

An Application on the Integration of Chinese Traditional Culture into English Major Courses

-- Taking Y University as an Example

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Abstract

In the era of globalization, telling the story of China well in foreign languages has become an important means to establish a good national image in the context of globalization. This requires students to have a deep understanding of China's long history, splendid culture, and outstanding literary traditions, cultivate a sense of pride and love for Chinese culture, broaden their cultural horizons, and enrich their cultural connotations. This paper studies the current situation of integrating traditional Chinese culture into English classrooms and proposes some teaching strategy suggestions. A questionnaire survey was conducted on 60 English major students from Y University in S city, and qualitative analysis was used for the study. Research has found that students have cultural awareness, but their cultural output ability is weak. Therefore, some suggestions have been proposed to improve English teaching strategies.

Keywords

Chinese Traditional Culture, English Teaching, Current Situation, Strategies.

1. Introduction

President Xi Jinping (2022) put forward the major task of “promoting cultural self-confidence and self-reliance, and forging a new splendor of socialist culture” in the report of the 20th CPC National Congress, and made deployment arrangements for “prosperous development of cultural undertakings and cultural industries”, which provides a fundamental guideline and a well-known direction for doing a good job of cultural work in the new era. It provides a fundamental guideline and a well-known direction for cultural work in the new era. Cultural self-confidence is a more basic, broader and deeper self-confidence, and to improve the country's cultural soft power, it is necessary to strive to demonstrate the unique charm of Chinese culture. Culture is a spiritual force that transcends time and space and passes on a country's history and traditions; it is a bridge that connects the past and the present, and a force that shapes the future. Therefore, it is all the more important for young students to learn to tell a good Chinese story while learning professional knowledge.

According to the Teaching Guidelines for Undergraduate Foreign Language and Literature Programs in Colleges and Universities (2022), students are required to have an in-depth understanding of China's long history, splendid culture, and excellent literary traditions, to cultivate their pride and love for Chinese culture, to broaden their cultural horizons, and to enrich their cultural connotations. Through the study of the course, students should be able to achieve the ability to introduce to the world China's historical development trajectory, basic national conditions, local conditions, folk customs and habits and other general humanities

knowledge, as well as to have a strong sense of cross-cultural communication and exchange, and to be able to respect cultural diversity in cross-cultural communication and achieve effective communication. Therefore, university English teachers must guide students to gain a deeper understanding of traditional Chinese culture during the teaching process, and cultivate new-age international foreign language talents with cultural confidence who can tell a good Chinese story and spread the Chinese voice (Zhao, 2023).

With the development of globalization, telling Chinese stories well in foreign languages has become an important means to establish a good national image under the background of globalization. College students are the inheritors of the splendid Chinese culture and need to shoulder the responsibility to spread our culture to other nations through the comparison of the two cultures. Excellent college students in the new era should not only have a solid theoretical foundation, but also cultivate their own social practice ability. Therefore, it is very necessary to learn excellent traditional Chinese culture, draw the essence from it, broaden their horizons, and constantly learn lessons from traditional culture, so as to better improve their own quality and ability. In addition, learning excellent Chinese traditional culture can cultivate the patriotism of English majors. College students in the new era should love the motherland and have the spirit of patriotism, which is the spiritual force to promote social development and progress of the times, and an important source of cohesion of the Chinese people. In traditional Chinese culture, the spirit of patriotism plays an important role, not only cultivating the Chinese people's sense of justice and right and wrong, but also shaping the Chinese people's loyalty and patriotism. The study of Chinese traditional culture is particularly important to deepen the patriotic feeling of English majors, and thus plays an indispensable role in guiding the value orientation and ideological character of college students. Therefore, in college English teaching, teachers should be aware that college students not only need to master a language, but also need to be familiar with the culture of the target language and the source language. While teaching language and culture, teachers should pay more attention to the integration of ideological and political education in learning, which is conducive to cultivating more college students with innovative spirit, maintaining the national spirit of unity, friendship and self-improvement of the Chinese nation, and stimulating the national pride and patriotic feelings of college students.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Relevant Research Abroad

Language is determined by culture and is the product and carrier of culture (Du, J. & Liao, R., 2016). In China, the strategy of "Chinese culture going global" is a cultural construction proposed at the beginning of the 21st century, which requires that only by strengthening people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries can we promote international communication capacity building (Pan, R., Yang, M., & Chen, Z., 2020). Therefore, we should tell Chinese stories well, show the world a real and comprehensive China, and enhance the soft power of national culture. Young college students are the future pillars of the motherland and the key players in telling the Chinese story well, so it is very important to introduce culture into teaching.

However, there are some problems in integrating Chinese culture into English teaching. First of all, traditional college English teaching methods tend to put English thinking and language environment in the first place, which undoubtedly contributes to students' English level (Zhang P., 2023). However, as Chinese, English majors should not only focus on Western culture, but should carry out effective cross-cultural communication, which requires students to have a nuanced understanding of two different cultures. A similar view was also mentioned in the research of Du, J. & Liao, R. (2016), "Many English teachers think that their only task is to

integrate English language and English culture, and the relevant Chinese culture into the classroom consciousness has been largely ignored.” In addition, in exam-oriented or performance-oriented teaching, the teaching methods of most English teachers remain unchanged throughout the year, which is obviously not suitable for cultural teaching in the new era, so the reform of teaching concepts and teaching strategies is imperative (Pan, R., Yang, M., & Chen, Z., 2020).

2.2. Relevant Research at Home

Language is the carrier of culture, and culture essentially affects the expression of language (Xu, 2014). Traditional culture is the soul of a country and a nation, and excellent traditional culture is the root of the development of modern culture. From the cultural level, culture itself is an all-encompassing connotation. With the increasing cultural penetration in the global environment, more and more foreigners are learning Chinese language and showing great interest in traditional Chinese culture (Zhang & Jia, 2021). Therefore, while learning English language and culture well, English majors must systematically strengthen Chinese culture, so as to be able to express Chinese culture skillfully and accurately in English, and spread excellent Chinese culture to the world, so as to facilitate the benign development of human beings and the creation of a harmonious world.

English teaching in China should not only pay attention to the introduction of foreign culture, but also the teaching of Chinese culture. Students should be able to introduce to the world general humanistic knowledge such as China’s historical development track, basic national conditions, local customs and folk customs, and have a strong awareness of cross-cultural communication and communication, and be able to respect cultural diversity in cross-cultural communication and achieve effective communication (Foreign Language and Literature Teaching Guide for Undergraduate Majors in Colleges and Universities, 2022). When students communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds, their intercultural communication ability will be improved. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to help students accumulate the necessary cultural background knowledge. College English teachers must guide students to have a deep understanding of traditional Chinese culture in the course of teaching, take “cultivating morality and cultivating people” as the fundamental task, take “teaching foreign languages and educating the whole person” as the fundamental goal, and cultivate international foreign language talents in the new era with cultural confidence, who can tell Chinese stories well and spread Chinese voices well (Zhao, 2023).

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Questions

This paper is based on the current situation of integrating traditional Chinese culture into the English classroom in the School of English at Y University in S City. It aims to better understand the strengths and problems of English majors in learning traditional Chinese culture and English teachers in teaching traditional Chinese culture, and to make some teaching suggestions. Therefore, this study tries to achieve the following objectives.

Related to the research objectives, the research questions are as follows.

- (1) What is the current situation of integrating Chinese traditional culture into the English course?
- (2) What teaching suggestions can be provided to try to solve the problems?

3.2. Research Subjects

The subjects of this study were 60 English majors from Y University in S City. Y University in S City is committed to cultivating applied talents with strong intercultural communication skills,

practical and innovative abilities, an international outlook, a Chinese sentiment, and the ability to directly participate in international cooperation and competition. In order to have a more comprehensive understanding of students' strengths and problems in integrating Chinese culture into the classroom, the author chose students from four grades, 15 from each grade, and they were given a questionnaire.

3.3. Research Instruments

In this paper, the author uses questionnaires as a research tool. Firstly, the author conducted a questionnaire survey on students' skills and cultural awareness to gain a preliminary understanding of students' views on Chinese excellent traditional culture. Secondly, the author takes students' perspectives to understand the current situation of integrating Chinese excellent traditional culture into the English curriculum from the perspectives of teaching materials, teaching approaches and strategies.

4. Analysis

4.1. Students' Skills and Cultural Awareness of Spreading Chinese Culture

Through the questionnaire survey, the author found that all the students participating in the survey believe that learning Chinese traditional culture can enhance cultural self-confidence, and 91.67% of the English majors believe that it is necessary to have the skills to tell the excellent traditional Chinese culture in English. In addition, the investigator surveyed how the significance of integrating traditional Chinese culture into the university English classroom was understood from the students' perspectives, and all the participants believed that it was conducive to the cultivation of intercultural competence among university students, 90% believed that it helped university students to establish the correct values and cultural outlooks, and 47 participants believed that it was conducive to the consolidation of the status of traditional Chinese culture. This shows that students are aware of the necessity and importance of learning Chinese traditional culture, and they attach great importance to and hope that they have the ability to use English to spread the "voice of China" to the world and tell the "story of China", and they also hope that they can develop intercultural competence and improve their personal cultivation. They also hope to cultivate intercultural competence and improve their personal cultivation. At the same time, contemporary university students have the responsibility to pass on and carry forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture and enhance their cultural confidence and sense of identity. Therefore, it is very necessary to continuously penetrate traditional Chinese culture in English teaching, not only to consolidate the status of Chinese culture in students' minds and strengthen their identification with the Chinese nation and culture, but also to cultivate students' humanistic qualities and improve their intercultural communication skills.

However, according to the statistics (the data are shown in the figure 1 below), 58.33% of the students think that they have average ability to communicate Chinese traditional culture in English, and only 15% think that they are able to tell Chinese traditional culture in their professional language proficiently or relatively proficiently. Classroom teaching is the main way to educate people in higher education. Therefore, the skills of appropriately integrating traditional Chinese culture into the curriculum and teaching students how to spread the culture in a foreign language are urgent and are what English teachers should focus on in the teaching process nowadays.

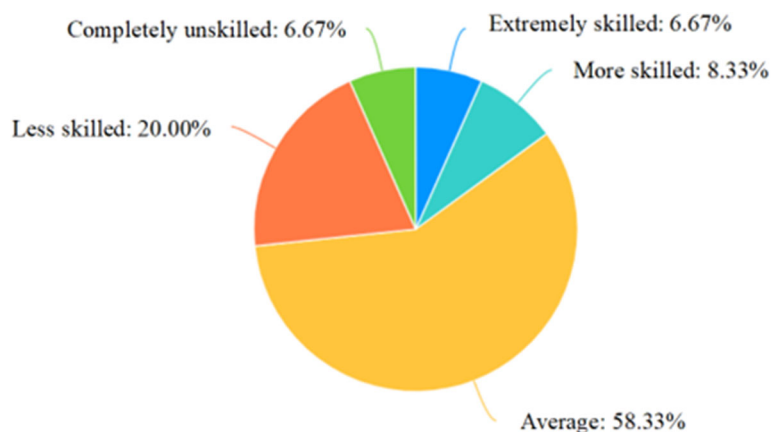


Figure 1. Students' Proficiency in Spreading Chinese Culture in English

4.2. Current Situation of Integrating Chinese Traditional Culture into English Courses

Students take the main part in the educational process. Therefore, in order to get a more realistic picture of the current situation of the integration of Chinese traditional culture into the English curriculum, the investigator surveyed students about their views and opinions on teaching materials and teaching strategies. 88.33% of the participants considered that traditional Chinese culture was covered in the English textbooks, and 86.67% of the students thought that the teachers could pay attention to the integration of traditional culture in the classroom. In addition, 80% of the students thought that the teachers provided a variety of materials about traditional Chinese culture. Thus, it can be seen that traditional Chinese culture is included in some of the teaching materials, and most of the teachers are able to consciously integrate culture into the teaching process, play a leading role in education, and organize and guide students to learn traditional Chinese culture. At the same time, teachers take the initiative to introduce diversified teaching materials into the curriculum, which enriches the teaching content, enhances students' interest, cultivates students' national sentiment, helps students learn Chinese culture better and more intuitively, and lays the foundation for cultivating innovative and excellent intercultural communication talents.

Through surveys and data analyses (the data are shown in the figure 2 below), the most common way for teachers to teach excellent traditional Chinese culture and for students to learn it in the current English curriculum is through textbook materials. Teachers should be good at combining teaching needs, paying attention to students' development, giving full play to their professional talents and teaching wisdom, and making active use of textbooks to fully teach the knowledge of Chinese excellent traditional culture. Secondly, online media and supplementary reading texts or audiovisual materials are also considered by students as better ways of learning. Therefore, teachers should have the correct concept of integrating Chinese excellent traditional culture into English teaching and innovative teaching methods, select suitable content for students based on a large number of excellent traditional culture materials, make the teaching content not only limited to textbooks, and share supplementary materials with students through paper or online media in a timely manner, expanding the knowledge of both teachers and students, and achieving the effect of educating people through joint learning. At the same time, teachers can actively create a platform for practice and exercise, and actively encourage students to practice what they have learnt in activities, stimulate their interest, and gain a sense of achievement in learning and national pride. Fully integrating the excellent traditional Chinese culture with English teaching will help teachers embark on the road of teaching reform that keeps pace with the times, so that teachers can truly become researchers and creators.

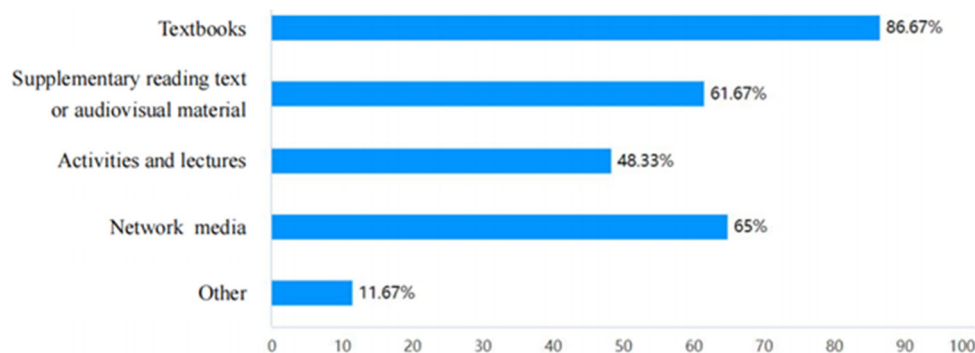


Figure 2. The Main Ways of Learning Traditional Chinese Culture in English Teaching

4.3. Strategies of Integrating Chinese Culture into English Courses

According to the survey (the data are shown in the figure 3 below), the author found that the teaching strategies that were more popular among students were: organizing events and lectures related to Chinese culture; integrating traditional Chinese culture into teaching materials; teachers focusing on exporting culture in the classroom; and exporting Chinese culture through diversified learning activities.

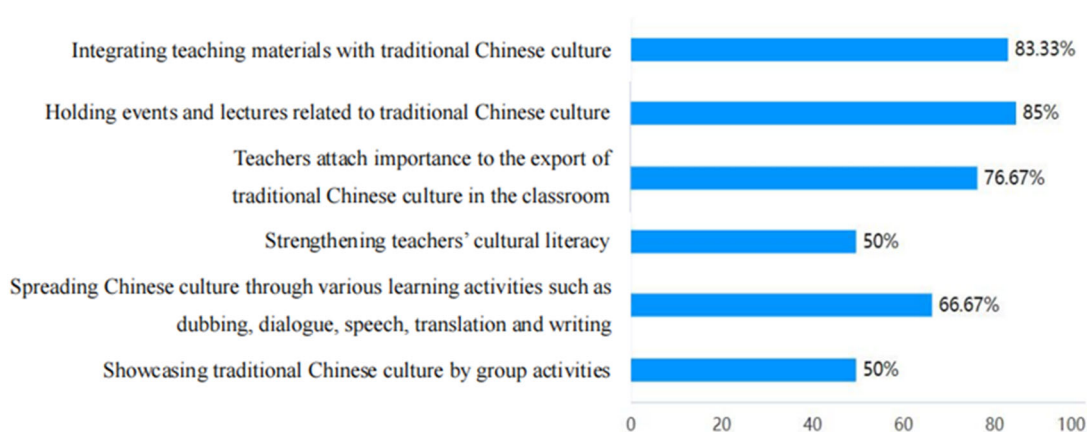


Figure 3. Strategies for Integrating Chinese Traditional Culture into English Teaching

Textbooks are the basis and source of students' learning. The author has also found that students generally prefer the input of Chinese culture from textbooks in the English classroom. Therefore, it is necessary to appropriately increase the proportion of excellent traditional Chinese culture in English textbooks, or to open up several units in certain English textbooks to introduce original English articles on Chinese culture, for instance, writing articles on traditional Chinese festivals and the 24 solar terms, etc. This will not only be in line with the universal teaching mode, but also be conducive to the students' general knowledge input. This will not only be in line with the universal teaching mode and suitable for students' universal knowledge input method, but also be conducive to enhancing students' cultural confidence and building a long-term mechanism for cultivating morality. At the same time, in the selection of teaching materials, we should focus on students' ability to express and disseminate traditional Chinese culture. It is important to cultivate English majors to be able to use their English-related knowledge and skills to play an effective role in spreading Chinese culture in foreign communication, to appreciate the differences in the cultures of different countries, and to cultivate cross-cultural awareness. Therefore, teachers should broaden the choice of reading selections and encourage students to actively use their spare time to read a large number of English textbooks or books that cover Chinese culture. If they are able to do so, teachers can guide students to read relevant selections to enhance their understanding of traditional Chinese

culture through intensive reading. In this way, students can continue to learn from Chinese culture, and also enhance their English input and improve their reading and language skills.

What's more, the twenty-first century is a new era characterized by intelligence and networks, a stage in which new technologies are constantly being developed. The application of "Internet +" have broken through the barriers of "online + offline" teaching and have increased the time for supplementing cultural knowledge. Teachers have responsibilities to guide students to collect valuable information from multiple ways and channels, share supplementary reading materials or audio-visual materials, recommend books about Chinese and Western cultures, hold more events and lectures online, and watch TV programs and films about Chinese and Western cultures. Based on listening, speaking, reading, writing and writing, traditional Chinese culture will be rooted in students' hearts and minds, so as to strengthen their cultural self-confidence and lay a good foundation of traditional Chinese culture.

Besides, teachers' cultural knowledge is the source of teaching, and they have to take up the mission of educating people and passing on culture, so they have to set a good example and continuously enhance their own cultural quality. At the same time, they should be deeply aware of the teaching goal of establishing morality, contributing to cultural self-confidence with a sense of family and country, and integrating cultural quality into English teaching. Teachers are the organizers, participants and implementers of the classroom, and they are also the guides and supporters for students to learn language and cultural knowledge. Therefore, when constructing English classrooms and designing teaching activities, teachers should focus on exploring different teaching pathways to achieve the dissemination of Chinese culture. Teachers improve their teaching methods in real time by taking into account students' mastery of Chinese culture. In addition, teachers can encourage students to spread Chinese culture in English both in class and outside class through various learning activities, such as voice-overs, dialogues, speeches, translations, writings, or group activities to demonstrate traditional Chinese culture, so as to continuously develop students' English skills and cultural output skills. Teachers strengthen the training of students from the perspectives of grammar, culture and context, so that students can use English to understand the world's culture and confidently spread Chinese culture and tell Chinese stories to the world.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the author investigated and researched the current situation and strategies of integrating Chinese traditional culture into the English curriculum from the students' perspective. The author found that English majors in Y University have basically had the awareness of spreading Chinese culture to the world in English, but the related English skills and language skills are weak, and they lack confidence in cultural output. At the same time, the author found that students are more willing to learn traditional Chinese culture through textbooks and the Internet, and focus on consolidating and spreading Chinese culture through classroom input of cultural knowledge and diversified activities.

As an international common language, English plays an increasingly important role in international communication. The subject of English is of great significance to our country's cultivation of talents with cross-cultural comprehension and cross-cultural communication skills, and English teachers are shouldering the important mission of cultivating talents in the new era. Meanwhile, in the context of Chinese culture "going out", English learners should not only be proficient in mastering and using English language, but also be well versed in the language and culture of our country, and firmly uphold the construction of China's image and the dissemination of China's voice. Therefore, in English teaching, teachers should optimize the teaching content and innovate the teaching mode, subconsciously let the excellent traditional Chinese culture take root in students' hearts, and cultivate students' intercultural

communication skills. Besides, teachers should select and use the teaching materials well, tailor the teaching to the students' needs, design every activity well, and gradually improve the students' cultural output ability.

However, due to the limitations of the researcher's own ability and time, there are some limitations in the scope of the survey, the sample selection of the survey respondents and the depth of the study, and the conclusions of the study are only applicable to Y University in S City, and cannot be applied to all schools, and do not have a broader sense of representativeness and universality. Moreover, the research methodology of this paper is not sufficient, and only the method of questionnaire survey was used for quantitative research. Therefore, the researcher will strengthen theoretical thinking in the future work and study in conjunction with teaching practice, continuously improve the ability to engage in teaching research, conduct follow-up research on the basis of this study, expand the research object and breadth, and continuously improve the empirical research effect of the integration of Chinese traditional excellent culture into university English classrooms.

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