

## The Integration of Cultural Self-confidence and College English Teaching

Zhuolun Chen

Foreign language teaching and research department, Officers' College of People's Armed Police

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**Abstract:** College English teaching is both instrumental and humanistic. On one hand, the instrumentality of college English teaching refers to the improvement of students' Basic English abilities of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating, as well as their abilities of English for Special Purposes. On the other hand, the humanity of college English teaching refers to the intercultural education for students to know and correctly understand the differences between different cultures. This paper here is going to discuss the necessity and feasibility of integrating cultural self-confidence into the process of English teaching from the perspectives of teachers, students and course set-up systems. Only when both teachers and students have strong cultural self-confidence, can college English teaching play a better role in talents cultivation, and thus students can truly get proper and effective communication skills and abilities to inherit and spread Chinese culture, so as to meet the needs for future development and foreign exchanges.

### 1. Introduction

In 2017, the Ministry of Education in Guide to College English Teaching pointed out that college English teaching was one part of humanistic education in universities and colleges, with both instrumental and humanistic characteristics. On one hand, the instrumentality of college English teaching refers to the improvement of students' basic abilities of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating after high school, as well as their abilities of English for Special Purposes. On the other hand, the humanistic nature of college English teaching refers to the intercultural education for students to know and correctly understand the differences between different cultures. It is necessary and feasible for us to integrate cultural self-confidence into English teaching in order to better achieve this goal to realize the organic unity of instrumental and humanistic characteristics of college English teaching. Only when both teachers and students have strong cultural self-confidence can college English education play a better role in talent cultivation, and students can truly have proper and effective communication skills and abilities to inherit and spread Chinese culture, so as to meet the needs for future development and foreign exchanges.

It can be seen that today English application, intercultural communication, cognition and critical thinking of cultural differences between China and foreign countries have been paid much attention in college English teaching, and nowadays to master foreign languages and to spread Chinese culture through foreign languages have become the basic skills for almost every college student in China.

It has been a long history for us to do so. Since ancient times, China has always attached great importance to education. More than 200 years ago, Chinese people realized that lagging behind will be defeated, so they began to learn foreign languages, western cultures and their advanced technologies, in order to survive and succeed in competitions with foreign countries. In the 1980s, Chinese reform and opening up made foreign language learning more and more important. Till the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, it has become much more popular all over the country. Today, in the 21st century, most Chinese people begin English-oriented foreign language enlightenment for kids early from their preschool period. Compulsory English courses are also offered in most elementary schools, and the learning of English will last until the university or work stage, or even longer. It can be seen that in China, it's really a long time to learn English, almost throughout the whole stage of a children's education. Actually, learning English can improve the ability of intercultural

communication, can lead to the understanding of the world, and can help to better know one's own and his competitors.

But at the same time, it is worth noting that every language and its culture are interdependent and inseparable. When learning a foreign language for a long time, people will unconsciously feel, learn and absorb the foreign culture which this kind of language carry. For example, in order to create an environment for children to learn English, now in many English training schools, children are required to sing English songs, play English games, celebrate English festivals. Foreign cultures are constantly impacting our own culture. In this process, if students of different ages do not have or form a firm cultural self-confidence, more or less they will be affected negatively by foreign cultures——causing negative attitudes towards their own culture, blind worship of foreign cultures, studying abroad fever, or even more terrible situations, all of which is contrary to the original aims of foreign language teaching.

Therefore, teachers should pay much more attention to the integration of English teaching and cultural self-confidence in the relatively long process of English learning, especially at the college stage when students' outlook on life, world and values are coming into being and after which most students will begin to work and deal with social affairs. Only by scientific integration of college English teaching and cultural self-confidence, can English teaching play a better and effective role in talent training so as to cultivate students' critical thinking for cultural differences and helping them set up correct consciousness of national image.

## **2. Integration of Cultural Self-confidence and College English Teaching**

As we all know, the important time for a person to form his three outlooks is just at the university stage, which is also an important turning point for college students' evolution from school to society. Thus college English teaching has an obvious influence on the formation of students' three outlooks. So it is worth consideration how to ensure Chinese students' cultural self-confidence when developing their abilities for English application and intercultural communication, and making them learn and understand the world culture. This is a question, and also a challenge for college English teaching.

### **2.1 From the Perspective of Teachers**

The main way in China for students to learn English is classroom teaching. In college English classes, teachers are actually like porters of different cultures. English classes are offered not only for the teaching and learning of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, but also for students' abilities to communicate, to understand and to think from different perspectives. And here the new perspective is not endowed by their mother language, but a foreign one. Moreover, the ability to communicate mentioned above also means a two-way model. Today in such an era of global information, any communication should be bilateral. In English classes, students should learn both English culture and how to express the essence of native culture in English.

First of all, teachers need to make students realize that in the classroom while using English to talk with the world, understand the world and enrich knowledge, they should also learn how to actively and effectively spread the excellent Chinese culture to the world in English, so as to set up and maintain a good image of the country. There is no contradiction between English teaching and Chinese traditional culture. Instead, the introduction of Chinese traditional culture can further optimize the cultivation effect of English teaching. In the classroom, teachers guide students to learn English skills, to understand western cultures; and at the same time pay attention to the introduction of Chinese traditional culture and make the appropriate cultural comparison, which can not only promote students' learning and understanding of their own culture, further correct and improve students' outlooks on life, world and values, but also make students gradually form rational critical thinking competence. This way of thinking can make students know how to maintain and spread Chinese culture, and how to correctly understand and evaluate other countries' culture. Learn from the good parts of it and discard its bad ones. Take a proper attitude towards cultural differences——do

not feel ashamed of or boast about it. In the whole process of English learning and communicating, try to form and show a firm national cultural self-confidence in order to make full use of English.

Secondly, in English classes, teachers should be carefully and seriously selecting teaching materials. For example, TV talk shows between Chinese and American hosts, one of the hottest events of this year, is a perfect choice. Teachers can analyze the dialogue text repeatedly, and make students to carry out class discussions, researches and studies. The two hosts, to a certain extent, represent different national images. Their communication is bidirectional, and they both use particular words, which convey a large amount of information. In the show, the main audience are Chinese and American people, and because of their different cultural backgrounds, they might have different understanding facing the same question. Such kind of cognitive differences do exist. So when analyzing the comments by the audience from the network, students should have a dialectical thinking—not blindly follow, deny, or even quarrel with each other. Moreover as for their different conversation skills, students should also dialectically treat and learn.

For example, the American host, Tracy, particularly emphasized Chinese host, Liu Xin's political identity when making an introduction at the very beginning of their conversation. It's not hard to find that she aimed to set a filter to disturb American audience, in order to affect their approval of Liu xin's words. That is to say, Tracy wanted help American audience to set up a frame for their three outlooks so as to prevent them from understanding of what Liu Xin was saying. In spite of Ms. Liu's timely responses and corrections to her own identity, the frame did work. This is only a diplomatic skill, and students should moderately analyze and understand it. No extreme praise or criticism. For another example, western festivals are also good materials for English teaching. Teachers can compare Christmas in the west with Chinese New Year, telling students that two festivals are of the same importance in their own countries when families will get together. Besides, teachers can talk about how to express China's lunar festivals in English. In this way, students can broaden their cultural perspectives and strengthen understanding of their own culture and self-confidence.

Generally speaking, English teaching contents do have an impact on students' consciousness. Teachers should attach importance to teaching material selection. Try to choose more thoughtful, inspiring and educational resources, and eliminate unhealthy ones, which may have negative influence on students' three outlooks.

Meanwhile, teachers are those who devote themselves to transmitting wisdom, imparting knowledge and resolving doubts, so they should set examples for students—— strengthen their own political consciousness, actively show their own cultural self-confidence in the classroom and spread their own language and culture. And then through their personalities, teachers can positively infect students, inspire students and drive students. In a word, no matter where they are, in daily life or at work, teachers should reinforce basic English skills, strengthen traditional culture learning, and make clear their responsibilities and missions as well.

## **2.2 From the Perspective of Students**

First of all, college students are the inheritors and promoters of Chinese splendid culture. In the process of learning English, students should spontaneously establish their cultural self-confidence, have firm belief, and dialectically regard and analyze western cultures through the comparison between Chinese and western language cultures, so as to assist their English learning. Be brave to face cultural differences and try to make themselves understood by foreigners in communication.

Secondly, there are so many English learning methods and resources currently, such as books, e-books, the Internet, television, media and so on. Students should correctly understand and choose these resources and actively consult with teachers and classmates in order to keep far away from incorrect ideas and information and to prevent deviation from their own belief. Students should also actively strengthen their study of traditional Chinese culture, pay close attention to current affairs, and recognize the world situation and the power of China so as to naturally set up a sense of cultural self-confidence.

Moreover, in the process, students should not only know the importance of English as the world's lingua-franca, but also realize that Chinese, as the language with the largest number of speakers, has been raised by the United States and other countries to the level of national security strategy.

To sum up, in the process of learning English, students should learn to correctly treat the characteristics of foreign cultures, and choose excellent parts to learn. Do not reject and be hostile to other cultures, and do not boast about and follow them blindly. Only with firm cultural self-confidence, students can shoulder the responsibility of inheriting and spreading Chinese culture, and letting China be known by the whole world.

### **2.3 From the Course Setup Systems**

College English courses have been widely offered in Chinese colleges and universities. Colleges and universities usually set up English courses according to their actual conditions and "Course Requirements", consisting of compulsory courses and elective courses, giving students enough hours and credits for English learning. No matter how English courses are set, it should be made clear that English is a tool and also has a humanistic function. It can be combined with many other courses and benefit each other. Therefore, it is approachable and beneficial to offer courses such as Traditional Chinese Culture, English Classics Reading, Comparison between Chinese and Western Cultures, Translation of Chinese and Western Cultures. Or integrate proper contents of these courses into college English teaching. By this way, students can improve both English and their own language, and gradually form a sense of cultural self-confidence in the process of learning a foreign language.

### **3. Conclusion**

College English teaching is not only a language teaching, but also a two-way cultural exchange. In a new era of global information, with the coming of western cultures, college English teaching must undertake the tasks——inheritance and output of native culture, and guidance and input of foreign cultures as well. Only by integrating cultural self-confidence with English teaching and by the contrast between Chinese culture and western cultures, can we effectively cultivate students to set up correct cultural values and firm their own cultural self-confidence. It is necessary to fulfil the integration of college English teaching and cultural self-confidence, to guide students to strengthen their understanding of the essence of Chinese culture, to treat foreign cultures dialectically and learn from the essence and discard the dross. English teaching should focus on teaching and guiding students to be confident in their own culture, and have the courage to show the excellent parts of it to the world. To let China go to the world and let China be known by the world, that is the real task that college English teaching should take on.

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