

Analysis of the Paths to Empower College Students to "Tell China Stories Well" in Foreign Language Teaching

Bo Jiang, Wenjing Deng*

Sichuan University of Media and Communications, Chengdu, Sichuan, 611745, China

**Corresponding author*

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Abstract: "Telling China stories well" is a necessary way for the world to fully understand China, to expand the influence of Chinese culture as well as to create a good image of China as a cultural power. As an important way to improve college students' foreign language competence and promote cross-cultural communication, foreign language education also serves as a cradle for cultivating international communication talents with firm political stance, solid language skills, and good communication literacy. Telling China stories well in foreign language teaching, therefore, is not only a systematic project of foreign language education based on China's national conditions, but also a key measure to implement the full process of moral education to all students in higher education. Exploring ways to empower college students to tell China stories well in foreign language teaching is of paramount significance for improving their foreign language proficiency and strengthening cultural soft power of China. The article first analyzes the necessities and difficulties in telling China stories in foreign language teaching, and then explores the path to enabling students to practice the corresponding skills in foreign language teaching. By strengthening the instrumental and practical nature of foreign language education, we can take various measures to help college students "tell China stories well".

1. Introduction

Language is a bridge for communication between countries around the world. Being a "window" for Chinese and foreign exchanges, foreign language education works as a frontier for telling China stories well, spreading the voices of China, as well as providing Chinese wisdom to the world. The plan of "Telling China Stories Well" is designed to enable the world to fully understand China, correctly recognize China and entirely identify with the development path of China, which provides a chance for enhancing its cultural soft power and boosting cultural confidence of the country [1]. For a long time, foreign language education in colleges and universities has placed more emphasis on improving college students' language skills, with most of its teaching content focusing on Western languages and cultures. However, what needs to be further improved is to make Chinese culture take root in the mindset of college students and to cultivate foreign language skills from the perspective of telling China stories well, which serves as a supplement to the ideological and political education. Foreign language teachers should have a sense of mission and responsibility to identify the position

of foreign language teaching in "telling China stories well", making contributions to promoting the high-quality development of foreign language education and displaying to the world a real and comprehensive image of China. While striving to explore ways to tell China stories well, foreign language teaching should keep pace with the times to reform and innovate, so as to improve students' foreign language skills and cross-cultural communication abilities.

2. Necessities of "Telling Chinese Stories Well" in Foreign Language Teaching

2.1. The Need to Serve the National Culture Strategic Layout

The prosperity of a country or a nation is always supported by cultural prosperity. The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation needs to be premised on the development and prosperity of Chinese culture. It is necessary to continuously improve the inheritance system of Chinese culture in order to fully expand the transmission and the influence of Chinese culture, thus successfully creating a good image of China as a cultural power [2]. The national culture strategic layout points out the direction of cultural education for foreign language teaching in universities by promoting the innovation of teaching reforms. Endowing foreign language teaching with new connotation in the form of "telling China story well" not only strengthens the patriotic sentiment of college students and builds a strong sense of community among the Chinese nation on the one hand, but also demonstrates a comprehensive, three-dimensional, and real image of China to the world on the other, allowing China to better integrate into the world and the world to better embrace China.

2.2. The Need to Cultivate Talents for Cross-cultural Communication

Recent years have witnessed the constant improvement of China's comprehensive national strength accompanied by the embarrassing situation where it is hard for China to make the facts and reasons understood by foreign countries. Therefore, cultivating foreign communication talents and strengthening international communication capacity of college students becomes urgent for foreign language education to enable China's international discourse power to match its comprehensive national strength and international status. Foreign communication talents must be proficient in both Chinese and foreign language skills with a firm political stance as well as good communication competence. Meanwhile, they are required to display the glorious ancient China, the vibrant contemporary China and the innovative future China in an objective way that is easily acceptable to foreigners [3]. Foreign language teaching needs to keep pace with the times, enabling students to acquire language skills and spreading the Chinese voice as well. By telling China stories in English, students can fully and deeply understand the historical origins of Chinese culture, learning to comprehensively explain China's newly issued policies in authentic English, which lays a solid foundation for becoming cross-cultural communication talents with national sentiment, international vision, and professional skills [4].

2.3. The Need to Achieve College Foreign Language Teaching Objectives

As a part of humanistic education in colleges and universities, college foreign language courses have both instrumental and humanistic characteristics, aiming at the cultivation of students' language application ability, the enhancement of cross-cultural communication awareness and ability, and the improvement of comprehensive cultural literacy. [5] Language is the carrier of culture, while culture is the connotation of language. In addition to more convenient and direct access to foreign information, foreign language study serves as a communication tool for college students to spread to the world the voice, the stories and the culture of China. While improving their foreign language proficiency, they

should carefully examine the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western cultures to deepen their understanding of different cultures and improve their cross-cultural communication skills.

3. Difficulties in "Telling China Stories Well" in Foreign Language Teaching

3.1. Solving the "Chinese Cultural Aphasia" Syndrome

"Chinese cultural aphasia" has been a "chronic disease" that has been plaguing foreign language teaching in China for a long time. Oriented by improving students' basic skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation, foreign language teaching is mainly based on western culture with its textbooks sometimes even directly introduced from foreign countries. The problem of "Chinese cultural aphasia" arises from a serious tendency of westernization in foreign language teaching, making students consciously or unconsciously influenced by western culture and values.^[6] The excellent traditional Chinese culture is the root and soul of the Chinese nation. Hence, the educational concept of integrating value shaping into the process of ability cultivating and knowledge transferring should be implemented in foreign language teaching, making it possible to handle the relationship between language education and cultural education by deconstructing the former foreign language teaching system which mainly focus on reproducing the "original sound" of foreign life, and then truly linking foreign language education with the inheritance of Chinese culture.

3.2. Solving the "Cultural Superiority and Inferiority" Syndrome

Having been long influenced by western culture and ideology, foreign language learners in China used to worship western culture excessively, which leads to the prevailing syndrome of "cultural superiority and inferiority" [7]. Adhering to the concept of cultural equality, therefore, becomes an appeal to foreign language learners by both absorbing the essence of western culture and promoting the excellent Chinese culture. The cultural diversity should be recognized, which means respecting the culture of other nations with critical thinking abilities. Meanwhile, Chinese national culture should also be respected by applying the core values into the whole process of foreign language teaching [8]. The concept of discourse equality needs to be upheld due to the fact that cultures have no ranks but differences in characteristics. It is necessary to enhance cultural confidence without the framework of cultural judgment and narrow arrogance. By breaking the siege of western culture and discourse hegemony, the theory and system of China can be interpreted with Chinese history and practice in response to the attention from the international community on China [9]. Cultural confidence helps dispel misunderstandings and form positive interactions, thus enabling China to take the initiative in international discourses.

3.3. Solving the "Cultural Deficit" Syndrome

"Cultural deficit" is a major weakness in the creation of human civilization. Under the long-term impact of western "cultural hegemony", the "cultural deficit" problem in China is serious, making China's cultural products difficult to "go global", thus inhibiting the inheritance and innovation of Chinese culture [10]. The input and output of culture should be carefully dealt with in foreign language teaching which needs to create high-quality courses introducing Chinese culture. It is of great significance to promote the construction of international communication capabilities at multiple levels by making good use of the advantages of new media, self-media, and overseas social media with wide audience and strong interactivity and fully utilizing the platforms of Sino-foreign cooperation and exchanges [11]. It is persuasive to encourage foreign students to tell China stories,

which can make Chinese culture better known to the world.

4. The Path to Empower Students to "Tell China Story Well" in Foreign Language Teaching

4.1. Strengthening the Instrumental Feature of Foreign Language Teaching

Instrumentality is the basic attribute of language. Language is a tool for human communication. Only by establishing a correct view of language and abandoning language bias can the world truly understand China.

4.1.1. Foreign Language Teaching is A Tool for Talent Cultivation

Language is a tool for acquiring knowledge and cultivating talents [12]. To contribute to the cultivation of the builders and successors with all-round abilities, foreign language teaching should implement the fundamental task of establishing morality and cultivating people by integrating knowledge transmission and value guidance into the entire process of education [13]. First of all, students need to shoulder the responsibility to make China better known to the world, while teachers need to take students as the center to cultivate foreign language talents with patriotic sentiments, international perspectives, and responsible attitudes. Secondly, it is necessary for students to acquire the ability to tell China stories well in foreign language education. Teachers should strive to cultivate outstanding talents with interdisciplinary cross-cultural backgrounds, national and regional knowledge reserves, as well as competence in multilingual and multicultural challenges.

4.1.2. Foreign Language Teaching is A Tool for Cultural Communication

As an indispensable teaching content in foreign language teaching, cross-cultural communication plays an important role in cultivating high-quality foreign language talents. In order to tell China stories well and spread Chinese culture, a good command of language skills matters, so that stories can be told to others in an understandable and acceptable way. Teachers should stick to constant exploration and innovation, and shoulder the heavy responsibility of knowledge instruction and cultural teaching. Students' cultural consciousness can be strengthened through cultural teaching that transcends cultural barriers and cultural awareness cultivation. At the same time, teaching research should be conducted to explore students' attitudes towards cross-cultural learning and to stimulate their enthusiasm for cultural learning [14]. Enhancing empathy in Chinese culture enables students to strengthen their cultural self-confidence and to promote their ability to spread local culture. Thus the instrumental nature of foreign language teaching can be maximized.

4.2. Strengthening the Practical Feature of Foreign Language Teaching

Following the educational policy of China, teachers should adhere to the principle of taking students as the center and strengthening the practical feature of foreign language teaching. Meanwhile, to tell China stories well, great importance should be attached to the efficiency of foreign language teaching.

4.2.1. Strengthening the Construction of Foreign Language Teaching Materials

Teaching materials are the foundation of education. English teaching materials are the main carrier of Chinese stories told in college English teaching. Therefore, teaching material construction is the key to telling China stories well in college English teaching. Due to the long-standing concept of foreign language education, the compilation of foreign language textbooks generally tends to

introduce western languages and cultures with a lack of the content of traditional Chinese culture as well as the ideological and political elements. Consequently, college English textbooks should be updated in their concepts, so as to help students deeply understand the cultural differences between China and the West [15]. Teachers can choose the most distinctive content and highlights of China stories, among which either the lives of ordinary people or anecdotes of celebrities can be introduced. In addition, China stories should strive to represent the image and spirit of China and embody Chinese core values. Only by properly allocating the proportion of Chinese and Western cultures can we achieve cultural exchange and keep the balance between language learning and cultural education.

4.2.2. Building a High-quality Foreign Language Teaching Team

Teachers are the developer and provider of learning resources. Therefore, great importance should be attached to giving full play to the leading role of teachers and to creating an elite foreign language teaching team in college. In addition to moral preaching, knowledge imparting, and doubts dispelling, teachers also shoulder the heavy responsibility of morality establishing and talent cultivating [16]. Foreign language teachers should enrich their knowledge structure and continuously improve their comprehensive qualities from the following four aspects. First of all, to enrich teaching content, special attention should be paid to major historical and political events. Secondly, it is vital for teachers to innovate their thinking and keep pace with the times. In this way new learning experiences can be brought to students. Thirdly, with personality charm and profound professional skills, a teacher will be the one that students love and admire. Lastly, the most important thing is to strengthen learning, broaden horizons, and increase knowledge reserves as much as possible. Only in this way can the connotation of "China stories" in textbooks be explored.

4.2.3. Providing Diversified Foreign Language Teaching Resources

The needs of foreign language learners are characterized by diversity. Based on the constructivist theory in the context of the new liberal arts, foreign language teaching should adhere to the learner-centered teaching philosophy. It is a great necessity to think about students' thoughts and solve students' difficulties. A special course with high-quality, appropriate, and intelligent learning resources should be set up to focus on cultivating students with critical, creative, cooperative and cross-cultural abilities. At the same time, in the digital age, an intelligent foreign language teaching method should be explored. For one thing, it is crucial to promote the construction of digital infrastructure for foreign language teaching. Teaching resources can be shared through strengthening the integration of employment, study, and research. For another, a new form of foreign language teaching should be reconstructed by breaking the traditional teaching pattern and developing a series of digital courses and teaching cases. Carrying out interactive virtual classroom teaching and open online teaching can break the time and space constraints of foreign language education, enabling students to independently choose high-quality and appropriate teaching resources. Fundamental changes in foreign language teaching can be achieved by strengthening back-end management and effectively carrying out teacher-student interaction.

4.2.4. Innovating Foreign Language Teaching Models

A new foreign language teaching model can be reconstructed by highlighting the initiative of students, giving full play to the guiding role of teachers, and discovering new teaching methods. Centering on updating teaching content and carefully designing classroom activities, teachers can improve students' awareness of "telling China stories well". What matters is to build a personalized, hierarchical, and diversified teaching system with the three-dimensional foreign language second classroom and the college foreign language practice teaching platform. The proper integration of

language learning, skill improvement, and campus culture construction reflects the political, instrumental and humanistic nature of college foreign language teaching. With the goal of "telling China stories well", a mechanism can be established to carry out colorful foreign language second classroom activities, such as foreign language speech contests, foreign language debate contests, and foreign language culture festivals, which allows students to experience the beauty of humanity when acquiring foreign languages in a pleasant atmosphere. By this means, students' abilities to tell China stories well can be greatly promoted.

5. Conclusions

"Telling China stories well" is not only a systematic project of foreign language education, but also a key measure to implement all-round education. It requires high attention from universities, careful planning by foreign language teachers, collaborative cooperation among students, and the synchronization of the social environment. Meanwhile, with the Chinese core values as the guidance, it is of great significance for teachers to keep in mind the development of students' cultural self-confidence and the innovation of foreign language teaching models. In this way teachers are able to improve students' English language skills and cross-cultural communication skills, as well as to achieve the goal of ideological and political education.

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