

Exploring the Integration of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture and University English Teaching

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Abstract: For a long time, in university English education, teaching and learning activities have generally focussed on improving students' language skills, with Anglo-American culture as the main content of teaching and learning. However, this one-way model of cultural input may lead to biased cultural perceptions. In order to solve this problem, it is especially important to integrate Chinese traditional culture into English teaching. Such an approach not only helps university students to hold fast to their cultural roots and strengthen their cultural confidence in multicultural exchanges, but also enhances their sense of national identity and cultural responsibility, and contributes to the inheritance and promotion of Chinese culture. Therefore, this study delves into the strategies and methods of integrating Chinese excellent traditional culture into university English teaching, and conducts a comprehensive study from the dimensions of the second classroom and the preparation of teaching materials. Let the excellent traditional Chinese culture be better inherited and promoted in university English teaching, and provide strong support for the cultivation of new-age college students with global vision and Chinese cultural self-confidence.

Keywords: Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture; Cultural Confidence; University English; Telling Chinese Stories

1. Introduction

The cultural self-confidence of contemporary university students is a reflection of their deep identification with and firm belief in the excellent Chinese culture in the context of globalization. This confidence stems from a deep understanding and appreciation of the long history, rich connotation and unique charm of Chinese culture. In order to maintain and solidify this cultural confidence, we must actively inherit and carry forward the essence of Chinese civilization, dig deep into the connotations of Chinese culture, combine it with modern life and modern science and technology, and let it take on a new lustre in modern society. At the same time, promoting traditional Chinese culture to the world is also an important task in maintaining cultural confidence. By strengthening cultural exchanges and co-operation, more people can understand and know Chinese culture, and the international community's recognition of and respect for Chinese culture can be enhanced, so as to strengthen university students' cultural self-confidence and sense of national pride.

In the context of globalization, university students need to be able to communicate cross-culturally, to be able to understand and respect other cultures, but also to be able to hold on to their own cultural roots, and to spread and promote Chinese culture. As an international language, English is an important tool for us to communicate with the world. We should focus on balancing the teaching of Chinese and Western cultures, so that students can understand Western culture and at the same time deeply feel the unique charm of Chinese culture. By learning English and understanding Western culture, they are able to recognize more clearly the uniqueness and value of Chinese culture, so that they are able to have the ability to discern and form an open and tolerant cultural concept in the context of complex thinking and culture. In the practice of university English teaching, we should actively integrate the advantageous resources of traditional Chinese culture. Incorporating the content of traditional Chinese culture in English teaching can not only improve the English proficiency of college students, but also enable them to better understand and spread Chinese culture. Through such teaching practice, we expect to be able to cultivate new-age college students who have an international outlook but are also deeply rooted in the soil of Chinese culture. They will become the inheritors and disseminators of Chinese culture, contributing to the inheritance and development of Chinese culture, as well as making positive contributions to the building of a community of human destiny.

2. The Splendid Intermingling of Chinese Culture and Foreign Language Teaching

In recent years, academic discussions on how to integrate traditional Chinese culture into language teaching have become increasingly in-depth. Research has shown that carefully designed teaching content and methods that enable students to learn the language while gaining an in-depth understanding and appreciation of their country's history, culture, values and their practical significance in contemporary society have a significant effect on enhancing students' cultural self-confidence.^[1] Particularly in non-native language teaching environments, the skilful integration of elements of national culture with language teaching is an important task that can both deepen students' understanding and appreciation of their own cultures and provide them with a solid foundation for confidently expressing and sharing their own cultures on the global stage.

2.1. The Necessity of Promoting Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture

Excellent traditional culture is the root of the nation and the soul of modernity. It is not only the cornerstone of socialist core values, but also the source of national cultural identity and self-confidence. Its moral education is of far-reaching value, promoting individual growth, forging social consensus and advancing civilization. In the wave of globalization, it is the mission and responsibility of the times to uphold and pass on the outstanding traditional culture. The report of the Twentieth Party Congress points out that 'the excellent traditional Chinese culture has a long and profound history and is the crystallization of the wisdom of Chinese civilization'. The ideological educational value, moral educational value, and the educational value of the times contained in the excellent traditional culture are of practical significance to the enhancement of Chinese cultural self-confidence.

As the crystallization of more than 5,000 years of civilization of the Chinese nation, the excellent traditional Chinese culture has undergone countless precipitations and baptisms, and eventually formed its unique and rich ideological concepts and ideological culture. These cultures not only embody the wisdom and creativity of the Chinese nation, but also contain profound elements of ideology and politics, which play an irreplaceable role in cultivating the character and values of contemporary college students.

2.2. Relationship between cultural confidence and language education

On 28 June 2016, the General Secretary first put forward the concept of 'four self-confidence' when presiding over the 33rd collective study of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), including firm confidence in the socialist road, theory, system and culture. On 1 July 2016, the General Secretary stressed in his speech at the conference celebrating the 95th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC) that 'cultural self-confidence is a more basic, broader and deeper self-confidence'.^[2] Cultural self-confidence, the soul of the nation, demonstrates the strength of the country, but also to raise the international style. Language teaching is centred on fostering this self-confidence, highlighting the deep mission of education for cultural heritage and innovation. Language is the boat of culture, carrying the essence of the nation and transmitting values. Education not only refines language skills, but also serves as a bridge to promote culture, strengthen identity, and build the cornerstone of self-confidence. In the context of globalization and frequent cross-cultural exchanges, the integration of cultural self-confidence in the teaching of non-native languages is both a challenge and an opportunity for educational innovation.

2.3. Progress of Research on the Integration of Traditional Culture and Language Teaching

The integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture in college English teaching is an urgent need for higher education to cultivate morality and is also the key to deepen moral education in local colleges and universities in view of the specificity of teaching. With the deepening of economic globalization and cross-cultural exchanges, university students need to have both high English literacy and deep cultural literacy. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate traditional culture into English language teaching, not only to improve language proficiency, but also to strengthen cultural identity and intercultural communication skills. At this stage, China's academic community has made certain achievements in the exploration of the integration of traditional Chinese culture in university English teaching: searching in China Knowledge Network with the keywords of 'English teaching' and 'traditional culture', there are as many as 4,845 research results in the time period from 2000 to 2023.

The research results for the period from 2000 to 2023 alone are as many as 4,845 articles.^[3]

Although in the academic world, the discussion on how to skillfully integrate Chinese traditional culture into university English teaching has been quite extensive and in-depth, and various theoretical frameworks, teaching methods and case studies have emerged, which have provided a solid theoretical foundation and rich ideological resources for the development of this field. However, in the actual teaching and learning process, we find that these theoretical results have not been fully translated into effective practical actions, and the exploration at the practical level is relatively lagging behind. Specifically, many teachers often face many challenges and difficulties when attempting to integrate traditional culture into English language teaching. On the one hand, how to select appropriate cultural content, in what way to present it, and how to ensure that it enhances students' cultural literacy while improving their language proficiency are all issues that require in-depth thinking and careful planning. On the other hand, due to the limitations of teaching resources and conditions, as well as the individual differences and interests of students, the specific operation in practice is more complex and variable, and it is difficult to form a set of universally applicable teaching models. Therefore, although we have achieved a lot of results in theory, we still need to intensify our exploration in practice, constantly innovate teaching methods and means, and endeavour to transform theory into practice, so as to promote the effective integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture in university English teaching.

3. Reflections on the Integration of Chinese Culture into University English Teaching

When talking about the relationship between the connotation of Chinese excellent traditional culture and the current situation of university English teaching, it is not difficult to find that there is a close connection between the two. The deep integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture into university English teaching can not only effectively enhance students' cultural self-confidence. In the context of globalization, while students are exposed to Western culture through learning English, they are also able to understand and identify with their own national culture in greater depth, and develop a firm cultural self-awareness and cultural confidence. This cultural self-confidence enables students to hold on to their cultural roots in cross-cultural exchanges, spreading and promoting the unique charm of Chinese culture.

More importantly, this paradigm shift in education will help cultivate English-speaking talents of the new era with 'Chinese souls and global perspectives'. These students not only have a solid language foundation, but also have a deep cultural background and cross-cultural communication skills, and are able to better disseminate and promote Chinese culture on the international stage, contributing to the building of a community of human destiny. Therefore, integrating the connotations of Chinese excellent traditional culture into university English teaching helps to achieve the teaching goals of cultivating students' intercultural communicative competence and establishing moral integrity, as well as the dissemination of Chinese excellent traditional culture in the world.^[4]

3.1. The Essence of Chinese Culture

In his *Philosophy of History*, Hegel states, 'If we compare the countries mentioned above in terms of their national fortunes, then only that Chinese empire over which the Yellow River and the Yangtze flow is the only enduring country in the world.' According to the British historian Toynbee, in the nearly 6,000 years of human history, 23 civilizational forms have emerged, but in the whole world, only the Chinese civilizational form is a civilization that has continued to develop over a long period of time without ever being interrupted. Since ancient times, China has been honoured with the name 'Xia' for the grandeur of its rituals and 'Hua' for the beauty of its costumes. For thousands of years, the broad-mindedness, profound temperament and outstanding wisdom of the excellent traditional Chinese culture have been depicted in the strokes of ink and brush, hidden in the magnificent chapters of canonical dictionaries, and coalesced in the exquisite craftsmanship of artefacts, and ultimately converged to form the everlasting Chinese spirit and Chinese power.

Firstly, examined from the perspective of ideological essence, the core concepts of excellent traditional Chinese culture are profound and diverse. The cornerstone of benevolence is solid, the idea of the people is the soul, honesty is the foundation of society, and justice is unremitting. The philosophy of Harmony and Symbiosis leads to the harmony of all things, and the vision of Cosmos hangs high in the hope of an ideal society and the construction of the Great Wall of Chinese Spirituality.

Secondly, from the point of view of the form of content, the excellent traditional Chinese culture shows an extremely rich diversity. There are both profound philosophical thoughts such as Confucius philosophy, Taoist thought, Wei and Jin metaphysics, Lu Wang Xinxue, Cheng and Zhu rationalism, as well as excellent traditional Chinese virtues such as benevolence, filial piety, fraternal duty, justice, diligence and thrift; There are the papermaking, compass, gunpowder, printing and other scientific and technological achievements that have led the world, and there are also ancient buildings such as the Yellow Crane Tower, Yueyang Tower and Tengwang Pavilion, which are full of allusions to ancient times; There are literary masterpieces such as the Sao of Chu, the Fugue of Han, the parallelism of the Six Dynasties, the Poetry of Tang, the Lyrics of Song, the Songs of Yuan, and other literary treasures, as well as precious cultural treasures such as the oracle bones of the Yin Ruins, the Han Jian of Juyen, the remains of Dunhuang, and the archives of the Ming and Qing dynasties. The richness of Chinese excellent traditional culture not only shows the cultural heritage of the Chinese nation, but is also a valuable spiritual wealth for us to carry on from the past and move forward.

3.2. The current situation of teaching English at university

Under the dual waves of globalization and informatization, English has leapfrogged to become a universal communication tool that transcends national boundaries. It not only carries the basic function of language, but also becomes a bridge connecting different cultures and fields, both practical and cultural. However, the English proficiency of students in university English classes varies due to their cultural backgrounds, geographical differences, and the diversity of their English learning experiences. Some students have a solid foundation and are able to master English grammar and vocabulary quickly, while others may be slightly weaker in their English language skills due to environmental and other factors.

In today's increasingly globalized world, mere language skills are no longer sufficient to meet the needs of international communication. Intercultural communication competence, as a comprehensive competence, covers a wide range of dimensions such as language, culture, social customs and values. It requires individuals to be able to communicate effectively in an intercultural environment, not only using language, but also understanding and respecting the differences of different cultures, so as to establish a communication relationship based on mutual respect and understanding. In English language teaching, we must go beyond mere language skills training and make the cultivation of students' intercultural communication skills the core objective.

4. Ways of Organic Integration of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture and English Teaching

When the excellent traditional Chinese culture and English teaching intertwine and coexist harmoniously, they not only forge students' solid cultural self-confidence, enabling them to confidently display the unique charm of Chinese culture on the stage of globalization, but also nourish their hearts and minds, allowing them to walk freely on the bridge across cultures. This fusion, like a clear spring merging into the sea, enriches the connotation of English teaching and expands the boundaries of the classroom, allowing students to swim in the ocean of language and feel the depth and breadth of culture. It teaches us that cultural exchange and integration is not only the transmission of knowledge, but also the collision and resonance of the mind, so that we can explore the world without forgetting to return to ourselves and hold on to our cultural roots.

4.1. Creating a second classroom

In the process of university English teaching, the task of integrating Chinese traditional culture needs to be better realized with the help of the second classroom, as the first classroom is subject to both time and space constraints. Therefore, we should actively create and enrich the second classroom of college English, plan and organize diversified and content-rich extracurricular activities after class, so as to fully stimulate the enthusiasm and interest of college students. Compared with the examination pressure in the first classroom, the second classroom provides a more relaxed and free environment, enabling students to accept and integrate the cultivation of the excellent traditional Chinese culture more easily without examination pressure, and at the same time, there is also more space for them to show and give full play to their personalities.

Specifically, teachers can use student clubs as a medium to guide students to participate in various forms of foreign language activities. For example, students are encouraged to take photographs

reflecting traditional Chinese culture, which can be traditional architecture, folk activities, handicrafts and so on. Students can give short descriptions of their photographs in English and then organize a photographic exhibition within the school. Such activities not only honed students' photography and writing skills, but also allowed them to experience the glamour of Chinese culture through the lens. In addition, colleges and universities can also regularly organize activities such as Chinese and Western cultural knowledge competitions and English speech contests to encourage students to actively participate, which not only enhances the sense of identification with traditional culture but also improves the practical use of the English language through interaction and communication.

Through such a second classroom model, we can not only effectively integrate the excellent traditional Chinese culture into university English teaching, but also provide a broader and freer learning platform for students and promote their all-round development.

4.2. Injecting More Chinese Cultural Elements into English Teaching Materials

As the main source of knowledge for college students, the content of textbooks has a crucial impact on shaping students' knowledge systems and cultural horizons. However, it is not difficult to find a remarkable problem in the current college English textbooks: that is, the proportion of Western culture is too high, while the embodiment of Chinese excellent traditional culture is relatively scarce. This content imbalance not only limits students' in-depth knowledge and understanding of the traditional culture of their country, but may also, to a certain extent, affect their understanding of and respect for cultural diversity.

In order to correct this imbalance, it is necessary to re-examine and restructure the content of college English textbooks. Specifically, the proportion of outstanding traditional Chinese culture in teaching materials should be appropriately increased, and students should be provided with a rich variety of traditional cultural learning materials through selected texts, cases and discussions. These materials can cover a wide range of fields such as history, literature, philosophy, art and so on, so that students can learn English and at the same time gain an in-depth understanding and feel the depth and unique charm of Chinese culture.

Such adjustments not only help to enhance students' cultural literacy and intercultural communication skills, but also develop their national pride and cultural self-confidence. By learning and passing on Chinese traditional culture, students will be able to better understand and appreciate the differences and commonalities between different cultures, laying a solid foundation for future international exchange and co-operation. At the same time, it is in line with the current trend of valuing and respecting cultural diversity in the context of globalization.

Therefore, it is a necessary and urgent task to increase the proportion of Chinese excellent traditional culture in university English teaching materials. We need to provide university students with more comprehensive, balanced and in-depth English language teaching materials through continuous efforts and innovations to help them grow and develop better.

5. Conclusion

Currently, there exists a shortcoming in university English teaching that cannot be ignored, namely, the serious lack of integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture. The structure of the course often favors the presentation of Western culture, while the exploration of local Chinese culture is superficial, limited in length and insufficient in depth. This imbalance not only restricts the ability of university students to present and disseminate Chinese culture in international exchanges, but also ignores the profound cultural heritage and unique national spirit nurtured by thousands of years of civilization in China, which are the core elements of the country's cultural soft power. In the context of global economic integration, we should actively grasp the opportunity of cross-cultural communication, use language as a bridge to present the treasures of the excellent traditional Chinese culture to the world, promote global cultural exchange and integration, and jointly build a cultural ecology of pluralism and coexistence.

Therefore, it has become a major important task in the field of education nowadays to closely integrate the excellent traditional Chinese culture with college English teaching. In order to change this situation, colleges and universities should play a leading role, and in the preparation of teaching materials, the proportion of Chinese and Western cultures should be balanced, so that college students can have a comprehensive contact with and understanding of the two cultures in their English

learning. In addition, colleges and universities should also actively create a second classroom to provide students with more practice opportunities, so that they can improve their English expression of Chinese traditional culture in practice. Only in this way can we nurture outstanding talents with an international outlook who are also capable of passing on and promoting Chinese culture.

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