

Research on the Cultivation Path of Cultural Confidence in Middle School English Teaching

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Abstract: At present, the phenomenon of Cultural Aphasia and cultural indifference is widespread among Chinese teenagers, which is not only due to the influence of western values, but also due to the lack of school education. To cultivate cultural confidence in English education, it is necessary to revise English textbooks and use explicit courses to enhance understanding of national culture, fully utilize teachers own cultural personalities to influence students, fully utilize school culture to create a culture confidence atmosphere based on the mother language, encourage students to participate in relevant cultural practice activities, so as to cultivate their cultural confidence.

Keywords: English Teaching; Native Language Cultural Alienation; Cultural Confidence.

1. Introduction

Cultural confidence is a psychological experience state of cultural subjects towards culture, and also an external formation presented by culture in its own development process. Specifically, cultural confidence refers to a strong identification of a country or a nation with its own culture, a deep belief and high recognition of its value, and a persistent belief in and pursuit of its creativity and development prospects.[1].

Globalization has made English an international lingua franca. However, the conflict and integration of multiple cultures, the utilitarianism of English education, and the absence of guidance in education management have made Chinese English learners keen on the pursuit of English culture, which has led to the alienation of their mother tongue culture. Therefore, English education should shape learners' positive cultural personality, enhance their ability of cultural appreciation, cultivate their correct views on heterogeneous and ethnic cultures, so as to change the phenomenon of cultural alienation in learners' mother tongue and cultivate their confidence in mother tongue culture. In this case, how to appropriately introduce Western culture and build confidence in one's own culture in English education is a topic worth exploring.

2. The Phenomenon of Cultural Alienation of Native Language

With the development of the economy and the widespread application of the internet, traditional Chinese culture has been strongly impacted by cultural products and values from abroad. Although most people can adhere to their own national position and follow the best, the popular culture, lifestyle and values of the English-speaking world have caused the cultural alienation of Chinese English students. Native language cultural alienation refers to the psychological distance that individuals experience from their original culture due to changes in their living environment or constraints from other cultures. At the same time, due to the influence of other cultures, they gain a bystander's perspective, critically examine their native culture, and even overlook the excellent elements in the culture, amplifying the

negative factors in it, resulting in identity crisis in their own interactions with others, ultimately losing confidence and self.[2] The phenomenon of cultural alienation in native language is manifested in the following two aspects in real life.

2.1. The Lack of Understanding and Expression of Ethnic Culture

As for the lack of understanding and expression of ethnic culture, professor Cong put forward the concept of *Chinese cultural aphasia* in 2000. He argued that although many young Chinese scholars had a considerable level of English proficiency, they could not always show the profound cultural quality and independent cultural personality that scholars in cultural countries should have in the process of communicating with Westerners, presenting *Chinese cultural aphasia*, and their performance in daily Chinese communication also lacked cultural heritage.[3] On the one hand, learners have insufficient or superficial understanding of culture of their own country, which cannot reflect the intrinsic values of their country and therefore cannot accurately express the culture of China. On the other hand, some students have a certain understanding of Chinese culture, but due to the lack of vocabulary and language expression skills related to their own culture, their language use is limited, and they cannot accurately express their own culture, thereby hindering the success of cross-cultural communication. For example, when communicating with students, foreign teachers ask a simple chat question, "what do you usually have for your breakfast?" Unfortunately, many students do not know how to answer it, because most of them do not know how to express *soybean milk*, *deep-fried dough sticks*, *steamed stuffed buns*, and *porridge* in English. This phenomenon directly reflects the lack of Chinese culture in middle school English teaching. It is mainly because for a long time, our English teaching has consistently emphasized English culture, and English exams have always examined English culture. Therefore, Chinese culture has never had the opportunity to enter the classroom, or occasionally entered the classroom, and has also been removed as interference. Due to failed cross-cultural communication, English students are easily placed at a cultural disadvantage in communication activities, resulting in a low level of cultural confidence and

ultimately affecting China's cultural soft strength level in the world.

2.2. The Lack of National Cultural Identity

For the individual, cultural identity refers to the process of individual reflection and confirmation of the group culture to which they belong, and the process of incorporating the group culture into the personal value system. It guides individuals to love, be faithful, preserve and expand the culture of the group to which they belong.[4] At present, Chinese teenagers generally face problems such as weak traditional ethical concepts and deviations in their aesthetic perception of national culture. In this case, the prevalence of overseas shopping, the rise of study abroad activities and celebration of foreign festivals all reflect the crisis of Chinese cultural identity.

As an important occasion for cross-cultural communication, English education aims to promote the Chinese spirit, tell Chinese stories well, and spread Chinese values for foreign language learners in the process of learning and using foreign languages for cross-cultural communication, rather than just focusing on language knowledge and skills. However, if foreign language learners do not have deep national cultural literacy and high cultural confidence, this goal will be difficult to achieve. Only when learners can view the world from the perspective of their own culture and reflect on themselves from the perspective of world culture, can they truly possess cultural confidence. On the contrary, if learners experience cultural alienation in their native language, it is difficult to actively explore their own culture and spread Chinese values to the world. Therefore, how to appropriately introduce Western culture and build confidence in one's own culture in English education is a topic worth exploring.

3. The Analysis of the Reasons for Phenomenon of Cultural Alienation of Native Language

There are many reasons for the lack of understanding and expression of ethnic culture and the lack of national cultural identity. Under the trend of global integration, some Western countries have taken advantage of this to promote their national ideologies and values, which has had a subtle impact on Chinese youth and seriously threatened the cultivation of their cultural confidence. In addition, there are also some problems in China's education.

3.1. The Prevalence of Western Festivals in Campus Culture

Traditional festivals represent the unique time sense of Chinese nation, which contains unique cultural concepts of the nation. However, nowadays more and more traditional ethnic festivals have been diluted, and more and more foreign festivals have occupied the emotional territory of teenagers.

In Chinese and Western festivals, some festivals are relatively similar in terms of time and cultural connotations, such as the Spring Festival and New Year's Day, the romantic Double Seventh Festival and Valentine's Day, and the ghost culture related Hungry Ghost Festival and Halloween, etc. Moreover, there are many festivals nowadays, people's understanding of festival culture is not deep enough, leading to a convergence of festival cultural concepts. If Western holiday culture is allowed to spread to the world, it will lead to the assimilation and even substitution of the cultural

concepts of traditional Chinese festivals by the West.

Furthermore, the Western style festival system is based on the Western calendar system, which is more in line with the modern industrial production time and closer to people's lives. Therefore, it has stronger dissemination ability, which poses a great threat to the traditional Chinese festivals based on agricultural culture. In particular, under the yoke of capital, western hedonism, consumerism, extravagance and other festival concepts have not only eroded the traditional virtues of the Chinese nation, such as hard work, simplicity and thrift, but also made some people blindly worship western festivals, and also lost confidence in their national festival culture.

The reason why Western festivals have become popular in China is, on the surface, a personal choice and freedom, but in essence, it is the pursuit and recognition of Western culture and values by Chinese people, especially the younger generation. Its root is the result of conscious, organized, and planned infiltration of culture and values in Western society. The Western multiculturalism and values centered around Western festivals will have a sustained and fierce impact on cultivating cultural confidence among students. This will lead to the deconstruction of certain elements in traditional Chinese culture, and the clash of various ideological trends will intensify the deconstruction effect on traditional Chinese culture.

3.2. The Lack of Chinese Culture in English Textbooks

English textbooks are one of the main sources of cultural cognition for students. There is a lack of Chinese culture and an imbalance in the proportion of Chinese and Western cultures in current English textbooks. A study was conducted on the cultural content of current English textbooks at different levels and versions. It was found that English textbooks pay attention to infiltrating Chinese culture, but overall, the culture of English speaking countries dominates. This is manifested in two aspects. Firstly, the culture of English speaking countries accounts for a large proportion in textbooks, while the content of Chinese culture and other cultures in the world is relatively small. Secondly, the cultural dominance of English speaking countries is also reflected in the length and presentation of their textbooks. For example, in a mainstream high school textbook, the culture of English speaking countries is often presented in the form of text, while Chinese culture is often presented in the form of illustrations and exercises.

If the reading and phrases in English textbooks only select articles that reflect the culture of English speaking countries and only explore the culture of them, then in the long run, our students will completely lose Chinese culture in English learning and cannot showcase our excellent culture in English communication. In fact, with the increasingly frequent international exchanges, Chinese expressions such as *spiritual civilization*, *Confucius*, and *gelivable* gradually entered the English world. So our Chinese culture gradually integrates into English culture. The expressions that are not included in the English dictionary cannot become a constraint for us to express excellent Chinese culture. In this case, English teachers should actively create opportunities for students to express excellent Chinese culture and continuously enhance their cultural confidence.

3.3. Shortcomings in English Course Teaching

On the one hand, the Language Teaching Methodology

focuses on the education of language knowledge and rules, and on the cultivation of abilities such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation. This shows the neglect of cultivating students' sound personality and establishing their cultural identity. When formulating teaching plans, experts pay more attention to how to make students learn a language closer to the local language, resulting in a teaching system that focuses on the output and input of foreign cultures, while neglecting the learning of excellent Chinese culture. In addition, teachers encourage students to exercise their foreign language dictation and expression abilities by reading a large amount of foreign language magazines, watching foreign language movies, and listening to foreign language broadcasts during their spare time for self-study. This learning method can help students better master the language to some extent. However, in a large amount of language input, students will gradually be influenced by Western cultural ideas and values, resulting in a weaker sense of identification with Chinese culture and a weaker emotional attachment to it. Therefore, it is necessary to fully reflect Chinese culture in the foreign language textbook system and professional courses to make up for its shortcomings in foreign language teaching.[5]

On the other hand, foreign language teachers have limited understanding of the excellent traditional Chinese culture. It is obvious that students' learning of foreign language knowledge is achieved through foreign language teachers, and their learning status to a certain extent depends on the teacher's knowledge level and structure. However, in the knowledge structure system of foreign language teachers, compared to foreign language linguistics and Western culture, there is a serious lack of knowledge about excellent traditional Chinese culture, which increases the difficulty for them to integrate excellent traditional Chinese culture into foreign language teaching. Moreover, foreign language teachers have always lacked a correct understanding of foreign language teaching. In their personal beliefs, the focus of foreign language teaching is not only on learning language knowledge, but also on introducing the culture of the target language country, emphasizing the usability of the language, and neglecting the humanistic education of the language, especially the comparison with the mother tongue culture. Some teachers even implanted their blind worship of western culture, their negation of Chinese excellent traditional culture and advanced socialist culture into the minds of students through classroom teaching, which has seriously affected the formation of students' positive ideological values.

4. The Construction Path of Cultural Confidence in Middle School English Teaching

Cultural confidence includes cultural confidence awareness and cultural confidence behavior. To cultivate cultural confidence awareness and strengthen cultural confidence behavior in English teaching, we can start from five aspects, that is, the aspects of textbooks, courses, teachers, campus culture, and practice. The details are as follows.

4.1. Revising English Textbooks that Highlighting Chinese Culture Value and Developing School-based Textbooks with Regional Characteristics

Adding Chinese cultural elements to existing textbooks requires the use of specific excellent Chinese culture as a

carrier. The selection of cultural content can be considered from three perspectives, that is, culture itself, students' cultural learning, and interaction and mutual learning between Chinese and foreign cultures.[6]

From the perspective of culture itself, English textbooks should balance traditional and contemporary culture, as well as Chinese culture in the fields of humanities and technology. On the one hand, English textbooks should not only contain the excellent traditional Chinese culture, such as traditional drama, calligraphy and painting, martial arts, traditional festivals, park architecture, catering culture, allusions, legends, literature, etc., but also select the culture that can reflect the development and construction achievements of China's modern socialism, for example, China's major achievements in space technology and space exploration such as quantum communication satellite and the emergence of outstanding figures such as Zhong Yang. In this case, students can understand and love the socialist culture with Chinese characteristics in the new era. On the other hand, if we want to cultivate people with all-round development, the content of Chinese culture in textbooks should not only reflect the progress of science and technology in our country, such as Tu Youyou, the Nobel Prize winner, and Yuan Longping, who is known as the *Father of hybrid rice*, but also reflect some advanced representatives in the field of humanities and social sciences in China, such as Mo Yan, who has important influence in the domestic and foreign literary circles.

From the perspective of students' cultural learning, firstly, the cultural content in textbooks should be in line with the daily learning and life of middle school students in China. Because it can meet their needs for self-exploration and self-expression, stimulate their interest in learning, and improve their learning motivation. Secondly, English textbooks should also be combined with the actual situation, that is to say, integrating Chinese culture into teaching, and incorporating cultural learning methods into teaching to guide students to form autonomous learning strategies.

From the perspective of cultural interaction and mutual learning between China and foreign countries, the content of English textbooks should, on the one hand, reflect the positive influence of China on foreign economy, politics, culture, and other aspects, such as Confucianism and Chinese vocabulary on the Silk Road. This approach can cultivate students' sense of national pride, stimulate their love for Chinese culture and enthusiasm for spreading Chinese culture. On the other hand, some foreign vocabulary should also be introduced to reflect the influence of foreign culture on Chinese culture, thereby establishing an open and inclusive image of modern China, cultivating the tolerant spirit and broad cultural perspective of young people, and enhancing their cultural confidence.

In addition to revising existing textbooks, schools can develop school-based textbooks based on their own regional cultural characteristics. Local governments and schools can collaborate with relevant experts and scholars to develop school-based textbooks with local characteristics, making them closer to students, thereby enhancing the relationship between teaching and students, and increasing students' interest in learning. Taking Sichuan as an example, Sichuan opera, Sichuan cuisine, giant pandas, Shu embroidery, Sanxingdui, etc. can be included in school-based textbooks. These cultural paradigms closely related to students' lives can activate the values of traditional culture, enhance the charm of Chinese culture, strengthen students' traditional cultural heritage, and enhance their national cultural confidence.

4.2. Utilizing Explicit Courses to Enhance Understanding of Ethnic Culture

On the one hand, classroom teaching can consciously integrate Chinese culture through cultural differences comparison. Culture is all-encompassing and ubiquitous, which is often hidden in reading texts and language materials, requiring teachers to explore. Based on the premise that most foreign language textbooks currently choose articles related to the society and culture of the target language country, when explaining language knowledge, teachers can choose some example sentences that reflect Chinese culture and combine language learning with cultural learning. This can increase the proportion of Chinese culture and enhance students' ability to express Chinese culture in English. For example, when learning the word *masterpiece*, take the *Four Literary Masterpieces of China* as an example to help students understand the English expressions of excellent Chinese Works. When introducing western festivals, the introduction of Chinese traditional festivals is also included, so that students can learn how to express Chinese traditional festivals and festival customs in English, such as couplets, set off firecrackers, Chinese knotting, reunion dinner, etc. This teaching method naturally integrates Chinese culture into the learning of the target language and target language culture, almost seamlessly connecting, without making people feel abrupt or deliberate, and is easy for students to accept and understand.

On the other hand, information technology can be used to broaden learning channels. Upload English video materials, MOOCO resources, or newspaper articles related to Chinese culture to students as supplementary materials for extracurricular learning. Video resources such as *Wild China*, *The Story of China*, *A Bite of China*, and articles from *China Daily* are highly recommended for learning Chinese culture in English. The learning of online resources is not limited by time and location, and can make up for the shortage of face-to-face teaching hours. It is an extension and expansion of classroom cultural input. It is completely feasible to create a comprehensive and three-dimensional environment for learning Chinese culture in English through the organic combination of in class and out of class input.

4.3. Shaping English Teachers with Positive Cultural Personality and Infecting Students with the Power of Role Models

Cultural personality is the psychological and behavioral norms that culture accumulates in individuals.[7]The cultural personality of English teachers plays an irreplaceable role in cultivating learners' awareness and confidence in their native language culture. English teachers not only need to impart professional knowledge to learners, but also need to shape learners' ways of thinking and values through their own value judgment of human culture, so as to cultivate learners' cultural judgment and spirit. This requires teachers to maintain their own psychological balance, consciously choose their own ethnic culture, and examine foreign cultures, in order to establish their own cultural personality and confidence. Teachers can only guide students when they have strong cultural confidence and awareness. That is to say, only when teachers can feel the charm of Chinese culture from the depths of their hearts and take pride in it, can they transform this charm into a force to educate and infect students, in order to cultivate students' confidence in their own country's

culture. Teachers with cultural awareness can help students establish inclusive values. During the course of teaching, teachers will guide students to discover their strengths and weaknesses in appreciation and comparison, including the strengths and weaknesses of their own ethnic and other cultures. Ultimately, children will learn from each other's strengths and develop inclusive personality traits. For example, in English textbooks, students learn that white symbolizes purity in the West and is often used in festive occasions, while Chinese tradition is often used for funerals and inauspicious events. And students can understand that dragon is a totem of traditional Chinese culture, and through learning Western culture, they understand that the attitude of the West towards dragons is vastly different from that of the Chinese nation. After such comparative analysis, not only does it expand students' knowledge, but it also gradually accumulates and deepens their cultural cultivation.

4.4. Creating Campus Culture and Cultivating an Environment for Confidence in Native Language Culture

Campus culture, as a cultural phenomenon, is closely related to the growth and development of schools. In recent years, China has attached great importance to and actively advocated strengthening the construction of campus culture. So the campus culture of the school has strong characteristics of the times, distinct guidance, and high innovation. In particular, the involvement of the Internet has made WeChat official account, Sina Open, campus application and other emerging cultural phenomena come one after another, becoming an indispensable part of young students' campus life. [8]

On the one hand, it is necessary to vigorously promote local culture and build campus characteristic culture. Culture should have regional characteristics, and China has a vast territory, numerous ethnic groups, diverse development histories, diverse customs, and rich local characteristics. Many places of this country have a profound cultural heritage, which can be described as colorful. First of all, schools should be good at tapping local cultural resource, so that students can experience the essence and strength of the national spirit from the cultural atmosphere around them, so as to enhance the persuasiveness and appeal of education. Secondly, the cultural resource excavated should be actively integrated, academically promoted and effectively publicized. For example, the local historical cultural resource can be used to hold special lectures to make the local culture an organic part of the campus culture construction. The integration of local culture into the construction of distinctive campus culture in universities is also an important cornerstone for the development and inheritance of a country's and a nation's culture. With the aim of making every scenic spot speak, we can utilize areas such as street signs, streetlights, walls, corridors, and billboards to optimize the campus environment and fully reflect the perfect combination of characteristic culture, school education, and landscape art.

On the other hand, it is necessary to carry out comprehensive campus cultural activities and achieve the integration of modern culture and traditional culture. Chinese culture encompasses everything and has strong integration capabilities. In campus, only by keeping up with the times, integrating excellent traditional culture into modern culture, and achieving the combination of traditional culture and modern culture, can we create an elegant, positive, healthy,

and upward campus culture. Schools should continuously explore the application scope, space, and form of excellent traditional culture on campus, inherit and develop excellent traditional culture with modern concepts and models, and continuously increase the modernity of traditional culture. Firstly, schools can carry out technological and cultural activities to cultivate students' innovative thinking. The theme of activities can focus on the current popular knowledge of economic globalization, low-carbon economy, etc., and carry out debate contests, knowledge contests, etc., so as to cultivate the ability of contemporary middle school students to advocate science, pursue truth, and study hard, and improve their innovative ideas. Secondly, schools should focus on organizing meaningful cultural appreciation activities. Such as appreciating classical masterpieces, regularly holding book reports, etc., various cultural and artistic activities can also be carried out to promote the excellent culture and customs of the Chinese nation, so as to improve the artistic appreciation ability of middle school students and promote the development of moral and aesthetic education. With innovative thinking and the foundation of traditional culture, the two blend and complement each other, integrating traditional culture into the trend of modern culture and playing its due role in the new era.

4.5. Encouraging Students to Participate in Cultural Practice Activities and Strengthening Cultural Confidence Behavior

The first step in building cultural confidence is to enhance students' cultural awareness and understanding through the joint action of textbooks, teachers, and campus culture. Based on this, carrying out cultural practice activities, strengthening students' awareness of cultural subjectivity and responsibility, and enhancing their sense of cultural responsibility is the second step in building cultural confidence.

Enhancing cross-cultural communication skills through experiential cross-cultural communication activities. In foreign language classrooms, teachers should create a real cross-cultural communication situation, enabling students to apply the language they have learned to a real cross-cultural communication experience, thereby completing challenging communication tasks. For example, students can simulate tour guides and waiters to receive foreign tourists. Through these activities, students can apply the cultural and communicative knowledge they have learned to practical life, thereby enhancing their cross-cultural awareness, adjusting their cross-cultural strategies, and improving their communication skills. Experiential cross-cultural communication not only enables students to use English to express their national culture, but also allows them to immerse themselves in the cultural context of the target language, experiencing different cultures from different perspectives and roles. At the same time, it can also improve students' ability to engage in flexible and appropriate dialogue and communication with their communicative partners, thereby reducing their anxiety in cross-cultural communication and enhancing their confidence in cross-cultural communication.

Improve the ability to spread national culture through the *Tell China in a Foreign Language* activity. Under the new historical conditions, young students should tell the story of China well, showcase a three-dimensional, comprehensive, and real China to the world, and demonstrate a country's soft

power. Through the *Tell China in a Foreign Language* activity, students can apply the language knowledge they have learned and communicate the information, concepts, and values of Chinese culture to the world through cross-cultural communication, thereby cultivating their language application ability and enhancing the dissemination and inheritance of national culture. The activity of *Tell China in a Foreign Language* should be flexibly combined with the content of the textbook. Therefore, teachers should appropriately expand and combine Chinese culture and practical conditions based on the theme content of the textbook, and design activities that are reasonable and interesting. For example, teachers can require students to organize small groups to sort out China's recent technological achievements through the production of English tabloids, and can also hold a speech activity. For example, introducing the origin and customs of traditional festivals, the development of Chinese education, and the impact of globalization on the Chinese economy. These tasks revolve around the topic of this unit, facilitating students to better apply the language they have learned to complete the tasks. Through this approach, not only can students be trained in problem-solving skills, teamwork skills, and English expression skills, but also can students have a deeper understanding of China's cultural, economic, technological and other achievements, thereby strengthening their national and cultural confidence, and enhancing their ability to communicate with each other internationally and spread Chinese culture.

5. Conclusion

Cultural confidence cannot be established overnight. In the era of economic globalization, students face the challenge of multiculturalism. In order to ensure that they can maintain a high level of cultural confidence and not lose themselves in the collision of different cultures, cultural defense should start with academic education. In the process of English teaching, we should balance the proportion of Chinese and Western cultures, utilize the advantages of the curriculum, enable students to establish the value concept of cultural equality, integrate and share culture under the premise of equality between both parties, with a confident attitude and actions, spread the story of China to the world, and promote Chinese culture to the world.

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