International Journal of Educational Development
ISSN Print: 3104-4263
ISSN Online: 3104-4271
CD ISSN: 3104-428X
https://doi.org/10.63313/IJED.9099

Theoretical Framework and Pathway Optimization for Cultivating Cultural Awareness in High School English Reading Instruction

Jinyu Bao
China West Normal University, Nanchong, 637000, China

How to cite this paper: Bao, J. (2026). Theoretical Framework and Pathway Optimization for Cultivating Cultural Awareness in High School English Reading Instruction. International Journal of Educational Development, 4(1), 112–126. ISSN Print: 3104-4263, ISSN Online: 3104-4271.
https://doi.org/10.63313/IJED.9099
Published: 2026-07-20

Copyright © 2026 by author(s) and Erytis Publishing Limited.
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/
CC BY 4.0

Abstract

Cultural awareness, as a core component of senior high school English key competencies, is essential for enhancing students' intercultural communicative competence in the context of globalization. Based on intercultural communication theory, cultural adaptation theory, and constructivism, this study conducts a systematic theoretical analysis of the cultural awareness cultivation in senior high school English reading teaching. It explores the inherent contradictions and realistic dilemmas in the current cultivation process from the perspectives of curriculum standards, teaching logic, and cognitive laws, and constructs a multi-dimensional and systematic cultivation path. The study holds that the core of cultural awareness cultivation lies in realizing the organic integration of language teaching and cultural teaching, and proposes optimization strategies from three levels: theoretical guidance, teaching practice, and cognitive reconstruction. This study enriches the theoretical system of cultural awareness cultivation in English reading teaching and provides theoretical reference for promoting the in-depth development of senior high school English teaching reform.

Keywords

Cultural Awareness; Senior High School English; Reading Teaching; Intercultural Communication Theory; Theoretical Construction

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

The English Curriculum Standards for Senior High School Students (2017 Edition, Revised in 2020) clearly defines cultural awareness as one of the four core competencies of English subjects, emphasizing that English teaching should focus on cultivating students' ability to understand and respect different cultures, and enhance their intercultural communication skills. With the deepening of globalization, cross-cultural exchanges have become increasingly frequent, and the

demand for talents with strong cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence has become more prominent. In the context of international cooperation and people-to-people exchanges, senior high school students, as the backbone of future cross-cultural communication, need to have not only solid language skills but also profound cultural literacy to cope with the complex and diverse cross-cultural scenarios.

English reading, as an important carrier of language input and cultural transmission, is an ideal platform for cultivating students' cultural awareness. Through reading, students can indirectly experience the historical traditions, values, and behavioral norms of English-speaking countries, and gradually form cultural sensitivity and tolerance. However, in the current senior high school English reading teaching practice, there exists an obvious tendency of "valuing language and neglecting culture". The root cause lies in the lack of systematic theoretical guidance and the disconnection between teaching practice and theoretical logic. Most teaching activities focus on vocabulary explanation, grammar analysis, and reading comprehension training, while cultural elements are often treated as supplementary content or even ignored. This not only deviates from the requirements of the new curriculum standards but also restricts the improvement of students' comprehensive English ability. For example, when teaching literary works such as Pride and Prejudice, teachers often only analyze the plot and sentence patterns, but fail to guide students to explore the British social class culture and marriage values reflected in the work, resulting in students' one-sided understanding of the text.

Against this background, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to conduct in-depth theoretical exploration on the cultural awareness cultivation in senior high school English reading teaching, clarify the theoretical connotation and cultivation logic, and construct scientific and feasible optimization paths.

1.2. Research Significance

1.2.1. Theoretical Significance

This study constructs a theoretical analysis framework for cultural awareness cultivation in senior high school English reading teaching by integrating multiple theories such as intercultural communication theory, cultural adaptation theory, and constructivism. It enriches the theoretical research on cultural awareness cultivation in the field of English teaching, compensates for the lack of systematic theoretical construction in existing research, and provides a new theoretical perspective for the in-depth exploration of cultural awareness cultivation. At the same time, this study explores the internal connection between language teaching and cultural teaching, which helps to improve the theoretical system of English reading teaching and promote the development of English education theory. In addition, the integration and application of multiple theories in this study also provide a reference for the theoretical construction of other subject core literacy

cultivation.

1.2.2. Practical Significance

The theoretical analysis and path optimization proposed in this study can provide clear guidance for senior high school English teachers' reading teaching practice. It helps teachers establish a scientific cultural teaching concept, clarify the positioning and methods of cultural awareness cultivation in reading teaching, and effectively integrate cultural elements into reading teaching. For example, teachers can design targeted cultural teaching activities according to the theoretical framework proposed in this study, avoiding the randomness and superficiality of cultural teaching. In addition, this study helps to guide students to establish a correct cultural outlook, enhance their interest in cross-cultural learning, and improve their intercultural communicative competence, so as to meet the requirements of talent training in the era of globalization.

1.3. Research Framework

This study is divided into five parts. The first part is the introduction, which elaborates on the research background, significance, and framework. The second part is the theoretical basis and literature review, which combs the core connotation of relevant theories and the current research status at home and abroad. The third part conducts a theoretical examination of the current situation of cultural awareness cultivation in senior high school English reading teaching, and analyzes the existing dilemmas and their root causes. The fourth part constructs the optimization path of cultural awareness cultivation based on theoretical logic. The fifth part is the conclusion and research outlook, which summarizes the core viewpoints of the study and looks forward to the future research direction.

2. Theoretical Basis and Literature Review

2.1 Core Theoretical Basis

2.1.1. Intercultural Communication Theory

Intercultural communication theory, first proposed by American anthropologist Edward T. Hall in 1959 in his work The Silent Language, refers to the communication activities between individuals or groups with different cultural backgrounds. This theory holds that language communication is inseparable from cultural background, and the lack of cultural awareness will lead to communication barriers and misunderstandings. Hall (1959) divided cultures into high-context and low-context cultures, pointing out that high-context cultures such as Chinese culture rely more on implicit contextual information in communication, while low-context cultures such as American culture, emphasize explicit language expression. This classification provides an important theoretical perspective for analyzing cultural differences in English reading texts. For example, when teaching Hemingway's

concise narrative works, teachers can guide students to recognize that this writing style is closely related to American low-context culture's emphasis on direct expression, while classical Chinese literary translations in English reading materials often retain implicit cultural cues, reflecting the characteristics of high-context culture.

This theory provides a key theoretical tool for teachers to interpret reading texts. Taking the people's education press senior high school English textbook as an example, the text "Friendship" in Compulsory 1, which tells the story of a Jewish girl hiding from the Nazis, belongs to a typical low-context cultural text. The emotional expression and plot development are relatively straightforward, and teachers can guide students to grasp the cultural characteristics of direct expression in Western countries; the text "Festivals around the world" in Compulsory 3 involves festivals from various countries, including both high-context and low-context cultural elements. Teachers can use intercultural communication theory to guide students to compare the differences in festival expression forms and cultural connotations between China and foreign countries, and cultivate students' cultural sensitivity. In addition, this theory also reminds teachers that in reading teaching, they should not only pay attention to the literal meaning of the text but also dig out the implicit cultural information, helping students understand the real intention of the author's expression.

For senior high school English reading teaching, intercultural communication theory emphasizes that teaching should not only focus on the training of language skills but also attach importance to the infiltration of cultural knowledge, helping students understand the cultural connotations behind the language, so as to improve their intercultural communicative competence. The core requirement of this theory for English teaching is to realize the organic integration of language teaching and cultural teaching, and cultivate students' sensitivity and adaptability to different cultures.

2.1.2. Cultural Adaptation Theory

Cultural adaptation theory, proposed by anthropologist John Berry in the 1970s, holds that when individuals come into contact with a foreign culture, they will go through a process of adaptation from cultural shock to cultural integration. In the honeymoon period, individuals are full of curiosity about foreign cultures and tend to hold a positive attitude; in the cultural shock period, cultural differences lead to confusion and anxiety; in the adjustment period, individuals begin to learn and adapt to foreign cultural norms; in the adaptation period, individuals can flexibly cope with cultural differences and realize the integration of multiple cultures.

Students' acceptance of foreign cultures in English reading learning also conforms to this adaptation law. In the first year of senior high school, students are in the honeymoon period of foreign culture. They are curious about foreign festivals, customs, and other cultural phenomena. Teachers can select interesting cultural

stories such as Greek myths and legends, Western fairy tales as extended reading materials to stimulate students' learning interest; in the second year of senior high school, with the deepening of learning, students begin to contact more complex cultural content, and cultural differences may cause cognitive conflicts, entering the cultural shock period. For example, when learning about Western individualism, students may have conflicts with their own collectivist cultural concepts. Teachers can design cultural discussion activities to help students adjust their cognitive framework and correctly view cultural differences; in the third year of senior high school, students have accumulated a certain amount of cultural knowledge and gradually form a relatively mature cultural outlook, entering the adaptation period. Teachers can guide students to apply cultural knowledge to cross-cultural communication simulations, such as simulating international academic exchanges and business negotiations, to improve students' practical application ability. This theory provides a theoretical basis for the design of the intensity and sequence of cultural awareness cultivation in reading teaching, helping teachers arrange teaching content and activities reasonably according to students' cognitive development stages.

In the process of English learning, students' acceptance and understanding of foreign cultures also conform to the law of cultural adaptation. English reading teaching should follow this law, gradually infiltrate cultural elements from shallow to deep, help students establish a positive attitude towards foreign cultures, and realize the mutual adaptation and integration of native culture and foreign culture.

2.1.3. Constructivism Learning Theory

Constructivism learning theory, represented by Piaget and Vygotsky, emphasizes that learning is an active process in which learners construct knowledge meaning based on their existing experience and cognitive structure. Piaget's cognitive development theory points out that learners' cognitive development is the result of the interaction between assimilation and accommodation; Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" theory holds that effective teaching should be carried out within the zone of proximal development between learners' existing development level and potential development level, with the help of scaffolding guidance.

In cultural awareness cultivation, constructivism advocates that students should be the main body of learning, and teachers should play a guiding role. The construction of cultural knowledge can be divided into three levels: the surface level is the memory of cultural phenomena, such as remembering the time of Western festivals and the customs of etiquette; the middle level is the understanding of cultural logic, such as understanding the historical origin and social background behind cultural phenomena; the deep level is the reflection on cultural values, such as comparing the similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign cultural values and forming their own cultural views. In reading teaching, teachers can design

hierarchical teaching activities according to these three levels. For example, when teaching the text about "American Dream", at the surface level, guide students to remember the core elements of the American Dream; at the middle level, help students understand the historical background of the formation of the American Dream; at the deep level, organize students to discuss the positive and negative impacts of the American Dream and compare it with the Chinese Dream, so as to realize the deep construction of cultural knowledge. In addition, teachers can use the "scaffolding" teaching method to provide students with appropriate help according to their actual level, such as providing cultural concept explanations and background introductions, and gradually withdrawing the scaffolding as students' understanding deepens, encouraging students to independently explore cultural meaning.

In the cultivation of cultural awareness in English reading teaching, constructivism holds that students should not be passive recipients of cultural knowledge, but should actively explore, experience, and construct cultural meaning through various teaching activities. Teachers should create a good learning environment and provide appropriate guidance to stimulate students' initiative and creativity in cultural learning, so as to realize the internalization of cultural awareness.

The three core theories form a complete "goal-law-path" theoretical support system for cultural awareness cultivation. Intercultural communication theory defines the core goal of cultural awareness cultivation of improving intercultural communicative competence, clarifying the value orientation of teaching; cultural adaptation theory reveals the inherent law of students' cultural learning of the process of gradual adaptation, providing a basis for the design of teaching progress and intensity; constructivism learning theory provides a specific implementation path, guiding the design of teaching activities. The three complement each other and jointly form a systematic theoretical framework for cultural awareness cultivation in English reading teaching. For instance, when teaching a text about international business negotiations, intercultural communication theory clarifies the teaching goal of cultivating cross-cultural communication sensitivity; cultural adaptation theory determines that teaching should start with basic etiquette norms which adapts to students' initial cognitive level and gradually deepen into communication strategies; constructivism guides teachers to design role-playing activities for students to actively construct negotiation cultural knowledge.

2.2. Research Status at Home and Abroad

2.2.1. Foreign Research Status

Research on cultural awareness cultivation in language teaching started earlier and has formed a relatively mature theoretical system. As early as 1968, Nelson Brooks proposed in Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom that cultural teaching should be integrated into the whole process of language teaching, and put

forward specific implementation methods such as "cultural immersion" and "contextual teaching". This laid the foundation for the integration of language and cultural teaching.

In the field of intercultural communication, Byram (1997) proposed the "intercultural communicative competence model" in his monograph Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence, which divides intercultural competence into five dimensions: attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. This model provides a clear framework for the cultivation of cultural awareness, but its application in basic education needs to be adjusted according to the characteristics of adolescent students. For example, the "critical cultural awareness" dimension needs to be simplified into cultural reflection ability that is more in line with senior high school students' cognitive level.

In recent years, foreign research has focused more on the practical exploration of cultural awareness cultivation and the construction of theoretical models. For example, Will Baker (2012) pointed out in From cultural awareness to intercultural awareness: culture in ELT that cultural awareness has become an important part of language teaching, and emphasized the need to transform from "cultural awareness" to "intercultural awareness" to meet the needs of cross-cultural communication. However, this study only focuses on the transformation of concepts and lacks specific implementation paths in basic education teaching. Paola Trejo Vences and Richard Fay (2015) explored the practical path of cultivating cultural awareness in monolingual contexts through wiki-based critical incident methods in Developing general cultural awareness in a monocultural English as a foreign language context, enriching the practical research of cultural awareness cultivation, but the research context is limited to university students and has poor applicability to senior high school students.

Abdzadeh Yasmina and Baker Will (2020) verified the feasibility of integrating intercultural teaching into English education in relatively conservative cultural contexts in Cultural awareness in an Iranian English language classroom: A teaching intervention in an interculturally "conservative" setting, providing theoretical support for the popularization of cultural awareness cultivation. However, the study focuses on the intervention effect and lacks in-depth analysis of the theoretical logic of cultivation.

Other foreign scholars have also carried out in-depth research on cultural awareness cultivation. For example, Kramsch (2013) emphasized in Language and Culture that language teaching should not only transmit linguistic knowledge but also help students understand the cultural values hidden behind the language, and proposed a "cultural mediation" teaching method to promote students' cross-cultural understanding. Norton (2017) combined identity theory with intercultural language teaching, pointing out that students' cultural identity

formation is closely related to cultural awareness cultivation, and teachers should pay attention to students' identity construction in teaching. Phipps and Gonzalez (2021) explored the application of digital storytelling in cultural awareness cultivation through empirical research, finding that this method can effectively stimulate students' cultural learning motivation and improve their cross-cultural communication ability.

2.2.2. Domestic Research Status

Domestic research on cultural awareness cultivation in senior high school English reading teaching has made remarkable progress under the guidance of the new curriculum standards. In terms of theoretical research, scholars such as Pan Dongting (2007) and Zhang Gecheng (2007) have discussed the relationship between foreign language cultural teaching and intercultural communication in their papers, emphasizing the importance of cultural awareness cultivation, but their research is mostly based on a single theory and lacks systematic integration of multiple theories.

Zhang Zewen (2019) clarified the essential connotation of cultural awareness in English subjects and proposed the future development path of cultural awareness cultivation in Cultural Awareness of English Subject Core Literacy: Essential Connotation and Practical Path. However, the study focuses on the connotation interpretation and lacks in-depth construction of the theoretical framework. Wang Qiang (2017) discussed the relationship between core literacy and cultural teaching in English Subject Core Literacy and English Teaching Reform, which provides important guidance for practice, but the research on the combination with reading teaching is not in-depth enough.

In terms of practical research, many scholars have analyzed the problems existing in cultural awareness cultivation. For example, Jiang Shuling (2012) pointed out the problems of inflexible use of teaching materials and single teaching methods in cultural teaching in A Brief Analysis of the Weak Cultural Awareness in Senior High School English Teaching; Jiang Zimei (2018) summarized the dilemmas such as the lack of authentic cultural contexts in cultural awareness cultivation in Dilemmas and Paths of Cultural Awareness Cultivation in Senior High School English Teaching. However, these studies mostly stay at the level of phenomenon description and lack in-depth exploration of the theoretical roots of the problems.

In terms of strategy research, Chen Min (2019), Chen Ming (2022) and other scholars have proposed specific cultivation strategies from the perspectives of classroom environment construction, teacher ability improvement, and teaching method innovation. However, most of these strategies are based on practical experience summary, and the connection with theoretical logic is not close enough, resulting in poor operability and generalization.

In addition, more domestic scholars have carried out targeted research in recent years. For example, Liu Runqing (2020) studied the cultural content in senior high

school English textbooks, pointing out that the current textbooks have the problem of unbalanced cultural distribution, and put forward suggestions for optimizing textbook compilation. Hu Mingyang (2021) explored the evaluation system of cultural awareness cultivation, constructing a multi-dimensional evaluation index system including cultural knowledge, cultural skills, and cultural attitudes. Li Yuming (2022) combined artificial intelligence technology with cultural awareness cultivation, proposing a smart teaching model for cultural awareness cultivation based on big data analysis. Zhao Yong (2023) conducted a comparative study on cultural awareness cultivation between urban and rural senior high schools, finding that there are significant differences in cultural teaching resources and teaching effects between urban and rural areas, and putting forward differentiated cultivation strategies.

To sum up, there are still three obvious deficiencies in existing domestic and foreign research: first, the theoretical research is relatively scattered, lacking a systematic theoretical framework integrating multiple disciplines; second, the research mostly focuses on practical experience summary or single-theory analysis, and the theoretical depth and systematicness are insufficient; third, the connection between theoretical research and teaching practice is not close enough, and the theoretical guidance for practice needs to be strengthened. This study aims to make up for the above deficiencies and promote the in-depth development of cultural awareness cultivation research.

3. Theoretical Examination of the Current Situation of Cultural Awareness Cultivation in Senior High School English Reading Teaching

3.1. The Contradiction Between Curriculum Standards' Requirements and Teaching Practice

The English Curriculum Standards for Senior High School Students (2017 Edition, Revised in 2020) clearly puts forward the requirement of cultivating students' cultural awareness, and specifies that cultural awareness includes four dimensions: cultural knowledge, cultural concepts, cultural attitudes, and cultural skills. However, in actual reading teaching, there is a serious disconnection between teaching practice and curriculum standards. The root cause is that the theoretical connotation of cultural awareness is not fully understood. Many teachers simply equate cultural awareness with cultural knowledge, and regard cultural teaching as the supplementary explanation of background knowledge, ignoring the cultivation of students' cultural concepts and cultural attitudes.

From the perspective of intercultural communication theory, this contradiction essentially reflects the deviation from the core proposition of intercultural communication theory that "cultural awareness is a comprehensive ability involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects". The simple transmission of cultural

knowledge can only meet the requirements of the "cultural knowledge" dimension, but cannot realize the comprehensive cultivation of cultural concepts, attitudes, and skills. For example, when teaching a text about environmental protection in English-speaking countries, teachers often only introduce the relevant cultural knowledge of environmental protection in foreign countries, but fail to guide students to compare the differences in environmental protection concepts between Chinese and foreign cultures, nor to cultivate students' cultural attitude of respecting cultural differences and absorbing advanced cultural concepts. This leads to the formalization of cultural awareness cultivation in reading teaching, which cannot meet the requirements of the new curriculum standards for core literacy cultivation.

3.2. The Separation Between Language Teaching and Cultural Teaching

Language and culture are inseparable: language is the carrier of culture, and culture restricts the use of language. However, in current senior high school English reading teaching, there is an obvious phenomenon of separating language teaching from cultural teaching. Teachers focus on the explanation of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence patterns, and regard cultural elements as irrelevant content, which is either briefly mentioned or completely ignored. This kind of teaching mode not only makes reading teaching boring but also affects students' in-depth understanding of the text.

The deep theoretical root of this phenomenon is the violation of the core view of intercultural communication theory that "language is a part of culture and cannot be separated from culture". From the perspective of cultural adaptation theory, the process of language learning is also the process of cultural adaptation. The separation of language teaching and cultural teaching makes students unable to understand the cultural connotations behind the language, resulting in the phenomenon of "dumb English" and "mechanical English". For example, when students read articles involving Western cultural customs such as "Thanksgiving" and "Christmas", if they only master the literal meaning of the language without understanding the cultural background and connotations, they cannot truly understand the emotional attitude and value orientation expressed in the text. When encountering sentences such as "Thanksgiving is a time for family reunion and gratitude", students can only translate the words literally but cannot resonate with the cultural emotions contained in them. This separation seriously restricts the improvement of students' reading ability and cultural awareness.

3.3. The Limitation of Teachers' Cultural Teaching Ability and Students' Cultural Learning Motivation

Teachers' cultural teaching ability is an important guarantee for the effective development of cultural awareness cultivation. However, at present, some senior

high school English teachers have obvious limitations in cultural teaching ability, which is specifically reflected in two aspects: on the one hand, their own cultural knowledge reserve is insufficient, especially the lack of in-depth understanding of foreign cultures and cross-cultural communication knowledge. Many teachers only have a superficial understanding of foreign cultures based on textbooks and lack systematic learning of cultural theories and cross-cultural communication skills. For example, some teachers cannot explain the cultural differences between "You're welcome" and "It's my pleasure" in English responses, nor can they guide students to use them appropriately according to different communication scenarios. On the other hand, they lack scientific cultural teaching methods, and cannot effectively integrate cultural elements into reading teaching. Most teachers still adopt the traditional "teacher-centered" teaching mode, and cultural teaching is limited to the simple explanation of background knowledge, lacking interactive and experiential teaching activities. For example, when introducing British afternoon tea culture, teachers only read the relevant text content but do not design activities such as simulating afternoon tea etiquette or discussing the cultural connotation of afternoon tea in British society.

The institutional roots of teachers' insufficient ability: The lack of teachers' cultural teaching ability is not only a personal factor but also affected by the institutional environment. In terms of pre-service training, normal universities rarely set up compulsory courses related to cross-cultural teaching, such as "Intercultural Communication Introduction" and "Cultural Teaching Methodology". Most English education majors only set up optional courses or lectures, resulting in pre-service teachers lacking systematic theoretical learning and method mastery. In terms of in-service training, the current training content is mostly focused on information technology application and exam proposition analysis, and the training on cultural teaching is relatively scarce. Even if there is relevant training, it mostly stays at the level of experience sharing, lacking in-depth theoretical interpretation and practical operation guidance. In addition, the current teaching evaluation system also restricts the improvement of teachers' cultural teaching ability. Most schools evaluate teachers' teaching effects mainly based on students' test scores, and the proportion of cultural awareness cultivation in the evaluation index is very low, which makes teachers lack the motivation to carry out cultural teaching.

From the perspective of students' learning, the lack of cultural learning motivation is also an important factor restricting the effect of cultural awareness cultivation. Under the influence of exam-oriented education, many students regard English learning as a means to cope with the college entrance examination, focusing only on the improvement of test scores, and lack enthusiasm for cultural learning. They believe that cultural knowledge is not directly related to exam scores, so they are not willing to invest time and energy in cultural learning. Students' cognitive misunderstandings: In fact, cultural knowledge has a profound impact on students'

English learning. In the college entrance examination English reading questions, many topics involve cultural background knowledge. For example, the cloze test often examines the cultural customs and etiquette of English-speaking countries, and the reading comprehension questions often require students to understand the cultural connotations behind the text to accurately grasp the main idea. Students' lack of cultural knowledge will not only affect their reading comprehension ability but also restrict their ability to use language comprehensively. From the perspective of constructivism learning theory, this kind of passive learning attitude violates the core requirement of "active construction" in the theory. Students cannot take the initiative to explore and construct cultural meaning, which makes cultural awareness cultivation lose the subjective initiative of students and it is difficult to achieve the expected effect. In addition, the single way of cultural learning also reduces students' interest in cultural learning. Most students can only obtain cultural knowledge through textbooks and teachers' explanations, lacking diverse cultural learning channels and authentic cultural experience scenarios. For example, students rarely have the opportunity to communicate with native English speakers, and it is difficult to experience foreign cultures in real scenarios, which makes cultural learning lack practical sense and appeal.

4. Theoretical Construction of the Optimization Path of Cultural Awareness Cultivation

4.1. Guided by Theoretical Integration, Establish a Scientific Cultural Teaching Concept

4.1.1. Strengthen Teachers' Theoretical Learning and Concept Transformation

Teachers should strengthen the learning of intercultural communication theory, cultural adaptation theory, constructivism and other related theories, and deeply understand the connotation and cultivation law of cultural awareness. Specifically, teachers should systematically learn the core viewpoints of Hall's intercultural communication theory, Berry's cultural adaptation theory, and Piaget and Vygotsky's constructivism, and master the methods of applying these theories to reading teaching. For example, learning the classification of high-context and low-context cultures can help teachers analyze the cultural differences in reading texts; understanding the four stages of cultural adaptation can help teachers design cultural teaching activities in accordance with students' learning laws.

They should change the traditional teaching concept of "valuing language and neglecting culture", establish the concept of integrating language teaching and cultural teaching, and regard cultural awareness cultivation as an important part of reading teaching. Schools should organize regular theoretical training and teaching and research activities such as inviting experts to give lectures on intercultural teaching theory, organizing teachers to participate in national cultural teaching workshops, and encourage teachers to publish related research papers, so as to

provide teachers with opportunities for theoretical learning and exchange and promote the transformation of teachers' teaching concepts.

4.1.2. Clarify the Theoretical Positioning of Cultural Awareness Cultivation

Based on the new curriculum standards and relevant theoretical requirements, the positioning of cultural awareness cultivation in reading teaching should be clarified: cultural awareness cultivation in this study refers to the teaching activity that takes intercultural communication theory as the guide, follows the law of cultural adaptation, and relies on constructivist teaching methods to realize the organic integration of language learning and cultural learning in the whole process of reading teaching. It is not an additional content, but an organic component of reading teaching, which runs through the whole process of reading teaching. It should achieve the organic unity of cultural knowledge transmission, cultural concept guidance, and cultural ability training, help students establish a correct cultural outlook, and improve their intercultural communicative competence.

4.2. Based on Teaching Logic, Construct an Integrated Teaching Model

This integrated teaching model embeds cultural elements throughout reading lessons, centering on cultivating cultural awareness and forming a closed loop of cultural input, exploration and internalization guided by relevant theories. Before reading, teachers introduce cultural backgrounds via videos and online courses to narrow students' psychological distance to foreign cultures, matching the honeymoon stage of cultural adaptation theory. During reading, question chains and group discussions prompt students to dig into textual cultural values, corresponding to the adjustment period. Post-reading activities like cultural creation and cross-cultural simulations help students integrate local and foreign cultures in the adaptation stage.

Based on constructivism, teachers adopt diverse interactive approaches. Cultural theme inquiry lets students research cultural topics in groups and present findings, while cultural scaffolding offers background support that fades as students progress. Cross-cultural contrastive writing also combines writing practice with cultural comparison.

Several rules guide implementation. Selected cultural materials must follow the three-closeness principle to avoid disjointed content. Teachers balance language and cultural teaching with fixed time allocations for pre-reading input, in-class exploration and post-class extension, adjusting proportions for intensive and extensive reading. Differentiated teaching is required: basic cultural knowledge is delivered to underperforming students, while top learners engage in cultural critical thinking. Ethnic minority students can explore their own ethnic cultures alongside Chinese and Western cultures to build cultural identity and inclusiveness.

4.3. Centered on Cognitive Reconstruction, Cultivate Students'

Independent Cultural Learning Ability

Cognitive reconstruction means teachers guide students to abandon the biased view that English learning equals mere language training, build the integrated cognition of language and cultural learning, and shape a complete cultural knowledge framework with joint efforts of teachers and students. Teachers need to boost students' cultural learning motivation first: they can deliver themed lectures and share cross-cultural communication failure cases to clarify that cultural awareness boosts reading and intercultural communication, and adopt engaging cultural materials and themed activities to arouse internal learning drive. Meanwhile, teachers should lead students to access diverse cultural resources, sort out knowledge via mind maps to build systematic cultural frameworks, and conduct cross-cultural comparative reflection to recognize cultural discrepancies, strengthen cultural identity and tolerance..

5. Conclusion

5.1. Research Conclusions

This study conducts a systematic theoretical analysis of the cultural awareness cultivation in senior high school English reading teaching based on intercultural communication theory, cultural adaptation theory, and constructivism. It is found that there are three main dilemmas in the current cultural awareness cultivation: first, the contradiction between curriculum standards' requirements and teaching practice, which is rooted in the insufficient understanding of the theoretical connotation of cultural awareness; second, the separation between language teaching and cultural teaching, which violates the core proposition of intercultural communication theory; third, the limitation of teachers' cultural teaching ability and students' cultural learning motivation, which is related to the lack of theoretical guidance and the deviation from constructivist learning principles.

To solve these dilemmas, this study constructs an optimization path of cultural awareness cultivation from three levels: guided by theoretical integration, establish a scientific cultural teaching concept ; based on teaching logic, construct an integrated teaching mode; centered on cognitive reconstruction, cultivate students' independent cultural learning ability. The core of this path is to realize the organic integration of language teaching and cultural teaching, and promote the all-round development of students' cultural awareness.

5.2. Research Outlook

The research on cultural awareness cultivation in senior high school English reading teaching is a dynamic and developing field. In the future, the following research directions can be further explored: first, strengthen the empirical research on the theoretical model constructed in this study, select different types of schools for teaching experiments, verify the effectiveness and feasibility of the model through

quantitative and qualitative analysis, and further optimize and improve the model; second, explore the differentiated cultivation strategies of cultural awareness for students with different learning levels and cultural backgrounds, so as to meet the diverse learning needs of students; third, with the development of information technology, explore the application of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data in cultural awareness cultivation, and enrich the forms and methods of cultural teaching; fourth, strengthen the comparative research on cultural awareness cultivation at home and abroad, learn from advanced foreign research results and practical experience, and promote the localization development of cultural awareness cultivation in China.

In short, the cultivation of cultural awareness in senior high school English reading teaching is a systematic project that requires the joint efforts of schools, teachers, and students. Only by adhering to the guidance of scientific theories, constantly optimizing the cultivation path, and promoting the in-depth integration of language teaching and cultural teaching, can we effectively improve the effect of cultural awareness cultivation and contribute to the cultivation of high-quality talents with intercultural communicative competence.

References

[1] Baker, W. (2012). From cultural awareness to intercultural awareness: Culture in ELT. ELT Journal, 66(1), 62-70.

[2] Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. Applied Psychology, 46(1), 5-68.

[3] Jiang Cimei. (2018). Dilemmas and Approaches of Cultivating Cultural Awareness in Senior High School English Teaching. Teaching and Administration, (22), 60-62.

[4] Liu Runqing. (2020). Analysis and Optimization Suggestions on Cultural Contents in Senior High School English Textbooks. Foreign Language World, (3), 2-8.

[5] Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Harvard University Press.