

# The Integration of Tea Culture into English Teaching Under the Perspective of Cultural Confidence

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## ABSTRACT

In the current context of global multicultural integration and collision, intercultural English teaching shoulders an important cultural mission. It is a meaningful attempt to integrate tea culture into English teaching from the perspective of cultural confidence. By optimizing the teaching content, carrying out comparative study of Chinese and Western tea culture and organizing various practical activities, tea culture teaching enables students to understand the cultural differences between China and the West, as well as the value of China's excellent traditional culture; it can not only improve students' English learning effect, but also cultivate their critical thinking. Tea culture English teaching is conducive to the cultivation of compound English talents, and has a positive impact on the output of national culture and the promotion of China's cultural soft power.

*Keywords: Tea culture, English teaching, Cultural confidence.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, the development of any country has been supported by economy, military as well as culture, none of the three being ignored. As a soft power, culture has great vitality and influence. And it is believed that the improvement of cultural soft power results from cultural confidence, which is a country's identification with its cultural values and is an important factor for culture to be able to be passed on. Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, has repeatedly emphasized that "without a high degree of cultural self-confidence and without the prosperity of culture, there will be no great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." College students are the backbone of the national construction in the future and are responsible for spreading traditional Chinese culture and socialist culture. English majors, as the main force of Chinese culture transmission and dissemination, should not only have excellent language skills and professional knowledge, but also establish a sense of national cultural identity and cultural confidence, so that they can better express the connotation of traditional Chinese culture once they experience the

collision between Chinese and Western cultures. Therefore, it is necessary to attach importance to the explanation of the connotations of cultures in language teaching. Tea is a representative element of Chinese culture, and as Chinese tea culture has been being accepted and recognized by more and more countries, the integration of tea culture in English teaching in colleges and universities can not only cultivate students' English listening, reading, writing and translating comprehensive language skills and intercultural communication skills, but also enrich students' knowledge of traditional culture, educate and guide students to inherit Chinese culture and establish cultural self-confidence in a subtle way.

## 2. CULTURAL CONFIDENCE

Cultural confidence mainly means that countries, nations and political parties fully recognize their own cultural values and have great confidence in their own cultural development. Firm cultural confidence enables people to identify with culture from the bottom of their hearts and recognize the value of culture, and generate self-confidence and pride.[1] As an ancient civilization, China has accumulated a rich traditional culture during its

long historical development, and these traditional cultures have strong vitality and cohesion. This vitality and cohesion promote the continuous development of the Chinese nation and have great influence on the dissemination of Chinese ideology and culture in the new era of socialist modernization.

However, seen from the real situation, it is found that due to the influence of some factors, the college students group has some doubts about Chinese culture, which is not conducive to cultural confidence and hinders the dissemination of excellent traditional culture.[1] For this reason, it is necessary to focus on the cultural confidence situation, so that students can re-establish cultural confidence through learning, establish cultural identity and national pride, and provide more favorable conditions for the inheritance and development of Chinese excellent culture.

### **3. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF ENGLISH INTERCULTURAL TEACHING IN CHINESE UNIVERSITIES**

In 2020, the *Guide to Teaching Foreign Languages and Literature in Undergraduate Programs in General Higher Education (Upper)—Teaching Guide for English Majors* was issued, stating that the learning and research objects of English majors are English language, English literature, translation, comparative literature and cross-culture studies, as well as country and regional studies, etc.[2] This shows that English is not just a purely linguistic discipline, but a comprehensive one, and cross-culture is also one of the contents of the study and practice of English majors. However, there are still shortcomings in the intercultural teaching part of the English major curriculum, which leads to the advantages of the English major not being well played. The problems can be generalized into the following aspects.

Firstly, the breadth of intercultural courses offered is insufficient. Although some intercultural courses on the basis of traditional English language courses have been offered to English majors, more courses are only related to important national current affairs and customs, and the breadth of the courses is not sufficient.

Secondly, the penetration of cultural connotation is neglected. Although English teachers make efforts to integrate cultural contents in their teaching design, due to factors such as teaching

time, content and interdisciplinary experience, teachers are often unable to effectively integrate cultural contents appropriately. As a result, culture teaching only focuses on some cultural theoretical knowledge, neglecting the infiltration of relevant cultural connotations, which is not conducive to enhancing the influence of culture on students.

Thirdly, there is little time arrangement for cultural practice activities. The survey finds that many universities are not able to realize putting theory into practice. Especially, English majors still focus on theoretical teaching, and less practical class time is arranged, which leads many teachers to neglect the cultivation and assessment of language application ability in daily teaching. Therefore, it must be admitted that the lack of practicality and interest of intercultural teaching in English majors in colleges and universities is not conducive to the positive influence on students' cultural confidence, and the English majors cultivated are not strong in compounding and application, and the more ideal employment positions graduates can find are often only basic teaching and translation work, and they are basically not competent for the work involving certain depth of intercultural communication between China and foreign countries.[3]

Therefore, the integration of intercultural content in English language teaching in colleges and universities may lead to a lack of interesting teaching and learning, which is likely to have an impact on the cultural confidence of some students.

### **4. THE ROLE OF INTEGRATING TEA CULTURE INTO INTERCULTURAL ENGLISH TEACHING**

Tea culture takes an important position in the context of intercultural life and directly influences people's understanding of contemporary Chinese and Western cultures around the world. By using tea culture context as the teaching basis and educational content, college English teachers combine tea culture and English teaching and carry out intercultural English teaching, which can make students better understand the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, identify with their own traditional culture, and enhance the effect of students' English learning and the cultivation of intercultural competence. The role of integrating tea culture into English intercultural teaching can be reflected in the following aspects.

#### ***4.1 Promoting the Establishment of Cultural Confidence***

Entering into higher education, students have more opportunities and channels to be exposed to diverse Chinese and foreign cultural knowledge and cultural interpretations. If there is no guidance of correct cultural orientation and a good cultural environment and cultural atmosphere, students will blindly worship and believe in Western culture, and even question national culture. China is the homeland of tea and the birthplace of tea culture. The integration of rich Chinese cultural elements and contents in the English curriculum can provide students with a culture full of positive energy, and will gradually form an all-round, multi-perspective and three-dimensional mode of cultivating Chinese cultural confidence.[4] Historically, tea has been spread from China to other countries across the seas and enriched the world culture. In recent years, tea as a representative element of Chinese culture has frequently appeared on some important international stages, which has offered the opportunity for Chinese people to show and enhance Chinese cultural self-confidence in a silent way. Indeed, the spread of tea culture has made the nation confident in the vitality and creativity of Chinese culture and has shown the vitality of cultural innovation. The integration of tea culture into English teaching in colleges and universities enables students to strengthen their beliefs, learn to appreciate their own culture, appreciate the profundity of Chinese culture and establish cultural confidence after being impacted by Western culture.

#### ***4.2 Contributing to the Transformation of Linguistic Thinking***

The development of English thinking skills has a great role in promoting cultural communication between China and the West. The long history of tea culture not only refers to China's tea culture but also includes the tea culture of western countries; it includes not only the types, origin and development history of tea itself, but also the rich connotation of tea ceremony culture and the charming classical poems related to tea. The integration of tea culture in the process of teaching English in colleges and universities helps students to enrich their knowledge and insight related to tea culture on the one hand, and on the other hand, it also allows students to compare the connotations of Chinese and Western tea culture, find out the differences in the way of thinking and values that exist behind the customs, habits and behaviors of Chinese and

Western tea culture, and gradually form the concepts of language, material culture and spiritual culture of Chinese and Western societies.[5] In addition, the best social effect of the translation of tea culture also requires the translator to take into account the national culture, way of thinking, expectation psychology and other factors of the reader group.[6] The English comprehension of tea is closely integrated with the specific regional cultural context, which helps to transform the linguistic thinking and improve students' cultural comprehension, expression ability and context adaptation ability of intercultural communication to some extent.

#### ***4.3 Facilitating the Implementation of Teaching Activities***

Integrating English with tea culture in the context of cultural confidence and teaching English under the guidance of tea culture requires teachers to analyze Chinese and Western tea culture from the source and clarify the value of tea culture. Such teaching has high requirements for English teachers, which means that teachers are required to understand tea culture from its essence. In fact, the integration of tea culture into teaching can promote teachers to actively think about how to continuously optimize the teaching content and innovate the teaching model in the actual teaching, so as to strengthen the relevance of teaching and achieve the purpose of improving the teaching effect. Therefore, the infiltration of tea culture into English teaching in colleges and universities and the transmission of cross-cultural knowledge to students in the process of comparing cultural differences are not only highly relevant cultural teaching activities in practice, but also a new way to explore the dissemination of traditional Chinese culture, which can inject new vitality into English teaching in colleges and universities.

### **5. MEASURES FOR INTEGRATING TEA CULTURE INTO ENGLISH TEACHING**

Nowadays one of the principles followed by Chinese universities in constructing the curriculum system for English majors is to help cultivate complex English talents, i.e. English majors should have a certain degree of expertise in economics, politics and culture. In view of the school conditions and teachers' qualifications, many local colleges tend to explore the mode of integrating foreign language knowledge and skills with

traditional culture in the cultivation of composite English talents, and such composite talents need to have very high intercultural competence. As far as the integration of tea culture into English teaching is concerned, in order to make the teaching effect meet the requirements of talent cultivation, teachers should take effective measures to carry out scientific planning and improvement in terms of teaching philosophy, teaching content and teaching mode.

### ***5.1 Optimizing Teaching Content***

The purpose of intercultural English teaching in colleges and universities is to cultivate students' language application abilities, so the development of tea culture language comprehension and the training of application skills should be the focus of consideration in optimizing teaching content.

First of all, tea culture teaching resources should be sufficient. The traditional English textbooks do not contain much English knowledge related to tea culture, so it is necessary to ensure that there are enough teaching resources to support the integration of tea culture into intercultural English teaching. While tapping into the existing learning resources, it is more important to develop and write new teaching materials so as to increase the knowledge and content related to tea culture.

Secondly, the trade-off of tea culture knowledge should be appropriate. Chinese and Western tea cultures each have a long history, involve a great variety of contents and have great differences. If all the contents are integrated into classroom teaching, it will definitely increase the difficulties of intercultural English teaching. Therefore, teachers should make scientific screening and select the most distinctive differences between Chinese and Western tea culture as the teaching content. That is to say, teachers should determine the appropriate number of knowledge points and create a teaching content system with tea culture language as the core and tea cultural customs as the supplement.

Thirdly, the explanation of tea culture content should be practical. Teachers should explain more commonly used spoken and practical content, while the explanation of the purely theoretical and technical content of Chinese and Western tea culture that is too professional should only be briefly mentioned, or even completely discarded, to avoid students' resistance to learning tea culture due to the difficulty of understanding these interdisciplinary knowledge.

In short, through the optimization of the teaching content, the integration of tea culture into English teaching has to be more scientific and operable.

### ***5.2 Conducting Comparative Teaching***

As the saying goes, comparison is the best way to feel the difference. Using the contrast method to teach Chinese and Western tea culture in college English classrooms can fully motivate students to participate in the learning of cultural differences, exercise their subjective judgment ability, develop tea culture awareness, and improve their intercultural communication competence.

On the one hand, contrast refers to comparing the knowledge of Chinese and Western tea culture, and students should learn the language of tea culture under the awareness of contrast. The teacher selects and classifies the proper nouns, language descriptions of operation steps and other contents in Chinese and Western tea culture, and then gives necessary explanations after horizontal comparison, and guides the students to make comparative analysis of the causes of the differences in tea culture, so that the students can be familiar with and master the language and behavior habits of Western society and improve their cross-cultural ability on the basis of understanding the differences between Chinese and Western cultures. The linguistic and behavioral differences between China and the West that students feel through comparison can make them understand Chinese culture more deeply and enhance their sense of national cultural identity.

On the other hand, contrast teaching refers to the use of visualization means of comparison. Relying on modern information technology and equipment, teachers can intuitively show the differences between Chinese and Western tea culture, so that students can understand it at a glance, which is easier for students to master the knowledge of tea culture. For students majoring in language, tea culture, after all, involves interdisciplinary knowledge, and tea culture is characterized by practical operation, such as tea picking, tea tasting, tea brewing and other activities. It is difficult for students to feel the substantive content only through abstract written materials, which will inevitably make students feel boring, leading to a lazy attitude in the learning process. At present, information technology is so powerful that teachers can use Internet technology and multimedia equipment to mobilize students' visual

and auditory perception with pictures or audio and video materials, and carry out an intuitive comparative display of Chinese and Western tea culture, which is bound to arouse students' interest in learning tea culture and improve the teaching effect.

### **5.3 Carrying Out Practical Teaching Activities**

The traditional English teaching mode is knowledge instillation, and the teaching process lacks teacher-student interaction, which is not conducive to the improvement of teaching effect and the cultivation of students' critical thinking, and does not conform to the concept of cultivating English application-oriented talents. Therefore, teaching should be based on meeting practical needs and carrying out teaching practice activities. Teachers and students should communicate in the activities, and teaching should be carried out in the activities. Only in this way can students truly have the opportunity to engage in practical exercises rather than just talking on paper. The interesting characteristics of heterogeneous language and culture exchanges in Chinese and Western tea culture can just greatly mobilize and attract students' participation and interest in the process of language and culture practice and learning. Colleges and universities can appropriately carry out targeted practical teaching of tea culture according to the setting of professional direction. Schools can set up simulation laboratories to open on-campus tea houses for students to exchange tea stories, poems and etiquette in English for practical exercises. Through cooperation between schools and enterprises, schools can also choose real tea houses as practice bases in the society, creating opportunities for students to learn and practice in depth, so that students can observe and learn the meaning of tea culture and terminology in the actual scene, and strengthen their understanding of the current situation of tea culture and the prospect of the industry.

In addition, schools can also properly organize tea culture study tours. Tea culture has the attributes of natural resources and human resources at the same time, and has the inherent advantage of carrying out study trips from multiple angles and levels. From the perspective of tea culture dissemination, only by making young people love Chinese tea, can Chinese tea culture go to the world. It can be seen that winning young people's attention to tea is an opportunity to spread Chinese

tea culture. Tea culture study tour is not only the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge, but also in line with the psychological and cultural characteristics of modern English learners. Students can establish intimate feelings with tea culture through personal participation in visiting tea gardens, tasting tea fragrance, learning how to collect tea, and learning about folk customs, which can lay the foundation for the continuous inheritance of tea culture.[7] The practical teaching of English tea culture in colleges and universities can serve the spread of Chinese culture.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Intercultural foreign language teaching is not only language teaching, but also cultural teaching, which shoulders a mission of cultural inheritance and dissemination. In today's international background of multi-cultural integration and collision, and with English still playing the role of international language, intercultural English teaching in colleges and universities has a unique advantage in promoting the export and internationalization of Chinese national culture. The long history of tea culture in the world and the differences between Chinese and Western tea culture provide rich materials for intercultural English teaching. Through optimizing the teaching content and carrying out rich teaching practice activities, English teaching of tea culture from the perspective of cultural self-confidence makes it possible for students to intuitively understand the cultural differences between China and the West, and deeply recognize the value of China's excellent traditional culture. This can not only stimulate students' interest in learning tea culture and improve the English learning effect, but also cultivate critical thinking and strengthen cultural confidence. Tea culture English teaching is conducive to the cultivation of compound English talents, and will have a positive impact on the output of national culture and the promotion of China's cultural soft power.

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