Analysis on the Development of Cultural Teaching in International Chinese Language Education

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Abstract: Culture is the soul of a country and a nation. Strengthening cultural self-confidence is related to the independence of national spirit. Culture revitalizes the country and the nation is strong. This paper will be based on the development of the name of international Chinese education -- Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (1982), Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (2007) to International Chinese Language education (2019). From the traditional teaching Chinese as a foreign language, Chinese culture education in the period of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages, online Chinese culture teaching in International Chinese Language Education, the existing problems and solutions of the five parts of the narrative, to sort out the development stages of International Chinese Language Education and cultural teaching.

Keywords: International Chinese Language Education; Online Teaching; Cultural Teaching.

1. Traditional Foreign Chinese Culture Education

1.1. Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

Traditional Chinese cultural education, that is, the period of cultural teaching from 1982 to 2007. It is the first stage of the development of international Chinese education. This stage of international Chinese education is the stage of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Although some teachers or students still use the name “teaching Chinese as a foreign language” to define this major, it has to be said that the definition of a stage has become a past tense.

1.2. Definition of Chinese Traditional Culture

Before talking about traditional Chinese culture education, first understand what is traditional Chinese culture. The definition of traditional Chinese culture is controversial. Some scholars believe that Chinese traditional culture is a stable culture that has gradually formed and developed in the long-term social and historical development process and is preserved in every nation. In his book Chinese Traditional Culture, Zhang Jian pointed out that Chinese traditional culture generally refers to the ancient culture of China before the Opium War in 1840. [2] Chinese traditional culture is all-encompassing, including tea culture, wine culture, jade culture, porcelain culture, mountain culture, water culture, architecture culture and so on. No matter how to define Chinese traditional culture, there is one thing in common, that is, it is closely related to language, because the content of these cultures is passed on through language.

The period from 1982 to 2007 can be said to be the exploration stage of international Chinese education. The wave of reform and opening up has rolled, and the country has opened its doors and strengthened international exchanges. At that time, Chinese people were longing for the foreign world, and foreigners also showed great attention and enthusiasm for China. More and more people want to learn Chinese, on the one hand, because China has a huge market, on the other hand, they are attracted by China's splendid and time-honored culture. The purpose of learning a foreign language is to communicate, so the fundamental purpose of teaching Chinese as a foreign language is to cultivate students' intercultural communication ability. However, due to different national backgrounds, different cultures and different life experiences, conflicts are bound to occur in the process of cross-cultural communication. Compared with students, teaching Chinese as a foreign language is to understand the language of a country, but in order to communicate comfortably with Chinese people, culture is an urgent need to be understood. For teachers, facing students from different countries, they must have an understanding of each student's culture, mainly the taboos that are different from those in China. Culture is all-encompassing, and any phenomenon in life can be attributed to different types of culture, and the reasons can be found in order to solve problems.

1.3. Content of Cultural Communication During the Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

In this period, the content of cultural communication in teaching Chinese as a foreign language is relatively simple: the culture involved in the process of Chinese learning and communication. [1] Why is the content of cultural teaching relatively simple at this time? In fact, the teaching content of this period consists of two aspects: on the one hand, the culture involved in Chinese learning; On the other hand, the culture involved in the communication process of Chinese learners.

First of all, let's look at the first part - the culture involved in Chinese learning by Chinese learners. Chinese traditional culture has a very complex system, even authentic Chinese people may not be familiar with all aspects of Chinese culture, many experts and scholars also choose a cultural direction to study carefully. Back to the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, teaching first needs certain textbooks. In the early stage of the development of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, there are very few textbooks that can be used, and many front-line teachers are also exploring and moving forward, and it is likely that there are no textbooks to use. But this does not affect the teaching, teachers can choose the topic content suitable for the level of students to teach. Whether there is a textbook or not, the topic of teaching is fixed, and
only one topic can be studied in one hour. The first step is
definitely to teach some of the common communication
language in life. What people want most is the ability to
communicate, not the cultural stuff. The teaching time is
limited, and even if it can involve culture, it is only a
superficial mention, which is the meaning of great
swallowing. Moreover, if the emphasis of culture is placed on
the course content itself, it is easy to focus on the culture
involved in the teaching content such as Chinese characters,
which is completely insufficient to support the needs of
communication. Therefore, if you only learn the culture that
will be involved in textbooks or teaching, it must be too little
to be able to have an overview of Chinese culture.

On the other hand, the culture involved in the
communication process of Chinese learners. This part of
culture is mostly the taboo culture found in the
communication between Chinese and foreign cultures. For
example, in the process of communication, Chinese people
grow up in the environment of "family" culture. When talking
with people, they will ask the other person's age, where they
come from, family population, job income and so on. If the
other person is from Europe or the United States, they will be
offended, because they are extremely private. At this time, the
culture involved is relatively simple, as long as the two parties
find the differences in the conversation between each other, a
little comparison can be learned. Although with the deepening
of Chinese learning, communication will enter a deeper level,
and more and more cultures will be involved, it is only a drop
in the ocean of Chinese culture. The level of Chinese learning
has shifted to an advanced stage, and the intake of culture will
also vary from the history of simple words to the allusions of
idioms and colloquial expressions. At this time, the culture
involved is too simple and not diversified enough, which has
little effect on the improvement of communication, but
aggravates the difficulty of communication.

All in all, during the period from 1982 to 2007, although
the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language was developing
continuously, the teaching content was too simple, and the
relevant literature and materials were very few. The research
on teaching was also in the process of exploration.

2. Chinese Culture Education in the
Period of Teaching Chinese to
Speakers of Other Languages

2.1. Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other
Languages

Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages refers to
the teaching of Chinese for overseas non-native speakers. The
period of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages
refers to the period from 2007 to 2019. At this time, Teaching
Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages entered a stage of
vigoruous development. With the continuous improvement of
China's comprehensive national strength and economic
strength, the number of people coming to China to learn
Chinese has increased rapidly, and China has become the
largest destination country for overseas students in Asia. In
every stage of the development of international Chinese
Language education, cultural teaching adheres to the teaching
principle of “from easy to deep” and “from easy to difficult”
In the stage of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other
Languages, the development of cultural teaching is deeply
influenced by national policies. There are Chinese
international teaching projects based on the cultural teaching
of Southeast Asian countries under the background of the
“Belt and Road” initiative, Teaching Chinese to Speakers of
Other Languages under the vision of building a community
with a shared future for mankind, cultural teaching related to
ideology, and “Internet +” and “Chinese +” which follow the
development pace of The Times. After several years of
experience in teaching Chinese as an international language,
the Chinese teaching community has gradually concluded the
cultural teaching idea of “structure-function-culture
combination”. [4]

2.2. Cultural Teaching Strategies Embodied in
Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other
Languages

As mentioned in the previous part, the fundamental
purpose of Chinese education is to cultivate students’ cross-
cultural communication ability. The motivation for learning a
language is the need for communication. The stage of
Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages is no
exception. Only in the previous stage, teachers had such
awareness, but they did not sum up the teaching strategy
suitable for teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Even
though people realized the important position of cultural
teaching in Chinese education at the last stage, the newly
started Chinese as a foreign language education lacks stable
and formed rules, which will inevitably lead to some
negligence. Therefore, in the stage of Teaching Chinese to
Speakers of Other Languages, a teaching strategy is directly
proposed to make teachers naturally unable to ignore the
importance of cultural teaching from the consciousness.
Through more than 30 years of exploration from 1982, he
summed up the strategy of combining “structure, function and
culture”. The strategy of combining structure, function and
culture is actually the three requirements of Teaching Chinese
to Speakers of Other Languages.

First, structure can be understood as the understanding of
Chinese characters and their cultural composition. The
development of the structure and shape of Chinese characters
also reflects the changes of history and culture. The physical
development of Chinese characters has experienced oracle
script, Jin script, seal script, official script, regular script,
running script, and each stage of development also represents
the replacement of dynasties, that is, from Yin and Shang,
Western Zhou, Spring and Autumn, Warring States, Qin, Han,
Eastern Han to Tang. [5] The teaching of the form of Chinese
characters will involve the teaching of culture. Although it is
difficult to teach Chinese characters in history, it can arouse
the interest of overseas students. The structure of Chinese
characters can be divided into left and right, up and down,
surrounding, frame and other combinations, the Chinese
character creation method shows the most original principle
of character creation and the original meaning of the word,
the Chinese character is to start from the Chinese character
itself, pay attention to the brushwork, structure, and combine
it with history and culture, so as to achieve multiple goals.
Therefore, the corresponding requirements of “structure” in
Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages can be
summarized as the combination of the form of Chinese
characters, the structure of Chinese characters and the culture
involved in Chinese character teaching. Secondly, the
corresponding requirement of function is the function of
learning that can be used in communication. Cultural teaching
is to be filled with Chinese teaching, and finally make the
communication content exported by international students become thicker.

2.3. Innovation of Cultural Teaching in the Stage of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages

First of all, a new teaching form—experiential style appeared in cultural teaching at this time. Experiential teaching refers to the introduction, creation or creation of specific scenes or atmospheres adapted to the teaching content in order to achieve the established teaching objectives in the teaching process, starting from the teaching needs, so as to arouse the emotional experience of students, help students quickly and correctly understand the teaching content, and promote the comprehensive and harmonious development of their psychological functions. [3] In the cultural teaching of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages experiential teaching enables students to personally participate in the process of combining culture and knowledge, greatly improving students' ability to understand some abstract Chinese culture, and creating a real situation for students to immerse themselves in the charm of Chinese culture, so as to love China more.

Secondly, Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages adopts task-based teaching for middle and advanced level students. The performance is that teachers assign tasks to students, let students form a group, complete the task after class, and show it in class. For example, give a small order “The courtyard is square, the small fish is in the center, only drink water from the pool, only feed will never grow.” Ask the students whether this small order shows the architectural style of southern or northern China, what kind of culture it shows, and why it formed such an architectural style. Let the students explore it on their own.

Finally, pay attention to the fun of the course. At the beginning of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, it is very difficult for every expert and scholar to explore what kind of textbook should be adopted or what kind of textbook should be compiled, because there is no reference standard. After decades of experience accumulation, compiled such as “picking up Chinese comprehensive textbook”, “Chinese Course”, “Developing Chinese” and “Chinese Horizontal and Horizontal · Intensive Reading textbook”. The novel curriculum and interesting teaching materials can arouse students’ interest in learning Chinese and thus have more interest in understanding Chinese culture.

In general, during the period from 2007 to 2019, Chinese language education developed vigorously. Under the premise of China’s rapid progress in international status, the cause of international Chinese language education also rode the wind and waves, actively responded to national policies, improved the rules of Chinese education, and constantly developed and innovated. The number of relevant literatures also increased significantly, and the discussion on teaching never fell behind. In the face of different cultures, respect and understanding, inclusive, but also strive to carry forward the charm of traditional Chinese culture.

3. International Chinese Language Education Online Chinese Culture Teaching

The beginning of 2020, with the outbreak of the novel coronavirus and its rapid spread across the world, is undoubtedly a difficult year for Chinese language education. Facing difficulties, Chinese education has entered a new stage. In 2019 and beyond, Chinese education has officially entered the era of International Chinese Language Education. International Chinese Language Education evolved from “International Chinese Language Education” and earlier “Teaching Chinese as a foreign language”, but its connotation has not been clearly defined and described. This term can be used to refer to both the International Chinese Language Education cause and the discipline in order to maintain the unity of the cause and the discipline name. International Chinese Language Education is a highly inclusive concept. It is possible to place “teaching Chinese as a foreign language” and “Teaching Chinese as a foreign language” under the framework of “International Chinese Language Education”, not only to maintain relatively independent positioning and characteristics, but also to coordinate and integrate development, and jointly form a more open, inclusive and standardized “International Chinese Language Education” interdisciplinary concept and new development pattern. International Chinese Language Education can be taught by Chinese, overseas Chinese and foreigners; The teaching objects can be foreigners whose mother tongue is not Chinese, or overseas Chinese whose mother tongue or first language is not Chinese and their descendants; The content taught is Chinese as a second, foreign or other language; Teaching can take place at home, overseas or in virtual space.

Due to the impact of the coronavirus epidemic, China’s offline education has been paralyzed for a time. Online education has opened online live teaching on the basis of the previous “Dingding” and “Tencent conference”, which were only used for signing in and submitting homework, etc., and online education has developed rapidly. International Chinese Language Education is also a “crisis” and “opportunity” coexist. In the case that Chinese teachers cannot go out and foreign students cannot enter, online teaching has also been opened. However, the online teaching of international Chinese education is much more difficult than that of domestic teaching.

Although domestic schools have not systematically carried out online live teaching, domestic tutoring institutions, postgraduate examination institutions, etc., have some experience in live teaching on cable. For International Chinese Language Education, the offline course teaching model has been further improved in recent years, and is even being adjusted. From offline to online, it means another large-scale change, teaching mode, management mode, etc., to make new adjustments. The requirement of online teaching on network environment is very high, and there will inevitably be problems such as delay and drop of line in the process of live broadcasting. The management of students is also very difficult, and teachers do not fully grasp the rhythm of the class.

4. The Difficulties of Online Cultural Teaching in International Chinese Language Education

The biggest problem in the development of online Chinese education is the lack of relevant teaching experience, and the difficulties in teaching are concentrated on teachers, students, the Internet and International Chinese Language Education itself.

Cultural teaching pays attention to the most immersive
feeling. Through online teaching, teachers and students cannot face to face under the premise, the course content has great variables. What’s more, Chinese culture teaching will inevitably involve calligraphy, painting, paper-cutting, etc. Teachers need to practice, and students’ cultural teaching with practice will be very difficult to carry out. As far as calligraphy is concerned, students need to follow the teacher to start writing, which requires the teacher to either have an independent display of the blackboard, and the camera to capture the whole process of the picture; Either with two slots, the operation is very complicated. For teachers, it is undoubtedly very important to find new teaching methods, to innovate in the past teaching experience, to make themselves quickly enter the online teaching state on the premise of guiding students to adapt to the new teaching environment.

In addition, the problem of students is also complicated. International students in various universities are combined by students from different countries, and the first thing that can’t come to China online class is to overcome the problem of time difference. Students who come to China can quickly adjust to study and life in China. However, due to the epidemic, international students trapped in their own countries have to follow the Chinese time of online classes and live in their own country’s schedule, which is actually very difficult to balance. If the class is late at night in Chinese time, will the practice of overseas students affect the rest of their families? Even during the day, whether international students will have some unavoidable social problems and life problems that will make teaching difficult to proceed normally, these need to be considered in advance. Moreover, due to the limited scope of observation of online teachers, in addition to the self-discipline and consciousness of students to regulate their own behavior, follow the online class to practice oral pronunciation, exercises to improve themselves, many students take advantage of the network screen vision loopholes or poor network environment to avoid speaking Chinese. This list of problems leads to uneven teaching results.

The network environment is a variable factor. Due to the impact of the epidemic, the number of people participating in online education is extremely large, and in the early days of the epidemic in 2020, there will often be cases of “Dingding” not being able to board, “learning pass” homework not being able to be submitted normally, and “Tencent meeting” suddenly interrupted. In recent years, major platforms have worked hard to upgrade and expand network capacity, so that there will be a large number of students into a platform, the problem of software crash. Although it has entered the 5G era, network delays have not been completely eradicated. In the class of international students, students have to listen to the teacher’s pronunciation, the teacher has to correct the students, the network is stuck, and the part that is not heard clearly has to be repeated, which greatly reduces the efficiency of teaching.

If the problems of teachers, students and the network can be solved through rapid adaptation, some problems existing in International Chinese Language Education itself need longer exploration to complete. First, there is a large shortage of professionally trained Chinese teachers. For a long time, Chinese education teachers have been served by Chinese speakers, who may not have systematically learned the teaching methods and strategies of Chinese education and the application of paradigms in the teaching process. Later, the country trained a group of professional international Chinese teachers, but through the investigation of the surrounding teachers and sisters, the author found that it is not the students who study International Chinese Language Education who will eventually engage in this job, many students choose to be Chinese teachers, civil servants, teachers and so on. Secondly, the teaching materials on culture are out of date. In the second language teaching, cultural materials should pay attention to timeliness and cultural resources should keep pace with The Times. Most of our cultural teaching materials are general Chinese teaching materials, which will not be updated in a short time. It is essential for international Chinese education to teach cultural knowledge in classical textbooks in special cultural courses. However, if there is a lack of time-effective cultural materials and resources, the latest development and change information of contemporary China cannot be incorporated into the process of Chinese culture teaching, it will inevitably affect students’ communication in daily life. Third, the level of International Chinese Language Education network cultural courses is uneven. Due to the impact of the epidemic, many platforms have launched a variety of courses for students to choose from, and Chinese education is no exception, such as college students MOOCs and Bilibili have launched a series of recorded courses. But the quality of the courses is mixed. For example, the recording and broadcasting courses offered by Beijing Language and Culture University, such as Shen Hongdan and Yu Miao, are excellent, but a search on Bilibili’s website shows that some teachers’ recording and broadcasting courses are suspected of being perfunctory. Finally, there are many books related to Chinese culture, but most of them are for Chinese people, and there are few cultural course books synchronized with international students' courses.

All in all, International Chinese Language Education is entering a new stage of development. Teachers’ teaching ability needs to be further improved, students’ learning ability needs to keep up with the pace, and all aspects of teaching are in urgent need of upgrading.

5. **Online Cultural Teaching Strategies for International Chinese Language Education**

First of all, how does online cultural teaching of International Chinese Language Education provide students with an immersive Chinese cultural environment? The epidemic has caused the Chinese teaching environment to become a virtual environment, and teachers can use the advantages of the vigorous development of the virtual environment to teach. For example, we can learn from the teaching mode of “China Island” and use online games such as Second Life or Minecraft to create a real Chinese society and simulate traditional Chinese festivals and solar terms, so that students can immerse themselves in the charm of traditional Chinese culture. The preparatory work of this kind of game is more complicated, once the construction is successful, it can be put into use for a long time.

Secondly, learning a language is for the need of communication, and students need strong motivation to learn a language. In order to make students self-discipline, teachers should give some external stimuli, such as assigning homework preview, homework after class and dictation. At the end of the class, students should summarize the class content and give certain “punishment” to students who fail to complete the task. For example, before the next class, tell a story about traditional Chinese culture, recite an ancient poem
and tell the meaning of the poem, and so on. The attitude of the teacher determines the attitude of the students. If the teacher keeps asking a student to answer questions because he is active in class, other students are not paid attention to, especially in the online class of the epidemic, there will be a situation that the class is hung up on the line and the people are not in front of them, which is not conducive to the improvement of other students’ oral English. Therefore, Chinese teachers should pay attention to every student, so that students learning Chinese have something to say and have something to say.

In addition, the spread of Chinese culture to the outside world has natural limitations, the demand for Chinese teachers in various countries is increasing day by day, and the shortage of teachers has become a problem. The International Standards for Chinese Language Teachers emphasize that teachers should have “the ability to compare Chinese and foreign cultures, cross-cultural communication, and multicultural awareness.” [10] In International Chinese Language Education, local Chinese teachers have natural advantages. They understand the difficulties of native people in learning Chinese, the local culture, and the Chinese culture. When the two cultures communicate, they can effectively avoid cultural conflicts and compare taboos in the two cultures. Therefore, the Language Cooperation Center has set up a training center for local Chinese teachers, and a number of online workshops have been held against the background of the epidemic. Since 2021, a total of 15 online training sessions have been held, and nearly 1,300 local Chinese teachers from 27 countries and regions have received training.

Finally, teaching should be a dynamic activity, especially Chinese teaching should keep pace with The Times. Outdated knowledge should be replaced promptly, and inappropriate content should be deleted. Books related to culture should keep up with the pace of The Times, eliminate controversial cultural content, retain the essence of traditional culture, and speed up the compilation of cultural books that meet the requirements of The Times. Why does China threat persist? Part of the reason is that foreigners don’t know enough about Chinese culture. If they understand Chinese culture, they should know that Chinese culture advocates “moderation”, “universal love”, “non-aggression”, “benevolence” and “righteousness”, Chinese culture is not an aggressive culture, but a culture of “people do not attack me, I will not commit crimes”, with the cultural spirit of accepting all rivers and oceans. The lack of books and teaching materials on Chinese culture has already led to the difficulty of cultural dissemination. If outdated, controversial and unrepresentative culture is still preserved, it will only deepen foreigners’ misunderstanding of China.

6. Conclusion

Chinese education has come a long way from the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language in 1982, and new progress has been made in every stage. The novel coronavirus epidemic has forced Chinese education to move online, which also gives International Chinese Language Education an opportunity to develop in the crisis, breaking the boundaries of time and space, and allowing people in different countries to continue to learn Chinese. Although faced with a lot of difficulties, but through the efforts of generation after generation of frontline Chinese teachers, the difficulties will always be solved, I believe that in the near future, the online work of international Chinese education will be better and better, and the dilemma of cultural teaching will be solved.

References


