

Foreign Language Competence & World Citizen Value Orientation

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Abstract

This paper proposes a hypothesis that foreign language education may have the function of complementing to the view formation of youth, or orientating the youth different culture value. Through the observation and education references analysis, we try to identify that the process of foreign language competence formation is the one of establishing difference-oriented values, which may carve an “inner-quality” into young people’s heart, qualifying young people become world citizen.

Key Words: Foreign Language Education; International Image; Value

I. Introduction

Globalization makes Chinese not adapt the world situation too much, and with the more world communication opportunities, it appears some phenomena, Such as, more and more local areas in abroad appears “civilization reminder” with simple Chinese writing: “please be quiet”, “do not litter everywhere please” etc. (sohu.com). Domestic events like Fe Shan little Yue Yue event, Shanghai transgenic poison steamed bread, clenbuterol milk, corruption and other social events have frequently emerged in the past five years. These social events may identify people’s faith or image or value taking place changes.

The international image or value problems from the national level, have been discussed from different angles recent years. The retrieval of database in Chinese Academic Periodical Net, there are more than 300 articles about the issue. In Baidu library, sohu.com, diplomatic and international micro-blog, from “person” itself layer to discuss contemporary people international image, through the retrieval with

“Chinese international image”, can find several articles. With key word like “Foreigners impression on Chinese” to retrieval, there are 30 articles. Thus, the current statement displays that China has put the international image problems on an important place. But after the analyzing the details of literature, we found that the construction of contemporary Chinese international image still in the primary stage, creating good international publicity image project and how Chinese culture to the world. Further retrieval with “Chinese and Western Values Complementary”, research literature is rarely. With “Chinese Image and Values” retrieved, only found an article expresses values related to national image from the angle of public diplomacy. Therefore, the conclusion is that the research on contemporary Chinese international image and values issues has just started.

In the macroscopic research aspect, China has launched a series of good international image project researches in the past two years, such as the summit diplomacy, Olympic diplomacy, new image propaganda films with Yao Ming in New York Times Square, as well as establishing CCTV television in Africa, building overseas Chinese cultural center and the Confucius Institute and so on. The study on these aspects -- such as “Confucius Institute Peace International Image” (Guangming Daily International News 2011 -11-11) are still mainly on praising and peace theory.

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French sinologist, the former diplomat puts forward establishing “Chinese values” issue in his thesis entitled “How to Improve the International Image of China” (The Economic Observer Newspaper 2010-3-1). The research stresses the person’s value itself on image set up, including first basic value, such as human rights, for example, people have right to enjoy the fair justice. The second is fundamental values, such as respect for the elderly, the bond between man and man, emphasizing the social values, which are the core values people should follow.

On establishing national image, Wang Yigui, a PHD scholar in United States Research Center of Fudan University mentioned that Chinese value exists apparent difference with western standard, and thus subjects to unfair treatment in his paper “Public Diplomacy: Shaping Chinese International Image”(Liberation Daily 2003-9-25). Since nineteenth Century, there has been discussed on the similarities and differences between the Chinese and Western values. As a result of historical reason, because of different understanding on family, society, formed a Chinese cultural traditions as group focuses —the standard of holism, and traditional Western values are egocentric individualism.

The group standard value pays attention to person’s duties and obligations, and Western individualism emphasizes man’s freedom and rights. But from economic globalization vision, both cultures all hide some loss in their advantages respectively. Chinese worship Confucian idea following the rules with certain historical limitation and hampered the nation’s pioneering and innovation, so to economic globalization standard will have distance. Individual standard historical limitations, however, if malignant development, has not only led to social responsibility and collective consciousness deficient, also causes the individual and society, the conflict between self and others, and becomes the negative factors for social development. On the moral level it cannot be made selfless sacrifice ideal personality. But its advantage is to adapt modern market economy, and greatly promote the development of western economy and modernization. Therefore the advantages of Chinese culture are just Western culture shortcoming, which illustrates an excellent cultural background for integration between Chinese and Western culture. Secondly, cultures difference more performs values different. Youth is the international main force, if explore youth of Chinese and Western values embodied in what kind of level? Which aspects? Do Chinese and western youth values economy have complementary identity trend with the development of the world? Where is complementary point? What is the contribution of foreign language education on values formation? Hopefully, it ultimately achieves merger and produces a “New World Culture” is the key youth value formation.

II. Some Problems

2.1 At abroad

Along with the globalization, Chinese have more opportunities to behave at home and at the world, some problems might exist. The following cases may embody that some foreign countries still have shadows impression on Chinese.

In June 2012, Burr Foundation in Germany surveyed 7 main medias in 2008 and issued more than 8700 articles concluded that German media reports on China overall bias toward negative, and some reports use simplified, model, biased speech, “depreciate or distorted image of China”. During the Beijing Olympics in 2008, a female presenter in German Television receive a message in her mobile phone “ welcome to Beijing”, and then she exclaimed that: “ How the Chinese authorities : know my number? Do they monitor me?” From the case, you may found that there is an indescribable and indistinct negative things on the German reporter’s mind.

Chinese-American Committee of One-Hundred has disclosed an investigation on “American attitudes to China”. The result shows that Americans attitude towards China has improved in general, but the United States Congress has serious differences with other groups. 24% of the population and 30% business elites of the United States emphasize that China underlies economic threat to USA, while members of Congress holds this same view high up to 54%. The British once asked Chinese students: “since ancient time to now, Chinese contributed little to the world civilization, except for the four major inventions, Chinese achieve nothing from little toothbrush to great spacecraft”. Liu Zhirong once summarized African’s Chinese impression in her paper “Chinese in the eyes of African”. There is only one positive impression, but 9 negative, such as Chinese often sells cheap products, Chinese does not unite, Chinese no belief etc.. So we can see that at present, in Westerners eyes, China still stays in the Museum, rigid, Bruce Lee’s image, Kung Fu, and lion dance, Peking Opera period, which is one part of the image, but not avoiding one-sided.

2.2 At home

With more and more Chinese tourists choosing to travel abroad, Chinese image has become a hot topic of discussion. In global tourist award activities holding in European Hotel, Chinese tourists were not evaluated well. In some visiting areas, more and more local simplified Chinese writing signs “civilization”: “please be quiet”, “please flush after” or “please don’t litter” etc. (sohu.com). Cases 2--- Feshan little Yue Yue events is so shocked, but can not wake a hurry help of passer-bys, which is detrimental to the image of the Chinese people (baidu.com). Case 3. Shanghai transgenic poisoned steamed bread, Wenzhou clenbuterol milk, corruption and so on. A series of bad events drastic to Chinese image occur frequently (major news webpage).

III. Analysis on Problems

What these domestic and international cases mentioned above illustrate? Is the people’s cultural quality problems? What is the inside of these all kinds of events? What are the factors that caused these problems? People might put reasons on long-term economy backward. But the development of China’s economy in recent years has made universally acknowledged achievements, while the economic development means that the progress of social civilization, people’s value and humane quality has been greatly improved.

In the fact of “due to poor and humble” is undoubtedly an excuse. It is lack of Chinese culture? Of course not completely is. From the pre-Qin period to the doctrine of Confucius, again to today’s whole society comprehensive quality education, 5000 years, Chinese cultural influence are really not short of culture. Culture is to see a person, or an enterprise in the three aspects: the first is how to treat their own, and the second is how to treat others. The third is how to deal with the surrounding environment. The author thinks that the three “treats” is not only the cultural literacy, but clearly reflects the people’s fundamental values, i.e., people’s awareness of civic responsibility.

As educators, it is felt that this problem has reached to the point which must be conducted. Lao-teu said: “knowing others--- wisdom, insight oneself---intelligent, Conquer oneself ---strong.” The nation’s fine quality already renown in the world, but as a result of the reform and opening up, we still have our own values international adaptability. Therefore, studying on what level the Youth’s values at? How modern western values developed? Exploring foreign language education promoted on the connection of Chinese and Western culture? How to establish world citizen consciousness? How to be a world qualified citizens? On realizing the goal proposed by The Seventeenth Sessions of the Sixth CCP plenary conferences, it has strategic significance in pushing the socialism core value system construction, build the soul base and soft power of our country.

3.1. Advocate Difference-oriented Values

The Chinese culture of five thousand years, Confucianism inheritance in complementary, but strength of cultural inheritance doesn’t mean closed.

Confucianism and Taoism culture has strong compatibility and absorbability, which are good at drawing in positive results from foreign culture. Contemporary youth is eager to pursuit new technology, new ideas, and it is the good time to promote cultural modernization, internationalization, so that it has a larger space in cultural compatibility and openness. But long-term Chinese cultural consciousness has caused our young people weak in seeking the differences in thinking. No difference no innovation. Copernicus and Darwin’s new finding, great Lenin, Mao Zedong Deng and Xiaoping, break Marx’s classical theory with divergent thinking and innovation, and gain brilliant achievements in Russian Revolution and Chinese revolution and socialist modernization construction. Therefore, it has epoch-making significance in cultivating difference-oriented values for the youth.

3.2. Change Role of University

If the difference-oriented value of Chinese students is weak, Should the education, especially foreign language education rethink? We do education reform, quality education and talents internationalization every day. What is the result? Except “985 Project” and “211” University and other well-known national university in the attempt to establish a world-class university, such as New York University in Shanghai, but 94.2% the national higher education in local colleges still follows a discipline system in running including administration, other barriers, cultural differences among the departments. Severe effect exists in nurturing youth with international qualities occupying 18% of the total population.

The awareness of Contemporary Chinese or sense of responsibility can not depart from international value cultivation. As high level talent center of local colleges should rethink how to cultivate the young generation to obtain this accomplishment? The key is interdisciplinary cultivation.

Can we draw lessons from the experiences of South University of Science and Technology University launched by Zhu Qingshi (Chinese Academy of Sciences)? It seems lack of relevant research currently and relevant government guidance. To answer such questions, the following issues discussed: “China’s fundamental education problem still goes in the system itself” (Zhu Ziqing 2011).①Icebreaking trying to change the local college structure and redesign the framework of discipline, overcome the barriers among the departments of administration, funding and cultural barrier mechanism; ② exploring new academic structure cross discipline and discipline integration. The goal is to facilitate international youth civic values of culture. ③The research takes English major as “experiment cropland”, an attempt to integrate the suitable teacher’s team for difference-oriented students. ④Studying the Chinese and western international talent course system including teaching materials, teaching methods and renewal, and try to open students’ individual development space in aggrandizing international quality and ability.⑤establishment of community social practice base cooperating with high-tech zones and foreign sister school base, the maximum guarantee students have performed in terms of social practice at home or abroad.

IV. The Result

The focus of this study is to search for the root causes of influencing people international image, and the evidences of two assumptions: “Chinese and Western values does not exist good or bad, but there are different characteristics” and “The two values have the trend to complement to same”. The difficulty points lies in what level the two values complementary recognition and how the mechanism operated.

The frequent events, which underline negative or damaged to domestic image embody the inadaptability between western and Chinese values identity. It is a great project of socialist spiritual civilization construction of studying the complementary mechanism, cultural construction and building the new value to improve national weakness. The emphasis on the trait difference in cultural values between Chinese and Western values, and through exploring the complementary recognition mechanism, to finally reach a kind of merger and to form “new world culture”. Countermeasures, such as trying to use awareness training, shortening the world idea’s difference in youth, advocate powering nation from culture strengthening strategy among contemporary people, especially the young. In other words, practicing “internal exercise”, make contribution for the good image of nation standing in the international level.

In a word, Foreign language education plays an important role in cultivating young people’s value and has an function of value –oriented. Therefore, when it happens, educators need take care young people’s grows not only in language itself but for whose values world culture-oriented nurture.

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