



A Discussion on the Reform Strategies of College English Teaching from the Perspective of Cultural Confidence

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Abstract: From the perspective of cultural confidence, college English teaching faces many challenges. In the teaching process, issues such as the lack of local cultural elements, failure to effectively stimulate cultural confidence, and the neglect of cultivating cultural confidence are prevalent. In response, improvements should be made by enriching teaching content with local cultural integration, updating teaching methods to create culturally interactive classrooms, and enhancing teaching evaluation to highlight the orientation toward cultural confidence. These approaches aim to improve the outcomes of college English teaching and cultivate students' cultural confidence and intercultural communication competence.

Keywords: cultural confidence; college English; teaching reform strategies

1. Introduction

In the current era, cultural confidence has become an important spiritual force for national development. It is related to the inheritance and development of national spirit, as well as to a country's status and influence on the international stage. As a key channel for intercultural communication, college English teaching carries significant responsibility in spreading national culture and cultivating students' intercultural communication abilities. However, there are certain issues in the current integration of cultural confidence into college English teaching, and it has not fully exerted its function in enhancing students' cultural confidence. Therefore, this paper aims to explore reform strategies for college English teaching from the perspective of cultural confidence, so as to improve teaching quality and cultivate culturally confident talents who meet the needs of the times.

2. The Significance of College English Teaching Reform from the Perspective of Cultural Confidence

2.1 Addressing the Dilemma of “Cultural Aphasia” and Reshaping Cultural Identity

In intercultural communication, “cultural aphasia” is often reflected in students being able to fluently discuss Western festivals in English while struggling to explain the meaning of the Spring Festival, or being able to analyze Shakespearean drama but unfamiliar with expressing *Dream of the Red Chamber* in English. Teaching reform can include course modules such as “English Expressions of Chinese Culture” to systematically teach bilingual expression in areas such as traditional philosophy and intangible cultural heritage. Combined with contexts like Model United Nations and international summer camps, these approaches enable students not only to communicate fluently in English with foreigners but also to confidently convey the essence of Chinese medicine, calligraphy, and other cultural elements. Thus, they move from “passive reception” to “active output,” shaping their cultural identity.

2.2 Breaking the Constraint of “Skill over Culture” and Building a Teaching Loop that Integrates Language and Culture

Currently, some college English teaching exhibits a tendency to emphasize instrumental functions over humanistic values. Western culture often dominates textbooks, and assessments focus mainly on reading and writing skills. Reform can involve integrating selected multilingual excerpts from Xi Jinping: *The Governance of China* into textbooks and including English translations of Peking Opera in listening materials. A dual-mentor system involving both language teachers and humanities scholars can be introduced to co-teach courses. Intercultural communication case studies can be added to assessments. Teaching can then shift from “exam-oriented training” to “competency cultivation,” forming a closed-loop system that integrates language proficiency, cultural cognition, and communication skills.

2.3 Cultivating Intercultural Communication Competence to Serve the Building of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

As the Belt and Road Initiative continues to advance, there is a growing demand in international cooperation for talents who are “proficient in foreign languages and culturally literate.” English-speaking professionals with cultural confidence can explain the Chinese wisdom of “seeking harmony in diversity” during overseas project negotiations. At international academic conferences, they can articulate the development concept of “lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets” using professional terminology. These individuals utilize platforms such as public diplomacy and academic exchanges to translate Chinese stories into effective expressions within an international context, eliminating cultural barriers and serving as “bridging forces” in building a community with a shared future for mankind.

3. Problems in College English Teaching from the Perspective of Cultural Confidence

3.1 Lack of Local Cultural Elements in Teaching Content

At present, most college English textbooks are dominated by Western cultural content, with very limited inclusion of local cultural elements, and the existing local content is often superficial. In the teaching process, instructors tend to focus more on Western language knowledge and cultural customs, resulting in students having few opportunities to engage with their own culture. Consequently, they struggle to integrate English learning with local culture and fail to showcase the charm of Chinese culture in intercultural communication.

3.2 Teaching Methods Fail to Cultivate Students’ Cultural Confidence

Many teachers still adopt traditional lecture-based teaching methods in college English classes, where instruction is teacher-centered and students are in a passive learning role, lacking opportunities for interaction and communication. As a result, students rarely get the chance to express their understanding and views of their native culture in English, which limits their motivation and hinders the development of cultural confidence. This, in turn, is not conducive to enhancing their intercultural communication competence.

3.3 Teaching Evaluation Systems Lack Consideration for Cultural Confidence Cultivation

Currently, college English teaching evaluation focuses primarily on assessing students’ mastery of language knowledge and exam performance, such as final exam scores and pass rates for CET-4 and CET-6. There is a lack of assessment concerning students’ cultural literacy and cultural confidence. Such an evaluation system leads students to concentrate solely on language acquisition while neglecting the development of cultural confidence, which does not align with the goals of college English teaching from the perspective of cultural confidence.

4. Strategies for College English Teaching Reform from the Perspective of Cultural Confidence

4.1 Optimizing Teaching Content and Deepening the Integration of Local Culture

Intercultural communication theory emphasizes the importance of treating different cultures equally in intercultural exchanges—respecting and understanding other cultures while maintaining confidence in and inheriting one’s own culture. Including sufficient local cultural content in college English teaching is fundamental to achieving effective intercultural communication. Only when students have a solid understanding of their own culture can they accurately convey its messages in interactions with people from other cultures, thereby achieving genuine intercultural exchange. From the perspective of cultural transmission, language serves as the carrier of culture, and college English teaching, as a form of language education, carries the responsibility of cultural dissemination. If English teaching focuses solely on the input of Western culture while neglecting the output of local culture, it will result in a cultural imbalance in the process of global cultural exchange. This imbalance is detrimental to the inheritance and development of native culture. Cultural identity is the foundation of cultural confidence. When students are frequently exposed to their own national culture in English teaching and learn to express their cultural sentiments in English, they are more likely to develop a strong identification with their culture. This, in turn, contributes to the establishment of cultural confidence.

During the teaching process, English instructors systematically optimize textbook content. When teaching about Western festivals, they do not simply introduce the holidays, but rather carefully design instructional activities that incorporate elements of traditional Chinese festivals. For example, when introducing Christmas, the teacher first guides students to explore its origins, customs, and symbolic meanings, then transitions to the Spring Festival. Students are grouped to discuss

similarities and differences between the two festivals in terms of celebration methods and cultural connotations. Each group then selects a representative to present the customs of the Spring Festival in English, such as putting up Spring Festival couplets, having a reunion dinner, paying New Year visits, and giving red envelopes, as well as the cultural meanings behind these customs, such as family reunion and blessings for the new year. To help students better understand local culture, the teacher also collects excerpts from English translations of classical Chinese literature, such as *The Analects*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Selected chapters are explained in class, with students analyzing the cultural elements contained within the works. When teaching English passages from *The Analects*, the teacher elaborates on the historical meanings and contemporary relevance of concepts like *Ren* (benevolence) and *Li* (ritual propriety), encouraging students to express their views on these ideas in English. Additionally, the teacher supplements the textbook with English materials related to China's social, economic, and technological development based on the themes discussed. When covering topics on technological progress, the teacher introduces English news articles and reports on China's achievements in high-speed rail, 5G technology, and aerospace engineering. Students are tasked with summarizing these accomplishments in English. When environmental protection is discussed, the teacher incorporates content on China's efforts and achievements in ecological civilization construction, such as the afforestation project in Saihanba and the Yangtze River fishing ban, encouraging students to explain and comment on these initiatives in English. Through such comprehensive and in-depth content reforms, students not only improve their language skills while learning English but also gain a more thorough and nuanced understanding of their native culture. Their ability to express local culture in English is significantly enhanced, and their cultural confidence is gradually strengthened.

4.2 Innovating Teaching Methods to Create a Culturally Interactive Classroom Environment

Constructivist learning theory holds that learning is a process in which learners actively construct meaning; learners are the subjects of learning, while teachers serve as guides and facilitators. In the teaching process, instructors should create supportive learning contexts and guide students to actively engage in learning activities. Through methods such as interaction and collaboration, learners build their own knowledge systems. Applying constructivist learning theory to college English teaching can fully stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning and help them enhance their cultural confidence through interactive communication. According to interactive teaching theory, interaction fosters the exchange and collision of ideas between students, as well as between students and teachers. It allows learners to continuously enrich and deepen their cultural understanding through ongoing dialogue. In a culturally interactive classroom, students are no longer passive recipients of knowledge but become active disseminators and creators of culture. Through mutual interaction and discussion, they share their perceptions and experiences of local culture, while also learning about different viewpoints from their peers, thereby broadening their cultural horizons.

Teachers move away from traditional lecture-based instruction and actively innovate teaching methods by employing various interactive formats to create culturally interactive classrooms. When addressing topics related to differences between Chinese and Western cultures, teachers divide students into groups based on the course content and students' actual situations. Each group is assigned a specific cultural theme—such as culinary culture, etiquette, art, or festivals. Before beginning group-based cooperative learning, the teacher provides each group with a detailed task sheet that includes learning objectives, research directions, and presentation requirements. Students are required to gather information on Chinese and Western cultures related to their assigned topics through various means, such as consulting library resources, conducting online searches, and interviewing experts. They then organize, analyze, and summarize the collected information. During group discussions, the teacher offers guidance and support, helping students explore the cultural phenomena, the underlying causes, and the similarities and differences between cultures. In the presentation stage, each group uses formats such as PowerPoint presentations, skits, or speeches to express their views on the cultural topic in English. For example, the group responsible for culinary culture may create a visually appealing PPT introducing the Eight Great Cuisines of China and the main Western culinary traditions. They analyze differences between Chinese and Western cultures in cooking methods, ingredient choices, and table manners, and may perform a skit to reenact family dining scenes from both cultures. Other students are encouraged to ask questions during presentations, and presenting groups respond, creating a positive and engaging interactive atmosphere. The teacher provides timely guidance and feedback, correcting students' language errors during presentations. When misunderstandings about cultural concepts arise, the teacher offers clarifications and encourages students to express their ideas boldly. In addition to group cooperative learning, the teacher frequently organizes cultural debate competitions on topics such as "Which is more beneficial to student development: Chinese or Western educational philosophies?" and "Which is more worth preserving: traditional Chinese festivals or Western festivals?" Students are divided into affirmative and opposing teams to debate. Throughout the debates, they must express their views clearly and logically in English, using relevant cultural knowledge and examples to support their arguments. This process not only

improves their English communication and logical thinking skills but also deepens their understanding of both Chinese and Western cultures, thereby enhancing their cultural confidence. Furthermore, the teacher periodically organizes “English Culture Corners” around weekly themes such as “Traditional Chinese Medicine” or “Modern Western Art,” inviting foreign teachers and international students to participate. In a relaxed setting, students use English to discuss these topics with foreigners, gaining insights into how people from different cultural backgrounds think. Through intercultural dialogue and practical experiences of expressing local culture in English, students experience the joy of cultural exchange and gradually build stronger cultural confidence.

4.3 Improving the Teaching Evaluation System to Strengthen the Role of Cultural Confidence Orientation

The theory of multiple intelligences posits that human intelligence is multifaceted, encompassing linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences, among others. Therefore, teaching evaluation should focus on the comprehensive development of students’ diverse abilities, rather than merely assessing their mastery of knowledge. From the perspective of cultural confidence, college English teaching evaluation should also incorporate students’ cultural literacy and cultural confidence into the evaluation system to more comprehensively reflect their development in this area. In terms of trends in educational evaluation, traditional exam-oriented approaches no longer meet the needs of modern education. Diversified and formative evaluations are becoming mainstream. Formative (process-oriented) evaluation emphasizes assessing students’ learning process. Through various methods and channels of evaluation, it enables a more comprehensive understanding of students’ overall learning performance and potential. By integrating the cultivation of cultural confidence into the evaluation system of college English teaching and combining formative and summative assessments, educators can more objectively and fairly evaluate students’ cultural literacy and level of cultural confidence. This approach encourages students to pay more attention to cultural development during the learning process, ultimately fostering a more holistic and culturally confident learning outcome.

Colleges and universities are carrying out comprehensive reforms to the evaluation system of college English teaching, establishing an assessment framework that highlights the orientation toward cultural confidence. This system is composed of two parts: the traditional final examination and a newly added cultural performance-based evaluation, with the latter accounting for a relatively higher proportion. In cultural performance-based evaluation, teachers assess students comprehensively from multiple dimensions. One key aspect is classroom participation, where students’ performance in activities such as cultural discussions, group presentations, and cultural debates is taken into account. Evaluation criteria include the enthusiasm of students’ participation, originality of viewpoints, and the accuracy and fluency of expressing local culture in English. Take group presentations as an example—teachers grade students based on their English proficiency, understanding of cultural content, and the creativity of their presentation formats. Homework is also included in the cultural performance-based evaluation. Teachers assign a series of culture-related tasks, such as writing a short essay comparing Chinese and Western cultures, creating an English PowerPoint presentation introducing Chinese culture, or translating traditional Chinese poetry. When evaluating essays, teachers focus not only on the students’ English writing skills but also on the depth of their cultural analysis and the originality of their perspectives. For PPT presentations, evaluation also covers students’ ability to select, organize, and present cultural content effectively. To better assess students’ cultural competence, teachers organize intercultural communication practice activities. For example, students are paired with international students and tasked with introducing traditional Chinese culture and contemporary societal developments in English. Afterward, international students provide peer feedback, and teachers offer evaluations based on their own observations. Teachers also encourage students to participate in English cultural competitions, such as speech contests or English drama performances. Students’ performances in these events are incorporated into the overall evaluation. By adopting this diversified evaluation approach, students come to understand that cultivating cultural confidence is a vital part of learning college English. It is not just about memorizing language knowledge, but about actively engaging with their native culture and improving their ability to express it in English. Many students have expressed that this evaluation system brings them great enjoyment and a strong sense of fulfillment, leading to a noticeable increase in their cultural confidence.

5. Conclusion

From the perspective of cultural confidence, the reform of college English teaching is a long-term task. Currently, college English teaching faces issues such as insufficient local cultural elements in teaching content, teaching methods that fail to stimulate students’ cultural confidence, and evaluation systems that do not emphasize the cultivation of cultural confidence. These problems can be addressed through optimizing teaching content, updating teaching methods, and improving the

evaluation system. Continued exploration and refinement in future teaching practices are necessary to further integrate cultural confidence into college English education, thereby cultivating more talents who possess both strong English language skills and profound cultural confidence. Such talents will make greater contributions to intercultural communication and the development of Chinese society.

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