On the Importance and Feasibility of Setting Up Dialect and Culture Courses in Local Colleges and Universities

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Abstract. With the development of society, the popularization of Putonghua, the increase of floating population, the promotion of urbanization and the transformation of the inner cities, both the using scope of dialects and the environment of using dialects obviously become weaker. On the other hand, according to the relationship between the establishment of courses and the objects of talents training in local undergraduate colleges and universals, the courses on local dialect and culture should be paid proper attention. This article will proceed from the importance of dialect and culture and the problems in the establishment of language and culture courses in local undergraduate colleges and universities therefore demonstrate the importance and feasibility of setting up the local dialect and culture courses.

Introduction

General Secretary Xi Jin-ping pointed out that “traditional Chinese culture is our most profound soft power”, “History and culture is the soul of one city, we should protect the urban historical and cultural heritage as well as cherish our lives.” Dialect is created by all residents in a certain region for generations with their wisdom and practice. In addition to playing a communicative role, dialect could be regarded as a carrier of traditional culture in the region. Students in higher education institutions have enough ability to understand the relationship between dialect and Putonghua. What’s more, they also understand the importance of the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. This article takes Wuhan dialect and culture course as an example to demonstrate the importance and feasibility of dialect and culture course in local universities.

The Importance of Dialect Culture

According to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage under UNESCO, the definition of intangible cultural heritage is that communities, groups and sometimes individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage, performances, expressions, knowledge and skills and its associated instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces. Communities and groups in response to their environment, changes in the relationship between nature and historical conditions continue to make this kind of intangible cultural heritage from generation to generation innovation, and provides them with a sense of history and a sense of identity, so It promotes diversity and human creativity culture. Dialect culture is also a special kind of intangible cultural heritage.

Due to the relative late start of China’s industrialization and modernization, traditional dialect resources are relatively well conserved. China is the country with the most abundant language resources in the world today and a big country with a large number of language resources. As one of the most typical and important intangible cultural heritage, dialect has symbiotic with mankind. During the long history of human beings, dialect has accumulated rich cultural information. Dialect contains local people's values, ways of thinking, cultural psychology and Cognition and expression of nature and society.

Wuhan dialect has a long history and can be traced back to Chu language in ancient times. It is regarded as one of the representatives of Southwest Mandarin and also plays an important role in linguistics. Wuhan dialect is used through the downtown of Wuhan, reflecting out of the three main
tells of the natural and cultural characteristics, and passes all over Hubei Province, so it is also a cultural gem in Hubei Province. In Wuhan dialect, “Ji yu (Crucian carp)” is often called “xi tou yu” because of this kind of fish like to live in the mud in the water; in Wuhan, local people like to eat “su cai (vegetarian)” in New Year, because the pronunciation of “su” in Wuhan dialect is the same as “shou (lone life)”. The vegetarian implies New Year health and longevity. So, it is not hard to imagine that the disappearance of a dialect means the disappearance of a foundation of the development and inheritance of cultures, which means the less of a worldview, a mode of thinking and a kind of local knowledge. The disappearance of dialects will lead to the disappearance of dialectal and culture accompanying with it, and the loss of any dialectal culture will be the loss of Chinese culture.

The Importance of Setting up Dialect and Culture Courses in Local Colleges and Universities

When the government took the promotion of Putonghua as its top priority in the work of national languages since 1986, the State language Committee has made it clear that “Putonghua is basically the language of instruction in schools and kindergartens at all levels.” Almost all colleges and universities offer courses related to Chinese or Putonghua. Scholars at home and abroad have a lot of research on the teaching of Chinese courses in Colleges and universities, but there is still a lack of research on the cultural teaching of college dialects. With the deepening of people’s understanding of dialects, the close relationship between dialect protection, local culture and the protection of traditional cultural heritage has also become a hot spot and consensus in academic circles and media. The status of Chinese dialect as a corpus resource, language and cultural research resources has also been clearly affirmed.

Language and culture courses in colleges and universities in China are mostly set up in language subjects, such as Chinese Major, English Major or minority language. But such courses are not set up in other subjects, not to mention the local dialect and culture courses are established. In such a situation, the issue of protection and inheritance of the intangible cultural heritage that we are following and advocating is almost empty. Although the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage require the concerted efforts of people across the country, students in colleges and universities have enough dialectical ability to understand the significance of dialectal culture while at the same time being able to undertake the important task of dialect protection and cultural inheritance.

In addition, from the perspective of the relationship between curriculum setup and object of the talent training, curriculum is consist of the educational content, teaching activities and its process, which is not only the carrier of teaching content. At the same time, it is also an important basis for the management and evaluation of educational activities, and it is also the basic guarantee to achieve the goal of school education. Therefore, the curriculum teaching design of the higher education is the most essential factor and the core of the problem which reflects the institutes and teachers on teaching content from the nature (including culture character, knowledge, skills and abilities, etc.) the selection and organization, specific and clearly reflect the institute’s educational philosophy, value orientation, target positioning the characteristics of talent cultivation and teaching.

The Outline of the National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) proposes: It is needed to meet the needs of national and regional economic and social development, establish a dynamic adjustment mechanism and continuously optimize the structure of higher education. It is especially important for local universities to expand the scale of application-oriented, compound and technical personnel training. This is especially important for local undergraduate colleges and universities. Local universities have strong regional characteristics and have very important status in the development of regional social development. Its main function is to cultivate a large number of high level applied talents for local economic construction and social development needs around the needs of regional economic and social development.
In the training of talents, it is necessary to make clear the basic task of "training talents mainly for the local people", to take the road of "based on the place and serve the place", and to take the initiative to meet the needs of the local economic construction and social development. On the one hand, we insist on serving the local economy and social development, on the other hand, we try our best to improve the quality of talent training.

To sum up, it is of practical significance and far-reaching value to set up a kind of general course -- Wuhan Dialect and Culture, which emphasis on training application-oriented talents oriented to production, management and service in oriented Wuhan regional economic development.

Firstly, it is conducive to the innovation of teaching contents and ways in general education. Traditional language courses, such as college Chinese, practical writing, focus on written knowledge of reading, writing and knowledge. Wuhan Dialect and Culture, which aims at cultivating applied talents, will give full consideration to the interest and hobbies of students in teaching contents and modes, carry out language practice activities in line with the direction of job hunting, and actively open up the second class to provide students with appreciation of dialects, Learn about local culture opportunities.

Secondly, General education, which is an important supplement to professional education, is conducive to the promotion of students' comprehensive quality. After learning the relevant language and cultural knowledge of Wuhan, students from all over the country could understand the culture of Wuhan deeply, and be improved the confidence and enthusiasm of internship or social practice, and be enhanced the level of understanding and communication of dialects, thus could adapt to the needs of local industries and industry positions as well as enhance the professional quality of students.

Thirdly, It is conducive to dialect protection. Through the study of Wuhan Dialect and Culture, students can understand the values, thinking modes, cultural psychology, and cognition and expression of nature and society of local people in Wuhan. As a local applied undergraduate institute, to serve the region is its mission in addition to the responsibility of heritage of local culture.

Fourthly, local undergraduate colleges and universalities should take the responsibility of promoting Wuhan culture. It is not hard to imagine that the disappearance of a dialect means the disappearance of a foundation for cultural development and inheritance. The rise of a city is not only the improvement of GDP, but also the promotion of its spirit and the spread of culture. The establishment of Wuhan Dialect and Culture in local applied undergraduate colleges and universities can cultivate students’ sense of mission of cultural preservation so that they can consciously regard dialect as the object of their inheritance.

The Feasibility of Setting up Dialect and Culture Courses in Local Colleges and Universities

As a local undergraduate college or university, serving the local community is its own responsibility, taking the responsibility of heritage of local culture, the colleges and universities that plan to set up the dialect and culture course can follow these aspects:

Firstly, determine a kind of scientific and rational principle and teaching method of dialect and culture course. Municipal applied undergraduate colleges and universities play a very important role in the development of the region. Its main function is to focus on the needs of regional economic and social development and train a large number of high-level applied talents who are capable of being used for the needs of local economic construction and social development. In the process of personnel training, we should take the initiative to adapt to the needs of local economic construction and social development, and cultivate a group of qualified personnel who must work hard. However, most colleges and universities still use the test scores and certificates as the standard to measure the abilities of undergraduates. The traditional language general courses focus on reading, writing and the imparting of knowledge. The teaching contents and methods have hardly been adapted to the actual needs of today's society. Municipal applied undergraduate colleges and universities should be related to the reform of the curriculum, such as the establishment of additional local language and culture-related courses. The Wuhan Dialect Culture Courses can learn from the successful
experiences of Shanghai, Zhejiang and Guangdong, writing high-quality textbooks with local characteristics, and highlight the Wuhan Spiritual Characteristics of “dare to be the first and pursue excellence”; teaching methods should take full account of students’ interests and hobbies, combined with the direction of job-seeking to actively open up the second classroom, to provide students with appreciation of dialects, to understand local culture opportunities.

Secondly, improve students’ appreciation and research ability of local dialect and culture. China has a long history of ancient civilization with a wide variety of cultural heritage. Since we recognize that dialects have an important meaning for the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, we should make a difference for the survival and inheritance of dialects. Therefore, it is necessary to write suitable Wuhan dialect teaching materials for students. Apart from introducing the concept of dialect, the formation and development of dialect, the characteristics of phonetic system, vocabulary system and grammatical system, dialect and historical and cultural studies of each dialect area, It should be necessary to increase the content of Chinese dialects investigation and description because “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” And the situation of Chinese dialects is complicated and changeable. Students who learn to study the dialect can learn more about themselves similar dialects for comparative analysis, which is important for the protection and inheritance of dialects. In addition, carry out dialect practice activities, open up the second class. According to the teaching content of dialect, appropriate arrangements and activities of language practice, for example, can encourage students to learn each other dialects, guide them to find differences between dialects, dialects and mandarin in terms of voice, vocabulary, grammar, and the corresponding law And so on, through this activity to stimulate everyone's interest in speaking dialects, enhance students' awareness of the dialect culture and self-confidence.

Thirdly, popularize Wuhan dialect culture through campus activities. The undergraduates in local colleges and universities mainly use Putonghua. Learning Putonghua well is beneficial to promote communicate among all ethnic groups and regions and good for safeguarding national unification and enhancing the cohesion of the Chinese nation. Learning dialects is not contradictory against learning Putonghua because dialect and Putonghua bear different social functions and they do not conflict with each other, but complement to each other. Wuhan municipal colleges and universities regard Wuhan dialect as another form of culture to supplement, so that the students could understand and use the dialect. After graduating the students would have laid a good foundation for local dialect and culture for working in Wuhan. And even more, the students who master the local dialect and culture would make good contribution to inherit the cultures. Municipal applied undergraduate colleges and universities could promote Wuhan dialect culture through colorful campus activities. For example, they could carry out propaganda activities such as “Speaking Wuhan Dialect and Show Wuhan’s Image”, using dialects to tell stories, lectures, recitals, singing and acting activities, and so on. To attract students to take the initiative to study Wuhan dialect and use it, local colleges and universities could organize the students in unit of class or community to visit Wuhan famous historic and cultural sites and strengthen their understanding of the city of Wuhan. The institutes could also invite celebrities from all walks in Wuhan to attend the campus lecture hall on Wuhan culture and guide the students who are in the ivory tower to swim in the sea of Wuhan dialect and culture and enjoy them.

Fourthly, strengthen the construction of relevant faculty. The quality and achievement value of college talents training depends largely on teachers. Teachers engaged in Chinese language teaching in universities should update their teaching philosophy with time and recognize the importance of local dialects and cultures. At the same time that educating students master in Putonghua, they should also guide students to pay attention to the protection and inheritance of Wuhan dialects and cultivate students' social responsibility of the local intangible cultural heritage. The inheritance of dialect requires the collection and arrangement of professionals. The professional qualities of Chinese teachers in colleges and universities can undertake this task. They can lead students to study the characteristics and changes of the dialects in Wuhan by means of textual data collection and field investigation, and collect dialect corpus. In addition, local governments and municipal schools should
encourage Chinese teachers to participate international and domestic academic exchanges and discussions, regularly strengthen in the training, practice and exchange of dialect protection, and effectively improve the teaching and inheritance of teachers’ dialects.

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