culture-themed speech contests, or essay competitions, providing real-life contexts to apply their language skills and deepen their understanding of red culture.

By implementing these measures and strategies, integrating Shaanxi red culture into college English courses breathes new life into language learning. It not only improves students' linguistic skills but also enhances their cultural confidence and cross-cultural communication abilities, enabling them to confidently share China's red culture with the world.

6. Conclusions

This study explores the integration of Shaanxi red culture into college English courses, emphasizing its role in enriching language education while fostering cultural identity and national pride. The findings demonstrate that incorporating red culture deepens students' understanding of China's revolutionary history and enhances their engagement through innovative methods like task-based learning, multimedia tools, and extracurricular activities. Strong student interest and acceptance underscore the potential of this approach, while the success of its implementation depends on teacher expertise and thoughtful course design. By aligning language learning with cultural education, this integration not only cultivates culturally confident and globally competent students but also provides a model for promoting China's cultural heritage on an international stage.

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