

Integration of Chinese Patriotic Songs into College English Viewing Listening and Speaking Course

Fuhua Liu

School of Foreign Languages, Dalian Jiaotong University, Dalian, Liaoning 116028, China

Abstract

The present paper is an analysis of the integration of Chinese patriotic songs into college English viewing listening and speaking course. The reasons, procedures, clarification for some possible misunderstandings and effectiveness of such an integration program are analyzed in detail. Through the analysis, the feasibility and effectiveness of the integration program can be well proven.

Keywords

integration, Chinese patriotic songs, college English viewing listening and speaking course.

1. Introduction

College English courses are constantly undergoing reforms, and college English viewing listening and speaking course for non-English majors is no exception in this reforming trend. While there is much progress made in reforming this course, there is still much room for improvement as to how to further raise students' interest in language learning and increase their learning effectiveness. For most senior language learners, decent language acquisition can be achieved through the contact and use of the language via day-by-day memorization. However, in practice, many students lack the very interest and perseverance in language courses. Besides, many students put much emphasis on their majors that can ensure them decent jobs after graduation and ignore the cultivation of their minds and morality. Making use of English songs in class teaching can effectively stimulate students' interest in learning and greatly boost their English learning. [1-4] In my opinion, saving some teaching hours for dealing with Chinese patriotic songs in English can serve as a super starting point of stimulating college students' interest in language learning and cultivating their morality in a subtle way.

2. Body

2.1. The Reasons for the Integration of Chinese Patriotic Songs into College English Viewing Listening and Speaking Courses

For my understanding, Chinese patriotic songs can be subdivided into three categories: Chinese revolutionary songs or red songs, Chinese modern songs that are in praise of Chinese prosperity and Chinese people's collectivism and morality, and patriotic songs. Songs, either Chinese or foreign ones, have their innate advantages in arousing the listeners and singers' interest for their enchanting lyrics and melodies and in helping memorize words and sentences for the singers' temptation to repeat frequently. Language learning and song-singing not only can be but should be closely related, which has been proven by the fact that most language learning beginners in kindergarten or primary school sing abundant songs in the process of their language acquisition. Singing in a second language helps learners to clarify and perfect their pronunciation, intonation, rhythm and pace. If language learners do love certain songs, they tend to sing the songs in their spare time, thus greatly increasing their chances of language practice. College students' language learning and that of kindergarten or primary students have

much in common. So, the singing practice which has proven to be quite effective in enhancing preschool or primary school students' language learning abilities, can be equally applied in the studies of college English learners. To target college students' needs, college English teachers need to complicate the whole thing a bit and make flexible schedules for their students.

Many college English teachers find it rather difficult to cultivate students' morality through traditional teaching. For these teachers, the adoption of the singing of Chinese patriotic songs may offer a fresh perspective. Most of the patriotic songs are of great historical significance and rich in meaning, and there are usually interesting, sensational and important stories behind them. Therefore, by singing Chinese patriotic songs in English and conducting other activities which revolve around these songs, college students not only improve their language abilities but also emotionally infected and morally and ideologically educated.

One of college students' responsibilities is to spread Chinese culture to the world and tell foreign friend Chinese stories. But the goal is not easily attainable, because foreign friends' reception of the messages does not the acceptance of them. And most of all, the foreigners must first get the messages in this message-exploding world we live in. That is, as Chinese culture transmitters, college students must first of all succeed in getting the foreigners' attention. Relatively speaking, songs have obvious advantages over written, other audio or even video messages. By listening to the sweet melodies with fresh lyrics, foreigners concerned may just want to take a step further----to learn more about the stories behind these songs. In this way, they may better comprehend China, Chinese people, and Chinese history. From the perspective of Chinese college students, by offering Chinese patriotic songs to foreigners through various means, they can truly achieve their goal of transmitting Chinese culture and telling Chinese stories.

2.2. The Procedures for the Integration of Chinese Patriotic Songs into College English Viewing Listening and Speaking Courses

Ten minutes before class starts, a college English teacher may put some Chinese patriotic songs on so that students can enjoy the songs or even follow the songs and sing themselves. For convenience's sake, I'll use the Chinese revolutionary song "Southern Bay" as an example to illustrate how Chinese patriotic songs are exploited and relevant activities are organized in a typical session at the teacher's disposal in a college English viewing listening and speaking course.

First of all, the teacher involved may ask students to listen to the song "Southern Bay" in their spare time either individually or in groups. What is equally important, the teacher may also ask students to search relevant historical facts or stories behind the song and discuss within groups. Then the teacher may ask several groups to prepare oral presentation concerning these facts or stories. In class, the teacher may give a lecture on the historical facts concerning the song. Then various activities can be conducted revolving around the song. For example, the teacher may ask students to retell the story behind the song if there is one. The teacher may offer the English version of the lyrics with some words missing and ask students to fill in the blanks with proper words and phrases. The teacher may download the song in the English version from the Internet and ask students to repeat a line or two from the whole song. The teacher may also give students the necessary hints and ask them to give short speeches on the significance of reviving local agriculture. After class, the teacher can assign them interesting homework by asking students to make up their own lines and sing the song together within groups.

2.3. Clarification of Some Possible Misunderstandings

First, this integration program does not necessarily mean that in every class, the teacher must spend half of the teaching hours carrying out activities centering on Chinese patriotic songs. The teacher may pick up one or two sessions each semester to carry out the program. Second,

since it is relatively difficult for English beginners to understand and express complicated ideas such as Chinese revolutionary history, it is appropriate for sophomores, juniors or seniors to take part in such programs. Third, teachers have to search all the relevant materials both in Chinese and English, which often proves to be a rather time-consuming and exhausting job, so it is highly suggested that teachers work in groups to get fully prepared. Teachers also have to design the teachings to make sure that their upcoming class is both appealing and instructive. Fourth, college English teachers are encouraged to talk to teachers specializing in politics and ideology to enrich their knowledge so that they can better apply relevant materials to their teaching practice.

Some may doubt about the feasibility of applying Chinese-patriotic-song-singing-strategy to college English courses, as they believe college English teaching is mainly based on students' textbooks. In my opinion, college English teaching should not be totally confined to textbooks, which is determined by the characteristics of language courses. Languages have no classification. That is, there is no such thing as good language or bad language, useful language or useless language. Language is only a medium to communicate the ideas, and languages in any field should be learned attentively if and when necessary. Therefore, besides English textbooks, students are also required to read and use the language extensively. To solve the "textbook or not" problem, I offer the following tips. On the one hand, we should not give up textbooks once and for all. We may allocate most of the class hours to the handling of textbooks. On the other, teachers should enjoy the autonomy to use the remaining class hours in which they can organize various activities centering on Chinese patriotic songs.

2.4. Students' Response to the Integration Program

I saved one class for doing such an experiment last semester, and did a little survey by interviewing 10 students afterwards. The response from the students is generally positive. Of all the 10 students interviewed, 6 of them say that they have been kind of fed up with the traditional way of learning and teaching in a typical college English viewing listening and speaking class. To be specific, they have been tired of the textbook-centred teaching method through which students listen to the materials from the textbooks and do oral activities such as making dialogues. 9 out of the 10 students think that the textbook materials are moderately interesting, but they really need something fresh for a change once in a while, and activities centering around Chinese patriotic songs are really fresh, interesting and more challenging. After the special class, all the 10 students interviewed say that they benefit a lot from such a unique class. Half of the interviewed confess that they were not quite familiar with most of the Chinese patriotic songs before. But after the class, all the 10 students develop a liking for such songs, with 7 of them tending to sing such songs for fun in their spare time and 6 developing an interest in learning the historical facts or stories behind the songs. After the integration program, 7 of them would like to ask their parents or grandparents for more information about the modern history of China. All of the 10 students agree that through the program, they have greatly improved their language abilities, especially their abilities to translate from Chinese to English. However, according to the survey, only 3 students would like to try their best to transmit Chinese patriotic songs through online means to overseas friends. Through the detailed analysis of the response of the students to Chinese patriotic songs program, we can find that students can benefit both academically and morally.

3. Conclusion

The paper is an analysis of the integration of Chinese patriotic songs to college English viewing listening and speaking courses. The reasons, procedures, and effectiveness are analyzed respectively. There are generally two reasons to support the integration theory: to improve students' language abilities and to cultivate their morality. Singing Chinese patriotic songs in

English is more likely to appeal to students who will in turn sing them often in their spare time. Chinese patriotic songs are suitable for cultivating students' morality for their chanting lyrics and melodies. Songs are also a better way of transmitting Chinese culture and building positive international image overseas than written words. The teaching content chosen by college English teachers can be in essence random as long as it is general English, which is decided by the nature of language learning. College English teachers do have the right to set a course focused on Chinese patriotic songs, but for college English courses, it is practical for college English teachers to save a class or two for such a program. The most difficult part of the program is on the part of the teachers who have to collect relevant materials and design their teaching in an stimulating and effective way. By interviewing 10 students after implementing the program, I find the program is quite effective in improving students' language abilities and enhancing their morality. However, students' willingness to spread Chinese patriotic songs to the world needs to be further boosted.

References

- [1] Lan Xi. How to Stimulate Students' Learning Interest through English Songs[J]. Weekly Examination, 2011(74).
- [2] Liu Rui, Xu Huancheng. Application of English Songs to Teaching Practice[J]. Education and Management of Primary and Secondary Schools, 2006(9).
- [3] Wang Wen. The Facilitating Effect of English Songs on English Teaching[J]. Journal of Beijing Electric Power College, 2011(1).
- [4] Zhang Yan. Cultivation of Students' Learning Interest through English Songs[J]. Course Education Research, 2019(17).