



Challenges and Strategies for the Teaching of Spanish Art to Chinese Students

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Abstract

For six years, teaches Spanish and Latin American Art at the University Rovira i Virgili (Spain) to a group of Chinese students doing a course in Hispanic Philology at the university. My colleagues in the Department of Philology in 2005 it organized a course for twenty students from a Chinese university of Dalian in which other subjects included not only dedicated to Hispanic language and literature. Explain art in these students, many of whom have never studied this subject, taught me to adapt myself to their needs and try to solve all the cultural distance that must be saved. I wanted to explain here some of the pedagogical patterns have been implemented so that students could understand concepts totally unknown to them. I wanted to explain, then, what are the basic points to consider for students who already have the first hurdle the language of communication: Spanish. Suffice to say that it has the twenty students in 2005 to 150 today.

1. Genesis of the collaboration with Chinese universities

The Department of Hispanic Philology of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University Rovira and Virgili of Tarragona (Spain) it is consolidating pleasingly, after six years of classes, the course of Language and Hispanic Culture, destined to the Chinese pupils. After a series of contacts with diverse universities of the North of the China, thanks to the initiative of diverse teachers of the of Tarragona Department, the idea was formalized of that these pupils could realize his penultimate year of the career of Hispanic Philology in Tarragona.

The equipment that directs this initiative had clearly from a beginning to add diverse subjects on culture, art, geography or history to complement the competitions that would extend the knowledge of these pupils on Hispanic language and literature. Between these subjects it existed of History of the Spanish and Latin-American Art. There was offering to the student body like that the possibility of dealing, of studying and to join better artistic so distant culture to his. In the first year of this initiative there came to Tarragona almost a score of pupils of Dalian's university. Nowadays this project has brought the latter course (2010-2011) to almost 150 pupils of the universities of Dalian, Binhai, Beijing, Nanjing, Tianjin, Sichuan, Shenzhen.

This way so it wanted to exhibit here, brief, some of the challenges and strategies that arise on having given the classes of the subject of History of the Spanish and Latin-American Art. These six years of practice demand an analysis and a continuous study to smooth the difficulties of transmission and learning of these pupils.

1.2. Some initial challenges to overcoming

Though initially these pupils must overcome certain disadvantages since are the adjustment to those who will be his new homes for one year, to live in a different climate, a food with a few ingredients that are not necessarily of his pleasure, it is necessary to say to his favor, which they are very adaptable pupils to new situations. The problems that can transport these new situations also are reflected in some conflicts that arise in class but that are solved rapidly. Probably for them one of the topics most



difficult to resolve (and that from the university seeks to be relieved) is that of his socialization and integration with other pupils, fundamental point to support an ideal linguistic exchange. For me, the topics that imply a deeper work and of integration sound the following ones:

1. Many of these pupils have a few basic notions on History of the Art. The first days of class it is necessary to investigate, to slant images (some of them are "hackneyed" works of very relevant authors and others that might know), which are the artistic modals that they have on Spanish art and which are the big artists who value. Therefore, the initial script foreseen already demands specific changes to correct and to explore along the course.
2. Every year, with every group/s, it is necessary to be employed at class, based on dialog and of feedback, the cultural distances and of content that they turn out to be more difficult.
3. The meetings of analysis and evaluation of the march of the groups with other teachers are highly gratifying to do a balance sheet of the learning of these pupils.

1.3. Educational and emotional Components

There exist diverse studies that they investigate in why of the silence and the great attention that these pupils show in class. The education, cultural and religious, that have received in China they awards a great respect to his teachers and to the baggage that they the major persons can transmit¹. On this topic it is necessary to bear these points in mind:

- the enormous will power of the oriental pupils is translated in an effort of constant overcoming to follow correctly the process of abstraction that needs a subject dedicated to the History of the Art.
- in the same way as the same way that these pupils can support a strict order in class, the silence that they transmit must be respected but simultaneously questioned, it is necessary to try secretly, to break it to extract his opinion, though being silently is for them a motive of respect for supporting the structure of the class. For the teacher there is fundamental the need to check the comprehension of the explained.
- to facilitate his integration in the ignorance of a subject it is necessary to search constant synonymous and other resources to explain technical words or adjectives of difficulty comprehension for them so much in English like in Catalan (official language in Tarragona together with the Spanish).

1.4. New structures of work for the future

Once studied the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of these classes I believe opportunely to underline of increasingly studying the History of the Art from a more nearby and practical optics. The given smart teaching towards the following lines of work:

- a) Tarragona is the capital of coastal province, very well communicated (it is situated to 100km to the south of Barcelona). Therefore, it is necessary to use the cultural resources of the city to bring them over to the formation of these pupils: museums, rooms of exhibitions or other places where samples of art can be seen. The specialized visits for public determined, participative workshops, etc are a few big allies to complement the classes. To few km of this capital, in another city, Reus, exists an excellent route dedicated to the modernist art that

¹ Xiaojing, 2008, p. 9. In this article there are mentioned two sayings very according to the ideal received philosophical one: "Of The sky the time is born and of the land, the wealth. The man is born of the father and is educated by the teacher" (天生时而地生财, 人其父生而师教之) or "to be a teacher of one day, he will be a father of the whole life" (一日为师, 终生为父)..



offers to the pupils a much more wide vision of the theory studied in class. In the latter years they have be realize periodic visits to the modernist buildings of the above mentioned city.

- b) The province of Tarragona has four types of Heritage of the Humanity, categories that allow to incorporate them in class and to compare them with other Chinese heritages.
- c) The lack of religious knowledge applied to the History of the Art can be corrected, for example, visiting the Biblical Museum of Tarragona. They can increase this way his bases on the christianity (it is necessary to say that very small of them they have this religion). Of equal way it is necessary to accompany the agenda on historical contents on Spain and Spanish America will help them to explain certain political, economic or social contexts that, undoubtedly someone, to discovering his pictorial, sculptural, cinematographic productions, etc.
- d) Almost necessarily one advises them to visit the principal museums that will know in his trips realized in the periods of vacations. To his return are commented the principal difficulties that have had or the doubts raised in certain works. It is necessary to promote also an education of the discovery opposite to the traditional education.
- e) The university collaborates with teachers of secondary education who are employed at the diffusion of the cultural heritage of the city to realize visits guided by the same one. In occasions these visits serve to discover the city across questions that the pupils have to solve, thing that facilitates to them the comprehension of the history of the urban space where they are.
- f) Many of the practical activities are realized together with teachers of other subjects, as Culture and Company, extending this way the vision that the pupils have on a certain topic. It is evident that the culture increases his value when it is articulated by others that serve for the formation of the immersed persons in the current companies².
- g) To provoke a descriptive transmission of the student body and not subjective³, there are not valued the above mentioned thing but the intention of interacting, of acquiring information different from the known one. It is necessary to stimulate the participation of the pupils that finds it hard to them to speak more.
- h) To reinforce the contents seen in class thanks to the help of the TIC: Internet, use of ppt, moodle, dvd on punctual analyses of works of art, analysis of press of the city ...
- i) Is very important that in the exercises been employed at class the pupil could apply a process of self analysis; this way it will be able to determine in what place there is situated the learning of the concepts seen in class.
- j) The teacher must use resources and big doses of fantasy and creativity to transmit our message to a student body that he does not know of the historical - cultural Hispanic and Catalan area⁴.

Conclusions

I believe that to obtain this connection with the Chinese pupils, that every time it is more fluid, it is necessary to listen to his comprehensive needs thing that can be managed by an attentive dialog and to encourage the pupils do not be afraid to speaking in class, independently of which is his level of

² Hernández, Garriga, Baños, 2009, p. 200.

³ AADD, 2006, p. 116.

⁴ GÓMEZ, 2004, p. 136.



Spanish. The performance of the pupils is good, constant and assertive therefore the feedback teacher - pupil-subject is increasingly high. Also it is favorable to the car stimulus of these pupils his presence in the university, in the city supported by his appearance in numerous diaries of the same one that gather his more social activities as the holiday that they prepared recently for all the university pupils of the Faculty of Letters, the entry of the new Chinese year, which served to bring the Chinese culture over to the university community⁵.

It is necessary to verify with the pupils his expectations and analyze the competitions that he has acquired. Increasingly it is necessary to organize offers unified from interdisciplinary areas.

One of the evident challenges is a bet towards the practices where the serious magisterial class is replaced by a totally opened class where the pupils lose the fear of approaching an unknown topic. Another point of working is of breaking the royal structures that the pupils could have on the art and that they to be presented by a way full of sensibility that can open other doors them and offer them new cultural and even labor readings.

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⁵ <http://tac12.xiptv.cat/video/40089/capitol-241?a7eca8862593b770ffa28e0532e39562>