

## *Original Paper*

# The Importance and Teaching Approach of Practical English in Intercultural Communication Education

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### **Abstract**

*With the deepening of economic globalization, cross-cultural communication has become an indispensable part of modern society. As an important tool for intercultural communication, the teaching of Practical English plays a key role in cultivating talents with international vision and intercultural communication ability. This paper firstly explains the importance of Practical English in intercultural communication education, analyzes the challenges faced by intercultural communication education at present, and then discusses the effective ways to improve intercultural communication ability through Practical English teaching. The study points out that combining Practical English teaching with cross-cultural communication theory and adopting diversified teaching methods and means can effectively enhance students' cross-cultural awareness and improve their cross-cultural communication ability. Finally, this paper puts forward the implementation strategies of practical English teaching in intercultural communication education, aiming to provide educators with useful references and lessons.*

### **Keywords**

*Practical English, Intercultural Communication Education, Importance, Teaching Approach, Intercultural Communication Competence*

### **1. Introduction**

In today's era of globalization, intercultural communication has become an indispensable aspect of our daily life. With the increasing frequency and depth of international communication activities, the importance of practical English in intercultural communication education has become more and more obvious. As a key component of university English education, the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence is not only related to students' future career and professional development, but also has a direct impact on the expansion of their international vision and the enhancement of their

global competitiveness. The purpose of this paper is to discuss in depth the importance of Practical English in intercultural communication education and to propose some effective teaching methods and approaches, hoping to provide some valuable references and insights for the reform and development of university English education. In this background of globalization, communication among people is no longer limited to their own countries or regions, but crosses national boundaries and cultural differences. Intercultural communicative competence has become one of the necessary skills for modern people. It includes not only language communication, but also understanding and respect for different cultural backgrounds. In such a background, the role of Practical English as a bridge of communication becomes more and more prominent. It not only helps people to express themselves on the international stage, but also promotes mutual understanding and integration between different cultures.

## **2. The Importance of Practical English in Intercultural Communication Education**

### *2.1 Promoting International Communication and Cooperation*

Practical English, as an international common language widely used around the world, plays an important role as a bridge of intercultural communication. It is not only a language tool, but also a link between different countries and nationalities. For students, mastering practical English skills means that they will be able to participate in international communication and cooperation more efficiently. Whether they are delving into the field of academic research, conducting business negotiations, or participating in cultural exchange activities, Practical English enables students to cope with the situation with ease. Through the use of English as a tool, students can not only communicate effectively with people from all over the world, but also gain an in-depth understanding of the cultural backgrounds, values and social customs of different countries. Such in-depth understanding helps to promote mutual understanding and respect among different cultures, and promotes harmonious coexistence on a global scale. In addition, the study of Practical English can also enhance students' critical thinking ability, enabling them to better analyze and solve problems they may encounter in cross-cultural communication. In today's globalization, mastering Practical English has become a necessary skill, which opens the door to the world for students and enables them to display their talents and realize their personal values on the stage of globalization.

### *2.2 Cultivating a Global Perspective*

Intercultural communication education not only helps students broaden their horizons through the study of practical English, but also promotes them to form a global consciousness. Through English, an international language, students can gain a deeper understanding of political patterns, economic development and cultural diversity around the world, thus enhancing their awareness of and in-depth thinking about global issues. The development of such a global perspective is crucial for students, as it helps them to better adapt to the increasingly globalized social environment and lays a solid foundation for their future career development. Through intercultural communication education, students will learn

how to communicate effectively in a multicultural context, which will not only enhance their personal competitiveness, but also enable them to present themselves more confidently on the international stage.

### *2.3 Enhancement of Intercultural Communication Skills*

The learning of practical English is not only limited to the mastery of language knowledge, but also to the cultivation of intercultural communication skills. Through in-depth intercultural communication education, students can learn how to communicate effectively in diverse cultures, how to avoid cultural conflicts, and how to establish and maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships between different cultures. The cultivation of such cross-cultural communication skills is of great significance to the improvement of students' comprehensive quality and personal competitiveness in the fierce competition. In addition, it can help students better understand the globalized world and enhance their international outlook so that they can participate in international affairs more confidently and effectively. In today's multicultural world, mastering cross-cultural communication skills can not only help personal career development, but also promote mutual understanding and respect among different cultures and contribute to building a more harmonious international society.

## **3. Challenges of Practical English in Intercultural Communication Education**

In today's deepening globalization, intercultural communication has become an unavoidable reality. As an indispensable communication tool in this process, the importance of Practical English in intercultural communication education is self-evident. However, in the actual teaching process, Practical English faces many challenges, which not only affect the teaching effect, but also restrict the improvement of intercultural communication skills.

### *3.1 Understanding Obstacles Caused by Cultural Differences*

In the process of teaching Practical English, teachers and course designers usually focus on improving students' language skills, which include listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, it is worth noting that language itself is only a component of culture, which is not only a communication tool, but also contains rich cultural connotations and specific social background information. Due to the existence of a wide variety of cultures in the world, each of which has its own unique ways of expression and values, this makes it possible for students to encounter barriers to comprehension when learning English. Especially for those English cultural elements that are more different from their own native culture, students often have difficulty in accurately grasping their deeper meanings, and thus are prone to misunderstandings and communication bias in cross-cultural exchange and communication. To give a concrete example, certain behaviors or expressions that are generally regarded as polite or friendly in English culture may not be interpreted as positive communication in other cultures, but may instead be interpreted as impolite, offensive or even a sign of indifference.

### *3.2 Mismatch between Language Proficiency and Intercultural Communicative Competence*

Although many students have made remarkable progress in English language proficiency, and their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills have improved dramatically, at the same time, their intercultural communicative competence has not been improved accordingly. This is mainly due to the fact that the teaching of practical English often neglects the cultivation of students' intercultural communicative competence. In traditional English teaching, teachers pay more attention to the memorization of vocabulary, the mastery of grammar and the analysis of sentence structure, but seldom touch on cultural differences, communication etiquette and how to communicate effectively in different cultural contexts. Students may have acquired rich knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, and be able to read and write fluently, but when faced with real cross-cultural communication scenarios, they lack the strategies and skills to cope with cultural differences and conflicts. They may not know how to express themselves appropriately or how to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts and build good interpersonal relationships when they meet people from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, in order to comprehensively improve students' English application ability, educators need to incorporate more cross-cultural communication elements into their teaching to help students master the language knowledge and at the same time be able to better understand and adapt to different cultural environments, so as to be able to navigate through actual cross-cultural communication.

### *3.3 Disconnection between Teaching Methods and Reality*

In the process of traditional practical English teaching, we often find a significant problem, that is, the teaching activities focus too much on the inculcation of theoretical knowledge, and pay far less attention to practical application. Although students are exposed to and learn a lot of theoretical knowledge about intercultural communication in the classroom, when they step into the real world and try to apply this theoretical knowledge to real life, they often find it difficult to be effectively transformed into real communicative competence. This disconnect between theory and practice leads to students' difficulties in actual communication. In addition, the singularity and stereotyped nature of teaching methods have also become an important factor restricting the improvement of students' intercultural communicative competence. For example, the teaching process over-emphasizes the mechanical memorization of grammar and vocabulary, and neglects the cultivation of students' practical language application ability, as well as the stimulation of their thinking ability and innovative consciousness. This kind of teaching often makes students lack of initiative and creativity in the learning process, and it is difficult for them to adapt to the ever-changing international communication environment.

### *3.4 Insufficiency of Teachers*

In today's context of globalization, intercultural communication education has become more and more important. In this field, the application of practical English faces many challenges, and the shortage of teachers is especially prominent. Although we see that many English teachers possess solid language skills and they usually have a deep knowledge base in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, they

often lack practical experience and theoretical knowledge of intercultural communication. This lack of knowledge and experience leads to the fact that it may be difficult for them to effectively guide students to understand and respect different cultural backgrounds in the teaching process, and to help students master the skills and strategies for effective communication in a multicultural environment. Therefore, in order to enhance students' intercultural communicative competence, both educational institutions and teachers themselves need to pay attention to and strengthen training and learning in intercultural communication, so as to better adapt to the new requirements for English education in the era of globalization.

#### **4. Teaching Pathways of Practical English in Intercultural Communication Education**

##### *4.1 Integration of Curriculum Content*

Closely integrate Practical English and intercultural communication education, and realize the seamless integration of the two through well-designed curriculum content. In the process of English teaching, the relevant knowledge of intercultural communication, including but not limited to cultural background, social customs, values and behavioral norms, is consciously integrated. Through diversified teaching methods such as vivid case studies, role-plays and simulated exchanges, students can gradually master and apply cross-cultural communication skills and methods in practical exercises and interactions, thus improving their communication and adaptation abilities in the context of globalization. This kind of teaching mode not only helps students to understand the differences and characteristics of different cultures while learning language, but also cultivates their respect and understanding of multiculturalism. In actual cross-cultural communication, students are able to express themselves more confidently, effectively avoid cultural conflicts, and promote mutual understanding and cooperation among people of different cultural backgrounds. In addition, this educational approach encourages students to explore and learn on their own initiative, stimulates their curiosity and desire for knowledge about the world, and lays a solid foundation for their future development on the international stage.

##### *4.2 Innovative Teaching Methods*

By utilizing a variety of teaching strategies, we can effectively ignite students' enthusiasm and initiative in learning. For example, with the help of multimedia teaching tools, we can show students the cultures around the world in a lively way, so that students can get a colorful experience both visually and aurally. In addition, we can also organize various forms of cross-cultural communication activities, such as international student exchanges, Model United Nations conferences, etc., so that students can sharpen their cross-cultural communication skills in a real interactive process. At the same time, we actively encourage students to participate in international volunteer services, overseas internships and other practical activities, through which students can directly experience the way of life in different cultures and deepen their cross-cultural understanding and experience.

##### *4.3 Teacher Team Building*

In order to further strengthen the building of English teachers, we should strive to improve their

intercultural communication skills. This can be achieved by organizing various training and seminar activities aimed at improving teachers' intercultural literacy as well as their teaching level. In addition, we should encourage teachers to actively participate in international exchanges and cooperation activities so that they can keep abreast of and master the latest teaching concepts and methods. Through these efforts, we can provide solid human resources support for intercultural communication education so as to ensure the continuous improvement of education quality and effect. At the same time, we should also emphasize teachers' personal development and career planning, and provide them with more learning resources and growth opportunities, including but not limited to attending international conferences, conducting academic research and publishing papers. In this way, teachers will not only be able to improve their own professional competence, but also broaden their horizons and enhance their understanding of and respect for different cultures, which is of great significance to the cultivation of students' cross-cultural communicative competence.

#### *4.4 Perfect Evaluation System*

In order to ensure the quality of practical English and intercultural communication education, it is especially important to establish a scientific and reasonable evaluation system. Such a system should be able to assess the effectiveness of education in a comprehensive way, covering students' language skills and intercultural communication abilities. Through diversified assessment methods, such as regular examinations, daily assignments and project reports, students' abilities in these two aspects can be effectively tested and measured. In addition, the evaluation system should also emphasize process evaluation, which means that apart from the final results, students' learning process, attitude and progress in the learning process are equally important. Teachers should pay close attention to students' learning dynamics and provide the necessary guidance and assistance in a timely manner in order to promote students' all-round development. At the same time, the evaluation system should also include self-evaluation and peer evaluation sessions, so that students can examine their own learning outcomes and communication styles from different perspectives, and thus gain a more objective understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. In addition, in order to better adapt to the educational needs in the context of globalization, the evaluation system should also take into account cross-cultural sensitivity and adaptability, encourage students to cultivate respect and understanding of different cultures in the learning process, and improve their communicative competence in a multicultural environment.

### **5. Conclusion**

Practical English plays a crucial role in intercultural communication education. It is not only a language tool, but also a bridge to connect different cultures and promote international understanding and communication. By carefully integrating course contents, innovating teaching methods, strengthening the construction of teachers and improving the evaluation system, we can effectively improve students' intercultural communication skills. This not only lays a solid foundation for their future career

development, but also helps to expand their international vision so that they can better adapt and compete in the context of globalization. As university English educators, we should deeply realize the importance of practical English in intercultural communication education, and actively explore and practice various effective teaching methods. Our goal is to cultivate composite talents with international competitiveness, to contribute our strength to the society and to help them become excellent individuals who can play a role in the global arena.

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