

An Exploration of Integrating Excellent Regional Culture into College English Teaching in Local Universities

A Case Study of Traditional Culture in Jilin Province

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ABSTRACT

Against the backdrop of integrating ideological and political elements into courses, integrating regional culture into teaching is particularly necessary to enable college English to fulfill the mission of fostering virtue through education and promoting the international dissemination of Chinese culture. Taking the traditional culture of Jilin Province as an example, this paper analyzes the current situation and causes of the lack of integration between college English teaching in local universities and regional culture, explores effective integration approaches, and provides ideas and solutions from a cross-cultural perspective for the reform of college English courses and the inheritance and development of regional culture.

Keywords: *Local universities, College English teaching, Regional culture, Cultural integration.*

1. INTRODUCTION

College English is a compulsory course for non-English major undergraduates in China, whose core goal is to improve students' comprehensive English application ability and cross-cultural communication competence. Against the dual backgrounds of globalization and the integration of ideological and political elements into courses, the cultivation of cross-cultural communication competence must be based on an understanding of the connotations of both native and target cultures. However, for a long time, college English teaching in China has focused on Western culture, leading to the widespread phenomenon of "Chinese cultural aphasia". The 2020 Edition of the College English Teaching Guidelines clearly proposes that the course should help students understand and interpret Chinese culture to serve international communication. [1] Therefore, integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into college English teaching and helping students build cultural confidence have become an inevitable requirement for curriculum reform.

As an important branch of excellent traditional Chinese culture, regional culture has both commonalities and local characteristics, and embodies cultural diversity. Relying on it can realize the innovative dissemination of Chinese culture, and integrating it into college English courses is of great practical significance. This paper takes the traditional culture of Jilin Province as a research case. Located in the central part of Northeast China and the core area of Northeast Asia, Jilin Province is an old industrial base and a major commodity grain production base. It boasts natural landscapes such as Changbai Mountain, cultural landscapes such as the Museum of the Imperial Palace of the Manchukuo, and intangible cultural heritage such as Manchu paper-cutting. Its profound cultural heritage provides rich resource support for the integration of regional culture into English teaching.

2. CURRENT SITUATION OF INTEGRATING REGIONAL CULTURE INTO COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING IN LOCAL UNIVERSITIES

According to interviews, surveys, and years of teaching practice of the teaching team, it is found that many universities have varying degrees of lack of native culture in curriculum offerings and English teaching. The content related to Chinese culture in English textbooks is either scarce, overly simplistic and superficial without depth and details, or fragmented and unsystematic, and there is a complete absence of teaching content on regional culture with Chinese characteristics. Many students report that it is difficult to find learning materials related to regional culture in English textbooks, and there are not many bilingual learning resources about regional culture on the Internet. Taking Jilin Province as an example, most students in Jilin have a certain understanding of the local traditional culture, social customs, natural and human landscapes, but their relevant English vocabulary and expression skills are insufficient. They find it quite challenging to express the unique regional cultural connotations in English, let alone promote and disseminate them.

Attaching importance to regional culture is not only an inherent requirement for inheriting and carrying forward excellent traditional Chinese culture but also an exclusive mission of local universities. Local universities have four major functions: discipline construction, talent training, social service, and cultural leadership. [2] They possess unique resource advantages and play a crucial role in the protection, inheritance, and innovation of regional traditional culture. Against the background of integrating ideological and political elements into courses, local universities can seize the strategic opportunity of "Chinese culture going global" to integrate regional culture into college English teaching, take facilitating the international communication of regional culture as a breakthrough point for school teaching and research, promote the construction of college English courses, and highlight the characteristics of college English teaching. In the process of deeply exploring, researching, and utilizing the unique cultural resources of the region, the content of disseminating excellent traditional Chinese culture can be enriched and made a source of strength for us to strengthen cultural confidence.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES FOR THE LACK OF REGIONAL CULTURE IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING OF LOCAL UNIVERSITIES

3.1 Insufficient Awareness of Promoting Regional Culture

Against the background of integrating ideological and political elements into courses, integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into college English teaching has become a research focus in English teaching and research in many universities, aiming to effectively improve students' cultural literacy and cross-cultural communication capabilities, and cultivate more cultural talents in the new era who can "tell Chinese stories well and spread Chinese voices". However, the current "Chinese stories" told in English mainly include traditional Chinese festivals, historical and cultural relics, classical masterpieces, etc., with little attention paid to the diverse and unique regional cultures. [3] As an important part of Chinese culture, the international dissemination of regional culture is also of great value in enriching the narrative dimensions of "Chinese stories" and shaping a more three-dimensional image of Chinese culture.

3.2 Disconnection Between Teaching Content and Regional Culture

The materials in college English textbooks are basically selected from original English readings. While providing students with language materials and cultivating their language abilities, they also involve cultural knowledge of different countries and nations, especially focusing on introducing the cultures and values of British and American countries, with a lack of integration of Chinese cultural themes and even a complete absence of content on regional culture with Chinese characteristics. Due to the widespread use of such textbooks, English teachers rarely incorporate rich and colorful regional cultural content into classroom teaching. As a result, even after completing the entire textbook, students still find it difficult to accurately express the cultural connotations related to regional culture in English.

3.3 Lack of Integration of Regional Culture in Teaching Mode

Traditional college English teaching models have long been constrained by certain limitations. These include rigid adherence to standardized syllabi, unified scheduling of teaching progress, mechanical delivery of course content, and over-reliance on examinations to assess student learning outcomes. Within this framework, instructors prioritize the teaching of grammar and vocabulary, emphasizing rote memorization and practical application of linguistic knowledge. While Western cultural contexts are often elaborated upon in detail, the integration of the English language with traditional Chinese culture—especially regional culture—is largely overlooked. Consequently, English vocabulary and expressions that encapsulate regional cultural characteristics are seldom introduced or discussed in the classroom.

3.4 Uneven Regional Cultural Literacy Among Teachers

Teachers bear the important mission of the times to impart knowledge, disseminate ideas, spread truth, shape souls, mold lives, and cultivate new people. This mandate requires educators not only to instruct students and resolve their academic doubts but also to foster their cultural character. [4] However, to effectively integrate Jilin's distinctive regional culture into college English teaching, teachers themselves must possess a systematic and solid foundation of relevant knowledge. Questionnaire surveys indicate that some English teachers in Jilin's universities have only a fragmented and superficial understanding of local culture, lacking systematic accumulation and profound cultural insight. Furthermore, constrained by exam-oriented educational philosophies, some instructors prioritize the indoctrination of linguistic knowledge over the cultivation of students' comprehensive literacy. This pedagogical imbalance directly impedes the deep integration of regional culture into English teaching practices.

4. EFFECTIVE PATHS FOR INTEGRATING EXCELLENT TRADITIONAL JILIN CULTURE INTO COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING IN LOCAL UNIVERSITIES

4.1 Establishing a Teaching Philosophy of Cultivating People with Distinctive Regional Cultural Characteristics

The teaching philosophy serves as the guiding ideology for teachers in their teaching practices, encompassing their beliefs and views on teaching objectives, behaviors, and strategies.[5] Amid the comprehensive advancement of curriculum-based ideological and political education, the philosophy of such education must be deeply integrated into college English courses, permeating every key aspect of the teaching process. College English teaching should not only focus on consolidating students' disciplinary knowledge and cultivating their language application skills but also enhance their understanding of diverse cultures, elevate their cross-cultural communication competence, and promote the high-quality and efficient dissemination of fine traditional Chinese culture. The integration of Jilin regional culture into college English teaching reflects the inheritance of Jilin's distinctive cultural heritage by local universities. As the main body of the education process, college students possess high cognitive abilities and cultural literacy, making them inheritors and disseminators of excellent regional culture. They should assume the responsibility of advancing regional cultural prosperity, building a culturally strong country, and promoting the global dissemination of Chinese culture. Teachers, as the foundation and source of education, must deeply recognize the unique educational value of regional culture, proactively strengthen their awareness of nurturing people through regional culture, establish a teaching philosophy centered on regional cultural dissemination, and empower students to comprehensively enhance their ability to express regional culture in English and engage in cross-cultural communication through systematic teaching design.

4.2 *Excavating Ideological and Political Elements in Textbooks and Constructing a Bilingual Database of Jilin Cultural Resources*

English textbooks constitute the core of college English curriculum resources and an important basis for teachers to define teaching objectives and organize classroom activities. Currently, most college English textbooks used in domestic universities are compiled based on original English reading materials, which have strong universality and applicability but lack the supply of localized and personalized content, easily resulting in the homogenization of teaching resources. To address this, teachers need to thoroughly explore the ideological and political connotations and positive values embedded in textbooks, clarify the ideological and political guidance and value orientation of the curriculum, and further define the ideological and political goals of the curriculum. On this basis, it is necessary to systematically collect, categorize, translate, and organize Jilin's cultural resources, and construct a modular bilingual database of Jilin culture to provide resource support for the integration of regional culture into college English teaching.

Jilin is the cradle of Goguryeo civilization, the birthplace of the Bohai Kingdom, and the ancestral home of the Manchu people, boasting rich traditional cultural resources and forming a cultural system with distinctive Jilin characteristics. The spirit of innovation, perseverance, unity, and virtue formed by the people of Jilin in long-term historical practice is not only a manifestation of the Chinese national spirit but also an integral part of the spirit of the times. In college English teaching, by exploring the integration points between textbook content and Jilin traditional culture, and combining the ideological and political elements in textbooks with Jilin's traditional culture and the "Four Spirits", students can gain a deeper understanding of the unit themes, learn and develop excellent qualities, and strengthen their emotional identification with Jilin culture and spirit, allowing Jilin culture and spirit to radiate new vitality in the new era.

Regional culture has a long history and rich connotations, covering material, spiritual, political, economic, historical, and practical aspects. In the process of integrating Jilin's distinctive regional culture into college English teaching, teachers may face challenges such as scattered, disorganized, and untranslated materials. To improve the efficiency of English teachers in integrating Jilin culture into

college English teaching, it is necessary to systematically collect, categorize, translate, and organize Jilin's distinctive cultural resources, and construct a modular bilingual database with the support of modern information technology and digital technology. The main content can include modules such as Jilin celebrity culture, red culture, traditional folk customs, ice and snow culture, and traditional cuisine, serving as a resource foundation for the integration of Jilin's excellent traditional culture into college English teaching.

4.3 *Construction of a Project-Driven College English Teaching Mode with Traditional Jilin Culture Themes*

The construction of the modular bilingual materials database provides abundant and systematic teaching resources for integrating excellent traditional Jilin culture into college English teaching. However, to effectively integrate these resources with the teaching objectives, content, methods, and evaluation of college English courses, and achieve a teaching effect of natural integration, systematic and scientific teaching design is indispensable. To realize the effective integration of Jilin culture and college English teaching, it is advisable to adopt a project-driven teaching model with traditional Jilin culture themes. By combining the advantages of online and traditional teaching through three stages: pre-class, in-class, and after-class, this model can achieve the integration and unification of the three-dimensional objectives of knowledge and skills, processes and methods, and emotional attitudes and values.

The design of traditional Jilin culture-themed projects is a crucial prerequisite for the effective integration of Jilin culture into college English teaching. To carry out project-based college English teaching integrated with Jilin culture, teachers need to deeply explore the ideological and political elements in textbooks, find the connection points between them and Jilin cultural elements to determine project themes and design teaching projects. Taking Unit 4 of New Horizon College English: Reading and Writing 1, which focuses on the theme of "Heroes of the Times", as an example, teachers can use this theme and design teaching projects based on the deeds and spiritual qualities of Huang Danian, a "Special-Class Model Worker of Jilin Province", "Model of the Times", and "People's Educator". Students are guided to combine the materials database and independently collect relevant resources, use English language

knowledge, pragmatic skills, and regional cultural knowledge to complete project tasks in groups, and then carry out project achievement displays and reflective evaluation activities. In the process of completing project tasks, students are inspired to think about heroes' beliefs and pursuits, and guided to establish correct life values and idol concepts, so as to achieve the goal of ideological and political education and cultural education.

4.4 Collaborative Inheritance of Traditional Jilin Culture Through Integrated Teaching, Learning, and Research

Both teaching and research are of great significance in English education. Teaching provides the foundation and prerequisite for research, while research can enrich teaching content and improve teaching quality, and the two complement each other. [6] Teachers are the practitioners and promoters of teaching reform. Against the background of integrating ideological and political elements into courses, to effectively integrate excellent traditional Jilin culture into college English teaching, college English teachers need to achieve the coordinated development of teaching, learning, and research. They should actively carry out research on regional culture, gain a deep understanding of it, improve their own regional cultural literacy and the ability to express regional culture in English, thereby enhancing the effect of education and teaching.

In addition, amid the waves of globalization, digitalization, and intelligence, the traditional educational ecology and teaching models are being rapidly restructured. Teachers should actively embrace the tremendous changes brought by the innovation of information technology to language and cultural teaching. In the process of integrating excellent traditional Jilin culture with college English courses, teachers can use 5G technology to break the limitations of time and space and realize resource sharing. By integrating and utilizing internal and external resources and mutual assistance and cooperation, they can promote academic research and exchanges among scholars, and continuously improve their scientific research innovation capabilities and teaching levels. Based on unit themes, teachers can also use virtual reality technology to provide students with interactive and experiential learning opportunities. For example, by constructing virtual scenes and inserting Jilin's local natural and human landscapes, students can

understand Jilin in an immersive experience, expand their English expressions related to Jilin culture, and guide them to learn Jilin culture and tell Jilin stories in English. Teachers can also deepen their understanding and application of excellent traditional Jilin culture through online interactions with professionals and leading students in field investigations, with a view to transforming research results into practical teaching applications.

However, it should be noted that the integration of excellent traditional Jilin culture and college English teaching should adhere to the principle of "natural infiltration and organic integration", and avoid transforming English courses into mere lectures on regional culture. To this end, it is necessary to scientifically control the selection of integration paths and the proportion of regional culture content. On the basis of focusing on the core goal of cultivating students' core English literacy, teachers should simultaneously realize the ideological and political educational value and cultural inheritance function of excellent traditional Jilin culture.

5. CONCLUSION

Regional culture is the material and spiritual civilization achievements accumulated by the people in a specific region through long-term history and practice. It has inherent ideological and political educational value and can be called a "dynamic teaching material" and "cultural resource database" in the educational field. Against the background of the in-depth advancement of integrating ideological and political elements into courses, exploring the integration paths between regional culture and college English teaching has both academic and practical significance. Regional culture injects rich local resources into English teaching, which not only expands the dimension of teaching content but also provides core support for the construction of characteristic courses, conforming to the requirements of the Guidelines for Integrating Ideological and Political Elements into Higher Education Courses to optimize content supply focusing on political identity and patriotic feelings. This integration practice can guide students to deeply understand the roots of regional culture, cultivate their regional emotions and sense of responsibility, while deepening their dialectical understanding of Chinese and Western cultures, strengthening their confidence in native culture, and enabling the charm and value of excellent traditional Chinese culture to be more widely

demonstrated. In addition, it can promote the systematic research of regional culture, enhance local cultural soft power and urban image, boost regional development, and ultimately realize the organic unity of the functions of talent training and social service in universities.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Wei Yang, the first author, conceived and designed the study, conducted the research, and drafted the manuscript. Yu Zhang, the corresponding author, provided critical revisions and supervised the overall research process. The final version of the manuscript was approved by both authors.

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