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TEA CEREMONY CULTURAL TEACHING PRACTICES FOR CHINESE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A PRELIMINARY STUDY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH TEACHING MATERIALS ON JAPANESE TEA CEREMONY

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Abstract

This study is a preliminary study for creating teaching materials for the development of global human resources who can communicate their own (Japanese) culture, such as the tea ceremony, to the world in English. This study aims to clarify what foreigners are interested in, what they find important, and what they would like to know more about the tea ceremony to create teaching materials reflecting foreigners' interests and concerns. The results indicated that the participating students enjoyed hands-on activities, such as actually preparing and drinking tea and learning how to eat wagashi (traditional Japanese sweets), even in an online environment. Furthermore, some students demonstrated interest not only in hands-on experiences but also in the history of the tea ceremony, distinctions between Japanese and Chinese tea cultures, and various aspects of the

tea ceremony, including tea, tea utensils, traditional clothing (kimono), and the differences among tea ceremony schools. Based on these findings, it is recommended to create educational materials for Japanese university students learning the tea ceremony in English that cover not only the fundamental etiquette of the tea ceremony, but also provide comprehensive knowledge about the broader aspects of the tea ceremony.

Keywords

Tea Ceremony, Chinese University Students, Japanese Culture

1. Introduction

The tea ceremony is described as an intellectual practice for acquiring knowledge, featuring a technical aspect focused on refining one's manners, a spiritual component rooted in Zen teachings, and a social dimension involving gatherings in tea rooms (Nakanishi, 2003). Additionally, it provides a sense of relaxation (Mikami et al., 2018). While the tea ceremony offers numerous benefits, the global recognition of Japanese cuisine as a World Heritage site in 2013 has increased interest in Japanese food and matcha (powdered green tea). Consequently, there has been an increase in foreigners intrigued by the tea ceremony and those visiting Japan to experience the tea ceremony (Carreira et al., 2022).

On the other hand, in Japan, Japan Institute for Social Economic Affairs (2013) conducted a "Survey on the Awareness of Cultivating Global Talent," listing the qualities, knowledge, and abilities that Japanese individuals should possess. Alongside "communication skills in foreign languages," there is a clear emphasis on "knowledge of Japanese culture and history." Additionally, according to the Japan Business Federation (2015) report on "Measures to Promote Education on Global Talent Development in Elementary and Secondary Education," initiatives related to language education and globalization are surpassed by the promotion of "education on Japanese language, history, and culture."

Global talent development, therefore, extends beyond learning foreign languages like English; it begins with understanding Japan and its culture. Hence, Carreira et al. (2022) developed teaching materials for the English instruction of the Japanese tea ceremony, conducting practical research with Japanese university students in Tokyo. However, it remains uncertain whether the materials and knowledge acquired in these classes align with the actual interests and curiosity of foreigners. Thus, this study represents a preliminary survey to develop English teaching materials

for the tea ceremony that reflect the needs and interests of foreign learners. Specifically, this study aims to clarify what aspects of the tea ceremony foreigners are interested in, what they consider important, and furthermore, what specific aspects they wish to delve deeper into.

2. Research on the Tea Ceremony for Japanese

Several studies have examined the integration of the tea ceremony into Japanese education. For instance, Yoshida (2021) confirmed that when teaching the tea ceremony online, it is crucial to ensure that audio and video are transmitted without delay, allowing for uninterrupted participant communication. Advanced information technologies such as 360° panoramic video communication were found to be not necessarily practical, as simpler video conferencing systems like Zoom proved sufficient. Additionally, a practice procedure was developed, involving the recording of a practitioner's performance (15 minutes), followed by a replay, instructional commentary, and a question-and-answer session. According to Yoshida, this approach resulted in dramatically different psychological and educational benefits compared to pre-pandemic practices. Furthermore, unlike in-person practice at an instructor's tearoom, participants had to take responsibility for preparing their tearoom and utensils each time. This seemed to induce a shift in their practice attitude toward being active and proactive.

There are relatively few studies, but some research has been conducted on incorporating tea ceremonies into English classes aimed at Japanese participants. For instance, Tanaka and Carreira (2012) reported that they integrated presentations on the tea ceremony into English classes for university distance education, resulting in high satisfaction and enjoyment among most of the students. Kushiyama (2020) highlighted that in university English education in Japan, the focus is often centered on improving language proficiency and fostering cross-cultural understanding for the development of global talent. However, aspects such as individual initiative, proactivity, and Japanese identity are frequently overlooked. As a means of nurturing Japanese identity, a class was held for international students to experience traditional Japanese culture, including the tea ceremony, with Japanese students providing support in English. Moreover, Carreira et al. (2022) directed their focus on the tea ceremony as a means of cultivating global talent capable of promoting Japan and its culture in English to the world. They developed "English Tea Ceremony" videos and had students from universities in Tokyo learn the tea ceremony in English using these videos. The results revealed that many students found learning about the tea ceremony in English

to be “interesting,” “enjoyable,” and “refreshing.” Furthermore, they reported that by learning about the tea ceremony in English, the students developed a desire to teach foreigners about the tea ceremony and Japanese culture, which may have allowed them to think about their identity as Japanese people in a global society.

3. Research on the Tea Ceremony for Foreigners

Several studies have been conducted on tea ceremony experiences for foreigners, but many of them are studies that incorporate the tea ceremony as part of learning Japanese culture. For example, Yamamoto, Kondo, Yoshida, and Sekiguchi (2018) conducted a tea ceremony experience as part of a five-day Japanese culture and language seminar for 36 first-year students from a Malaysian technical university. The results of the post-seminar survey analysis revealed that the most intriguing aspect was the tea ceremony, with 21 mentions, among other cultural experiences such as calligraphy or karuta (traditional Japanese playing cards). Additionally, when asked about their preferences for the seminar, the most common requests were for an extended duration of the seminar and more opportunities to engage with Japanese culture. In a study conducted by Karatsu (2021) to explore the approach to Japanese cultural experiential activities in North American university Japanese language programs, a survey was administered to program participants. Concerning the tea ceremony experience (with 53 participants), three classes were conducted, including lectures on tea ceremony and Buddhism, partaking in tea and sweets, and hands-on experience in preparing tea. According to the survey results, the three most positive aspects of the tea ceremony experience were enjoying tea and sweets, learning about the historical background of the tea ceremony, and collaborating with others. In particular, the majority of students with a Japanese language proficiency level of two or higher found an interest in history and religion, expressing a desire to learn more. Moreover, their curiosity extended to topics such as tea gatherings, etiquette, host and guest behaviors, different schools of tea ceremony, types of sweets and tea, and more.

On the other hand, there have been a few studies conducted on foreigners who were taught only the tea ceremony. Yamanaka (2015) surveyed 11 university students with advanced Japanese language levels who were taking a “Japanese Interpretation Exercise” course at a national university in a regional city in South Korea. The students spent seven hours of class time submitting a report on Japanese and Korean tea ceremonies in advance and actually experiencing

Japanese and Korean tea ceremonies. Yamanaka investigated their impressions of Japanese and Korean tea ceremonies and what they learned from their tea ceremony experience. The results revealed that while Japanese tea ceremonies are perceived as emphasizing formality, Korean tea ceremonies are seen as simple and focused on enjoying the senses. Furthermore, the study catalyzed a heightened awareness of one's own culture, with participants expressing sentiments such as disappointment in the limited popularity and decline of Korean tea ceremonies compared to the widespread practice in Japan. They also wished for an increase in places to enjoy Korean tea ceremonies. These reflections underscored the importance of cherishing one's own culture.

4. Purpose of the Study

This study is a preliminary study for creating teaching materials for the development of global human resources who can communicate their own (Japanese) culture, such as the tea ceremony, to the world in English. In particular, this study aims to clarify what foreigners are interested in, what they find important, and what they would like to know more about the tea ceremony to create teaching materials reflecting foreigners' interests and concerns.

5. Participants and Lessons

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the classes were conducted online using the ClassIn system. In two weeks in July 2022, there were 47 students on the roster, but the actual participation in the class was 41 students. The first week focused on learning Japanese culture and language through Japanese anime, while the second week centered on Japanese culture and language through the study of the tea ceremony. Lessons 9 and 10 covered the spirit and history of the tea ceremony in English. Lessons 11 through 15 involved the use of videos that allowed students to learn about the tea ceremony in both English and Japanese. These videos, based on the Urasenke school of tea ceremony (one of the three main schools of Japanese tea ceremony) were produced and supervised by an instructor who teaches tea ceremony at the University of Hawaii, and further edited by the lead author. Additionally, students were instructed to prepare their chawan (tea bowl), chasen (tea whisk), and matcha (powdered green tea) so they could make the tea.

The following is the lesson plan for lessons 9 through 16.

- Lesson 9 History and spirit of the tea ceremony 1
- Lesson 10 History and spirit of the tea ceremony 2
- Lesson 11 How to make tea
- Lesson 12 How to drink tea
- Lesson 13 How to bow
- Lesson 14 How to eat wagashi (Japanese sweets)/Learning about wagashi
- Lesson 15 Learn Urasenke temae
- Lesson 16 Report and Presentation

6. Method

After the last lesson, the students were asked to answer the following three questions.

- What was the most interesting thing you learned in the Japanese Tea Ceremony?
- What was the most important thing you learned in the Japanese Tea Ceremony?
- What do you want to learn more about, and why?

In this study, we conducted a content analysis of these three responses to clarify what foreigners are interested in, what they find important, and what they want to learn more about the tea ceremony.

7. Results

We categorized the students' responses to the above three questions by content. The following represents responses related to what participants found most interesting about learning the Japanese tea ceremony.

Table 1: *Responses Regarding What Was Most Interesting About Learning Tea Ceremony*

Responses	Number of respondents
Regarding wagashi (Japanese sweets)	13
Regarding making and drinking tea	11
Regarding comparisons with China	3
Regarding the history of the tea ceremony	3
Regarding tea ceremony utensils	3

Regarding fastidiousness	2
Regarding tea fighting	1

The following represents responses related to what is important in the Japanese tea ceremony.

Table 2: *Responses regarding what is Important in the Japanese Tea Ceremony*

Responses	Number of respondents
Regarding etiquette and manners	17
Related to spirit and religion	8
Regarding Rikyu's 7 rules and Wakei Seijaku (harmony, respect, purity, tranquillity)	8
Regarding comparisons with China	6
Regarding making tea	4
Related to quiet environment and movement	4
Regarding the history of the tea ceremony	2
Regarding tea rooms and utensils	2

The following represents responses related to what is important in the Japanese tea ceremony.

Table 3: *Responses Regarding What Chinese Students Like to Learn More about the Tea Ceremony*

Responses	Number of respondents
Tea in general	8
Differences with China	5
Differences between schools of tea ceremony	4
Current knowledge of the tea ceremony in general	3
Wagashi	3
Kimono	2
The history of the tea ceremony	2
Utensils	1
Tea ceremonies	1

8. Discussion

The most common response regarding the most interesting aspect of learning the Japanese tea ceremony was that of wagashi (13 respondents). This is probably because they found it interesting that the Japanese tea ceremony has rules on how to eat sweets, whereas they usually eat sweets casually and freely. Furthermore, in terms of their desire to learn more about the Japanese tea ceremony, three students expressed an interest in learning about wagashi. These aspects suggest that many of the students participating in this research were particularly interested in wagashi. Similarly, Yamamoto et al. (2018) reported that many students from a Malaysian university liked mame-daifuku (a Japanese sweet of red bean paste wrapped with beans-mixed thin rice cake) and asked for another one instead of another cup of tea. One of them mentioned the tea and wagashi experience was the most interesting in the program. According to the survey conducted by Karatsu (2021), enjoying tea and sweets was one of the three best things that students experienced in the tea ceremony. In this way, for foreigners, eating wagashi in the tea ceremony seems to be the most enjoyable aspect.

On the other hand, in this study, we only provided instruction on the consumption of higashi (dry confectionery) during the usucha temae (thin tea procedure). However, in the tea ceremony, there is a specific manner of consuming not only higashi but also omogashi (moist Japanese confectionery) served with koicha temae (thick tea procedure). Therefore, it would be advisable to create teaching materials that cover not only higashi but also the manner of consuming omogashi.

The second most common response regarding what students found interesting about learning the Japanese tea ceremony was related to “making and drinking tea,” with 11 participants mentioning it. Furthermore, in responses related to what students considered important in learning the Japanese tea ceremony, four students wrote about the significance of “actually making tea.” Since all classes were conducted online due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, students were required to prepare their chawan (tea bowl), chasen (tea whisk), and matcha (powdered green tea). Despite this instructional format, many students found it enjoyable.

Additionally, in responses related to what students found interesting about learning the Japanese tea ceremony, three students mentioned comparisons with China. Furthermore, in responses related to what students considered important in learning the Japanese tea ceremony, six students included descriptions of the significance of comparing the Japanese tea ceremony with its Chinese counterpart. While Japanese tea originates in China, it is noteworthy that the Japanese tea

ceremony differs significantly from the Chinese tea culture. Moreover, in terms of what students wanted to learn more about regarding the tea ceremony, five students expressed a desire to learn about it through the lens of a comparison with China. Similarly, Yamanaka (2015) conducted the tea ceremony lesson in the course “Japanese Interpretation for the Korean JFL students” with higher proficiency, including the experiences of both Japanese and Korean tea ceremonies. The report indicated that the students noticed the differences and similarities between Japanese and Korean tea ceremonies and developed their respect for each as well as their tea ceremony and their culture. These findings suggest that when teaching Japanese tea ceremonies, incorporating a comparative perspective with the target country is essential, in addition to teaching about Japan’s unique tea culture.

In responses concerning what students found interesting about learning the Japanese tea ceremony, three students mentioned an interest in the history of the tea ceremony. Similarly, in responses related to what students considered important and what they wanted to learn more about in the Japanese tea ceremony, two students expressed an interest in the history of the tea ceremony. Regarding what they thought was important in learning the Japanese tea ceremony, 16 respondents answered that it was related to spirit and religion, including *Wakei Seijaku* (harmony, respect, purity, tranquility). Thus, it can be said that through this course, some students developed an interest in the history, religion, and spiritual aspects of the tea ceremony. This is similar to the findings of Karatsu (2021), which also reported that students developed an interest in history and religion, and expressed a desire to learn more. In this way, not only in the practice of tea ceremonies but also among a certain number of students, there is an interest in Japanese history, religion, and other aspects. Therefore, when creating materials for Japanese students, it can be said that there is a need for materials that enable students to express tea ceremony, Japanese history, and religion in English.

Furthermore, the most frequently mentioned aspect, identified by 17 students, was etiquette, which they considered to be crucial in the context of the tea ceremony. Among them, four students specifically mentioned bowing. This is likely because, in this course, we provided explanations and practical experiences of the three types of bows.

Although detailed explanations about tea itself were rarely provided in this course, when it came to what students wanted to learn more about, eight students expressed interest in various aspects of tea, including the different types of tea and how it is made. They were curious about tea

in a broader sense, demonstrating that some students were not only interested in the tea ceremony but also in the topic of tea itself. Furthermore, four students expressed an interest in learning more about the differences between various tea ceremony schools and three students wanted to know more about contemporary developments in tea ceremony. Although this course provided detailed explanations about the Urasenke school of tea ceremony, it did not delve deeply into other schools or the current state of the tea ceremony. From these responses, it can be anticipated that foreign students are more interested in acquiring a broader knowledge of subjects such as tea ceremony and tea as a part of their cultural education, rather than focusing extensively on a single school. Additionally, although there were only one to two students with such interests, they expressed curiosity about tea ceremony equipment, tearooms, kimono attire, and tea gatherings. In Karatsu's study (2021), students also demonstrated interest in various topics such as tea gatherings, etiquette, host and guest behaviors, different schools of tea ceremonies, and types of sweets and tea. These topics, similarly, explored in the study, intrigued the students. These suggest the need to develop teaching materials in English that can convey peripheral knowledge related to the tea ceremony.

9. Conclusion

As a result of Chinese students learning the tea ceremony online, it was found that despite being in an online environment, participating students enjoyed activities such as making and drinking tea, as well as learning how to consume traditional Japanese sweets. They expressed a desire to further explore these ceremonial practices. Additionally, some students expressed an interest in delving deeper into aspects beyond hands-on activities, such as the history of the tea ceremony, differences between Japan and China, and further details about tea, tea ceremony utensils, traditional attire like kimonos, as well as variations in tea ceremony schools. For the development of teaching materials on the tea ceremony aimed at fostering global talents among Japanese learners, it is advisable to reflect on these results, including not only the fundamental practices of the tea ceremony but also peripheral knowledge related to the tea ceremony.

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