

An Exploration of Inheriting Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture in English Textbooks for Arts Colleges

---Taking the *New Journey Art College English* As an Example

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Abstract

Culture is the important force in the national survival and development. The Chinese excellent traditional culture is the root of the Chinese nation spirit and how to develop Chinese excellent traditional culture inheritance through national education has always been the heat issue to be discussed nowadays. After giving the analysis of current condition of English teaching, the paper is focused on the art college English teaching, introduces the English textbook, *The New Journey Art College English*, which covers 7 different themes of art, music, dance, film, drama, costume and architecture, aiming to help students learn, understand and love traditional excellent culture, inherit and innovate Chinese excellent traditional culture from four aspects, art history, art creation, art and life, and art and society. At the same time, suggestions are put forward on how to make full use of the characteristics of teaching materials in the teaching process to promote the inheritance, innovation and development of traditional Chinese excellent culture.

Keywords: Traditional Chinese Culture; Inheritance; English teaching

1.Introduction

Culture is the important force in the national survival and development. The Chinese excellent traditional culture has been regarded as the root and the soul of the Chinese nation. At the 18th Chinese communist Party congress, the CPC Central Committee also has attached great importance to the Chinese excellent traditional culture from the aspect of the depth of the deepest spiritual pursuit of the Chinese nation, and has always taking great weight of excellent traditional culture from the aspect of the national strategies, emphasizing the importance of promoting the creative transformation and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture(He lianzheng, 2020, p.14). The guidelines on the implementation of the Project of Inheriting and Developing China's Excellent Traditional Culture (2019) proposed that the inheritance and development of China's excellent traditional culture should be carried out throughout national education.Taking traditional Chinese excellent culture education as an important task of cultural inheritance and development, as well as putting forward the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese excellent traditional culture, is the new mission of China's excellent traditional culture education in the new era.

At the same time, the guidance outline for ideological and political construction of college curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education(Zhang Hong, 2020, p.43) emphasizes that specialized courses for the art

major students should insist on aesthetic education, carrying forward the spirit of the Chinese aesthetic education actively, guiding the students consciously to inherit and spread the Chinese excellent traditional culture, improving the students' aesthetic and cultural accomplishment, enhancing the students' self-confidence. All these mentioned is not only the guidelines for the art colleges and universities in the English teaching, but also is the great challenge for the construction of English teaching materials to integrate the excellent traditional Chinese culture in the whole teaching process.

2.An Analysis of the Current Condition of English Teaching Materials in Art Colleges

Teaching material is the text giving an account of the subject contents systematically based on the curriculum standard, which is the embodiment of the teaching content, not only the media for pushing forward the teaching process, but also the object of teaching process. The present form of the teaching material is first scientific, and second conformed to the psychological law of development and cognitive characteristics of the students. Especially in accordance with the instructions from the Ministry of Education (2020) to promote Chinese excellent traditional culture and other major themes into the curriculum textbooks, and organic integration into the excellent traditional Chinese culture as one of the primary requirements of textbook development and revision, the teaching material is also an important carrier of systematic education of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

At present, extensive and beneficial attempts have been made in teaching materials for the general education system. However, as the public basic courses for the non-major students in art colleges, whether they are offered for four consecutive semesters in the first and second grades of the undergraduate stage, or two semesters in the graduate stage, both have the characteristics of wide audience and long duration. Therefore, it is urgent to strengthen the construction of the featured English textbooks in art colleges.

At the same time, generally, all the Chinese students in art colleges have weak English foundation, and are much more extrovert. Then how should we take advantages of the artistic appeal and the stronger expressive power of art in our English teaching so as to implement the inheritance, innovation and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture? Teaching material construction has undoubtedly become the starting point and also the key point to answer the mentioned question above. However, the current English teaching material obviously cannot meet our needs to the unique humanistic and instrumental serving inheritance, innovation and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture, which is embodied in the following two aspects.

(1)The contents of the textbooks without good consideration about the excellent traditional Chinese culture

The contents of the textbooks are mostly selected from the western classic works, which promote western moral values, paying attention to western culture and praise western civilization, rather than taking great concern or good attention to traditional Chinese culture to our Chinese students. In the long run, some Chinese students will gradually develop the worship to the western culture, the western civilization and even the Western figures. Consequently, the students may become ignore or indifference to our glorious traditional Chinese culture with a longer history. Forgetting our history means betray, as we know.

(2)The contents of teaching materials without good consideration about the distinguished features of students in art colleges

The current textbooks mostly attach importance to the English level and reading taste of students from different majors, covering arts, science, industry, commerce, economics and management and other major categories, but pay less attention to some extent to a minority of the students whose major is music, sports, clothing, dance, opera, film and something like that. Especially they show less concern about the integration of the excellent traditional Chinese culture in English teaching to meet with the students' different needs resulting from their different English level, their different personality, their different major and their different career development. It is an urgent problem for us to solve in the new era.

3. What to Do Next to Meet with the New Needs to English Textbooks in Art Colleges

3.1 Clearly defining the concept of excellent traditional Chinese culture

From the perspective of culturology, culture can be viewed from both the narrow sense and the broad sense. The former refers to the mentality culture composed of values, aesthetic tastes and thinking modes bred in human social practice and conscious activities, namely the implicit culture. The latter includes the whole content of human society and historical life, including physical culture, system culture and behavior culture, which is the explicit culture (Zhang Dainian, Fang keli.2004, p.4). In a broad sense, the excellent traditional Chinese culture includes the material civilization, spiritual civilization and system civilization that the Chinese nation has created in its development history, such as the four great inventions of ancient China, Chinese characters, folk art and traditional Chinese virtues, showing the overall characteristics of the coupling of explicit culture and implicit culture.

According to the guiding outline of ideological and political construction of college curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education in China(2022), it is required to carry out the fundamental task of establishing morality and cultivating talents by integrating the construction concept of value shaping, knowledge imparting and ability cultivation. The key construction contents include strengthening the education of excellent traditional Chinese culture, which means vigorously promoting the national spirit centered on patriotism, reform and innovation, educating and guiding the students to have a deep understanding of the essence and values embodied in excellent traditional Chinese culture (Zhang Hong, Yu Rui, 2020, p.43) especially of the benevolence, values for the people, integrity, justice, harmony and unity. It is helpful to clarify the standard of cultural content selection in the field of Chinese excellent traditional culture education, and also provides guidance for the selection of college English textbooks on excellent traditional Chinese culture.

3.2 Compiling college English textbooks that highlight the excellent traditional Chinese culture

The Guiding Outline for Ideological and Political Construction of Curriculum in Colleges and Universities (2020) clearly proposes that we should make full use of the main channel of classroom teaching, admire the teachers playing an important role in the process of the curriculum construction, and propose that in terms of professional education courses, we should, according to the characteristics and advantages of different disciplines, have a further study on the educational objectives of different majors, deeply dig and refine the ideological value and spiritual connotation contained in the knowledge system of professional education

courses, expand its breadth and depth, and increase the knowledge and humanistic nature of the courses, so as to enrich and improve our teaching results.

Based on what we have mentioned above, according to the college English teaching guidance curriculum objectives and requirements from the Ministry of Education in China, the English teachers from more than 10 representative art colleges in China have a good communication with each other, make a good investigation of the current English teaching in art colleges and the further analysis of the current college English teaching, and predicate its future development trend based on the criteria of the specific requirements of English Proficiency Scale in China. Then the series of textbooks of *New Journey of Arts college English* have been compiled in this new condition.

The contents of the textbook focus on the general knowledge in arts and serve the good communication between China and the other foreign countries, considering the exploration in the theory and the application in practice and including the historical overviews from different angles, and also the presentations of the new media and new art forms. The series of textbook have been composed of the four volumes to fit for the students' needs of different English level, mainly considering the vocabulary of different levels in each unit.

Each volume of the *New Journey of Art college English* textbook consists of 8 units, which aims to provide students with a general knowledge of the arts and the most popular vocabulary of art English. The first unit of each volume aims to introduce the core knowledge, and the following 7 units are arranged from two angles, both from home and abroad, and there are 7 categories of art (art, music, dance, film, drama, costume and architecture) in each volume, aiming to help students learn and understand Chinese and foreign culture and art from four aspects: history, creation, life and society. Such study has just meant to lead the students to love the excellent traditional Chinese culture, inherit it combining with their own majors, and innovate the excellent traditional Chinese culture in their own field.

3.3 Emphasizing excellent traditional Chinese culture in English courses

In English teaching practice, the textbook focuses on Chinese art and culture, integrates the ideological and political elements of the curriculum, and highlights the advantages and characteristics of different disciplines of art areas, such as art and emotion to be achieved through a comprehensive study on a full range of teaching material, through the five basic skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation) training, paying attention to the effective ideological elements, carrying forward the socialist core values, cultivating the students' emotion of "Family-country" and enlarging their international vision, enhancing the students' cultural self-confidence, improving the students' art accomplishment, promoting the students' cross-cultural communication abilities, so as to realize the inheritance, innovation and dissemination of Chinese excellent traditional culture in different ways.

At the same time, teachers should conform to the actual needs of the development of both arts colleges and the major students, pay attention to effective teaching, pursue the effective teaching and effective learning, focus on art topics and situations, help students to learn and practice gradually, emphasize learning by doing, and improve their language communication ability. Through the repeated practice of art criticism writing, research projects, application letter writing, the description of the data and table of current heat issues, and other writing styles, students are expected to improve their comprehensive ability in English application. With the help of corpus, modern technology is applied to scientifically select and guide the students to effectively acquire phrases related to their majors, improve their idiomaticness and fluency in English language expression, and

cultivate talents with international artistic characteristics who are familiar with Chinese and foreign music, dance, film, costume, painting and opera.

4.Reflection of English Teaching Combining with the Moral Cultivation in Arts colleges

English teaching is a complex system engineering, involving teaching environment, both the soft environment and hard environment. The former refers to the school's cultural atmosphere, teaching managers' ideological consciousness and an act of will; the latter refers to the teaching space, teaching facilities, teaching software and etc.. In the process of teaching English courses for art students, teachers should care about students' learning motivation, learning style, learning strategies, learning objectives and so on. They should take great care about the students, understand the students well, put themselves in their shoes and make friends with the students. And the teachers should also make clear the orientation of talent training that varies from school to major according to the situation of students, and make clear the specific requirements of different learning stages, from the basic stage, to the bridge course, and then to the whole learning stage.

Besides that, the teachers should strengthen cooperation and establish the idea of community. They should not only continuously explore teaching theories, but also summarize their own teaching practice, and form teaching modes with their own styles that meet the needs of students of different condition. They should learn from each other through sharing, cooperation and communication, and promote their teaching from different aspects through appreciation and learning to make good progress. Especially facing up the new technology nowadays, the teachers should take more flexible teaching approach. It can be a flip class, the students-centered class, or the production oriented approach class (Wen Qiufang,2015, pp145-180). But no matter what teaching approach has been adopted, the students' satisfactory is the most important, which means the adopted teaching approach should fit for the students' taste, fit for the students' future development, even though it is not really easy. So, it can be said that the teaching approach may vary from person to person, from place to place, and from time to time, only the teaching target as the guideline remains well.

Then, how about the teaching effect? It is mainly from the teaching feedback, that is, the evaluation of the teaching effect came from the leaders of the teaching administration department, colleagues and students, as well as all kinds of online data in the teaching process, including the length of the students' participation, the report data of participating in online learning performance test, the quantity and quality of the teachers' online answers to the students' questions, and students' learning performance test results and etc. All these can be used as evidences to verify teachers' teaching effects. In this paper, the construction of art teaching resources and the compilation of a series of teaching materials have been explored, which is the first step in the construction of teaching resources. Centering on the teaching materials, how to write a good teaching plans, make the model lessons and record micro-lessons and MOOCs and etc. needs to be constantly explored and improved in the future teaching practice.

5.Conclusion

It is a long way to integrate the excellent traditional Chinese culture into the English course teaching of art colleges. The construction of teaching materials is only the first step in the long march. The textbooks have

been compiled by the senior teachers of the representative arts colleges and universities in China, paying attention to the actual needs of art college students' professional development, considering the idiomatic language expression and the urgency of inheriting excellent traditional culture in the topic selection of the textbooks. In the process of language study and practice, much care should be taken of students' interests and new demands for future career development. While helping students to have a deep understanding of Chinese excellent culture and art, students' confidence in national culture should be enhanced, their English language practice ability should be improved, and excellent traditional culture should be inherited and innovated and communicated to the outside world will be encouraged as well.

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