

Original Paper

Research on the Problems and Countermeasures of Cultural Introduction in English Teaching in Vocational Colleges

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Abstract

In the current era of accelerating globalization, the construction of cultural connotations in English teaching has become a key factor in enhancing the quality of language education. As the main carrier of global business and academic exchanges, English is not only a language tool but also carries a rich cultural value system. It is worth noting that in the vocational education system of our country, there has long been a phenomenon of the lack of cultural dimensions in English teaching. This structural defect directly leads to learners showing obvious "functional barriers" in cross-cultural communication practices: from inaccurate language expression at the basic level, to misjudgments in social etiquette at the deeper level, and even to severe failure in cross-cultural communication. This situation urgently requires educators to re-examine the strategic position of cultural elements in language teaching and through a systematic cultural teaching system reconstruction, fundamentally improve students' cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural communication skills. From the perspective of educational practice, strengthening cultural introduction is not only an important supplement to the traditional teaching model, but also a necessary way to cultivate versatile talents with international competitiveness. Its theoretical construction value and practical guiding significance have been widely recognized by the academic community.

Keywords

English teaching, Vocational Colleges, Cultural introduction

1. Introduction

In the current digital era, the rapid development of information technology has created unprecedented convenient conditions for cross-cultural communication on a global scale. With the widespread and deepening of computer technology, multimedia applications, and internet infrastructure, people from different regions, cultural backgrounds, and social classes can break through time and space limitations

to engage in efficient interaction. This technology-driven globalization trend not only significantly increases the frequency and depth of interpersonal communication, but also places higher demands on language skills, especially on English proficiency as the international lingua franca. In this context, English teaching has shifted from being merely a language learning process to a key bridge for promoting international understanding and cooperation. Its strategic value is increasingly prominent in various fields such as academia, business, and diplomacy, and has become an indispensable core component of the contemporary education system.

In the context of globalization, cultivating professional talents with cross-cultural communication skills has become the core mission of English education. The vigorous development of cross-cultural research is not only driven by the demands of the times but also by the nature of the discipline itself. Language, as the carrier of culture, its teaching should essentially be a deep-level cultural transmission. The modern English education community has reached a consensus: mere language skills training is far from sufficient to cope with multicultural scenarios. Only by systematically enhancing learners' cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural adaptability can the ultimate value of language education be achieved. This understanding is continuously promoting the improvement of the cross-cultural communication theory system and the innovation of practical models, making the research in this field demonstrate unprecedented academic vitality and social significance.

Language, as an important carrier and core manifestation form of culture, its essential attributes determine that language teaching must inevitably incorporate cultural dimensions. In English teaching practice, cultural teaching should not be regarded as an additional component, but should be regarded as the fundamental support for the cultivation of language abilities. From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, the formation of language structure is intrinsically consistent with cultural thinking patterns. This requires English teachers to integrate relevant cultural background explanations into the regular teaching processes such as vocabulary explanations and grammar analysis, so that students can truly understand the internal logic of language phenomena from the perspective of cultural cognition. This cultural teaching should not merely focus on the introduction of surface knowledge, but should emphasize revealing the cultural norms and thinking paradigms behind language usage, enabling learners to gradually establish deep cross-cultural communication abilities. Compared to simple language skill training, this teaching method that integrates cultural dimensions can better cultivate language users with cultural sensitivity and practical communication skills, which is precisely the core value orientation advocated by modern foreign language education concepts.

2. The Current Situation of Vocational English Teaching

Our vocational colleges are facing multiple structural challenges in the field of English education, which exhibit a distinct systematic characteristic: Firstly, the government has a significant lack of support and investment in vocational education policies; Secondly, the construction of the teaching staff lags behind the teaching demands, and the professional quality of teachers urgently needs

improvement; Thirdly, the student group composition is complex, with significant differences in learning foundation and psychological development imbalance. This special educational ecosystem directly leads to the English cultural teaching in vocational colleges falling into a systemic predicament. Currently, not only is there a lack of specialized English cultural teaching theory monographs specifically for vocational colleges, but there are even fewer cultural introduction practice research based on the characteristics of vocational education students. Under this background, English cultural teaching is generally in a fragmented state, and students can only rely on the scattered cultural knowledge explanations of teachers to understand the cultural connotations behind the language. Particularly seriously, the already weak English foundation of vocational school students severely restricts their cultural comprehension ability, and this situation has been confirmed through multiple English cultural literacy assessment data of vocational colleges. From the perspective of educational ecology, this absence of cultural teaching not only affects the language acquisition effect, but may also restrict the cultivation of students' cross-cultural communication ability, ultimately forming a vicious cycle of educational predicament.

In the current vocational education system, the weak status of the English cultural literacy cultivation link has become a key factor restricting the development of comprehensive talent quality. Influenced by their school positioning, vocational colleges generally have a tendency to focus on practical skills training rather than humanistic education. This teaching orientation directly leads to the English classroom overly focusing on instrumental language training and neglecting the imparting of cultural connotations. The strong pressure of practical training courses has made language and culture teaching become marginalized. It lacks systematic course settings, professionalized faculty allocation, and special investment in teaching resources. Some educational managers still view cultural education at the superficial supplementary level and fail to realize the core value of cross-cultural communication ability in the modern vocational education system. This structural imbalance not only hinders the deep development of language teaching but also fundamentally weakens students' competitiveness in responding to international workplace demands. In-depth research on the reform path of English cultural teaching in the vocational education context is not only an urgent need to break through the current talent cultivation bottleneck but also a forward-looking layout for the future global talent market.

3. Cultural Introduction

3.1 The Concept of Cultural Introduction

In the development process of linguistic theory research, the cultural import theory, as an important teaching concept, has its academic origin traced back to the pioneering research of early scholars. The core proposition of this theory lies in the fundamental assumption that cultural factors have a decisive influence on the effect of second language acquisition, and it constructs a systematic cultural import model framework based on social psychology theory. The interpretation of this concept by the

academic community presents diversified understanding dimensions, among which representative academic viewpoints include the theoretical demonstration of the integration of cultural elements in language teaching from the perspective of cross-cultural differences, and the emphasis on achieving the organic integration of language knowledge and cultural background in English teaching practice, through this innovative integration of teaching models, ultimately cultivating learners with comprehensive language application abilities that meet the requirements of cross-cultural communication contexts. Contemporary language education research further deepens the understanding of the cultural import mechanism, regarding it as a necessary link and important approach to achieving language teaching goals.

In the field of English education, cultural import is a systematic and multi-dimensional teaching practice, which goes beyond merely superficially acknowledging cultural differences, but constructs a comprehensive educational system that includes cognitive understanding, emotional cultivation, and practical action. From the cognitive perspective, this process requires learners to acquire cultural knowledge through diversified channels and deeply understand the commonalities and characteristics between their own culture and other cultures; in the emotional dimension, it is necessary to guide learners to complete the reformation of values, cultivate an open and inclusive cultural mindset, and face cultural diversity with an attitude of equal respect; ultimately, these theoretical cognition and emotional experiences will be transformed into practical language application abilities, enabling learners to demonstrate their cultural literacy with ease in cross-cultural communication. This trinity of cultural teaching paradigm not only enriches the connotation of language teaching, but also cultivates modern citizens with a global perspective.

The deep connotation of culture is mainly reflected in the value system, spiritual beliefs, and traditional customs passed down through generations that it contains. Among them, value concepts constitute the most essential core of culture, and it is this internal value orientation difference that leads to the differentiation and manifestation of diverse cultures. This spiritual-level value recognition and ideological norms not only shape the behavioral patterns of specific groups, but also fundamentally determine the fundamental distinctions between different civilization systems, making each culture exhibit its unique spiritual temperament and worldview expression.

3.2 The Cultural Introduction Content

In the practice of English teaching in vocational schools, the imparting of language skills should be organically integrated with the infiltration of cultural connotations, enabling students to master the English language system while deeply understanding the cultural logic and communication norms behind it. As language is the carrier of culture, its teaching essentially is a process of cultivating cross-cultural communication skills, requiring teachers to abandon the narrow perspective of merely focusing on grammar training and instead establish a collaborative mechanism for the development of language structure and cultural cognition. This teaching concept is characterized by three core features: Firstly, the overall nature of teaching content, that is, the imparting of language knowledge and the

cultivation of cultural awareness should be coordinated and advanced like the two wheels of a vehicle or the two wings of a bird; Secondly, the complementarity of teaching methods, aiming to correct the bias in traditional teaching that overly focuses on language form while neglecting social pragmatic rules, achieving the dialectical unity of language form and communicative function; Finally, the integration of teaching goals, breaking through the limitation of simply regarding language as a communication tool, by systematically introducing cultural elements, enabling learners to acquire the ability to appropriately use language in real contexts. This multi-dimensional integrated teaching model can effectively enhance the actual language application skills of vocational school students in international working scenarios.

The systematic integration of cultural content should be based on the theoretical framework of cross-cultural communication ability. This integration process should be considered from multiple dimensions such as language expression, practical application, and behavioral performance, and relevant cultural elements should be organically integrated into the training systems of different ability levels. The ultimate goal of cultural content teaching design is to enhance learners' cross-cultural communication ability. This fundamental purpose and the internal logic of the training framework determine that the construction of cultural content must be highly coordinated and unified with the cross-cultural communication ability system. In the specific implementation process, the selection and organization of cultural elements should strictly follow the inherent laws of ability cultivation, ensuring that each teaching link can effectively promote learners' understanding ability of heterogeneous cultures and their actual communication ability. The content of cultural introduction in English teaching mainly includes structural culture, semantic culture, pragmatic culture, stylistic culture, and behavioral culture. These five cultural forms are not mutually isolated and independent existences, but present an organic integrated characteristic. The interpenetrating relationships in their deep structure need to be accurately grasped through systematic language cognition and cultural understanding. To achieve effective cultural teaching integration, scientific planning should be carried out according to the characteristics of the learning stage: in the basic education stage, it should focus on building the cultural cognitive foundation of language structure and meaning system, while in the advanced learning stage, it should shift to the cultivation of cultural ability in application levels such as communication practice, stylistic features, and behavioral patterns. This progressive teaching strategy avoids the drawbacks of seeking too much and too comprehensive and ensures that the acquisition of cultural elements conforms to the cognitive development laws.

3.3 The Methods of Cultural Introduction

In the practice of English education, the implementation strategies of cultural introduction refer to the systematic teaching methods adopted by educators to enhance the effectiveness of cultural teaching. The effectiveness of this teaching approach is based on a profound understanding of the differences between Chinese and foreign cultures, and it requires teachers to integrate the cultural elements of the target language country into the teaching process while imparting the language knowledge system.

Through this language and culture-oriented teaching model, not only can students' language skills be improved, but more importantly, their cross-cultural comprehension ability can be cultivated, enabling learners to gradually form communicative proficiency in dealing with diverse cultural situations, and ultimately achieving the coordinated development of language application and cultural cognition.

4. The Problem of Cultural Integration in English Teaching in Vocational Schools

4.1 The Survey on Cultural Introduction in English Teaching at a Vocational College

This study takes a vocational college as the research object, with the investigation period spanning from September 2024 to October 2024. This research adopts a dual-track parallel survey method, designing differentiated questionnaire tools to conduct systematic surveys targeting the teaching staff and the students. To ensure the comprehensiveness and comparability of the research data, a strict synchronous collection strategy was implemented during the investigation process. The teacher questionnaire focused on the teaching concepts and methods dimension, while the student questionnaire mainly examined the learning experience and feedback on effectiveness. The two types of questionnaires maintained logical connections in their question settings but had different emphases in content. This dual perspective survey design not only ensures the completeness of data collection but also lays a solid empirical foundation for subsequent comparative analysis. Through cross-validation, the reliability of the research conclusions was significantly enhanced. During the implementation of the survey, a unified standardized process was strictly followed, including quality control measures for key steps such as questionnaire distribution, filling instructions, and verification of returns, to ensure the authenticity and validity of the obtained data. The survey process is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The Survey Process

	Content	Process	Object & Result
The First Stage	Prepare the initial questionnaire	Conduct an open-ended questionnaire, select a small sample and investigate	The initial questionnaire was developed based on the survey design
The Second Stage	Conduct a survey and prepare a formal questionnaire	Randomly select a small sample, conduct a preliminary survey and make adjustments	Refine the structure and content and develop a formal questionnaire
The Third Stage	Formal investigation	Select samples, distribute questionnaires, conduct on-site responses and collect the questionnaires	Statistic analysis

The statistics of the survey samples and questions are shown in Table 2. Under the framework of English teaching research in vocational schools, this study adopted a dual perspective research method.

By separately designing teacher versions and student versions of questionnaires, it systematically collected differentiated feedback from the two groups regarding their attitudes towards cultural teaching and the implementation effects. Based on the cross-comparison and in-depth analysis of the questionnaire data, it not only revealed the key influencing factors in current cultural teaching practices, but also provided benchmark data with empirical value for subsequent academic research. This move aims to promote the theoretical exploration and practical innovation of educational practitioners regarding the importance of the cultural dimension in language teaching, ultimately forming a positive interactive mechanism of mutual learning in teaching. During the research process, particular attention was paid to the dialectical relationship between inter-subjectivity, enabling the integration of the teacher's dominant role in teaching and the students' autonomous learning in the dimension of cultural inheritance.

Table 2. The Statistics of the Survey Samples and Questions

	Content	Teacher	Student
Gender	Male	30	75
	Female	35	65
Survey Problem	Teaching implementation situation	2	4
	Regarding understanding and attitude	5	6
	Teaching conditions and guarantees	3	3

4.2 The Investigation Results of Cultural Integration in English Teaching

Two multiple-choice questions were designed in the teacher questionnaire, and four multiple-choice questions were designed in the student questionnaire. Among the 65 surveyed teachers, 64 responded that they had conducted cultural teaching in English classes, while 1 teacher was unclear and indicated that cultural teaching was generally being carried out. However, in terms of effectiveness, 84.6% of the respondents believed that cultural teaching in English classes was unsuccessful, 4.6% answered "it's hard to say", and 10.8% directly answered "it's unsuccessful".

The results of the three multiple-choice questions regarding the performance in English classes showed that 69.3% of the students believed that the teachers "occasionally mentioned" and introduced cultural points behind English, while only 10.7% answered "frequently mentioned". Two students answered "always mentioned" and "never mentioned", and 17.9% of the students believed it was "rarely mentioned". This also confirmed the view of most teachers that cultural teaching was carried out in English classes.

When asked about the multiple-choice question of whether teachers carried out some classroom activities to help understand the cultural differences between China and the West, 1.4% of the respondents answered "always carried out", 14.3% answered "often carried out" and 29.3% answered

"sometimes carried out", while 8.6% of the students answered "never carried out" and 46.4% answered "rarely carried out". This indicates that such activities exist but are not regular.

When asked about the handling methods when encountering English cultural vocabulary that caused comprehension difficulties during the learning process, 38.57% of the students answered "search online", 24.3% answered "ignore and not look at", 28.27% selected "other", and 8.86% answered "consult the teacher". Clearly, the separation of teaching and learning did not reflect the leading role of the teacher.

These three questions reflect the deficiencies in classroom teaching. Correspondingly, 65% of the students had insufficient confidence in the current English education in vocational schools for facilitating smooth communication with foreign colleagues and superiors in future work, 24.29% directly answered "cannot", and 7.86% and 2.85% answered "can" or "other" respectively. This also confirms the above-mentioned English teachers' view that cultural teaching in English classes is unsuccessful, and the lack of cultural teaching has affected students' cross-cultural communication.

4.2.1 The Unsatisfactory Implementation of English Language Teaching

The current English teaching system in vocational schools is facing multiple challenges. The core problem lies in the failure to establish a specialized teaching framework that matches the characteristics of vocational education. The construction of the teaching staff needs to be strengthened urgently, and the curriculum design and teaching content are seriously lagging behind actual needs. This structural defect directly restricts the effectiveness of cultivating students' cross-cultural communication skills. As the core carrier of knowledge transmission, the current status of textbooks is particularly worrying: the commonly used general English textbooks lack precise focus on vocational scenarios and fail to design differentiated content for various professional fields, resulting in a serious disconnection between teaching content and the goals of professional ability cultivation. This homogenized textbook system not only cannot support the effective improvement of students' professional English proficiency but also cannot meet the diversified and specialized language application needs in the future workplace environment. It has become a key bottleneck restricting the improvement of vocational English teaching quality. Teaching practice shows that the training effect produced by the current textbook system is far from meeting the expected goals and requires a systematic reconfiguration.

4.2.2 Differences in Understanding and Attitude towards English Language Teaching

Under the contemporary educational system, English cultural teaching is confronted with profound contradictions and challenges. Although the education community generally recognizes the significance of cross-cultural communication skills in the era of globalization, in actual teaching practice, this recognition often fails to translate into effective teaching actions. The traditional exam-oriented education model not only squeezes the survival space of cultural teaching but also fundamentally undermines the essential value of language education. The vocational education field particularly highlights this structural contradiction: the excessive emphasis on the utilitarian orientation of skill training has led to a serious deviation of the curriculum system from the goal of cultivating

comprehensive talents. This shortsighted pursuit of employment indicators actually weakens students' sustainable development capabilities, resulting in graduates lacking the depth of cultural cognition and being unable to meet the rigid demands of modern workplaces for cross-cultural literacy. Eventually, this leads to a double disconnection between talent cultivation and market demand.

4.2.3 The Lack of Teaching Objectives of English Culture and the Supporting Facilities

The English education system in vocational schools suffers from a significant deficiency in the cultural dimension. The teaching practice overly focuses on the basic training of language skills, but seriously neglects the systematic cultivation of cultural cognition and communication abilities. Under this teaching paradigm, English becomes a purely language symbol system, and the course content is simplified to a mechanical combination of grammar rules and vocabulary memorization, completely separating from the actual application scenarios of the cultural context. Even more seriously, the current teaching system lacks clear cultural teaching goals and fails to establish a scientific framework for cultivating cross-cultural abilities, resulting in teachers being constrained by textbook arrangements and class time pressure. They are forced to focus their teaching on the superficial knowledge of language transmission. This exam-oriented teaching model has led to the long-term marginalization of deep teaching contents such as comparisons of Chinese and Western cultures and pragmatic cultural analysis, ultimately causing the embarrassing situation where students can master the language form but have difficulty understanding its cultural connotations and communication rules. As pointed out by relevant scholars, this structural defect directly restricts the substantial improvement of students' cross-cultural communication abilities.

In the current higher education system, English cultural teaching is facing severe challenges in terms of both teaching staff and practical implementation. The teaching staff generally lack cross-cultural communication skills, and their cultural background is not deeply developed. Moreover, the heavy routine teaching tasks have squeezed out the space for research and innovation as well as professional training, resulting in a vicious cycle of poor teaching ability improvement. From the perspective of teaching resource allocation, the English cultural teaching facilities in most vocational colleges are seriously lagging behind. They lack advanced multimedia teaching equipment and dedicated training venues for immersive cultural experiences. This comprehensive shortage of both hardware and software has become a bottleneck restricting the development of the discipline.

5. The Strategies for Integrating Culture into English Teaching in Vocational Schools

5.1 The Enhancement of Students' Cross-Cultural Communication Skills

In the contemporary vocational education teaching practice, the traditional one-way indoctrination teaching model has shown obvious limitations. This rigid teaching method often leads to significant individual differences among students in the process of English learning, manifested as polarized academic performance and uneven knowledge acquisition. In fact, different learners have essential differences in cognitive structure, learning motivation, and internal attitudes. These factors jointly

influence the final teaching outcome. With the continuous deepening of vocational education concepts, educators are actively promoting the transformation of teaching paradigms. By implementing differentiated teaching strategies and task-oriented teaching methods, they are returning the classroom dominance to students. This learner-centered educational transformation not only effectively stimulates the autonomous learning awareness of vocational school students but also fundamentally reshapes the relationship between teaching and learning, making teaching activities truly return to the essence of cultivating the learning subjectivity.

To enhance students' cross-cultural communication skills, task-oriented teaching should be implemented. The task-oriented teaching model redefines the role positioning of teachers and students, truly returning the learning subjectivity to students. This teaching paradigm focuses on the personalized needs and interest stimulation of learners throughout the entire process from task selection to activity design. By building an immersive language acquisition environment, it effectively solves the practical problems of uneven English foundation and insufficient learning motivation among vocational school students. As an English course with dual attributes of cultural carrier and teaching tool, its classroom interaction section not only strengthens the authenticity cultivation of language communication skills but also promotes the awakening of students' autonomous learning awareness and comprehensive literacy through the two-way dialogue mechanism between teachers and students, transforming the traditional classroom space into a dynamic language practice field. The transformation of the teacher's role in the teaching process

5.2 The Enhancement of Teaching Staff Quality and Improving the Facilities Equipment

Building a high-quality vocational education teaching staff requires a systematic approach from two dimensions: educational philosophy transformation and professional ability improvement. The teaching staff must deeply understand the fundamental differences between vocational education and general education, break free from the constraints of traditional teaching models, and integrate cultural connotations into the language skills teaching process, making cross-cultural communication ability cultivation the core teaching goal. Currently, the construction of the teaching staff faces many challenges: Some teachers admit that they have professional shortcomings in cultural teaching, which reflects that the teacher team urgently needs to strengthen their depth of bilingual cultural understanding and cross-cultural teaching abilities. The management of educational institutions must face the structural contradiction of the teaching staff, as the imbalance in the teacher-student ratio caused by the expansion of vocational education becomes increasingly prominent. The shortage of "dual-qualified" talents and the uneven professional qualities of new teachers seriously restrict the improvement of teaching quality. The deeper problem lies in the fact that the heavy teaching tasks make it difficult for teachers to balance academic research, enterprise practice, and professional training. This vicious cycle must be broken through systematic measures such as increasing financial investment, improving the training system, and optimizing the talent introduction mechanism.

In the reform process of the English education system, cultural teaching must be elevated to a strategic level and written as the core teaching goal in the instructional program documents. The education authority should formulate a complete implementation framework for cultural teaching, regulate teaching standards at the institutional level, and make the curriculum setting have a clear cultural orientation. The vocational education field particularly needs to re-examine the positioning of English teaching. Currently, English teaching as a public basic course is significantly disconnected from vocational skills training, making it difficult to meet the requirements of modern workplaces for cultural cognition abilities. Therefore, it is suggested to add professional elective modules to the curriculum system, through systematic cultural knowledge teaching, to cultivate students' cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural adaptability. Educational institutions should strengthen the construction of digital teaching facilities, fully utilize modern educational technology means such as multimedia teaching platforms and virtual simulation laboratories, and innovatively carry out cultural practical activities, such as regularly holding cultural-themed months, inviting experts in cross-cultural fields to give lectures, and building campus cultural digital resource libraries. For institutions with the conditions, they can further carry out international cultural exchange projects, through student exchanges, overseas study tours, and other in-depth experience methods, to build a comprehensive cultural teaching system.

5.3 The Seeking of Government Support

In order to promote the cultivation of cultural connotations in English teaching, a systematic cultural introduction mechanism and a scientific assessment system must be established. The education authorities should formulate guiding policy frameworks, clearly defining the specific norms and implementation standards for cultural teaching. All levels of educational institutions need to formulate implementation rules based on this, integrating cultural teaching goals into curriculum planning and teaching practice. At the same time, they should establish incentive mechanisms to motivate all parties. At the teaching implementation level, teaching content and methods should be continuously optimized based on actual needs to ensure the organic integration of cultural elements and language skills. Through institutional design, teaching effectiveness and assessment and evaluation should be closely linked. In addition, efforts should be made to actively seek policy support. Through resource allocation and institutional guarantees at the government level, a favorable development environment for English cultural teaching should be created, thereby comprehensively enhancing the cultural depth and educational value of language education.

6. The Conclusion

Under the dual impetus of the globalization trend and technological changes, international communication has become the core driving force for the development of modern society. This undoubtedly poses more severe challenges and higher expectations for English education. Vocational colleges, as an important platform for cultivating applied talents, not only need to impart language

skills but also have the mission of shaping students' cross-cultural communication abilities. However, due to objective factors such as insufficient historical accumulation of the school and uneven student foundations, the cultural teaching in current vocational education is significantly weak. This structural defect directly leads to the gap in cross-cultural talent cultivation, resulting in a significant disparity between teaching goals and social needs. This study conducts an empirical investigation of the practical situation of cultural teaching in the vocational education field, integrates the cutting-edge achievements of linguistic theory, cultural research, and communication theory, deeply analyzes the systematic defects in the cultural introduction mechanism, and thereby constructs cultural teaching strategies with vocational education characteristics.

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