

Original Research Article

The representation of Chinese tea culture in college students' English public speaking

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Abstract: This article focuses on the presentation of Chinese tea culture within the specific context of college students' English public speaking. By analyzing actual speech cases, it explores how elements of tea culture can be integrated into English expressions, elucidating their role in enhancing the cultural depth of speeches and strengthening cross-cultural communication effects. Simultaneously, it identifies issues that arise during the application process and proposes corresponding recommendations, aiming to provide theoretical references and practical guidance for college students to better disseminate Chinese tea culture in English public speaking.

Keywords: Chinese tea culture; college students' English public speaking; cross-cultural communication

1. Introduction

In the wave of globalization, cross-cultural communication has become increasingly frequent. English, as the international lingua franca, plays a pivotal role in cross-cultural exchanges. English public speaking for college students not only serves as an important avenue for honing English expression skills but also acts as an effective window for disseminating their native culture. Chinese tea culture, with its long history and profound philosophy, encompasses rich aesthetic tastes and life wisdom. Integrating it into college students' English public speaking can enrich speech content and showcase China's unique cultural charm to the world. However, research on the specific manifestation of Chinese tea culture in college students' English public speaking is relatively scarce, making this study of significant practical importance.

2. Overview of Chinese tea culture

2.1. Historical origins of Chinese tea culture

China is the homeland of tea, with a history of tea discovery and utilization spanning thousands of years. From Shennong's taste testing of herbs, where he discovered the medicinal value of tea, to the Western Han Dynasty when tea became a commodity in circulation, and further to the Tang Dynasty when Lu Yu authored "The Classic of Tea," elevating tea culture to new heights, Chinese tea culture has undergone a lengthy developmental process. Throughout different historical periods, tea culture has intertwined with politics, economics, religion, and art, forming a unique cultural system.

2.2. Core connotations of Chinese tea culture

Chinese tea culture encompasses both material and spiritual dimensions. The material aspect involves tea plantation, picking, manufacturing techniques, as well as the types, materials, and craftsmanship of tea sets. The spiritual realm is even more abundant, covering tea ceremony, tea ethics, and tea art. Tea ceremony emphasizes self-cultivation and life perception through tea tasting, pursuing a state of "harmony, tranquility, pleasure, and authenticity." Tea ethics advocate for virtues such as integrity, modesty, and honesty, while tea art focuses on the skills and etiquette of tea brewing and tasting, showcasing an elegant and refined attitude towards life.

3. Manifestation modes of Chinese tea culture in college students' English public speaking

3.1. Selection of speech themes

Many college students choose themes related to Chinese tea culture for their English public speeches, such

as "The Charm of Chinese Tea Culture" or "Tea: A Liquid Treasure of Chinese Culture." These themes directly highlight the core content of the speech, attracting the audience's attention and laying the foundation for in-depth elaboration on tea culture. By expanding on these themes, speakers can systematically introduce various aspects of tea culture, including its history, types, efficacy, and cultural significance, providing listeners with a comprehensive understanding of Chinese tea culture.

3.2. Incorporation of stories and legends

Chinese tea culture abounds with vivid and interesting stories and legends, such as "The Legend of Longjing Tea" and "The Origin of Biluochun Tea." College students cleverly incorporate these stories into their English speeches, enhancing the interestingness and appeal of their presentations. For instance, when recounting the legend of Longjing tea, the speaker might describe in English: "Long ago, there was a village near the West Lake where a poor old man lived. One day, an immortal in disguise sought shelter at his house, and the old man treated him kindly. To express his gratitude, the immortal planted a tea plant in the old man's garden, yielding fragrant and delicious tea leaves, thus giving birth to Longjing tea." Such stories not only aid listeners in better comprehending the origins of tea culture but also allow them to sense the underlying virtues of kindness and gratitude.

3.3. Demonstration of tea art performances

Some college students incorporate tea art performances into their English public speeches, donning traditional attire and conducting a series of tea brewing and serving procedures on-site while providing English explanations. For example, during the tea brewing process, the speaker might introduce: "First, we warm the teapot by pouring hot water into it and then pouring it out to ensure the teapot is at the optimal temperature for brewing tea. Next, we add an appropriate amount of tea leaves, varying based on the tea type and personal preference. Then, we pour hot water into the teapot and let it steep for a few minutes, during which the tea's aroma gradually permeates the air." Through such visual demonstrations and detailed explanations, listeners gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of Chinese tea art, enhancing their perceptual knowledge of Chinese tea culture.

3.4. Citation of poetry and lyrics

Numerous literati throughout Chinese history have left behind poetry and lyrics about tea, such as Lu Tong's "Song of Seven Bowls of Tea" and Su Shi's "Drawing Water from the River to Brew Tea." College students cite these classic works in their English speeches, attempting translations and interpretations to showcase the literary heritage of Chinese tea culture. For instance, citing Su Shi's line "For brewing tea, we require living water and a strong fire. I personally go to the fishing stone by the river to fetch deep and clear water," the speaker might translate it as: "To brew tea, we need living water and vigorous fire. I personally venture to the fishing stone by the river to procure deep and clear water," further explaining that this line depicts the poet's meticulous attention to water quality for tea brewing, reflecting the Chinese tea culture's emphasis on detail and quality, allowing listeners to appreciate the charm of tea culture from a literary perspective.

4. Roles of Chinese tea culture in college students' english public speaking

4.1. Enriching speech content and enhancing cultural depth

Integrating Chinese tea culture into English public speaking provides a wealth of diverse materials for speeches. Content related to the history, types, manufacturing techniques, and cultural significance of tea can transform speeches from mundane topics into ones imbued with profound cultural heritage. Listeners not only acquire English knowledge but also gain insights into China's unique culture, thereby elevating the overall quality and appeal of the speeches.

4.2. Strengthening cross-cultural communication effects

In the context of globalization, cross-cultural communication necessitates mutual understanding and respect for each other's cultures. By showcasing Chinese tea culture in English public speaking, college students enable foreign audiences to better comprehend China's traditional culture and lifestyle, thereby bridging cultural divides.

Moreover, sharing tea culture can foster mutual learning and integration among different cultures, enhancing cross-cultural communication outcomes. For example, during post-speech interaction sessions, participants can engage in discussions centered around tea culture, sharing similar beverage cultures from their respective countries and deepening mutual friendship and cultural understanding.

4.3. Cultivating college students' cultural confidence and international communication skills

When college students successfully disseminate Chinese tea culture in English public speaking, they experience the value and allure of their own culture, thereby boosting their cultural confidence. Simultaneously, this process hones their English expression abilities, cross-cultural communication skills, and international dissemination capabilities. Through continuous practice and accumulation, college students can confidently step onto the international stage, narrating Chinese stories and amplifying Chinese voices to the world.

5. Issues and recommendations regarding the manifestation of Chinese tea culture in college students' english public speaking

5.1. Existing issues

5.1.1. Inadequate cultural understanding

Some college students possess only a superficial understanding of Chinese tea culture, lacking a profound grasp of its core connotations and spirit. In their speeches, they may merely introduce tea types and brewing methods without elucidating the philosophical thoughts, moral concepts, and aesthetic tastes embedded in tea culture, resulting in speeches lacking depth and infectivity.

5.1.2. Inaccurate english expressions

Due to limited English proficiency, some college students often make mistakes in vocabulary selection, grammar errors, and incoherent expressions when translating China's tea culture into English. For example, translating "tea ceremony" directly as "tea ceremony" fails to accurately convey its cultural connotation, leading to distorted information transmission and affecting the effectiveness of cultural exchange.

5.1.3. Lack of speaking skills

Some college students overemphasize the content of tea culture in their speeches, but ignore the use of speech skills. Problems such as too fast or too slow speech rate, monotonous intonation, lack of eye contact make the speech lack of attraction, and it is difficult to fully arouse the enthusiasm and attention of the audience.

5.2. Recommendations

5.2.1. Deepening understanding of Chinese tea culture

College students should deepen their understanding of Chinese tea culture by reading relevant books and literature, attending tea culture lectures and training sessions, and engaging in practical experiences such as visiting tea gardens, factories, and museums to personally experience the charm of tea culture. This enables them to convey tea culture information more accurately and vividly in their speeches.

5.2.2. Enhancing english expression abilities

College students should strengthen their English learning, accumulating tea culture-related English vocabulary, phrases, and expressions. They can improve their English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing by reading English-language tea culture materials, watching English documentaries, and interacting with foreign teachers or friends. When translating tea culture content, they should pay attention to cultural differences and select appropriate vocabulary and expressions to ensure accurate information transmission.

5.2.3. Improving speaking techniques

College students can enhance their public speaking skills by taking speech training courses or joining speech clubs, mastering essential techniques like pace control, intonation variation, and body language. Before delivering a speech, they should practice thoroughly, familiarize themselves with the content, and mentally prepare. During the presentation, maintain eye contact with the audience, use humor appropriately, and employ rhetorical questions to boost the speech's appeal and emotional impact.

6. Conclusion

Chinese tea culture manifests uniquely and holds significant value in college students' English public speaking. Through theme selection, incorporation of stories and legends, demonstration of tea art performances, and citation of poetry and lyrics, Chinese tea culture enriches speech content, enhances cultural depth, strengthens cross-cultural communication effects, and cultivates college students' cultural confidence and international communication skills. However, issues such as inadequate cultural understanding, inaccurate English expressions, and lack of speaking skills persist. To address these issues, college students should deepen their understanding of Chinese tea culture, enhance their English expression abilities, and improve their speaking skills to better disseminate Chinese tea culture in English public speaking, allowing the world to appreciate the profoundness of Chinese culture. In the future, as cross-cultural communication continues to deepen, the manifestation of Chinese tea culture in college students' English public speaking will become even more diverse and captivating, playing a greater role in promoting Chinese culture to the world.

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