

# Reflection on Foreign Language Teaching from the Perspective of Cultural Heritage and Transmission\*

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**Abstract**—Language is the carrier of culture. Therefore, foreign language learning involves not only the acquiring of linguistic knowledge and competence, but also the understanding of its inner cultural connotation, which is of great importance for modern China. The findings of the essay are as follows: first, embedding traditional Chinese culture in foreign language teaching is the objective requirement of national development; second, improvement in college English teaching can be carried out in aspects of taking full advantage of blended learning, stimulating learner's national consciousness, improving teacher's cultural qualities, as well as promoting positive transfer in learning process. All are beneficial for the enhancing of Chinese cultural soft power.

**Keywords**—FLT; cultural heritage; cultural transmission

## I. INTRODUCTION

Culture is the soul of a country. Language is the carrier of culture, that is, the main form of expression and means of dissemination of culture. In the process of global communication, cultural confidence and cultural identity is of great importance for every country. At present, with the increasingly rapid progress of globalization, the exchanges among countries in the world have become more and more intimate in various aspects, such as politics, economy, history and culture, to name just a few. On the one hand, this process has promoted the development of economy and the progress of civilization, but at the same time, it has also brought some negative effects. The main manifestation is the invasion of foreign cultures and its impact on native cultures. To this end, it is necessary to adhere to the traditional Chinese cultural beliefs and strengthen the pride and confidence in national culture.

What's more, since the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, China has put forward the "Going Out" policy of culture, which emphasizes the importance of telling Chinese stories and disseminating the voice of China. In particular, along with the popularity of the Belt and the Rode Initiative, more and more countries and people have welcomed and responded it enthusiastically. Therefore, it has become a necessity to inherit and spread

traditional Chinese culture and improve the Chinese cultural soft power. In other words, the competition between countries has shifted from the original military and economic fields to that of culture and talents. Language is an important carrier of cultural communication. Therefore, it has become an important issue for both teachers and scholars to explore effective ways to strengthen the cultivation of learners' humanistic literacy in College English teaching. For all the reasons mentioned above, the author takes cultural inheritance and dissemination in foreign language teaching as the research subject, and explores the necessity and effective means of cultivating comprehensive language competence and intercultural communicative ability of foreign language talents in the new era, with a view to providing some references for front-line teachers and foreign language learners.

## II. CURRENT SITUATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

At present, China is participating in more and more international affairs and assuming international obligations as a responsible country, the enthusiasm of the Chinese people for foreign language learning and communication is unprecedented, which is obviously proven by the prevalence of various kinds of cultural programs of traditional Chinese culture in TV and on Internet. However, the current situation in the field of foreign language teaching, especially in college English teaching, is not satisfying compared with that in society, to be specific, the penetration of traditional Chinese culture in classroom teaching is relatively weak. Namely, most of the teaching materials in the textbooks are English original texts. Therefore, in daily English teaching, most of the important and difficult points and contents in the textbooks taught by teachers are mainly about understanding western culture, including proverbs, customs, festivals, vocabulary and expressions besides the necessary linguistic knowledge and skills. Even if some teachers introduce the traditional Chinese culture, it is mainly with the purpose of cultural comparison and the emphasis of western aspects. Then the phenomenon of "aphasia" cannot be avoided in foreign English teaching. In addition, due to the existence of various kinds of exams, teachers mostly focus on the training of language skills and ignoring the cultural connotation of language and the function of English as a tool of Chinese cultural communication in the course of teaching. All factors

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mentioned above result in the current embarrassment of foreign language teaching in colleges. Namely, a majority of foreign language learners do not know Chinese culture thoroughly, and they are also unable to elaborate traditional Chinese culture in English.

### III. REFLECTIONS ON COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CULTURAL INHERITANCE AND TRANSMISSION

As an important component of general education in colleges and universities, foreign language education plays a realistic role and has a long-term impact on the development of learners. Foreign language education should help students establish a world outlook, enhance international awareness, strengthen their international competence and competitiveness, and grasp the basic tools of knowledge innovation, potential development and comprehensive development, so as to prepare for the opportunities and challenges in the era of globalization. Culture and belief are closely linked and inherited in the form of education. Therefore, it is an important mission of college English education to vigorously implement the strategy of cultural power

#### *A. Traditional Chinese Culture Should Be Gradually Added to College English Textbooks*

Based on thorough study, the author finds that the current English textbooks for introducing Chinese traditional culture are mainly included in the catalogue and learning schedule for English majors. What's more, many of them are not compulsory courses as opposed to the courses related with western culture, such as English Literature, American Literature, An Introduction to the UK and USA, to name just a few. There are few contents related to traditional Chinese culture, philosophy, manners and customs, and other aspects. Now, questions in the CET-4 have been reformed, that is, the original sentence translation has been changed into paragraph translation, to be specific, the students are required to translate one Chinese paragraph into English, whose subject involves all aspects of Chinese society, politics, economy and culture. This reform is put forward with the purpose of cultivation of cross-cultural competence and cultural self-confidence in College English teaching. It is a meaningful and valuable attempt. However, College English teaching has not yet been adjusted and changed in time. In other words, the foreign language teaching cannot keep pace with the change of the examination and the requirement of society. Therefore, it is of great necessity to strengthen the involvement of Chinese culture in the content of textbooks and classroom teaching.

#### *B. Strengthening the Integration of Online Course and Classroom Teaching*

With the popularity of flip classes and online courses in China, more and more learners choose to improve themselves through online courses or in the form of blending learning. It is a positive and beneficial attempt to produce and promote excellent online English courses which introduce traditional Chinese culture as a supplement to

college English classroom teaching. These courses should be designed and produced with the core of Chinese culture and based on the current knowledge structure of college foreign language learners and their practical needs of communication. Through various activities and teaching designs, such as explanations, tests, assignments, explorations, group discussions, so on and so forth; English learners can master both basic language skills and deepen their understanding of traditional Chinese culture. All these activities can enhance college students' sense of cultural identity and self-confidence, and prepare them for the inheritance and dissemination of traditional Chinese culture.

#### *C. Developing Foreign Language Learners' National Consciousness and Stimulating Their Subjective Motivation to Learn and Explore Traditional Chinese Culture*

For foreign language learners in the stage of colleges and universities, their physical and mental development has been mature, and their visions for the world, life, as well as value have all been formed. Therefore, in the process of foreign language teaching, College English teachers should not only pay attention to the cultivation of learners' linguistic knowledge and skills, but also to be particularly concerned with their national consciousness and cultural awareness. At the same time, the setting of college English curriculum should not only aim at mastering language knowledge and skills, but also pay attention to the simultaneous cultivation and internalization of learners' humanistic quality, by means of which they can finally enhance their national cultural pride and confidence. What's more, when it comes to the evaluation of teaching and learning effect, the emphasis on the process evaluation and comprehensive aspects of leaning should be laid. To be specific, it will be necessary to not only examine the learners' ability of expressing and using English language (the linguistic knowledge and competence), but also their ability of identifying the value of Chinese culture and explaining Chinese elements in a fluent and native manner. With the help of evaluation both on grades and achievement, learners should attach great importance to understanding and mastering Chinese culture.

#### *D. Strengthening Foreign Language Teachers' Cultural Quality and Promoting the Positive Transfer in Learning Process*

In China, most foreign language teachers mostly take linguistics, British culture, American culture, translation, as their majors. Long-term exposure to English language and foreign cultures makes them lack of in-depth understanding of traditional Chinese culture. In order to cultivate learners' cultural self-confidence and cultural identity, first of all, foreign language teachers should strengthen their own understanding and recognition of Chinese culture and enhance their cultural sensitivity and cultural self-confidence of mother tongue, so that they can be more skilled in the teaching process. What's more, from the perspective of language teaching theory, there are both positive and negative transfer in the process of languages learning with different cultural backgrounds. The infiltration of Chinese

culture in College English classroom teaching can not only avoid learners' lack of mother tongue culture, but also effectively carry out positive cultural transfer and cultural comparison. In this way, it will be significant to truly strengthen the understanding and integration of different cultures, and in return learners can truly become international and compound talents.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Cultural inheritance and dissemination is a major mission faced by both the Chinese foreign language educators and learners in the new era. This is not only the inevitable trend of the development of college English teaching, but also the objective requirement of the current situation and development of China in international communication and globalization. In order to tell Chinese stories and promote Chinese cultural soft power, it will be the necessity to strengthen the identification and dissemination of cultural values of mother tongue and enhance learners' cultural self-confidence, which is the only choice for Chinese culture to "go out".

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