

Research on Chinese Tea Culture Teaching from the Perspective of International Education of Chinese Language

Jie Bai

Xi'an Peihua University,
Humanities School
Xi'an, China
e-mail: 763791179@qq.com

Abstract—This paper discusses the current situation of Chinese tea culture in teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL) and points out that it is of great significance to introduce tea culture teaching under the background of global "Chinese Popular", and finally puts forward some teaching strategies to bring inspiration for Chinese tea culture teaching.

Keywords-International Education of Chinese Language ; Chinese Tea Culture ; Teaching Strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of globalization, China's language and culture has got more and more attention from the world. More and more foreign students come to China to learn Chinese and learn about Chinese culture and history, while the tea culture that represents the core side of Chinese traditional culture, is also one of the things they are eager to learn. This paper discusses the current situation of Chinese tea culture teaching at the present stage and points out that it is of great significance to introduce tea culture teaching under the background of global "Chinese Popular", and finally puts forward three teaching strategies to bring inspiration for Chinese tea culture teaching.

II. CHINESE TEA CULTURE AND CHINESE TEA CULTURE TEACHING

A. Chinese Tea Culture

There are hundreds of the definitions of culture, among which there is a view: it is created by the human, takes the material as the carrier and embodies a certain way of life with both practical and cultural values and such culture is called the "material culture". Chinese tea culture" is a typical "material culture".

Tea originally appeared in the form of material, but in China, it has been injected into the profound and rich cultural connotation in different social and historical period. Tea is a combination of many phenomena, including tea, tea ceremony, tea etiquette, the spirit of tea and tea-related cultural phenomenon, and it is the epitome of essence of the traditional Chinese culture.

B. Chinese Tea Culture Teaching

In May 2014, the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) has promulgated the "International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education (Revised Edition)" (hereinafter referred to as the "Syllabus"), which refers to the "cultural awareness": "language has a rich cultural connotation. Teachers should gradually expand the content and scope of culture and knowledge according to the students' age characteristics and cognitive ability, and help students to broaden their horizons so that learners can understand the status of Chinese culture in world multiculturalism and its contribution to world culture." [1] In addition, the "Syllabus" has also made a specific request on themes and tasks of cultural teaching, among which the Chinese tea culture is one of the important themes.

Foreign students who come to China to learn the Chinese language knowledge also have a strong interest in Chinese culture. Therefore, culture should be an important teaching content in TCFL. However, the reality is that there are a large proportion of language courses in TCFL, which greatly reduces the teaching space of cultural courses. If students do not have the guidance of teachers and they only use their spare time to learn relevant culture and knowledge, the learning effect is certainly not satisfactory.

Therefore, we should strengthen the teaching of cultural courses, such as Chinese calligraphy, Chinese garden, Chinese architectural art, Chinese opera, paper cutting, Tai Chi, folklore and other courses, which is the increasingly sophisticated development of International Education of Chinese Language. Among them, the offered Chinese tea culture courses could help students learn tea culture, which not only enriches the curriculum resources, but also strengthens the students' knowledge reserves on Chinese traditional culture, thus fundamentally promoting their Chinese learning.

III. VALUE OF CHINESE TEA CULTURE TEACHING

A. Cultivate students' cultural awareness

The "cultural awareness" mentioned in the "Syllabus" includes cultural knowledge, cultural understanding, cross-cultural awareness and international vision. These four aspects complement one another: cultural knowledge is the foundation to enhance the understanding of culture, while the

understanding and acceptance is the process of cross-cultural communication.

Chinese tea culture has a long history and its core is the fusion of thoughts from Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism. The unique Western tea culture originated in China, which embodies the spiritual connotation of Western culture. From this point of view, tea culture should be a meeting of Chinese culture and Western culture. The introduction of the teaching of tea culture not only can help students find the commonality in the cultural exchange between China and the West, but also can help them discover the difference between Chinese and western tea culture in the comparison and have a profound understanding of the essence of traditional Chinese culture, and thus quickly adapting to the target-language culture, which is an important way to cultivate students' cross-cultural communication ability. When students have a strong ability of intercultural communication, they will be able to re-examine the differences between Chinese and Western cultures in a broader perspective, understand the differences between Chinese and Western cultures and the contribution of Chinese culture to world culture with a more inclusive mind. Such an international vision is just the driving force to stimulate students to learn Chinese.

B. Help students understand Chinese social-historical culture

Chinese people can not live without tea in their daily life. From the evolution of tea culture we can peep the trajectory of Chinese society. In this way, we can inspire students' love for Chinese social-historical culture.

During the western Jin and eastern Jin dynasties as well as the Northern and Southern Dynasties in Chinese history, the System of Dominant Family had been formed and well developed and people at that time had all taken the wealth flaunt as success. In order to change this social morality, some far-sighted people had put forward the policy to "encourage honesty" with tea. So, there is the story about Lu Na and Huan Wen who have replaced alcohol with tea in the banquet. In the flourishing period of the Tang Dynasty, the Imperial Examination is very strict, and whenever there are metropolitan examinations, the candidates trapped in the exam halls were always mentally and physically exhausted. So, the imperial court ordained that the candidates could have some tea and fruits in the exam halls. The tea sent to the exam halls is called "Goldenrod", which is used to liven up and inspire their flow of thoughts and ideas in writing. With the rise of citizen stratum in the Song Dynasty, drinking-tea had become a tool for people to enhance their friendship and expand social networks. In Beijing during the Qing Dynasty, the teahouses were all over the city, forming a special "teahouse culture". The famous play called the Teahouse written by a famous Chinese writer Lao She reflects one side of the tea culture in Beijing at that time.

IV. TEACHING STRATEGIES

A. Combination of culture teaching and language teaching

Culture teaching must serve the needs of language teaching, which is determined by the nature of TCFL.[2] While teaching, we need to combine language teaching and culture teaching. For example, we can add the interpretation of the terminology associated with tea, such as "putting tea into tea pot", "tea competition", "drinking tea" and so on. Students can not only learn vocabulary knowledge, but also can understand sufficient cultural background knowledge.

It should be noted that: the culture teaching should be compatible with the stage of language teaching. For example, for junior and intermediate students, more relevant lexical or proverb can be introduced, and for high-level students, it is necessary to set up a tea culture course. In short, we should pay attention to the principle of teaching from the easy to the difficult and complicated step by step.

B. Comparative analysis

Comparative analysis is an analytical method to make a synchronic comparison among two or more language systems one by one, including phonetics, vocabulary, grammar and other parts so as to reveal their similarities and differences.[3] If teachers make a comparison between the target-language culture and native-language culture of foreign students and try to explore the differences between the two cultures, they can accurately predict the teaching difficulties and make full preparations for teaching these difficulties.

1) The comparison on the basic meaning

- Taking the teaching of "Chinese tea culture" as an example, we should start with the comparison on the basic meaning of tea words in Chinese and foreign languages. Taking Chinese and English as an example, The "tea" in Chinese mainly has the following meaning: ① evergreen shrub with oval-shaped leaves ; ② tea-water; ③ name of tea drinks; ④ tea tree. The "tea" in English mainly has the following meaning: ① tea leaves; ② tea tree; ③ tea for drink; ④ drinks without tea leaves; ⑤ tea party. You can see that the Chinese "tea" and the English "tea" basically have the same meaning. But in English, many of the tea-related idioms and proverbs reflect the British unique way of thinking. For example, "One's cup of tea" means the most interesting thing." A storm in the tea cup" referred to as "makes a fuss". Take tea with somebody" means a meeting with someone on a narrow path.

2) The comparison on the tea culture from the non-verbal communication.

- In addition, we can also make a comparison between Chinese and British tea culture from the non-verbal communication. China and Britain are the two countries in the world drinking tea most. Although the tea culture of the two countries is distinctive, they

still have some similarities. Both countries have two ways of tea cooking, such as "light drinking" and "drinking with condiments", and the difference is mainly reflected in the drinking place, tea set, tea ware, tea etiquette, teaism and cultural influence. As for the "teaism", we can summarize the essence of Chinese tea ceremony as "Serenity", "Simplicity" and "Decency". "Serenity" refers to meditation. Tea can make people calm and keep away from chaos and bothers, which is the core of Zen philosophy. "Simplicity" refers to the pursuit of spiritual comfort. "Decency" refers to the realm of elegance achieved through the physical and mental training and cultivation. For the Chinese people, drinking tea is a way of leisure and even is a spiritual emotional sustenance. In the West, tea is just a communication tool that lacks philosophical thinking. Tea is more of a symbol of elegant quality of life.

C. Complementary teaching in and out of class

Tea culture teaching has a rich extracurricular teaching environment, and these resources can be combined with the resources in class, thus establishing a complementary language and culture teaching model.

1) *Resources in class.* For example, in teaching of cultural course - Chapter 19 "Tea & Drinking-Tea" of "Chinese Culture", teachers can organize students to compare Chinese and Western tea culture in the class. For extracurricular activities, teachers could assign students to watch some films, such as "The Tea Road", "Tea", "King Tea Storm" and so on. These resources could broaden the horizons of students and strengthen their understanding of the knowledge in the class, which is undoubtedly a very good extracurricular teaching resource.

2) *In addition, teachers can also make some assignments related to tea culture and ask the students to finish self-study of the knowledge unspecified in class.* Students can find some idioms, folk adages, proverbs and riddles related to tea. Teachers can lead the students to visit the teahouses, tea garden, tea factory, tea museum and other places for learning and organize some of the tea-culture activities, such as tea-songs singing, tea dance and so on. Besides, It is also a good way to learn Chinese tea culture via tea-based recitation and presentation.

D. Strengthening Research on Tea Culture Teaching

As an important carrier of traditional Chinese culture, tea culture is one of the Chinese cultures that have distinct Chinese characteristics, which is essential to the teaching of TCFL. The excellent Chinese traditional culture embodied in the tea culture is worthy of our active promotion. However, the studies of tea culture in China mostly involve a few areas such as the history of Chinese tea and tea art, and the research of each field is independent of each other, let alone the studies performed from the perspective of cross-cultural communication. Tea culture is a representative Chinese culture, which should be taken seriously in the process of

teaching Chinese to Chinese learners, but in reality, the studies of tea culture teaching in TCFL are quite few. Therefore, the tea culture teaching has not been highly valued in TCFL.

We must strengthen the research on the tea culture teaching in TCFL and cross-cultural communication. To my mind, I think it should be studied by TCFL teachers with rich experience in culture teaching. First, we should carry out the preliminary research, combine current situation of the tea culture learning in major Chinese language schools and assimilate some feasible solutions to develop a complete and detailed teaching programs, and to create the content for foreign learners to learn the tea culture according to the learners in different stages. In addition, we shall develop different teaching programs according to different countries with different cultural backgrounds so that they are more acceptable to learners. Among all Chinese traditional cultures, If the tea culture teaching can get more attention, it can not only enhance the interest of foreign learners to learn Chinese culture, but also let learners understand the Chinese people's humanistic thoughts. Behind the tea culture, the Chinese people always pursue a kind of spiritual character, since the unique Chinese way of thinking could be the extended part of the tea culture.

E. Focus on the Standardization and Interestingness of Textbook Compilation

Most foreign Chinese learners have a certain interest in Chinese traditional culture, and they hope to learn more about Chinese by studying traditional Chinese culture. In the preparation of cultural materials, we can boldly add some new elements. It is a better way to teach knowledge with illustrations. Besides, the pictures could give the students a deeper impression, thus helping students to long-term memory.

The materials for culture teaching in TCFL shall include the Chinese people's common sense of culture, and this common sense must also be close to life, so the contents of the textbook should be easy to understand without any uncommon cultures that most Chinese people even do not understand which must be seriously standardized. On the basis of the standardization, we shall add some idealized colors to these common senses, which will be more attractive to the students. For example, the common ads on the tea, in which the advertising is beautifully produced, usually can directly show the characteristics of tea, so we can add some screen shots of these ads to the textbooks combined with advertising videos found by teachers in the teaching process, which is similar to the comic strip, to attract students' attention and further enhance the student's memory. The combination of standardization and interestingness not only makes the teaching objectives more clear, but also improves the enthusiasm of the learners.

F. Seek Common Ground and Reserve Differences

Each country's national culture has its own unique feature and Chinese learners always learn Chinese under the contrast between their own culture and the contrast the traditional Chinese culture, which then will stimulate their interests in

learning Chinese. For example, in the introduction of Chinese tea culture, teachers can also introduce the British afternoon tea for the comparative teaching, which will improve the enthusiasm of the classroom learners. British people and Chinese people all like tea, which is the cultural similarities between the two, but why the British prefer the black tea that is usually as the afternoon tea. And they often add milk and sugar into the tea when they drink tea, with the biscuits, desserts and other snacks ready together. That is because the British afternoon tea is a supplement. The British people will eat these things in advance and then have dinner at eight or nine pm. The afternoon tea is also popular with the royal family, which is created for the upper society to stave off boredom. Over time, some people who pursue high quality of life have to emulate, which then become a symbol of one's identity and an elegant, noble way of life, and finally evolved into a national habit. These specific contents added to the teaching materials coupled with the interaction between TCFL teachers and students through this contrastive teaching could stimulate the enthusiasm of students to learn Chinese and result in a good teaching effect. Such a way of cultural teaching not only needs the teacher's knowledge and guidance, but also needs the detailed research performed by the Chinese learning textbook writers. We shall seek some differences and similarities between the Chinese traditional culture and other cultures and select some thought-provoking

cultural points, so as to provide support for TCFL teachers in their better teaching.

V. CONCLUSION

Chinese tea culture is an important subject of culture courses in TCFL. It can cultivate students' "cultural awareness" and also has the similarity with traditional Chinese culture, so it is also an effective way to understand the evolution of Chinese society for thousands of years. On this basis, the paper explores several effective teaching methods. It should be noted that these teaching skills are not isolated, so we should make combine specific teaching content, teaching objects and teaching environment combined with each other and teach students in accordance of their aptitude so as to achieve the best teaching results.

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