

Investigation into the Cultivation of Chinese Cultural Consciousness in the Teaching of English Majors

-Based on Sichuan Agricultural University

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Abstract—Since the reform and opening up, English language teaching in China has made great achievements, but there has appeared not only a general weakening of Chinese language ability, but also the phenomenon of Chinese Culture Aphasia. To test the Chinese cultural consciousness of Chinese college students, 30 sophomores and 30 freshmen of English major in Sichuan Agricultural University are randomly selected. According to the data analyses, there is a widespread lack of Chinese cultural consciousness among English majors in Sichuan Agricultural University for various reasons. Therefore, we put forward some suggestions on how to cultivate Chinese cultural consciousness of English majors from the perspective of both the program of talents cultivation and English majors.

Keywords—*investigation; cultivation; English teaching; Chinese cultural consciousness*

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Times

With the development and deepening of economic globalization, cultural globalization will certainly become more significant. Chinese culture, as an indispensable component in world culture, will inevitably go out and 'telling the Chinese stories well' in Xi Jinping's eyes is a good way of 'going out', thus helping voice Chinese ideas, spread Chinese culture and increase the attraction and influence of China and its culture.

In the process of communicating with the outside world, college English majors have become the main resource of 'telling Chinese stories well', being considered as the bridge of communication between target culture and native culture. However, English learners often have Chinese Culture Aphasia in language learning and communicating, which means that

English majors aren't aware of the significance of learning native Chinese culture and can't express Chinese culture in an appropriate way, and there is even a lack of cultivation of Chinese cultural consciousness in the teaching of English majors, so that they do not have the ability to push Chinese culture out.

The authors, from the perspective of English majors, will take the English majors in Sichuan Agricultural University as the focus of the study and make a thorough investigation into the present situation of the cultivation of Chinese cultural consciousness in English teaching. Through this investigation, we try to find the reasons for the possible lack of Chinese cultural consciousness in English teaching and offer some suggestions.

B. Brief Introduction to Basic Terms

Claire Kramersch, professor at the University of California, has proposed an idea of double-directional interaction. Claire Kramersch believes that objective culture does not exist at all because of the complexity of cultural phenomena, the diversity of cultures, and the uniqueness of each person in the same cultural group. And that's why people think of each other from their own cultural perspective, thus triggering all kinds of conflicts in cross-cultural exchanges.

Through double-directional interaction which was proposed by Kramersch, cultural conflicts can be reconciled through shaping new meanings to reach by intercultural understanding. In this process both sides of the communication have changed, as compared to their original ideas, but it's not the case in which one side moves towards the other while the other side keeps unchanged [1].

In Kramersch's perspective, the ultimate goal of cultural teaching is to incorporate mother tongue culture and target

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language culture into training program and cultivate double-directional learners who know each other well and can promote the integration of two different cultures, instead of training totally native-like behavior imitators who cast their eyes solely on the target culture. Hence, it's meaningful to study the teaching of culture in the foreign language education in China with Kramsch's perspective.

In domestic research, "Chinese Culture Aphasia" shocked the academic circle in 2000. "Chinese Culture Aphasia" [2], first proposed by Cong Cong in *Guangming Daily* in 2000, which means the teaching of English majors cares more about target language culture teaching, thus leaving Chinese culture behind and many English majors confront difficulties in their expressions exclusive in Chinese culture. Since then, Chinese Culture Aphasia has drawn the attention of academic circle.

Dai Weidong(2008) pointed out that students or teachers attach more importance to the training of language skills, rather than Chinese and foreign cultural teaching, or the profound cultural edification of Chinese, thus losing the tradition characterized by language and culture [3]. The investigation into English majors and English teachers by Song Yiwen and Xiao Longfu (2009) showed that English major's ability to express Chinese culture in English was unsatisfactory[4]. However, there is no top-down policy, many teachers have limited or fragmentary cultural information and cannot give students a systematic training. And the intercultural communication teaching activities is, therefore, superficial and unsystematic. Zhang Hongling(2012) and Zhao Haiyan(2016) said that college English teaching will cause historic mistakes if we continue to keep the "English standard culture" and ignore the international spread of Chinese culture. Under the trend of Chinese cultural renaissance and 'going out' [5], Zhang Shan(2017) put that in order to give a full play to the social and cultural mission of English language teaching, Chinese cultural consciousness should run through the whole process of foreign language education in China [6].

In general, the investigations on Chinese Culture Aphasia have obtained great attention. Nevertheless, the investigations are still at an initial stage and the phenomenon still exists in foreign language teaching widely.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Subjects

The research subjects are participants of Chinese culture awareness test.

Since this is a case study, English majors in Sichuan Agricultural University are selected for data collection and data analysis as participants. In the investigation, 30 sophomores and 30 freshman were chosen at random for Chinese culture awareness test. They have learned English for at least 8 years and have had a better understanding of the curriculums that English majors should learn. Also, English majors in Sichuan Agricultural University have been guided to study the training program since they came to the university, thus they have a clear understanding of the arrangement for their study in the future. Their answers to Chinese cultural awareness test indicate the general attitudes of students in Sichuan

Agricultural University to Chinese culture and the spread of Chinese culture to foreigners.

B. Research Questions

The research tries to find answers to questions as follows:

1. How much do English majors in Sichuan Agricultural University know about Chinese culture?
2. Why haven't English majors learned enough Chinese culture? Are the following elements related to this: textbooks, the students' and teachers' cultural awareness, the curriculum of the school's?
3. Are English majors in Sichuan Agricultural University able to spread Chinese culture? Should contents about Chinese culture be added to their daily study?

C. Instruments

There are two instruments for the research: a test paper and a questionnaire. The test paper, with three parts, focuses on testing the mastery of Chinese culture of English majors in Sichuan Agricultural University. Part 1 is multiple-choice. Seven questions about Chinese culture are raised and the participants are required to choose the right answer from four choices. Part 2 is translation. Participants need to translate some terms of Chinese culture into English. Part 3 is gap-filling. This part is regarded as a comprehensive test because participants are required to write answers after C-E translation. In terms of the questionnaire, it focuses on testing English majors' awareness of Chinese cultures.

D. Data Collection

Prior to this investigation, the authors first asked for permission of the informants and made several points clear to them to ensure the reliability and validity of the results.

First, 20 minutes is needed for the test papers and questionnaires in class. Second, a brief introduction is given to the subjects in Chinese, so that students can have a preliminary understanding of the investigation, thus improving the effectiveness of their answering. Third, they need not write their personal information on the papers and the results of all test paper and questionnaires are confidential, for the only purpose of the investigation. In addition, in the course of tests and questionnaire, they are not allowed to refer to dictionary or discuss with their classmates so as to evaluate their real language competence.

At the end of 20 minutes, all test papers and questionnaires are collected.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Discussion on Informant's Attitude and Channel toward Studying Chinese Culture

1) Informant's Attitude toward Studying Chinese Culture

The investigation paper is about testing the awareness of Chinese culture of English majors in Sichuan Agricultural University. After data collection, the authors compiled the result.

59 students said that the mastery of Chinese culture and the ability to express English were important for students majoring in English; only 1 student said it was unimportant.

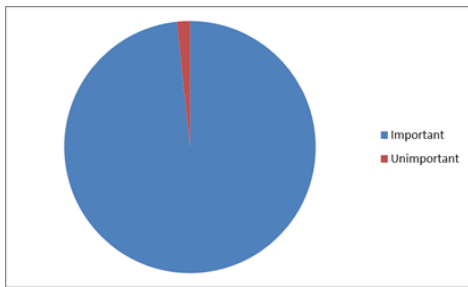


Fig. 1. The result 1

9 students said that they often read or watch English materials about Chinese culture after class. 18 students said that they do so sometimes. 28 students ticked "rarely". 5 students said never.

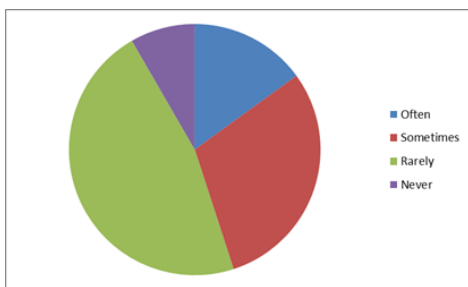


Fig. 2. The result 2

26 students said that it is very necessary to train English Majors in Chinese culture and English. 32 students said it is necessary to do so. 2 students ticked "indifferent". Nobody chose "unnecessary".

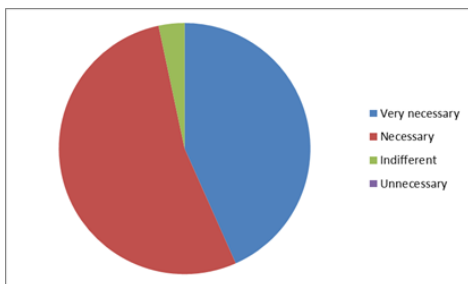


Fig. 3. The result 3

43 students said that it is necessary to incorporate Chinese cultural knowledge into College English textbooks. 17 students said it depends. Nobody chose "indifferent" and "unnecessary".

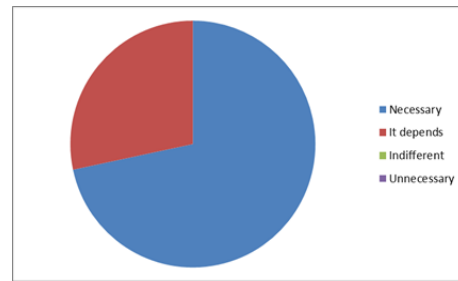


Fig. 4. The result 4

25 students said that they are very interested in Chinese culture. 34 students said they have some interest. 1 students ticked "indifferent". Nobody chose "dislike".

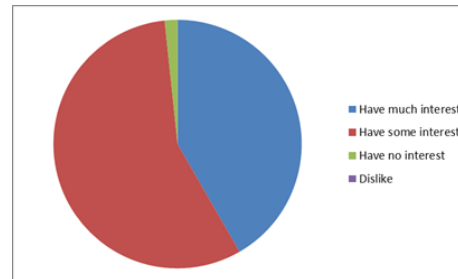


Fig. 5. The result 5

2 students said that they reluctantly agreed to make contribution to the inheritance and development of Chinese culture. 37 students said they would like to. 20 students ticked "It is our bounden duty". 1 student chose "uncertain".

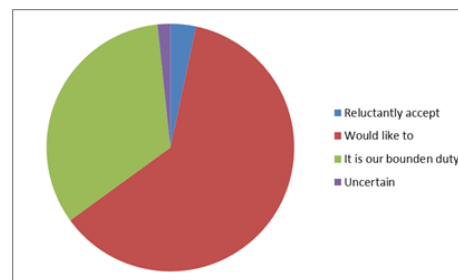


Fig. 6. The result 6

2) Informant's Channel to Study Chinese Culture

11 students said that their teacher often emphasizes Chinese culture. 35 chose "sometimes". 11 said their teacher had rarely introduced some data on Chinese culture. 3 students said never.

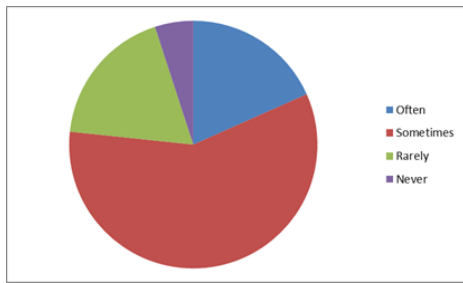


Fig. 7. The result 7

13 students said that their teacher often adds some vocabulary about Chinese culture during the class. 26 chose “sometimes”. 19 said their teacher had rarely added relevant vocabulary. 2 students said never.

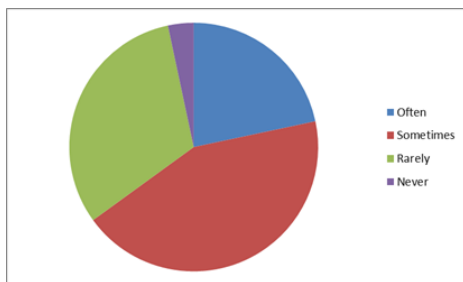


Fig. 8. The result 8

9 students said that their teacher often recommends some books about Chinese culture during the class. 22 chose “sometimes”. 25 said their teacher had rarely recommended books like that. 4 students said never.

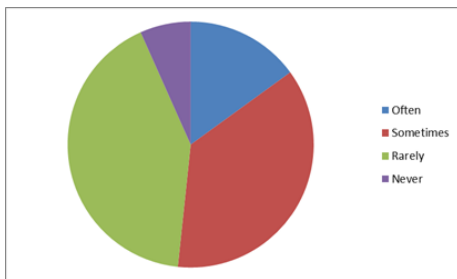


Fig. 9. The result 9

As for the question “Do you think the textbooks you use contain enough Chinese culture”, 9 students said that the textbooks they use contain enough Chinese culture. 27 chose “just some”. 21 said parts about Chinese culture sometimes exist. 3 students said it contains no part about it.

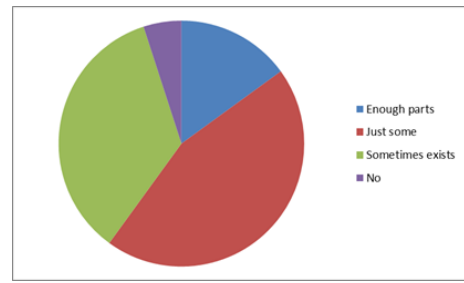


Fig. 10. The result 10

As for the only multiple-choice question about the channels of getting access to Chinese culture, “From sound movies, television and radio” became the most widely recognized channels with 42 students making the option. Then “on the Internet” followed it with 33 students choosing it. And the following channels are 24 “From English textbooks and teachers”, 23 “From English magazines and newspapers”, 11 “From family education”, and 9 “From community activities”.

Generally speaking, since the process of studying in university is no longer an exam-oriented learning stage, what teacher teaches in classroom is more flexible. Most students think that the Chinese culture-related knowledge taught by teachers in classroom is still inadequate. At the same time, almost all the students recognize the importance of Chinese culture. In addition, with the development of science and technology, some new channels such as getting information about Chinese culture from the Internet, movies and other ways have also been widely recognized by students.

B. Discussion on Informant’s Mastery of Chinese Culture

There are fifteen questions in this test making up of 7 multiple choices and 8 completions to check English major students’ mastery of Chinese culture. In this part, the informants need to apply their knowledge about the Chinese culture to complete the test without any English skills.

The authors incorporate different aspects of Chinese culture in this test, including Chinese politics, ideology, literature, religion, art, geography, architecture, language and law. The detailed quantity and proportion is as follows.

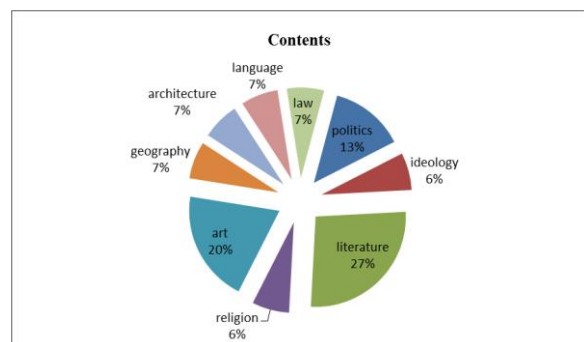


Fig. 11. The result 11

Under the statistical analysis, among 60 student subjects, the minimum number of “correct” is 4 while the maximum is 14, which reflects the difference of the 60

students. About the specific proportions, no one scored below three points, 9 students' points range between 4-6; 19 students' points range between 7-9. The number of right answer between 10 and 12 reaches 27, which accounts for 45% of all the subjects. Only 5 students make more than 13 corrects, accounting for 12%. No one answers all the questions correctly.

The result of this test is clearly presented in the following fig.12.

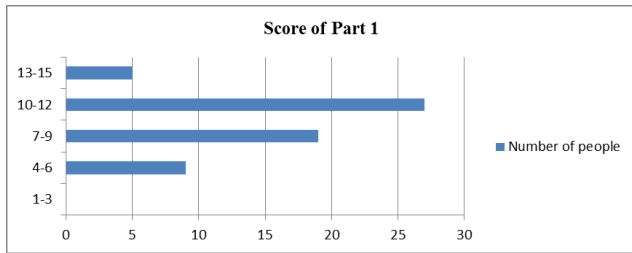


Fig. 12. Score of part 1

From the data of the first part, it can be seen that English majors do not know enough about Chinese culture. The current situation of English majors' mastery of Chinese cultures is far from satisfactory. The factors, which lead to this situation, are varied. Among these possible factors, the most direct one is the lack of cultural education in current English teaching. It is the time to focus on Chinese culture and take actions to improve the current situation.

C. Discussion on Informant's Expressiveness of Chinese Culture in English

As for culture teaching of foreign language, Wang Zongyan pointed out that two parts should be emphasized—basic knowledge of both native culture and target knowledge and the ability to express the two cultures in proper English [7]. To test English majors' expressive ability of Chinese culture, two tests were designed in appendix one. Both of the two tests are C-E translation of words and expressions related to Chinese culture, but they are different in that the former test only requires the students to do C-E translation task, while the later one demands, in addition to C-E translation task, the students be familiar with Chinese culture because before they do C-E translation task, they have to fulfill the gap filling about Chinese culture awareness testing.

The result of Part 1 and Part 2 of the test was discussed separately. Part 1 has a total score of 20 points. The maximum score is 90 points (calculated on 100 points scale) but the minimum score is 0. The average point is extraordinarily low, with only 21.98 points. For a more vivid study, a diagram below schematized the distribution of the students' scores:

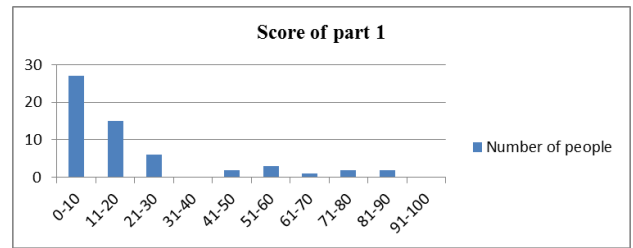


Fig. 13. Score of part 2

The distribution is far from optimistic. Among the 60 participants, only 8 got more than 60 points (on 100 points scale) in part one, including 2 over 70 points and 2 over 80 points. Moreover, when observing the accuracy rate of these words, English majors' lack of Chinese cultural ability was more obvious. Nobody gave a correct English translation of “贞观之治”. Only 3 people gave the correct translation of “文化大革命”. Only 5 gave the correct translation of “围棋” and “春秋战国”. Only 9 people gave the right translation of “易经” and “离骚”. These words are what we would often refer to when we introduce our custom, politics, culture, and history. It is impossible to introduce Chinese culture without knowing these important words. Table of Specific Results of Each Word and Phrase presents the passing rates for each word below.

TABLE I. SPECIFIC RESULTS OF EACH WORD AND PHRASE

Item	Scorer	PR	Item	Scorer	PR
1	44	73.3%	11	32	53.3%
2	25	41.7%	12	16	26.7%
3	5	8.3%	13	8	13.3%
4	5	8.3%	14	7	11.7%
5	9	15%	15	3	5.0%
6	8	13.3%	16	9	15.0%
7	0	0	17	16	26.7%
8	9	15%	18	10	16.7%
9	16	26.7%	19	14	23.3%
10	7	11.7%	20	14	23.3%

(PR=passing rate)

In general, the table above is about the details from the results of words and phrases. Only one word and phrases' passing rate is at a relatively high level (60%). It's “春节” and the passing rate is 73.3%. The most concentrated range for passing rate is between 10%—20% of “易经”, “秦始皇兵马俑”, “离骚”, “四合院”, “南京大屠杀”, “鸦片战争”, “中国特色社会主义”, “一国两制” with the passing rate of 15%, 13.3%, 15%, 11.7%, 13.3%, 11.7%, 15.0%, 16.7% respectively. Besides, the second most concentrated passing range is between 20%-30% where the

words and phrases of “中药”，“泰山”，“改革开放”，“一带一路”，“中国共产党” locate with the passing rate of 26.7%, 26.7%, 26.7%, 23.3%, 23.3% respectively. For this range, some modern words and phrases were also selected. For the rest data, the passing rates (41.7%, 53.3%) of one part is relatively high and the other (8.3%, 8.3%, 0, 5.0%) relatively low.

The same analysis method goes with part 2.

TABLE II. SPECIFIC RESULTS OF EACH WORD AND PHRASE

Item	Scorer	PR	Item	Scorer	PR
1	26	44.8%	5	3	5.2%
2	2	3.4%	6	4	6.9%
3	8	13.8%	7	7	12.1%
4	0	0	8	0	0

(PR=passing rate)

Results in part two is even far less optimistic. The passing rates of two words and expressions—“举人”，“清明上河图” represent as 0. Even the highest rate just accounts for 44.8%. As mentioned at the very beginning, the accuracy for part two is determined by whether students are familiar with Chinese culture. So even though a lot of words are often used in their daily life, like “长江”，“笔墨纸砚”，“故宫”，the informants’ accuracy is still very low. And maybe they are familiar with these words and phrases; however, they do not know how to translate them into English.

IV. SUGGESTIONS

A. Suggestions on the Program of Talents Cultivation

1) Adding Relevant Chinese Culture Curriculum

Against the background of globalization, the demand for English talents in China is enormous, but people still hold the old belief that English teaching or learning is only about English knowledge and the curriculum for English majors only focuses on foreign language teaching. So the key step for changing is to add relevant Chinese Culture Curriculum and integrate Chinese culture into foreign language teaching. In this way, two goals could be achieved. The basic one is to make students have a good command of Chinese culture. English majors tend to be immersed in a foreign environment with the language, culture, and even the way of thinking of foreign countries’. Thus, to hold the native roots firmly, Chinese culture must be introduced into their daily study. The ultimate goal is to make students become qualified Chinese culture speakers. Even equipped with relevant English competence and native culture awareness, English majors still need to be able to express their native culture in proper English. Hence, Chinese Culture Curriculum will play a role of cultivating their intercultural communication competence so that they can communicate with people from different counties and regions smoothly.

2) Choosing Appropriate Teaching Materials

Teaching materials are regarded as the core contents of curriculum arrangement. The present teaching materials should be in pace with the changing circumstances, meet the need of our society and meet students’ demands. English majors need appropriate teaching materials which contain accurate expressions of Chinese culture in foreign language, especially in English. As for the current English teaching materials, nearly none of them includes the topics of Chinese culture. Language is for communication. And as we mention the word ‘communication’, at least two languages will be involved in the process. Thus, in order to be a qualified English major student, priority must be given to their competence in both English and their native language.

3) Increasing Proportion of Chinese Culture in Tests

Tests play an important role in the evaluation of teaching and learning results. And, to a large extent, it motivates students to study hard and efficiently.

Tests are usually intended to improve teaching quality. If tests check the expressiveness ability of Chinese culture in English, the teachers may pay more attention to it. This is proved in the investigation—a lot of informants hold the opinion that the contents not in the tests are not the key points, so, to some extent, Chinese culture is neglected. They also think that learning without testing cannot be counted as ‘meaningful learning’ because they tend to spare little attention to it. But the methods of tests should be more flexible. For example, in addition to written tests, the methods of oral tests and essays can also be used to check the level of expressiveness of Chinese culture.

B. Suggestions to English Majors

1) Making Full Use of Chinese Culture Resources

With the rapid development of technology, people can easily get access to Chinese culture resources. For language learning, comparative study could be a shortcut because it offers opportunities for students to investigate into the differences between different languages so they could get to know authentic Chinese culture, thus reinforcing authentic Chinese expressions. And in the bilateral translation between E-C or C-E, “translation accent” could be avoid.

2) Organizing Extracurricular Activities on Chinese Culture

The extracurricular activities are the extension of culture learning. Due to the limitation of class hours, culture learning cannot be achieved merely through classroom teaching. Moreover, some students may feel a little bit stressed in class, then what taught in class sometimes cannot be fully taken into by them. In this regard, a relatively relaxing and flexible environment is highly important and teachers can hold various activities for culture teaching at extracurricular time. In this way, students will be more active to learn at ease, thus being more efficient and effective in the learning process.

V. CONCLUSION

Our investigation about the cultivation of Chinese cultural consciousness in the teaching of English majors has been

carried out under the background of Chinese Culture Aphasia and the guidance of theories concerning cross-cultural communication. Through the methods of test and questionnaire, we have found that English majors tend to be weak in the mastery of Chinese culture and the capability of expressing Chinese culture in English. In other words, many English majors in Sichuan Agricultural University lack Chinese cultural consciousness and there are varied reasons. Therefore, we believe that, to cultivate English majors' Chinese cultural consciousness, it would be better to add relevant Chinese culture curriculum, choose appropriate teaching materials, increase proportion of Chinese culture in tests, make full use of Chinese culture resources and organize extracurricular activities on Chinese culture.

Although major findings are mentioned in the above chapters, the study has its limitation. First of all, we only had a small number of freshmen and sophomores as our sample subjects and the situation of the juniors and the seniors is still unknown. If more subjects are chosen, the findings may be more representative. Secondly, we only had a simple multiple test and some questions for answering, without interview and other means. We hope there will be further investigations

concerning more subjects, tests, questions, curriculum and teaching materials for more direct and effective information.

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