

Analysis of “Chinese Cultural Aphasia” in Integrated English Teaching

XIAO Wenwen

Leshan Normal University, Leshan, China

Integrated English is a significant course for the English majors in China. Now there is a phenomenon named “Chinese Cultural Aphasia” attracting the attention of the researchers, for it’s not good to convey the Chinese culture. In Integrated English teaching, the teachers should try their best to solve the problem of “Chinese Cultural Aphasia”. This research is based on the quiz and questionnaire, which are designed according to the Chinese culture in different fields, in order to make some suggestions in Chinese culture introduction in Integrated English teaching.

Keywords: Chinese Cultural Aphasia, Integrated English teaching, China

Introduction

Integrated English is a very important course for the English or related majors in China. The objectives of this course are to comprehensively cultivate the ability of undergraduates in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating of the English language. Therefore, during this course teaching, most teachers mainly focus on the English language learning as well as the English culture cultivating. On the other side, the Chinese undergraduates also need to learn some Chinese culture. For the English or related majors, most courses are carried out based on the English language and culture. Therefore, there is a phenomenon named “Chinese Cultural Aphasia”.

Literature Review

The current research on the phenomenon of “Chinese Cultural Aphasia” has mainly focused on the teaching of English as a whole. The concept of “Chinese Cultural Aphasia” was introduced by Cong Cong (2000), who pointed out that this is a deficiency in English teaching in China and that traditional Chinese culture should be expressed in English at all levels of teaching, so that students’ English proficiency, their level of expression of traditional Chinese culture in English, and their understanding of Western culture should grow simultaneously. Culture should grow in parallel. Yang Juan (2015) analysed the danger of the problem of “Chinese Cultural Aphasia” in English language teaching and the reasons for it, and proposes measures to address it in a holistic manner. Yu Ying and Liu Miao (2014) studied the phenomenon of “Chinese Cultural Aphasia” from an intercultural perspective, taking general engineering colleges as an example.

Acknowledgements: This paper is the research result of “A Study on the Phenomenon of ‘Chinese Cultural Dissonance’ and the Path of Integrating Chinese Traditional Culture in the Integrated English Course”, 2021 Project of Ideological and Political Education Study Center of Leshan Normal University (Project No. SZND202111).

XIAO Wenwen, lecturer, School of Foreign Languages, Leshan Normal University, Leshan, China.

For example, Feng Qiao'e (2014) analyzed the necessity and measures of integrating Chinese traditional culture in the Integrated English course. Zhao Huizhu (2016) proposed a strategy for the infiltration of Chinese culture in the teaching of the course.

Research Methods

For this research, it was carried out: the quiz on the Chinese cultural expressions in English and the questionnaire, in order to analyze the following questions:

- (1) How is the present ability of the Translation major undergraduates to translate the Chinese cultural expressions into English?
- (2) How to improve this ability in the following teaching?

Preparation

This research aims to analyze the present ability of the Translation major undergraduates to translate the Chinese cultural expressions. Therefore, at first, the quiz on Chinese-English translation of cultural expressions was carried out to evaluate their ability. Then, based on the quiz, the students were asked to finish the questionnaire.

Step 1: The Quiz

In order to check the students' ability to translate the cultural expressions from Chinese to English, the quiz was designed, covering the expressions on festival, politics, policy, culture, fashion, environment protection, economics, study, tourism, history, and others. There are five expressions in each field, and the students were required to finish this translation task within one hour.

Step 2: The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was carried out based on the finished quiz. After finishing the quiz within one hour, the students were required to finish the questionnaire on Wenjuanxing, to reflect the results of the quiz and their understanding of “Chinese Cultural Aphasia”.

Research Results

The research results are also presented based on these two steps. 51 students of Translation major in Leshan Normal University took part in both the quiz and the questionnaire. And the questionnaire was carried out after they took part in the quiz.

Results of Step 1: The Quiz

The score rate of each field can be seen from Table 1.

Table 1

The Score Rate of Each Field

Field	The score rate of quiz (%)
Festival	36.2
Politics	17.8
Policy	25.9
Culture	26.7
Fashion	26.4
Environmental protection	36.4

(Table 1 to be continued)

Economics	20.6
Learning	34.5
Tourism	37.1
History	36.1
Others	6.7

Table 1 shows the score rates of each field. Among these fields, the score rate of tourism is the highest, 37.1%, while that of others is the lowest, 6.7%. Maybe that is related to the fact that this university is located in Leshan, a tourist city, so maybe the teachers mention some expressions on tourism. No matter how, the score rates of these field are all lower than 60%, or even 40%, which indicates that these tested undergraduates really cannot translate these Chinese cultural expressions into English in a good way. This table indicates that these students really cannot express the Chinese culture in a good way.

Results of Step 2: The Questionnaire

After finishing the quiz, the students were required to finish the questionnaire on Wenjuanxing. The questionnaire is based on the quiz, and there are 13 questions in all in order to get the students' thinking on how they think about the quiz and how they think about the importance of introducing the Chinese expressions into the related courses.

For the difficulty of the quiz, 9.8% of the students think it's very difficult, 66.67% difficult, and 23.53% neither difficult nor easy, while in fact the result of the quiz indicates that it's very difficult for them. 58.82% totally agree on that the Chinese culture should be added into the English courses, 37.25% agree on that, and 3.92% neither agrees nor disagrees.

Table 2

The Familiarity of the Students on Chinese Culture

Familiarity degree	Percentage (%)
Very familiar	0
Familiar	9.8
Just-so-so	62.75
Not familiar	21.57
Very unfamiliar	5.88

As Table 2 shows, before becoming an undergraduate majoring in English, these students are not so familiar with the Chinese culture: No one is very familiar; only 9.8%: familiar; 62.75%: just-so-so; 21.57%: not familiar; 5.88%: not familiar at all. The result indicates that most students have not enough knowledge in the Chinese culture, so translating these expressions into English is more difficult for them.

On whether the Chinese culture should be added in the English courses, 58.82% of the students totally agree, 37.25% agree, and 3.92% neither agree nor object.

For the purposes of putting the Chinese culture into the English courses, the choices are as follows: to put a solid foundation for the future translating or teaching (98.04%); to take part in the contests of translating (86.27%); to pass related exams (such as TEM-4/8 or CET-4/6) (84.31%); to do better in reading comprehension (80.39%); and other purposes (47.06%).

Table 3

The Channels of Getting the English Expressions of the Chinese Culture in Integrated English Class

Channels	Percentage (%)
Checking the dictionary	49.02
Explanation of the teacher in class	92.16
Mentioning in the textbook	78.43
Preparation for the English exams (TEM 4/8 or CET 4/6)	60.78
Daily report or presentation of other classmates in class	70.59
Collecting by themselves	52.94
Internet	86.27
Other channels	35.29

The students get the English expressions of the Chinese culture mainly through the following channels: explanation of the teacher in class (92.16%); Internet (86.27%); mentioning in the textbook (78.43%); daily report or presentation of other classmates in class (70.59%); preparation for the English exams (TEM-4/8 or CET-4/6) (60.78%); collecting by themselves (52.94%); checking the dictionary (49.02%); and other channels (35.29%).

Table 4

Students' Deficiency in the English Expressions of the Chinese Culture

Field	Deficiency (%)
Festival	52.94
Politics	82.35
Policy	84.31
Culture	76.47
Fashion	78.43
Environmental protection	64.71
Economics	74.51
Learning	58.82
Tourism	70.59
History	84.31
Others	49.02

The quiz involves 11 fields, and among them students make a self-assessment and 52.94% hold they do not do well in the festival area, 82.35% in the politics; 84.31% in the policy; 76.47% in the culture; 78.43% in the fashion; 64.71% in the environmental protection; 74.51% in the economics; 58.82% in the learning; 70.59% in the tourism; 84.31% in the history; and 49.01% in others.

Table 5

Contrast Between the Score Rate of Quiz and the Students' Deficiency in the Questionnaire

Area	The score rate of quiz (%)	Students' deficiency in questionnaire (%)
Festival	36.2	52.94
Politics	17.8	82.35
Policy	25.9	84.31
Culture	26.7	76.47
Fashion	26.4	78.43
Environmental protection	36.4	64.71

(Table 5 to be continued)

Economics	20.6	74.51
Learning	34.5	58.82
Tourism	37.1	70.59
History	36.1	84.31
Others	6.7	49.01

In the table, the former number line shows the score rate of the quiz, while the latter one shows the students' deficiency in their own opinion. Generally speaking, these two numbers should be negatively correlated.

Discussion

For the features of the English major and other majors, they have deeper understanding of the Western culture, so they pay little or even no attention to the Chinese culture (Wang, 2020). Through the quiz and questionnaire, it can be seen that most of the English majors cannot express the traditional Chinese culture in a correct way. The “Chinese Cultural Aphasia” that has long been prevalent in academic circles is precisely the cultural anxiety in the process of China's rise as a great power and the revival of a strong nation, which is also the inevitable result of China's cultural revival (Zhao, 2012). It's still a long way for these undergraduates to understand the Chinese culture and convey the culture to the outside world. Traditional Chinese culture can be integrated into the Integrated English course in the following ways.

1. Raise students' awareness of learning traditional Chinese culture. And make students aware of that learning Chinese and traditional Chinese culture is now a trend among young people around the world, so that they actively want to learn Chinese traditional culture and are happy to introduce Chinese culture to young people from other countries in English.

2. Raise the awareness of course in the dissemination of traditional Chinese culture. This will enable them to consciously disseminate traditional Chinese culture to students in the Integrated English classroom, to achieve correct value leadership, to enhance cultural literacy, and to cultivate humanistic feelings.

3. Enrich the traditional Chinese cultural elements in the course materials and teaching resources so that they become an integral part of the Integrated English course and students can deepen their understanding of traditional Chinese cultural elements while learning about Western culture.

Conclusion

For the Chinese students, “Chinese Cultural Aphasia” is a common phenomenon. All the teachers and students themselves should try their best to introduce the traditional Chinese culture into related courses, especially Integrated English. As the Integrated English teachers, they should solve the “Chinese Culture Aphasia” from the perspectives of textbook, teachers' thinking, students' thinking, and so on. To understand our own culture is a good way to understand the outside world.

References

- Cong, C. (2000.10.19). Chinese cultural aphasia: Deficiency in English teaching in China. *Guangming Daily*, C1.
- Feng, Q. E. (2014). Introduction of traditional Chinese culture in integrated English language teaching. *Contemporary Foreign Languages Studies*, 35(5), 40-42.
- Wang, L. (2020). An analysis of the causes and countermeasures of Chinese cultural aphasia among English majors. *Journal of Western*, 8(8), 83-85.

- Yang, J. (2015). Analysis of the “Chinese cultural aphasia” in English Language teaching in China. *Journal of Inner Mongolia Normal University (Education Science Edition)*, 28(10), 127-128+152.
- Yu, Y., & Liu, M. (2014). A study of “Chinese cultural aphasia” from an intercultural perspective in English language teaching. *Journal of Jilin Institute of Chemical Technology*, 31(2), 24-26.
- Zhao, H. Z. (2015). Strategies for the infiltration of Chinese culture in the teaching of “Integrated English”. *The Guide of Science & Education*, 10(20), 68-69.
- Zhao, F. L. (2012). The dialogue between national movement and culture: A discussion of western learning and the “Dissonance” of Chinese culture. *Culture Journal*, 7(3), 164-168.