

# *The Integration of Patriotic Education in Junior High School English Courses—a Case Study of a Southern City in China*

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**Abstract:** Since a series of violent protests erupted in Hong Kong in 2019, leaders of Chinese government have put patriotic education back on the agenda in face of people's weaken patriotic sentiments in recent years, requiring the integration of patriotic education in all school courses. This article focuses on the integration of patriotic education in junior high school English courses, aiming at revealing the status quo of the practice of the integration of patriotic education in junior high school English courses on the basis of a related questionnaire survey in a southern city of China and an analysis of the questionnaire data. It also finds out in the integration process the problems and deficiencies and provides resolutions from the perspectives of teaching philosophy, teaching contents and teaching resources.

## 1. Introduction

The violent protests that Hongkong experienced in 2019 shocked the international community. This unprecedented scale of chaos gave Chinese leaders a major wake-up call that this time the long-existing but rather neglected national identity crisis should be taken seriously.[1] Thus at the end of 2019, the State Council issued the Outline on Conducting Patriotic Education in the New Era, in which the principles, general requirements, basic contents are specifically presented, and the realization of Chinese Dream is considered a distinctive element of patriotic education (Xinhua News Agency, 2019). As a response to the new challenges and requirements for enhancing people's national identity, one of the four core competencies—cultural awareness mentioned in the English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education 2022 issued by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2022) highlighted that English curriculum must cultivate students' patriotism and enhance cultural confidence [2].

In China, the first paper about patriotic education was published in 1951 and there are already 12,181 papers related to this topic from then to the year 2022. The earlier ones mainly focus on patriotic education incorporated in the fields of history, Chinese language and political sciences, and patriotic education in foreign language education was not a spotlight in the earlier years. As patriotic education has been attached greater importance in recent years, studies of patriotic education have

been undertaken in a wider range of subjects in recent years, such as English, psychology, geography, chemistry and so on[3].

This research aims at conducting a holistic survey on the status quo of integrating patriotic education into junior high school English courses. On the basis of the results of the survey, the research intends to show that (1) What are junior high school teachers' and students' understanding of patriotism? (2) What are teachers' and students' attitudes towards the practice of integrating patriotic education into junior high school English courses? (3) What are students' evaluation on teachers' practices of integrating patriotic education into current English courses? Furthermore, the research identifies the problems emerging in the status quo of integrating patriotic education into English courses, and proposes some feasible resolutions to these problems.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Literature Review of Foreign and Domestic Studies

Tremendous studies have tried to give a clear definition to patriotism and opined on the kind of patriotism that deserves cultivating. Viroli (1995) clarified that patriotism and nationalism should not be treated as synonyms because “patriotism is an effort or readiness to promote the interests of all the persons born or living with the same patria, i.e., country, whereas nationalism aims at promoting the interests of all those of the same natio, i.e., literally a group of common descent and upbringing, that is to say, of complementary habits of communication” (pp. 3-4). But he also noted that the love of country should be “immune to false beliefs, the passions of ambitions and 'spirit of rivalry' that are responsible for the degeneration of love of country into love of domination” (p. 97). Viroli (1995) hereby concludes that cultivating the love of country through education should empower students to see well the distinction between good and bad government instead of making them blind (p. 55). Westheimer (2006) categorized patriotism into two kinds—authoritarian patriotism and democratic patriotism. What authoritarian patriotism advocates is that “one’s country is inherently superior to others”, while supporters of democratic patriotism believe that “a nation’s ideals are worthy of admiration and respect” (Westheimer, 2006). Curren and Dorn (2018) consider that patriotism is “the motivational core of civic virtue with respect to a country” and what they advocate is a “virtuous patriotism” (p. x). They argue that what can be taught in patriotic education is just the rational grounds for regarding various aspects of the country as valuable, whereas patriotism or patriotic sentiment is “something that might be inspired by a student’s experience of being a valued part of a just society and just school community” (p. 101). They also stress that education plays a legitimate role in “inspiring such patriotic motivation” but it is “limited to providing an inclusive and enabling just school community that facilitates civic belonging and friendship, civic competence, and the informed appreciation of the country’s merits that is part of civic intelligence” (p. 117).

As can be seen, foreign studies offer insights on the definition of patriotism and the role of patriotic education from different angles, and they are rarely connected with the national conditions of a certain country.[4] However, domestic researches always incorporate China’s national conditions and its culture into the studies of patriotism and patriotic education. Moreover, foreign scholars take patriotic education as an independent research subject, while in China, a lot of efforts are made in the integration of patriotic education and other subjects in domestic studies. According to Wu and Yang (2011), standing at the core of national spirits, patriotism reflects one’s emotional dependence on his or her country, sets up certain moral standards, political and legal obligation that one should stay committed to.[5] Qian, Ye and Fang (2020) hold that as a unique spirit and character of Chinese nation, patriotism for a new era stems from China’s history and traditions, calls for practical actions in achieving the rejuvenation of Chinese nation and shores up the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. With regards to patriotic education, Wen and Wang (2019) suggest that patriotic

education is facing new challenges from ideological confrontations and conflict of values. They consider that patriotic education in China must be based on concrete facts and actions of Chinese people's efforts for the national rejuvenation. Feng, Wang and Li (2022) give more specific information about what to include in China's patriotic education—fine traditional Chinese culture, national security and national unity, and socialist legal system. Meanwhile, Wang (2008) notes that history, such as China's 100 years of national humiliation, can be an important part of the country's patriotic education campaign, and the reinforcement of people's memory about the traumatic past is good for arousing its citizens' historical consciousness and promoting social cohesion. Regarding the integration of patriotic education in English education in China, Gan (2021) holds that the elements of Chinese culture in English textbooks should be well-explored to cultivate students' patriotism [6].

Compared with the contents of patriotic education that have been mentioned in the existing academic studies, the Outline on Conducting Patriotic Education in the New Era (Xinhua News Agency, 2019) issued by China's State Council offers more comprehensive explanation on what to include when patriotic education is incorporated into junior high school English courses: (1) Chinese leaders' thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era; (2) Socialism with Chinese characteristics and Chinese Dream; (3) National condition and policies; (4) National spirit and the spirit of the times; (5) The history of the Communist Party of China, the country, and the reform and opening up; (6) Fine traditional Chinese culture; (7) National reunification, and ethnic unity and progress; (8) Education on national security and national defense. This document serves as the direction and reference for English teachers to effectively integrate patriotic education into their lessons [7].

## **2.2. Definition of Patriotism and Objectives of Patriotic Education**

Based on the former efforts made in defining the meaning of patriotism and the need of China's development in the new era, the author believes that patriotism means the core of Chinese national spirits, with the force to unite all Chinese people, and it means the love and loyalty to the country and its culture, which excites one's pride to the country that will ultimately evolve into a sense of responsibility to ensure the country's prosperity and progress.[8] It is also worth noting that uniting all Chinese people should not mean dismissing people from other countries, and one's love, loyalty and pride to the country should be devoid of a sense of superiority over other countries. Accordingly, China's patriotic education in a new era should aim to cultivate patriotic, dedicated, integrated and kindhearted citizens, to boost people's cultural confidence and to foster people's sense of responsibility for building socialism with Chinese characteristics [9].

In conclusion, theoretically, a great many studies of and requirements for patriotic education have been done and set. And a survey will be conducted in this research to reveal the practical situation regarding the integration of patriotic education in junior high school English courses. How do students and English teachers in junior high school understand patriotism in the new era? What is the status quo of integrating patriotic education into English education in junior high school? What are the problems in the integration? Questionnaires about these questions are made and delivered to students and English teachers in junior high schools in a southern city of China. Data is collected and analyzed afterwards. The data is expected to show how well patriotic education is integrated into junior high school English courses and thus provide valuable reference for future research and practice.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Research Subject**

In this research, 152 English teachers and 885 students attended the questionnaire survey. All

respondents are teaching or receiving education in junior high schools located in a southern city of Guangdong province.

According to the collected questionnaires for teachers, most respondents are females, accounting for 87.50%. A large number of teachers belong to two age groups, with 44.74% of them between 31 to 40 and 43.42% of them between 41 to 50. 96.05% of teachers are Han people. The majority of teachers obtain a bachelor's degree, accounting for 94.08%. 83.12% of teachers have been teaching for over 10 years. And teachers who teach students in Grade 7, Grade 8 and Grade 9 are evenly distributed (As shown in Table 1) .

According to the collected questionnaires for students, 407 are males (45.99%) and 478 are females (54.01%). Most respondents are Han people (99.10%). Students of all grades in junior high school are covered in the survey.[10] Over half of respondents are Grade 7 students (54.92%), and there are 189 Grade 8 students (21.36%) and 210 Grade 9 students (23.73%) (As shown in Table 2) .

Table 1: Frequency table of sample characteristics of teachers (N = 152)

Variable	Option	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative percent (%)
Gender	Male	19	12.50	12.50
	Female	133	87.50	100.00
Age	20-30	6	3.95	3.95
	31-40	68	44.74	48.68
	41-50	66	43.42	92.11
	51-60	12	7.89	100.00
Ethnic group	Han	146	96.05	96.05
	Other	6	3.95	100.00
Educational background	Junior college degree	1	0.66	0.66
	Bachelor degree	143	94.08	94.74
	Master degree	8	5.26	100.00
Teaching years	Less than 5 years	5	3.29	3.29
	5-10 years	21	13.82	17.11
	More than 10 years	126	82.89	100.00
Students' grade	Grade 7	45	29.61	29.61
	Grade 8	45	29.61	59.21
	Grade 9	62	40.79	100.00
Total	152	100.0	100.0	100

Table 2: Frequency table of sample characteristics of students (N = 885)

Variable	Option	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative percent (%)
Gender	Male	407	45.99	45.99
	Female	478	54.01	100.00
Ethnic group	Han	877	99.10	99.10
	Other	8	0.90	100.00
Grade	Grade 7	486	54.92	54.92
	Grade 8	210	23.73	78.64
	Grade 9	189	21.36	100.00
Total		885	100.00	100.00

## 3.2. Research Methods

### 3.2.1. Literature Review Method

Through CNKI, Google Scholar, and other academic websites at home and abroad, papers and

books have been found with keywords of "patriotic education", "patriotism" and "English education". Based on these papers, books and documents, the definition of patriotism, the content and objective of patriotic education are brought up, thus laying a solid foundation for the paper.

### 3.2.2. Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were designed and distributed to the teachers and students in junior high schools in a southern city of Guangdong Province, China, to investigate students' and English teachers' understandings of patriotism and the reality of integrating patriotic education into junior high school English courses. Questionnaire 1 was named "Questionnaire for Teachers on the Integration of Patriotic Education in Junior High School English Courses." Questionnaire 2 was named "Questionnaire for Students on the Integration of Patriotic Education in Junior High School English Courses."

Questionnaire 1 consists of 4 parts. The first part (Question 1-6) covers the basic information of the teachers, including gender, age, ethnic group, educational background, teaching years and the grade of students that they are teaching. The second part is to investigate the teachers' understanding on patriotism in Question 7. In this part, 6 options were set for the only one question. Except for the 6th option "I don't know the meaning of patriotism," each of them is a kind of understanding of patriotism deriving from the definition of patriotism in this paper: (1) patriotism means the core of the Chinese national spirit; (2) patriotism means Chinese people's love to the nation and its culture; (3) patriotism means a sense of responsibility to the country; (4) patriotism contains the aspiration to promote national prosperity and social progress; (5) patriotism means the source of one's national pride. Also, each teacher is limited to choose three options at most in this question so as to know three most accepted understandings of patriotism. The third part (Question 8-10) is about teachers' attitudes towards integrating patriotic education into English courses. Question 8 is set in order to know whether teachers think it is necessary to integrate patriotic education into junior high school English courses. Question 9 reveals whether cultivating junior high school students' patriotism is more important than English language acquisition. Question 10 aims to identify how teachers perceive the objectives of integrating patriotic education into junior high school English courses and each teacher is limited to choose four options at most in this question so as to identify the most recognized objectives. The fourth part is focused on the practice of integrating patriotic education into junior high school English courses, in which Question 11 aims at knowing how difficult it is for teachers to integrate patriotic education into junior high school English courses, Question 12-15 tends to know the difficulties of the practice from the aspect of English textbooks, local resources and patriotism-related contents. With regards to the effect of the practice, Question 16 is set in order to know what kind of responses that teachers receive from their students, and Question 5 in the questionnaire for students is to find out whether students can properly understand the meaning of Chinese Dream after patriotic education is integrated into English courses since Chinese Dream is an essential theme in patriotic education.

Questionnaire 2 consists of 4 parts. The first part, Question 1-3, is the basic information of the students, including gender, ethnic group and grade. The second part is about the students' understanding of patriotism (Question 4). In Question 4, 7 options were set, and except for the 7th option "I don't know the meaning of patriotism," each of the other 6 options is a kind of understanding of patriotism deriving from the definition of patriotism in this paper, which means the options in Question 4 could have been the same as those in the question for investigating teachers' understanding of patriotism. There is a concern that the statements of some options that are initially designed for teachers might be difficult, and to some extent, abstract for students to understand. In order to make the statement of each option easier for students to understand, these statements were paraphrased:

(1) Option "patriotism means the core of the Chinese national spirit" in the questionnaire for

teachers is paraphrased to “patriotism means a virtue associated with dedication, integrity and friendliness” in the questionnaire for students;

(2) Option “patriotism means Chinese people’s love to the nation and its culture” in the questionnaire for teachers is stated as “patriotism means people’s love to the nation, the inheritance and development for Chinese culture” in the questionnaire for students;

(3) Option “patriotism means a sense of responsibility to the country” in the questionnaire for teachers is rephrased as “patriotism means making contributions to the country” in the questionnaire for students;

(4) Option “patriotism contains the aspiration to promote national prosperity and social progress” in the questionnaire for teachers is paraphrased to “patriotism means a force to advance national prosperity and social progress”;

(5) Option “patriotism means the source of one’s national pride” in the questionnaire for teachers is rephrased as “patriotism means a sense of pride for the Chinese nation” in the questionnaire of students.

Also, each student is allowed to choose three options at most in this question so as to know the most accepted understandings of patriotism. The third part goes into students’ attitudes towards integrating patriotic education into English courses. In this part, due to the concern that patriotic education might be too abstract for junior high school students to understand, the authors investigate their attitudes towards cultivating a better understanding of the country and its culture, broadening horizons to know how modern China influences today’s world and introducing China and its culture to people around the world rather than directly ask them whether it is necessary to integrate patriotic education into junior high school English courses. In order to know students’ evaluation on the integration of patriotic education in English courses, two questions concerning Chinese culture and Chinese national spirits—two key contents in patriotic education—are set in the fourth part (Question 9-10).

### **3.3. Research Procedures**

#### **Step 1: Selection of Experimental Tools**

Wenjuanxing, a professional online survey platform in China, was used to design and distribute the questionnaires for teachers and the ones for students. The data from the questionnaires were processed and analyzed with the statistical analysis tool IBM SPSS 25.

#### **Step 2: Questionnaire Distribution**

Questionnaires were distributed to teachers and students in junior high school in western Guangdong province. After two weeks, 152 questionnaires for teachers and 885 questionnaires for students were returned.

#### **Step 3: Questionnaire Collection and Data Cleaning**

The questionnaires were recycled two weeks later. IBM Statistics SPSS 25 was used to examine the questionnaires to ensure that only those that are completely answered are used for analysis.

#### **Step 4: Questionnaire Data Analysis**

The results and analysis of the questionnaires will be presented in the next section.

## **4. Results and Analysis**

### **4.1. Junior High School Teachers’ Understanding of Patriotism**

The survey indicates that regarding teachers’ understanding of patriotism, “core of the Chinese national spirits” and “Chinese people’s love to the nation and its culture” appear to be far more recognized than other definitions of patriotism. 89.47% of teachers think that patriotism means the

core of the Chinese national spirit. 82.24% of teachers think that it means Chinese people's love to the nation and its culture. 48.03% believe that it means a sense of responsibility for society. 42.76% believe that it contains the aspiration to promote national prosperity and social progress. 32.24% of teachers hold that patriotism means the source of one's national pride.

#### **4.2. Junior High School Teachers' Attitude towards Integrating Patriotic Education into English Courses**

The survey shows that junior high school teachers take patriotic education as a significant part in English courses. And compared with language acquisition, some teachers hold that patriotic education is even more important. Teachers also see various objectives that can be achieved through integrating patriotic education into English courses, but very few of them agree that the purpose of integrating patriotic education into English courses is also related to the improvement of students' academic performances.

85.53% of teachers believe it is "very necessary" to integrate patriotic education into current English courses, and the rest of them think it is "necessary." Among all the respondents, over half of them (51.97%) hold that cultivating junior high school students' patriotism is more important than English language acquisition; 46.7% of them think that patriotic education is as important as language acquisition, and only 1.32% of them hold that language acquisition is more important than patriotic education.

98.68% of the teachers think that integrating patriotic education into English courses is to foster students' love to the nation and raise their national self-confidence.

84.21% of the teachers consider that the integration of patriotic education and English courses is to help students think critically about Chinese culture and western culture.

73.03% of the teachers think that the integration of patriotic education and English courses is to cultivate students' global view and sense of responsibility.

2% of the teachers believe that the purpose of integrating patriotic education into English courses is to improve students' academic performances and only 15.1% of them think that it is for uplifting students' interest in learning English.

#### **4.3. Practice of Integrating Patriotic Education into Junior High School English Courses**

Integrating patriotic education into English courses is not easy for everyone. In the survey, the teachers point out the difficulties they encounter when integrating patriotic education into their lessons. Furthermore, teachers also report students' different responses they receive when patriotic education is introduced, which can be a significant measurement of how effectively patriotic education is integrated in English courses at present. Another measurement of the effectiveness of the integration comes from the investigation of students' understanding of Chinese Dream, a crucial theme in patriotic education.

Only 7.24% of the teachers think it is not difficult at all to integrate patriotic education into English courses; 37.50% of the teachers indicate that they feel "slightly difficult" and 34.21% of them feel "moderately difficult." 21.05% of the teachers demonstrate an attitude of "very difficult." No one thinks it is "extremely difficult."

The English textbook is one major reason that causes trouble in the process of integrating patriotic education into English courses. Only 14.47% of the teachers agree that the English textbook is "very helpful" for patriotic education in English courses; 43.42% of the teachers think it is "helpful"; 43.42% of the teachers take a neutral stand; 12.50% of the teachers think it is "unhelpful." Moreover, except for teachers who think the textbook is very helpful, other 130 teachers are further asked why they think the current English textbook is not helpful enough for patriotic education in English courses. In

consequence, 74.62% of the teachers hold that the reason is the texts are out of date; 67.69% of teachers think that it is difficult to combine the texts with patriotic education; 40% of the teachers suggest that the textbooks focus more on western culture than Chinese culture; 36.15% of the teachers indicates that the textbooks tend to introduce foreign culture rather than teach students to introduce Chinese culture to the world.

Local resources that can advance patriotic education, such as local cultural relics, historic sites, internet infrastructure, and patriotic education bases, are not abundant, which is also a possible hurdle. Just 14.47% of the teachers demonstrate that the local resources are “very abundant”, and 18.42% of the teachers think the resources are “abundant”, while 17.76% of the teachers consider the resources “unabundant” and 3.95% of teachers find it “very unabundant”. 45.39% of teachers take a neutral stand.

Patriotism-related contents in English courses are found less understandable to some students when patriotic education is incorporated into English courses. 28.95% of the teachers “strongly agree” that these contents are understandable to their students and 48.03% of the teachers “agree” with this. 1.32% of the teachers “strongly disagree” that their students can understand the contents and 2.63% of the teachers also “disagree” with this. 19.08% of the teachers take a neutral stand.

In terms of the effect of the integration, 65.13% of the teachers have integrated patriotic education into English courses and receive active responses from their students. 26.32% of them suggest that their students show no interest and 1.32% of them even receive negative responses from their students. And there are still 7.24% of them that have not yet integrated patriotic education into their classes since they remain unclear about how to do so. Though over half of teachers report positive responses from their students, it is found that only 31.41% of students have a proper understanding of Chinese dream from the questionnaire of students.

#### **4.4. Junior High School Students’ Understanding of Patriotism**

The data shows that “patriotism means a virtue associated with dedication, integrity and friendliness” is the most recognized definition of patriotism among students. 89.83% of the students think that patriotism means a virtue associated with dedication, integrity and friendliness; 68.47% of them believe that patriotism means the love to the nation, the inheritance and development for Chinese culture”; 44.41% of them consider that patriotism means a force to advance national prosperity and social progress; 32.77% of them agree that patriotism means making contributions to society”; 22.37% of them think that patriotism means a sense of pride for the Chinese nation, while a minority of participants (1.58%) demonstrate that they are not clear about what patriotism means.

#### **4.5. Junior High School Students’ Attitude towards Integrating Patriotic Education into English Courses**

The data shows that most students expect to learn more about modern China and hope to help people around the world to have a better knowledge of China. Such expectations demonstrate students’ supportive attitude towards the contents of patriotic education in English courses.

37.4% of the students think that it is “very necessary” to cultivate a better understanding of the country and its culture. 39.21% of them think it is “necessary”, and 19.44% of them take a neutral stand. Only 2.6% and 1.36% of them hold that it is “unnecessary” and “very unnecessary.”

44.18% of the students indicate that they “very expect” to broaden their horizons through English courses to know how modern China influences today’s world. 37.97% of them “expect” to do so. 15.14% of them take a neutral stand. Only 1.69% of students suggest that they do “not expect” it and 1.02% of them do “not expect at all.”

Over half of the students (52.43%) “very expect” to introduce China and its culture to people



around the world. 32.43% of them “expect” to do so. 12.2% of them take a neutral stand. Only 2.03% of students suggest that they do “not expect” it and 0.9% of them do “not expect at all.”

#### **4.6. Junior High School Students’ Evaluation on the Integration of Patriotic Education in English Courses**

The data show that more efforts can be made to better integrate contents of patriotic education into English courses.

Elements of Chinese culture may not be effectively employed in many English courses. 64.07% of the students think that English courses are well-balanced in introducing Chinese culture and western culture. 9.83% of them think that the contents of Chinese culture are more than those of western culture, while 12.09% of them hold that the contents of western culture are more than those of Chinese culture. 9.72% of students suggest that though both cultures are covered, the contents are unattractive to them; 4.29% of them suggest that both cultures are inadequately reflected in English courses.

Chinese national spirit may not be adequately reflected in many English courses. 29.27% of the students suggest that their English courses can “almost always” reflect Chinese national spirit; 40.34% of them suggest that English courses “often” reflect Chinese national spirit; 25.31% of them think that English courses “sometimes” reflect Chinese national spirit; whereas there are still 35 (3.95%) students considering that English courses seldom reflect Chinese national spirit and 10 students (1.13%) considering that English courses “never” reflect Chinese national spirit.

### **5. Discussion**

#### **5.1. Problems**

The previous chapters suggest that some problems exist in the practice of integrating patriotic education into English courses.

First, patriotic education and English teaching are considered mutually exclusive. According to the survey, only a negligible number of the teachers consider improving students’ academic performances is one of the objectives of integrating patriotic education into English courses. By contrast, a majority of the teachers tend to view patriotic education and English teaching as two irrelevant parts with two separate functions—the former is for the establishment of students’ value judgments, while the latter is for improving students’ academic performances in English. Teachers who cling to this belief would find it hard to integrate patriotic education into their classes effectively, since they have to distribute the limited class time for both patriotic education and English teaching separately to maintain the balance between them, which is an extra burden for teachers.

Second, some teachers remain unclear about the right direction of and appropriate content for patriotic education in English courses. Students’ misunderstanding of Chinese Dream and ineffective application of elements related to Chinese culture and national spirits indicate that teachers do not go along the right track when integrating patriotic education into English courses. Also, they are not good at looking for materials that can not only relate to patriotic education but also arouse students’ interest since some patriotism-related contents appear to be too hard for students to understand, let alone to stimulate students’ interest.

Third, insufficient and outdated teaching resources impede the practice of integrating patriotic education into English courses. Local resources could add fun and profound historic meaning to the patriotic education, such as local cultural relics, historic sites, internet infrastructure, and educational bases for cultivating patriotism. Lack of local resources could weaken the effects of patriotic education. The English textbook is also difficult to get harnessed, for the materials in textbooks are

outdated and the texts are hard to be bridged with patriotic education.

## 5.2. Solutions

The four following suggestions could be helpful in addressing the mentioned problems.

First, the relationship between patriotic education and English teaching must be viewed properly. Admittedly, integrating patriotic education into English courses is for cultivating students' patriotism and shaping their characters, but it does not mean sacrificing the teaching in knowledge of English. On the contrary, the integration of patriotic education empowers English teaching, since elements about patriotic education, which could come from recent news events, popular television shows, documentaries and movies, such as the documentary Du Fu: China's Greatest Poet and Amazing China, will greatly enrich teaching materials. Adding these elements into English courses will enable teachers to provide more vivid contexts and various interesting topics for students to study English, thus encouraging them to more actively apply and practice the English skills they've learned. Hereby it can be said that the integration of patriotic education does not undermine English teaching. Instead, it help teachers improve teaching quality and strengthens students' English skills. .

Second, teachers should grasp the political mainstream and use materials that are easy for students to understand. Teachers are suggested to follow the Outline, to expand reading about the CPC's latest major guidelines, theories and policies through news, books and papers, or to attend training programs, so as to enhance political acuity, understand the nation's requirements of patriotic education and capture the tendency of it. To make patriotism-related contents easier for students to understand, it is suggested that teachers choose materials about virtue and Chinese culture, for it is found in this survey that currently "a virtue associated dedication, integrity and friendliness" and "the love to the nation, the inheritance and development of Chinese culture" are two highly accepted understandings of patriotism among students.

Third, local resources should be expanded and upgraded. Many kinds of local resources can support patriotic education, which can provide an impressive experience for students if they are allowed to visit these places in person. Hence local cultural relics and historic sites need to be well-protected and should be open for educational purposes. In areas without ample cultural relics and historic sites, more patriotic education bases can be built to provide spaces for teachers who intend to conduct special lesson outside the classrooms or organize extracurricular activities. In addition, internet infrastructure should be upgraded to build up an online course sharing system, which can provide excellent model courses on the integration of patriotic education in English courses. And internet infrastructure is especially important for schools in remote rural areas, for they may be short of teacher and are unable to catch up with the latest changes in education. Through the online course sharing system, students there can have access to excellent online public courses, and they might be able to join other teachers' lessons via videoconferencing software.

Fourth, English textbooks need timely adjustment. Speeding up the update of textbooks is urgently needed in order to provide teaching and learning materials that can reflect the massive progress made by China in recent years. As for the content to be added, technology elements would be highly recommended for three reasons: (1) China has witnessed considerable accomplishments in technological progress in recent years, while the theme of technological development is seriously missed in the current textbooks; (2) technology is deeply involved in people's daily life in all respects so it can provide plentiful topics for students to discuss; (3) technology has far-reaching impacts on humankind's future, carrying with it the potential to resolve deep-rooted issues worldwide. A case in point is the shared mobility, a symbol of the development of the Internet in China, which is close to students' daily life, and conforms with the global trend toward sustainable development. In addition to reflecting technological progress, Chinese culture should also be valued. An essential purpose of

English education is to guide students to think critically about Chinese culture and western culture in a comparative context. And for the need of spreading Chinese culture, it is necessary to train students to discuss the Chinese culture and history in English. Another reason is that culture-related elements would be easier for teachers to connect with patriotic education. To give a clear example, WANG Lina (2021) suggests that when teaching how to describe seasons and weathers, teachers should also integrate the 24 solar terms deriving from China's agriculture, and Chinese ancient poems concerning weather and season. Hence, it is worth considering adding the 24 solar terms and the English translations of some Chinese ancient poems into the textbook.

## **6. Conclusion**

### **6.1. Major Findings**

This survey provides an overview of the current situation of patriotic education in English courses, examining how it is promoted in today's English courses and revealing some newly-emerging problems.

The survey finds that (1) It is not fully realized that patriotic education is conducive to improving students' academic performances. Teachers should shift this perspective, and do not have to worry that the integration of patriotic education would disrupt English teaching or affect students' language acquisition. (2) Integrating patriotic education into English courses is not easy for each teacher due to the lack of local resources and outdated textbooks, and the selection of contents for patriotic education is tricky. Therefore, local resources should be made available to more teachers and students, the textbooks need to be adjusted timely and teachers are supposed to select materials that not only can reflect the political mainstream but also are easy for students to understand.

### **6.2. Limitations and Recommendations**

There are some limitations in this study that could be addressed or avoided in future research.

First, the setting of questionnaire option in this survey needs improving. In some questions, one option included two different concepts, which could cause confusion and affect respondents' choice. Another problem of the option setting is that different options in a question actually convey the same meaning.

Second, interviews or open-ended questions should've been set to provide opportunities for teachers and students to express their own ideas in case they want to report other problems or don't agree with the options in the questionnaire.

Third, the survey did not identify whether teachers and students are from schools in rural areas or urban areas, failing to examine and compare the regional differences of the practice of integrating patriotic education into English courses.

The limitations might be able to indicate the targets and directions of future research, and help researchers avoid potential problems. The paper aims at making a holistic evaluation on the status quo of integrating patriotic education into English courses so that educators can be aware of the existing problems, appealing to educators and educational departments to pay more attention to the urgency and significance of offering more support for political education in junior high school English courses.

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