

How to Integrate Chinese Traditional Culture with High School English Teaching under the Background of NECS

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Abstract

The significance of cultural awareness and the intimacy between culture and language call for the integration between Chinese traditional culture and English teaching. To know the current situation of Chinese traditional culture in high school English teaching, this thesis conducts a survey from three aspects: teachers' ability in Chinese traditional culture, teachers' attitude and teaching practice. The data shows that (1) in terms of teachers' ability in Chinese traditional culture, high school English teachers have a low ability in Chinese traditional culture; (2) in terms of teachers' attitude, teachers aware of the significance of Chinese traditional culture, but they don't get the role that English course plays in the teaching of Chinese traditional culture; (3) in terms of teaching practice, the teaching content, textbooks, homework and assessment seldom cover Chinese traditional culture.

Keywords

NECS; Cultural Awareness; High School English Teaching; Teaching of Chinese Traditional Culture.

1. Introduction

English key competence, a core in English course, consists of language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability [1]. The four components are complementary and interconnected. Therefore, English teachers in high schools should pay equal attention to them. However, in reality, cultural awareness is ignored by many teachers. Apart from that, some teachers misunderstand the cultivation of cultural awareness. They regard that the cultivation of cultural awareness is just about the western culture. NECS has explicitly explained that cultural awareness refers to the understanding of both Chinese and other cultures, and the recognition to excellent culture.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Culture and Language Teaching

Scholars of Britain and United States began to talk about the relationship between culture and language teaching in 1980s. Before that, linguistics put considerable emphasis on structuralism and generative grammar and word meaning, pragmatics and culture received little attention [2]. Lin Ruchang discussed the relationship between language and culture, and then claim that foreign language teaching should take the structural hierarchy of language, the cultural level of language and the pragmatic level of language into consideration [3]. This has moved the teaching and research in cross-culture communication to a new level, but a new problem ensued. Scholars all focused on the cultural of the foreign language in both teaching and research. The emphasis on the culture of the target language is beyond reproach, but the general neglect of the culture teaching of the native language will lead to a superficial conclusion: cultural education in foreign language education refers to the introduction of the

culture of the target language. Actually, the cultural education in foreign language teaching should emphasize both target language culture and native language culture [4].

2.2. Aphasia of Chinese Culture in High School English Teaching

The term “aphasia of Chinese culture” was first proposed by Cong Cong, which refers to the phenomenon that Chinese learners with English abilities and Chinese culture can’t express Chinese traditional culture correctly and naturally when they are in an English environment[5]. In 2009, Zhang Liyue made a relevant research which applied a quiz and questionnaire, the results of which show that students in high school have very terrible aphasia of Chinese culture. She also found some factors contributing to the situation, such as the disadvantages in classroom teaching, textbooks, assessment and resources about Chinese traditional culture[6]. Wu Peipei explored the causes of high school students’ cultural aphasia from the perspective of high school English teachers. The research data showed that high school English teachers’ own cultural level would affect students’ ability to express Chinese cultural English, and based on the research results, she put forward suggestions from the four aspects -- education administration, teachers, schools and students[7].

3. Current Situation of Chinese Traditional Culture Teaching in High School English Teaching

3.1. Research Design

3.1.1. Present Study

- 1) What is the traditional Chinese culture ability of high school English teachers?
- 2) How do high school English teachers treat traditional culture and the teaching of traditional culture?
- 3) What is the practice of traditional Chinese culture teaching in high school English teaching like?

3.1.2. Participants

The participants are 16 high school English teachers in Chongqing, Hechuan. There are 8 from grade 1, 6 from grade 2 and 2 from grade 3. A total of 16 questionnaires were sent out, 16 were recovered and 16 were effective, with a recovery rate of 100% and an effective rate of 100%. Basic information of the sample is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Basic information of the sample

Variable	Sample characteristics	Number	Percentage
Grade	Grade 1	8	50%
	Grade 2	6	37.5%
	Grade 3	2	12.5%

3.1.3. Methodology

According to the research needs, this study mainly adopts literature survey and questionnaire survey. Previous research design and research results lay a foundation for the writing of this paper. Questionnaire survey was used to understand the current situation of traditional Chinese culture teaching in high school English classrooms, and SPSS26.0 was used to process and analyze the data.

3.2. Questionnaire Development and Reliability Analysis

3.2.1. Questionnaire Development

The author adapted the questionnaire by Xu Xiaoqing [8]. The questionnaire has 14 multiple questions in total. Each item has five options--completely disagree, disagree, kind of agree, agree, and fully agree.

It applies Likert scale method and covers three aspects:(1) the teachers' ability in Chinese traditional culture; (2) teachers' attitude; (3) the practice of Chinese traditional culture in high school English teaching. The first aspect can be divided into teachers' knowledge on Chinese traditional culture and teachers' skills to express Chinese traditional culture. The second aspect will include teachers' attitude on Chinese traditional culture and the teaching of Chinese traditional culture. The third one can involve in the practice in teaching content, teaching method, textbooks and assessment. Table 2 has provided detailed information.

Table 2. Questionnaire distribution

Variable	Sub-variable	Question number
Teachers' ability on Chinese traditional culture	knowledge	Q1
	skill	Q10
Teachers' attitude	Teachers' attitude on Chinese traditional culture	Q3, Q8
	Teachers' attitude on the teaching of Chinese traditional culture	Q5, Q6, Q7, Q9
Practice	Teaching content	Q2, Q4
	Teaching method	Q14
	Textbook	Q13
	Homework	Q11
	Assessment	Q12

3.2.2. Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's α coefficient of internal consistency validity was used as the reliability index of the questionnaire survey. Cronbach alpha coefficient is between 0.00 and 1.00. The higher the coefficient, the stronger the internal consistency of the scale and the more reliable the measured results. It is generally accepted that the acceptable reliability coefficient should not be lower than 0.70 [9]. The coefficient of this survey is 0.764, which is acceptable.

3.3. Data Analysis

3.3.1. Teachers' Ability on Chinese Traditional Culture

Q1 "You know Chinese traditional culture very well" and Q10 "You can introduce Chinese traditional culture fluently in English" are set for knowing the teachers' ability on Chinese traditional culture. For Q1, there were 5 teachers who chose "disagree", 8 teachers who chose "somewhat agree", 3 teachers who chose "agree" and 0 teachers who chose "fully agree". The mean value is 2.88, which is between "disagree" and "agree", indicating that high school English teachers' knowledge of traditional culture is insufficient. In Q2, mean value of this item is 2.50, and lower than Q1, indicating that high school English teachers' Chinese traditional cultural skills are not high, and inferior to knowledge.

3.3.2. Teachers' Attitude

Q3 "As an English teacher, it's important to know about Chinese traditional culture" and Q8 "Chinese traditional culture will help students know western culture" test teachers' attitude on Chinese traditional culture. The mean values are 4.75 and 4.56 respectively, which show that high school English teachers have fully realized the importance of Chinese traditional culture.

Q5, Q6, Q7 and Q9 are used to find out teachers' attitude on Chinese traditional culture teaching in high school English teaching. Among the results of Q5 "To learn Chinese culture, it is better to offer Chinese classes, and English is a translation tool", only 1 teacher chose "completely disagree", 2 teachers chose "disagree", and the others all had a positive attitude towards this statement. The data show that most high school English teachers believe that traditional culture teaching in English class is not as effective as Chinese class, and English is only an auxiliary tool. In Q6 "There is little knowledge of traditional culture in the exam, so teaching focuses on developing language skills", its standard deviation mounted to 1.195, which is greater than 1, indicating that most of the values in a set of data are quite different from the mean value. It shows that English teachers in ordinary high school have obvious differences in their cognition of English teaching objectives in traditional culture teaching. Q7 is "Students have fewer opportunities for cross-cultural communication, so it is not necessary to develop the ability to express Chinese culture in English in English classes." Of the responses, 11 teachers chose "completely disagree" and none chose "fully agree". The results show that ordinary high school English teachers hold a positive attitude towards the integration of traditional Chinese culture teaching in the high school English classroom. Q9 is "in the process of English teaching, teachers should cultivate students' awareness of spreading Chinese traditional culture." The mean value is mounted to 4.69, indicating that high school English teachers believe that in high school English teaching, teachers should cultivate students' awareness of spreading Chinese traditional culture to foreigners.

3.3.3. Practice

Q2 "In the course of English teaching, you supplement students with background knowledge related to Western culture" and Q4 "In the course of English teaching, you often describe the background knowledge related to Chinese culture to your students in English" are to understand the frequency of cultural teaching, and the proportion of Chinese and Western culture in high school English classroom. The mean values of the two questions are 3.94 and 3.81 respectively. Therefore, culture teaching occasionally exists in high school English classrooms, and the proportion of Western culture is greater than that of Chinese traditional culture. Q14 is "You arrange some discussions or activities involving the comparison of Chinese and Western culture in class to promote students' awareness of Chinese culture". Its mean value is 3.81, indicating that the comparison between Chinese and Western culture is a commonly used method for English teachers in cultural teaching. Q11, Q12 and Q13 respectively investigated the proportion of Chinese traditional culture in the homework, textbook and test. The mean values were all between 3.00 and 3.50, indicating that Chinese traditional culture occasionally appeared in the homework, textbook and assessment.

Through the above data, it is easy to find the following problems in the teaching of Chinese traditional culture in high school English teaching: (1) In terms of teachers' Chinese traditional cultural ability, high school English teachers have poor abilities. (2) In terms of teachers' attitude, high school English teachers fail to have a deep understanding of the role of English curriculum in traditional culture teaching. Although high school English teachers are fully aware of the importance of traditional culture and its integration into English teaching, it is generally believed that English is only a translation tool to spread Chinese traditional culture, and teaching Chinese traditional culture in English class is less effective than Chinese class. (3) In terms of teaching practice, in high school English classes, the content of traditional Chinese culture does not often appear in the teaching content, textbooks, homework and assessment.

4. Suggestions

4.1. Learning Traditional Culture Knowledge and Enhancing the English Expression Ability of Traditional Culture

Chinese traditional culture is the general term of national civilization, customs and spirits, such as the origin of traditional festivals, customs and so on. English Expression Ability of Traditional Culture refers to the ability to accurately transmit knowledge of Chinese traditional culture in English. As knowledge imparts and ability cultivators, teachers must have enough knowledge reserve and ability. However, according to the survey results, the traditional cultural ability of ordinary high school English teachers is low. In order to improve the teaching of Chinese traditional culture in high school English classroom, teachers' traditional cultural ability must be improved. Teachers should improve themselves from two aspects. Firstly, they should accumulate some Chinese traditional cultures. There are so many approaches, such as online courses, books and documentaries relevant to traditional Chinese culture. Secondly, teachers should improve their own English level. For example, they need to expand their vocabulary and learn some translation skills. Moreover, teachers should improve their cross-cultural communicative ability. Apart from learning from books and some courses, a great amount of practice matters, such as simulated training and real-life talking. A large amount of accumulation and practice help high school English teachers to improve their own cultural ability, so as to achieve a better integration of traditional culture teaching and high school English teaching.

4.2. Understanding the Nature of English Curriculum and Implement the Concept of English Curriculum

High school English curriculum emphasizes the comprehensive cultivation of language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability, with the characteristics of instrumental and humanistic integration [1]. The instrumental nature of English courses lies in that English learning helps students to master basic English knowledge and skills, which lays a foundation for further learning English and other English-related cultural knowledge. The humanism of English course refers to the formation of intercultural consciousness, the enhancement of patriotism, and the formation of correct outlook on life and values in the process of learning English. The survey results show that ordinary high school English teachers generally believe that English is only a translation tool to spread Chinese traditional culture, and teaching Chinese traditional culture in English class is less effective than Chinese class. This shows that high school English teachers only understand the instrumental nature of English courses, but fail to grasp the humanistic nature of English courses. English class is also the best place to teach Chinese traditional culture. Teachers can make students feel the extensive and profound Chinese traditional culture and enhance the spirit of patriotism through direct introduction or comparison of Chinese and Western methods. Theory is the foundation of practice. Teachers' understanding of the nature of English curriculum directly affects the practice of traditional Chinese culture teaching in English classroom. Therefore, teachers should carry out in-depth study of English curriculum standards in ordinary high school.

4.3. Attaching Importance to Chinese Traditional Culture and the Cultivation of Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness refers to the understanding of Chinese and foreign culture and the recognition of excellent culture, which is the cross-cultural cognition, attitude and behavior orientation of students in the background of globalization. Cultivation of cultural awareness helps students enhance national identity and national conditions, strengthen cultural confidence, and establish a sense of community with a shared future for mankind[1]. English

class is not only a class to develop students' language ability, but also to cultivate students' cross-cultural awareness, make students have a sense of cultural identity, promote students' patriotic feelings and the like. The survey results show that the proportion of cultural content in high school English classes is not high enough, and the proportion of traditional Chinese culture is lower than that of Western culture. Therefore, high school English teachers should increase the content about culture, among which the content about traditional Chinese culture should occupy the main position. In addition to the classroom, teachers should also attach importance to cultivate students' cultural awareness out of the classroom, such as encouraging students to watch CGTV and some English documentaries about Chinese traditional culture.

4.4. Optimizing Homework Design and Integrating into Traditional Chinese Culture

Homework is a kind of learning activity that students do in and out of class. Most of the teachers surveyed said that content about traditional Chinese culture does not come up very often. At present, English homework focuses on language knowledge and ignores language skills, and the form is simple. Combined with the new curriculum concept and based on the core quality of students, high school English homework design should pay attention to students' language application ability, pay attention to the cultivation of thinking, expand cultural connotation and independent learning ability [10]. English homework is no longer a traditional grammar and reading exercise designed to consolidate classroom language knowledge. It can also be a way for students to learn Chinese traditional culture independently. For example, with Chinese traditional festivals as the theme, teachers can divide students into several groups, each of whom assumes different roles, and jointly design a report. They need to collect information extensively to understand the origin and customs of festivals. This preparation process is the process in which students learn and develop their language ability, thinking quality, cultural awareness and learning ability.

4.5. Optimizing the Assessment Topics and Promoting the Status of Chinese Traditional Culture

Assessment is a way of testing learning results and observing students' progress. The results of the survey showed that content about traditional Chinese culture appeared only occasionally in regular high school English exams. The type and content of questions often tested are often more valued by teachers and students. Therefore, expanding the content of Chinese traditional culture in the exam can arouse the teachers and students' attention to the teaching of Chinese traditional culture, and better promote the integration of Chinese traditional culture and English teaching. Through the analysis of college entrance examination English questions, it can be found that Chinese traditional culture often appears in writing. The English test should examine students' knowledge and ability of Chinese traditional culture in listening, speaking, reading and writing, so as to improve students' cultural awareness[11]. For example, texts about Chinese traditional culture can be used in the listening and reading of the English test. The answers should be combined with the text content and students' existing knowledge of traditional culture, so as to test students' ability to extract information and their existing knowledge.

5. Conclusion

The inseparable relationship between language and culture, and emphasis on cultural awareness require high school English teaching to realize the perfect integration of traditional Chinese culture and high school English teaching. At present, there are still some problems in the teaching of traditional Chinese culture in high school English classrooms. Teachers' own

cultural ability, teaching content, teaching materials, homework and tests need to be changed in time.

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