

A comparative study of dragon culture in Chinese and English from the perspective of intercultural communication

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Abstract: with the advent of the era of globalization, the British society is eager to understand China in order to find jobs in China in the future. However, due to the huge differences between Chinese and English cultures, British learners will encounter many obstacles in the process of learning Chinese. Therefore, this paper selects the comparative study of dragon culture in Chinese and English languages from the perspective of cross-cultural communication, uses the method of comparative analysis and literature analysis to deeply interpret the specific connotation of dragon culture in China and Britain, shows the understanding of dragon culture in the language system of China and Britain, insight into the differences between the two countries' dragon culture from the root, and takes it as a reference point, Then it provides a new way to solve the cross-cultural communication barriers in the international Chinese education classroom.

Key words: dragon culture; Intercultural communication; Language contrast

Countries all over the world are eager to understand China and participate in China's economic development, while China also hopes to integrate into the trend of world economic development. However, all these exchanges and cooperation must be based on language. Shen Qi and Xia Xia (2018) pointed out that as a carrier for exchanging ideas, eliminating prejudice and disseminating culture, language is a tool for countries and regions along the "belt and road" to realize economic and trade exchanges and mutual learning of civilizations. Yang Yang (2022) stressed that language is the most important thinking and communication tool of mankind, and is the booster to promote the "belt and road" construction. However, opportunities and challenges must coexist in the process of communication. As Guo Guangwei et al. (2016) stressed, the differences between China and the West in privacy, time, politeness, eating habits, body language and other aspects have caused major obstacles to cross-cultural communication between China and the West. When people from different cultural backgrounds, countries and regions communicate, cultural differences usually bring them confusion, confusion, and even conflict. This paper takes the Chinese and British dragon culture as a starting point to analyze the differences in the interpretation of Dragon between Chinese and British culture. And in the long historical process, the description and development of dragons in Chinese and English language and culture, and actively try to integrate Chinese and Western dragon culture into the international Chinese education classroom, so as to alleviate the cross-cultural communication barriers in the process of international Chinese education.

1. The connotation of Chinese Dragon Culture

The image of the Chinese dragon has a long history. In ancient times, each tribe had its own totem. In the process of tribal integration, the dragon totem was created, and with the continuous development of Yanhuang tribe, it gradually became one of the most primitive beliefs of the Chinese nation. With the development of history, the image of the dragon has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. During the Qin and Han Dynasties, the emperor Liu Bang of the Han Dynasty compared himself to the dragon, and the dragon has become the symbol of the royal family. For example, the "dragon face" refers to the appearance of the emperor, "dragon body" refers to the jade body of the emperor, and the clothes worn by the emperor are called "dragon robes". Due to the spread and development of religion, the influence of dragon on the civil class is increasing; The "Dragon King" believed in by the citizen class is the most typical representative. The "Dragon King" is the God of rain. For the Chinese ancestors who mainly focus on agriculture, good weather is their common expectation. It can be seen that the dragon is the supreme existence in the eyes of the Chinese ancestors. At the same time, in the Chinese system, all kinds of words with the word "dragon" are usually commendatory words, such as the spirit of dragon and horse, dragon flying and Phoenix dancing, hidden dragon and crouching tiger, dragon and Phoenix showing auspiciousness, etc., which still affect the daily life of the Chinese people today. Taking the dragon as the symbol of the Chinese nation is the highest level of China's dragon culture. For thousands of years, Chinese people have regarded themselves as descendants of the dragon and called their motherland the Oriental Dragon. It can be seen that the dragon is a just, kind and dignified existence in Chinese culture. The Chinese people have been full of admiration for the dragon since ancient times and believe that the dragon can bring them harvest and good luck.

2. The connotation of British Dragon Culture

"Dragon" originally existed as a totem and was believed by the western world. In Greek mythology, "dragon" mostly exists as a guardian, such as "fire dragon" guarding the golden sheepskin and "giant dragon" guarding the golden apple. Although they have all kinds of differences with ancient Greek heroes, they are also under the jurisdiction of the gods, and have nothing to do with evil spirits and demons. In the middle ages of Europe, "dragon" gradually became the representative of the evil devil. At the same time, in order to spread its religious thoughts and improve its influence, Christianity began to vilify "dragon" to set off the sanctity of Christianity. In the Christian classic, the Catholic Bible revelation, the great red dragon was used to represent the devil Satan. From then on, "Dragon" has become the representative of evil and ferocity, and fraud and hypocrisy have become its exclusive synonyms. Nowadays, the evil and ferocious image of "dragon" has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the British people. For example, the dragon in the British classic Harry Potter series has

been shaped as a dragon and a magic dragon. From the definition of the English word “dragon” in the English dictionary, we can also see the British people’s understanding of “dragon”. The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English explains “dragon” as an unimaginable giant flying animal, which also has two bird wings and can spit out flames and smoke in this way. From the dictionary, we can see that the word “dragon” tends to be derogatory in the eyes of the British. This also shows that there are great differences between Chinese and Western cultural backgrounds, and they have different perceptions of things.

3. Exploring the reasons for the differences of cultural connotations between China and Britain

Due to the differences between the East and the West in natural environment, national history, political system, religious beliefs and customs, people’s understanding of dragons also shows great differences. In western culture, the dragon is regarded as a terrible animal with ugly and strange image. It has wings, tail, sharp teeth, long tongue, spitting fire in its mouth, making trouble and doing all kinds of evil. In China, the dragon is regarded as a sacred symbol. The natural geographical environment plays an important role in the development of civilization. The topography has not only achieved the western marine civilization, but also shaped the essence of China’s agricultural civilization. The modern western civilization is mainly originated from the ancient Greek civilization. Ancient Greece is located along the Aegean Sea. The inland land is poor, but it has many harbors. The ancient Greek ancestors can only rely on the sea to survive. However, the sea is full of dangers. According to the research of paleontologists, crocodiles and other large amphibians were often found along the coast of ancient Greece. Ancient Greek ancestors were so afraid of them that in the long-term fear scenario, people vilified this evil monster as a dragon. Therefore, the vilification of dragons is fundamentally the contradiction between marine civilization and nature in the process of outward expansion. However, as a nation cultivated for generations, the Chinese people are far away from the coastline and lack of rainfall, so they have a great demand for rainwater. In addition, the emperor had long linked the dragon with his own imperial power and advertised that he was the son of the dragon. In addition, in feudal society, the supremacy of imperial power meant that beautifying the dragon was to strengthen his dominant position. Therefore, the dragon was inviolable to gods in ancient China. From dignitaries to civilians, all people had to pray for the protection of the dragon. The Western nations are radical and aggressive, and they all want to show their value by eliminating harm. Driven by this value, the more cunning and difficult the dragon is to be defeated, the more it shows its value; The Chinese nation is sincere and humble, and has always hoped for a stable life and social peace since ancient times. In ancient China, because the rulers advertised themselves as the embodiment of Jackie Chan early on, Confucianism, Buddhism and even Taoism were trying to create a positive image of the dragon. In ancient times, the Western dragon was not so lucky. Western dragon Christianity constantly ugly the image of the dragon and compared the dragon to the devil to highlight its justice. To sum up, Chinese and Western dragon cultures have very different origins, connotations and cultural expressions, and the image of dragon also frequently appears in each other’s vocabulary. In cross-cultural exchanges, especially in the classroom of international Chinese education, we should comprehensively analyze the reasons for the differences between Chinese and English dragon cultures, and at the same time compare the cultural connotations of Chinese and English vocabulary in detail, We should also pay attention to the cultural stories extended from words, and carry out cultural exchanges accurately and comprehensively on the basis of respecting each other’s cultures.

4. Seeking solutions to cross cultural communication barriers from the differences between Chinese and English “dragon” cultures

4.1 Establish correct cultural values

Both Chinese and British cultures are rooted in their own cultural soil and have their own cultural values. There is no distinction between good and bad. Therefore, cultural chauvinism should be abandoned in the process of cross-cultural communication; Ethnocentrism should be avoided. Listen to different cultures with heart, build bridges between different cultures with sincerity, and establish correct cultural values.

4.2 Respect each other's culture

To deeply and carefully understand the connotation of Chinese and English culture, the most important thing in this process is to make a historical macro comparison between the two cultures, such as architecture, folk customs, diet, transportation, clothing habits, social language, etc. at the same time, it is also necessary to make a deep comparison, such as religious thoughts, national character, social values, the concept of life and death, etc. Although the culture and values are different, with the deepening of economic globalization, Sino British exchanges and communication should be the mainstream. From the perspective of history and reality, the cultural monomer with the boundary of nation-state has long ceased to exist. Therefore, in the process of cultural exchange, we should deeply and carefully compare the cultural differences between China and Britain, grasp the key points, think carefully, and then improve our communicative ability, so as to easily realize daily communicative activities.

4.3 Improve their cultural literacy and cross-cultural communication ability

First of all, we should be proficient in our own culture and have strong national self-confidence. We should be a “messenger of communication” with cultural confidence in the new era and fulfill the practical requirements of the 20th CPC National Congress to “build a socialist cultural power in the new era”; Secondly, we should not wait for me sometimes, seize the day and night, take the initiative, and fully understand the local conditions and customs of other countries, so as to be active in the process of cross-cultural communication. At present, the success of communication behavior is closely related to culture. In the process of cross-cultural communication, it is inevitable to use their own national communication habits. In serious cases, it may lead to cultural conflict, or even direct communication failure.

Therefore, in the process of cross-cultural communication, we should take correct avoidance measures, pay attention to speech acts, respect each other's values and cultural taboos, and ensure the smooth progress of our cross-cultural communication.

5. Remainder

With the increasingly frequent economic and trade exchanges between China and the UK, the conflict between the two countries on cultural values has become more and more obvious. As an international Chinese teacher, in the process of teaching, we should deeply analyze the cultural differences between China and Britain, and trace back to the source to explain to students why such differences occur. Finally, we should respect each other's culture in the teaching process, and we should try to avoid sensitive topics, such as more sensitive political topics. International Chinese teachers should make it clear that our task is to teach language and convey Chinese wisdom, rather than "cultural sermons" to force our culture. This will not succeed, but will seriously damage China's national image. Although the academic circles have conducted relevant research, how to integrate the cultural differences between China and the West into the international Chinese education classroom has been unclear. How to enable British students to correctly understand the differences between Chinese and British dragon culture in language, and let them put down their prejudice to correctly understand and then become ambassadors of cultural exchanges between the two countries is the top priority of our cross-cultural teaching at this stage. In addition, as a symbol of Chinese culture, the dragon is the spiritual totem of the Chinese nation and the inner support of every Chinese. As a responsible and responsible country in the world, China has a long way to go in cultural construction despite its rapid economic development. Therefore, taking the dragon culture as the breakthrough point, it is really necessary to actively integrate the dragon culture into the international Chinese education classroom and transmit Chinese wisdom to the world.

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