# A Study on the Presentation of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture in High School English Teaching Materials Based on Core Literacy — Taking the Compulsory High School English Teaching Materials of the Beijing Normal University Edition (2019) as an Example

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**Abstract:** This study takes the 2019 compulsory high school English textbook of Beijing Normal University as the research object to analyze in depth how to present excellent traditional Chinese culture in the textbook, and combines the concept of core literacy education to explore the internal connection between traditional cultural content and core literacy cultivation. The study results show that this set of textbooks has achieved a good balance between cultural inheritance and language learning, cultivating students' cross-cultural communication skills and deepening their understanding and identification with Chinese culture.

*Keywords*: core literacy, excellent traditional Chinese culture, high school English, compulsory textbook content

## 1. Introduction

In the context of the new period, the enhancement of China's international competitiveness has led to increasing exchanges and cooperation between China and other countries. While accepting and absorbing the excellent cultures of other countries, China also needs to show the world the excellent traditional Chinese culture. The textbook is an important carrier of the curriculum, an important part of foreign language education, and plays a decisive role in what teachers teach and how they teach. Therefore, it is urgent to strengthen the presentation of Chinese traditional culture in high school English teaching materials in the new era, and through the integration of traditional culture in English teaching, students' cultural confidence can be strengthened, cultural differences can be understood, cultural literacy can be strengthened, and cultural output in the process of cross-cultural communication can be accomplished. In view of this, this study analyzes and discusses the presentation of Chinese excellent traditional culture in high school English teaching materials, and further puts forward suggestions to strengthen and improve the presentation of Chinese excellent traditional culture in high school English teaching materials, so as to help high school English teachers grasp the content and presentation of Chinese excellent traditional culture in the teaching materials more comprehensively, and to provide new ideas for the exploration of reform of high school English in the context of core literacy.

## 2. The Current Situation of English Teaching Regarding the Infiltration of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture

Excellent traditional Chinese culture is the "root" and "soul" of the Chinese nation. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out that "we must implement the fundamental task of cultivating virtue and talent.". Chinese excellent traditional culture contains rich moral education resources and is an important way to achieve the task of moral education. The Party and the state attach great importance to traditional culture education. In 2014, the Ministry of Education issued the "Guidelines for Improving Excellent Traditional Culture Education in China" (hereinafter referred to as the "Guidelines"), which detailed the importance and urgency of traditional culture education[1]. In 2021, the Ministry of Education issued the "Guidelines for the Introduction of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Primary and Secondary School Curriculum Textbooks", which clarifies the theme, content, and carrier forms of traditional culture in textbooks[2]. Textbooks are not only curriculum products, but also cultural products[3]. They are materials selected and processed from a certain social and cultural context, and their textual content should reflect certain cultural requirements. "Textbooks are important resources and carriers for implementing curriculum goals and achieving subject education"[4], which largely determines the value orientation of talent cultivation. "The inclusion of Chinese excellent traditional culture in primary and secondary school textbooks is an important measure to strengthen the function of Chinese excellent traditional

culture in shaping the soul and educating people, and to achieve the goal of moral education.". The Outline proposes a disciplinary arrangement of "3+2+N" for traditional culture in textbooks (3 referring to Chinese, history, and politics; 2 referring to art and sports; N referring to mathematics, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, etc.), and English, as a fundamental cultural course, also plays an important role in inheriting excellent traditional Chinese culture.

English textbooks should not only include knowledge of the English language and culture of English speaking countries, but also incorporate knowledge of excellent traditional Chinese culture, so that students can enhance national identity and patriotism in the comparison of Chinese and Western cultures, strengthen cultural confidence, tell Chinese stories well in English, and spread the voice of China well. However, existing research mainly focuses on the study of Chinese culture in English textbooks (such as Guo Baoxian[5]; Zhang Hong and Li Xiaonan, 2022), and the research stage mainly focuses on college English (such as Kang Li and Xu Jinfen[6]; Zhang Hong and Yu Rui[7]), with relatively insufficient research on traditional Chinese culture in middle school English textbooks.

With the implementation of the policy of "incorporating excellent traditional Chinese culture into curriculum, textbooks, and classrooms", English textbooks actively incorporate the content and form of traditional culture. However, during the implementation process, there are also issues that urgently need to be further studied, such as whether the content of excellent traditional Chinese culture is representative and typical, whether the presentation, hierarchical arrangement, and positional layout in curriculum textbooks conform to the laws of education, and whether the value of education can be fully realized[8]. To answer the above questions, this study takes relevant documents from the Ministry of Education and the research results of Tian Huisheng et al. and Shi Ping[9] as the analytical framework. It selects the compulsory high school English textbook published by Beijing Normal University in 2019 for analysis, aiming to reveal the reality of traditional culture in the high school English textbook and provide practical reference for the integration of traditional culture into English textbooks.

## 3. Research Design

### 3.1 Research Object

This study selected high school English compulsory textbooks (including accompanying audio and video) published by Beijing Normal University Press as the research object. Both sets of textbooks were revised in 2019 (after the new curriculum standards were issued), including 3 compulsory textbooks and 4 selective compulsory textbooks. During the revision process, attention was paid to the integration and presentation of excellent traditional Chinese culture[10], and each unit included five major parts: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and watching.

### 3.2 Analysis Framework

The cultural presentation method refers to the form in which the surface or deep thoughts, emotions, attitudes, values, etc. in culture are presented in words, images, videos, audio, etc. Shi Ping believes that the cultural presentation symbols in English textbooks can be divided into three categories: visual codes using visual analyzers and visual channels; Using auditory analyzers and auditory channels to generate auditory codes; Simultaneously utilizing audiovisual analyzer and audiovisual channel audiovisual code. The visual codes presented in traditional culture in English textbooks include images (appearing only in the form of images without any text), text (non reading text appearing only in the form of text), images and text, and reading text; Auditory code, also known as audio; Audio visual code is video.

This study analyzes the integration and presentation of excellent traditional Chinese culture in textbooks from the perspective of presentation methods. The traditional cultural theme content of English textbooks relies on the form of carriers, and achieves the goal of cultivating people with culture and cultivating morality through presentation.

### 3.3 Encoding and Statistics

Based on the analysis framework of traditional culture in English textbooks, this study identified all the content about excellent traditional Chinese culture from the compulsory high school English textbooks of Beijing Normal University (2019) and encoded it. The coding follows the following principles: when the same cultural element appears multiple times before and after, but is presented in different ways, it belongs to the corresponding category. For example, if the Spring Festival appears three times before and after the Beijing Normal University version, but appears in the form of "images + characters", characters, and reading text, it is counted as three presentation form. Audio and video are measured in textbook sections, with each section counted as one occurrence and repeated occurrences counted only once. The obtained data was statistically analyzed using Excel 2019.

# 4. Research Findings

According to statistics, excellent traditional Chinese culture has appeared 33 times in the textbook of Beijing Normal University. It has distinct multi-modal characteristics in its presentation.

The statistical results of this study show that the presentation of traditional culture in textbooks reflects a multi-modal character, in which visual, auditory, and audio-visual perceptions dominate, accounting for 82%, 15%, and 3%, respectively. The specific data are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Distribution of Traditional Culture Presentation Form in the Textbook**

| Textbook Version | Presentation Form | Specific Form | Proportion | Concrete Content |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beijing Normal University Edition (2019) | Vision | Images | 3% (1) | Lion dance |
| | | Characters | 18% (6) | Spring Festival, famous quotes from "The Book of Rites":, famous quotes from Wang Bo, famous quotes from "Zizhi Tongjian", famous quotes from Xunzi, and famous quotes from Zuo Qiuming |
| | | Images + Characters | 37% (12) | Zhuge Liang's famous sayings, Spring Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, "First Day", Paper Cuttings, Water Splashing Festival, quintessence of Chinese Peking Opera, Confucius' famous sayings, Laozi's famous sayings (2), historical relics Confucius Temple |
| | | Reading Text | 24% (8) | Tea tasting, martial arts learning, Spring Festival, traditional food, traditional artworks (image of the River during the Qingming Festival, Dunhuang murals), Li Bai's contribution to poetry, traditional Chinese medicine, and the Four Great Inventions |
| | Hearing | Audio | 15% (5) | Mid-Autumn Festival, Beijing Opera (4) |
| | Audio-visual Perception | Video | 3% (1) | Paper Cuttings |

Multi-modal refers to the simultaneous or sequential appearance of text, images, tables, recordings, and videos[11]. The textbook includes multiple modalities such as images, text, video, and audio, and the same cultural content is often presented in two or more modalities. This presentation form utilizes multi-modal collaboration to jointly express meaning, stimulate students' senses from multiple dimensions, promote deep understanding, and achieve the effect of cultural education while improving English learning efficiency.

However, the presentation of traditional culture in this textbook is still mainly visual, with relatively less auditory and visual perception. Therefore, future textbook revisions can appropriately add content that introduces traditional culture in the form of audio and video, so that students can more vividly and vividly experience the charm of traditional culture and increase their interest in learning traditional culture in English. The presentation of cultural content indicates the level of emphasis that a textbook places on that part of the cultural content. For example, culture presented solely in the form of images only requires students to have a simple understanding, while culture presented in the form of reading texts not only requires understanding, but also a deep understanding of the ideological value carried behind the discourse. The traditional culture in the textbook in the form of reading text is typical and symbolic, such as the basic carrier of Chinese culture - Chinese characters, Chinese traditional festivals - Mid-Autumn Festival, Spring Festival, and the intellectual achievements of ancient Chinese ancestors - the Four Great Inventions, Chinese medicine, etc. It can be seen that this textbook attaches great importance to traditional Chinese culture and cultural education.

# 5. Conclusion and Outlook

This study analyzed the traditional cultural content in the 2019 compulsory high school English textbook of Beijing Normal University from the perspective of presentation methods. It was found that the presentation methods of the textbook have the characteristics of multi-modal teaching materials, which are conducive to three-dimensional display of excellent traditional Chinese culture. This is a preliminary attempt to integrate traditional Chinese culture into English textbooks in accordance with national requirements, verifying the feasibility of incorporating traditional culture into English textbooks. While acknowledging the existing achievements, this study found that the textbook relatively lacks audio and video presentation methods. Therefore, future revisions of English textbooks should focus on adding audio and video presentation methods as appropriate. The increase in traditional cultural content in English textbooks has raised higher requirements for the traditional cultural cultivation of frontline English teachers. Teachers should enhance their awareness of traditional culture from the perspectives of cognition, attitude, and behavioral orientation, and act as role models for learning and

practicing traditional culture.

This study only analyzed the integration of traditional culture in high school English textbooks from the perspective of textbook writing, and there is a lack of research on whether the use of textbooks truly serves as a cultural person. Textbooks are just carriers of knowledge, and the task of imparting knowledge relies on the classroom and teachers. Future research can be conducted in depth from aspects such as teacher teaching, teacher-student interaction, and testing and evaluation.

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