

Original Paper

Research on the Current Situation and Countermeasures of Chinese Traditional Culture Aphasia in College English Teaching

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Abstract

Cultural education has long been a focal topic in foreign language teaching. While it is widely acknowledged that foreign language teaching should encompass both linguistic and cultural instruction, current practices in Chinese college English education reveal a significant imbalance. This study examines the phenomenon of “Chinese traditional culture aphasia”—the inability of students to articulate Chinese cultural elements in English—within college English programs at local universities in Shandong Province. By analyzing curriculum design, teaching materials, and pedagogical approaches, the paper highlights the overemphasis on Western cultural content and the neglect of Chinese cultural integration. It further proposes actionable strategies to address this imbalance, aiming to enhance students’ cross-cultural communication competence and promote the global dissemination of Chinese culture.

Keywords

college English teaching, Chinese traditional culture aphasia, cultural integration, cross-cultural communication, educational reform

For a long time, culture teaching has been a hot topic in foreign language teaching. Foreign language teaching is not only language teaching, but also culture teaching, which has become a consensus. Culture has been widely regarded as an integral part of foreign language teaching. Labo (1964) advocated the comparison of language structures, but also proposed the comparison of different cultures to help students overcome the difficulties caused by different cultural backgrounds in foreign language learning. Since the 1980s, China’s foreign language community has begun to pay more and more attention to cultural factors in foreign language teaching. Therefore, in order to comprehensively

and accurately acquire English language skills, China's English community has put the introduction of western culture in College English teaching on a high awareness agenda. Since the 1990s, with the development of foreign language teaching and the extensive development of language and culture research at different levels, cultural teaching research has shifted from one-way focus on "target language culture" learning to two-way interaction between "target language culture" and "mother tongue culture" (He, 1993; Wang, 1993; Gao, 1994).

However, in recent years, research data show that there is still a major problem in English Teaching in China, that is, the aphasia of Chinese culture, that is, the lack of Chinese culture in English teaching. At present, the College English teaching mode is generally westernized. Most of the current college English textbooks are based on the culture of British and American countries. The contents of the textbooks are all kinds of language materials that reflect western customs, traditional habits, ideology and morality, values and so on. Chinese traditional culture is almost blank, especially the lack of the cultivation of students' ability to express their local culture in English, which makes it difficult for students to carry out successful cross-cultural communication. The existing syllabus does not include the expression of Chinese excellent traditional culture in English as an integral part of the teaching plan, and the vast majority of colleges and universities do not offer English courses on Chinese traditional culture, which fully proves that there is a serious problem in China's English Teaching—the lack of Chinese culture.

This lack of culture has caused great harm: (1) hindering the improvement of students' intercultural communicative competence. The research shows that in the foreign language teaching aiming at cross-cultural communication, the mother tongue culture can also play a positive transfer effect. Therefore, in College English teaching, only when the target language culture is introduced and the mother tongue culture teaching is strengthened, especially the cultivation of the foreign language expression ability of the mother tongue culture, can the truly successful cross-cultural communication be brought about (Wu, 2015).

(2) Hinder the inheritance and external dissemination of China's excellent culture, and weaken China's cultural soft power and cultural competitiveness. With the continuous enhancement of China's economic strength and world influence, the status of Chinese culture is being universally respected in the world. More and more foreigners begin to pay attention to China and want to know China. We need to show the world China's 5000 year old civilization and excellent culture in foreign languages, and we need to "send the essence of Chinese culture to western countries. We need to pursue 'sending doctrine', which has both political and academic significance" (Ji, 2006). As college students who shoulder the mission of inheriting and disseminating Chinese culture and history to the outside world, after receiving two years of basic college English education, if they blindly pursue western culture in their communication with the west, but know little about Chinese culture, there is no way to talk about it, "learning a foreign language will lose their mother tongue, and having a foreign culture will abandon

their national culture, so what is the significance of foreign language learning?” (Hu & Gao, 1997)

Minister Zhou Yunqing pointed out in the article that promoting Chinese culture is the historical mission of Chinese universities, “it is the responsibility of the whole university to understand and grasp the historical responsibility of inheriting and developing their own excellent Chinese culture, and English classes can also contribute to the inheritance and development of traditional culture”. Therefore, College English teaching should shoulder the important task of cultivating intercultural communicative talents, integrate Chinese culture into College English teaching, improve students’ ability to express Chinese culture in English, enhance contemporary college students’ sense of national pride, and carry forward and inherit local culture and even Chinese culture.

As a result, the domestic foreign language community has gradually realized that the target language and target language culture teaching must be based on the learners’ mother tongue culture, “using it as a tool to compare with foreign culture, we can more profoundly reveal some of the main characteristics of foreign culture, so as to deepen our understanding of the essential characteristics of national culture” (Shu & Zhuang, 1996).

The lack of Chinese culture in foreign language teaching shows that the autonomy of foreign language education in China is poor, the understanding of the “generality” of the language is ignored, and the “individuality” of the language is one-sided emphasized. To carry out language and culture teaching, we must understand the transfer effect of mother tongue culture on both positive and negative aspects of foreign language learning, rather than escape from the actual mother tongue context and generalize the target language culture. The reality of large investment and low efficiency in foreign language teaching in China has explained the urgency of the research turn in foreign language teaching.

To solve the problem of the lack of Chinese culture in foreign language teaching, the key is to deepen the understanding of English curriculum. We need to rethink the curriculum, syllabus, textbooks, classroom, teachers and students. China’s foreign language and cultural circles should work together to study the rational allocation of teaching content, so that students’ level of using English to express Chinese culture, the improvement of basic English level and their understanding of Western cultural background are growing at the same time.

We should change the traditional concept of foreign language teaching, correct the Westernization mode in College English teaching, improve students’ traditional cultural awareness and Chinese culture English expression ability, strengthen the theoretical research of Chinese culture English teaching, and promote the English Teaching of non-English majors to a higher level, so as to provide theoretical and empirical basis for the further reform of College English teaching.

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