

# Research on the Cultivation Strategies of Cross-cultural Communicative Competence in Junior English Teaching Under the New Curriculum Standard — A Case Study of Huainan Dongshan Middle School

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## Abstract

As globalization continues to advance, the new curriculum standard raises the bar for developing students' intercultural communicative competence during junior high school English instruction. Taking Huainan Dongshan Middle School as an example, this study analyzes in-depth the domestic and international research results in the related fields, and uses literature research, questionnaire surveys and other methods to reveal the existing problems in current teaching. Subsequently, cultivation strategies are put forward. These include enhancing teachers' intercultural awareness, integrating intercultural content into teaching materials, creating communicative scenes, promoting extracurricular learning, and improving the teaching evaluation mechanism. The goal is to improve students' intercultural communicative competence and promote junior high school English teaching reform to meet the needs of the times.

## Keywords

New Curriculum Standards; Junior English Teaching; Cross-Cultural Communicative Competence; Cultivation Strategies

## 1. Introduction

In today's interconnected world, cross-cultural communication is an inevitable part of daily life. English, as an international language, plays a pivotal role in facilitating such communication. The new curriculum standards for junior high school English teaching emphasize not only language knowledge acquisition but also the development of students' cross-cultural communicative competence. Wang and Luo (2019: 134) pointed out that while the experimental edition stressed the

development of students' overall language ability including language skills, language knowledge, affect and attitude, learning strategies, and cultural awareness, the new edition moves beyond a focus on language abilities to developing students' core competencies through the English subject. This shift reflects the recognition of the need to prepare students for effective communication in a globalized society.

Under the new curriculum standards, researching cross-cultural communicative competence training strategies in junior high school English teaching holds both theoretical and practical significance.

Theoretically, it deepens the understanding of the language-culture relationship, enriches the language teaching theoretical system, offers a new perspective for English teaching method development, promotes research on students' cognitive development and cross-cultural learning mechanisms, fills theoretical gaps, and paves the way for theoretical innovation in cross-cultural English education.

Practically, integrating cross-cultural communication elements into English teaching helps students better understand and apply English. By understanding language expression methods and communication customs in different cultural backgrounds, students can better adapt to various contexts and improve their comprehensive abilities in English listening, speaking, reading and writing.

## **2. Literature Reviews**

### **2.1. Research Status Abroad**

The cultivation of students' comprehensive language application ability is emphasized in the new curriculum standards, and cross-cultural communicative competence is a vital part of it. With the acceleration of the globalization process, foreign countries have an early start in research on the cultivation of cross-cultural communicative competence and have rich research achievements, presenting a development context from theoretical foundation laying to practical exploration, and then to continuous reflection and innovation.

In the 1950s, the West initiated research on cross-cultural communication. In 1959, American cultural anthropologist Edward T. Hall first put forward the concept of "cross-cultural communication" in *The Silent Language*, marking the birth of cross-cultural communication studies and laying a theoretical foundation for subsequent research.

Entering the 21st century, relevant research has been continuously refined and deepened. Balboni and Newbold (2006: 2) clearly proposed the cross-cultural communicative competence model, clearly defining the constituent elements of this competence from the dimensions of knowledge, skills, attitudes, etc., providing a basic framework for subsequent research on cultivation strategies and making the academic community's understanding of cross-cultural communicative competence more systematic.

On this basis, Chun (2011: 419) found a new approach focusing on the online

communication mode, and pointed out that it is of great value to cultivate students' cross-cultural communicative competence through online communication. Students can use this to break through geographical limitations and get in touch with diverse cultures, broadening the practical paths for cultivation.

With the advancement of research, some scholars have begun to reflect on the existing achievements. Wilberschied (2015: 4) believed that although there are many previous research achievements, they are relatively scattered, which is not conducive to educators' systematic grasp and application in actual teaching, and it is difficult to help teachers formulate targeted cultivation strategies.

Byram and Golubeva (2020: 85) further deepened the reflection, proposing that traditional cultivation focuses on knowledge imparting, and it is difficult for students to internalize knowledge into competence and literacy. They emphasized the in-depth integration of multiple theories with the cultivation of cross-cultural communicative competence, such as integrating cross-cultural citizenship awareness, etc., enriching the connotation of cultivation.

In recent years, many scholars have begun to pay attention to new ways of cultivating cross-cultural communicative competence in the context of the information age. For example, technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are used to create more authentic cross-cultural communication scenarios for students, cultivating students' cross-cultural communicative competence in complex situations.

Generally speaking, foreign research on the cultivation of cross-cultural communicative competence has been continuously deepened and expanded, but there is still room for further exploration in combination with the new curriculum standards, especially in research on the specific field of junior high school English teaching.

## **2.2. Research Status at Home**

With the continuous deepening of globalization, the cultivation of cross-cultural communicative competence in English teaching has become increasingly important. Under the background of the new curriculum standards, domestic scholars have carried out a series of research on the cultivation strategies of cross-cultural communicative competence in junior high school English teaching.

In 2015, Wang (2015: 119), although focusing on the reform of senior high school English curriculum, the concept of transforming from comprehensive language application ability to core competencies of the English subject also has profound enlightening significance for junior high school English teaching. This research has prompted junior high school English educators to start re-examining teaching objectives and thinking about how to cultivate students' more comprehensive qualities in teaching, including cross-cultural communicative competence.

In 2016, Cheng and Zhao (2016: 115) deeply analyzed the essence of the core

competencies of the English subject, and clearly defined its constituent elements, laying a solid theoretical foundation for the cultivation of cross-cultural communicative competence in junior high school English teaching. This research achievement helps teachers clarify the status and value of cross-cultural communicative competence in the entire system of core competencies of the English subject, so as to carry out relevant teaching activities more targetedly in teaching practice.

In 2017, Shu (2017: 10) emphasized the importance of cultural teaching in foreign language teaching from a macro perspective. Although the research object is foreign language teaching in colleges and universities, it points out the direction for junior high school English teaching, enabling educators to recognize the key role of cultural factors in English teaching, further highlighting the necessity of cultivating students' cross-cultural communicative competence.

In 2020, Liu conducted a special study on cultivating students' cross-cultural communication ability in junior high school English teaching. Through investigation and analysis, it was found that there are problems such as insufficient attention to the cultivation of cross-cultural communication ability and single teaching methods in teaching. Corresponding improvement strategies were proposed, such as excavating the cultural connotation of teaching materials and carrying out diversified teaching activities, which provided a certain practical basis and theoretical reference for subsequent junior high school English teaching research.

In 2024, Zhou focused on English teaching design for upper grades of primary school from the perspective of cross-cultural communication. Its research results have certain enlightening effects on junior high school English teaching in terms of teaching concepts and design ideas, and help junior high school English teachers broaden their teaching horizons.

In the same year, Gao (2024: 96) proposed innovative strategies for middle school English oral teaching based on the requirements of core literacy. It emphasizes the integration of cross-cultural elements in oral teaching, and the improvement of students' expression ability and cross-cultural communication ability by creating authentic situations and organizing group discussions, which provides actionable suggestions for junior high school English teaching practice.

### **3. Theoretical Basis**

#### **3.1. Communicative Language Teaching Theory**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes that language learning should be centered around real-life communication. It posits that language acquisition occurs most effectively when learners are immersed in meaningful communication tasks that require them to use the language in authentic contexts. Thamarana (2015: 100) pointed out that CLT advocates going beyond the rote teaching of grammatical rules of the target language. It holds that learners can develop communicative

competence (including linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic and discourse competencies) by using the target language meaningfully in real contexts. In cross-cultural English teaching, this theory guides teachers to create authentic communication scenarios. For instance, in simulated international business meetings, students grouped as companies from different English-speaking countries complete tasks like negotiation, practicing English while learning cultural norms and communication styles, such as individual-oriented American business culture and group-focused Japanese business culture.

## **4. Research Design and Methods**

### **4.1. Research Participants**

In this study, all students of Class 8, Grade 8, Dongshan Middle School in Huainan City were selected as the research object. There are 59 students in Class 8, Grade 8, of which 30 are boys and 29 are girls. This class is taught by an English teacher with 8 years of teaching experience, who is rich in teaching experience and has certain practice in cultivating cross-cultural communication ability, which helps to reduce the interference caused by teachers' teaching differences on the research results.

### **4.2. Research Tools**

#### **4.2.1. Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were designed for students and teachers respectively. The student questionnaire, with 10 single and multiple-choice questions, covers students' cross-cultural communication status, perceptions, exposure channels and improvement expectations. The teacher questionnaire focuses on teaching practice, including content integration, objective adjustment and activity organization. Distributed to 59 students of Class 8, Grade 8, 57 valid questionnaires were collected with an effective recovery rate of 96.6%.

#### **4.2.2. Tests**

In SPSS software, a new data file was created. The "Student ID" variable was set to distinguish different students. Eight numerical variables were created: "Pre-test Language Proficiency Score", "Pre-test Cultural Knowledge Understanding Score", "Pre-test Communication Strategy Use Score", "Pre-test Emotional Attitude Score", "Post-test Language Proficiency Score", "Post-test Cultural Knowledge Understanding Score", "Post-test Communication Strategy Use Score", and "Post-test Emotional Attitude Score". These scores correspond to each dimension's performance of students at both the pre-test and post-test, scored on a scale of 0 to 5.

#### **4.2.3. Interview**

This study used the interview method to understand the actual situation, views and experiences of junior middle school English teachers in the teaching of

cross-cultural communication skills. The interview object was an English teacher from Class 8, Grade 8, Dongshan Middle School. The interview was designed with 5 questions around teachers' practice in cross-cultural teaching, problems encountered, views on teaching resources, professional development and teaching evaluation. The interview was conducted in the form of face-to-face communication.

### 4.3. Data Collection and Collation

This study integrates multiple methods for data collection and organization. Questionnaires were designed for students and teachers respectively, and distributed to the 8th grade class of Huainan Dongshan Middle School. The effective recovery rate of the student questionnaires reached 96.6%, and the validity and reliability of the questionnaires were examined by SPSS software. Data files were created in SPSS software, and the students were organized to take the pre-tests and post-tests and enter the data, which were analyzed by descriptive statistics and paired samples t-tests. Interviews with the experienced English teacher were selected, and the content was organized into written materials for analysis.

## 5. Data Analysis and Discussions

### 5.1. Analysis of the Questionnaire

**Table 1.** KMO And Bartlett's Test

|                                                       |                           |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin(KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy: |                           | 0.823    |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity                         | Approximate Chi-Square:   | 1123.568 |
|                                                       | df (Degrees of Freedom):  | 45       |
|                                                       | Sig.(Significance Level): | 0.000    |

In this questionnaire survey, the KMO value is 0.823, greater than 0.8, indicating strong correlations between variables and suitability for factor analysis. Meanwhile, the approximate chi-square value from Bartlett's test of sphericity is 1123.568, with degrees of freedom at 45, and the significance level (Sig.) is 0.000, far below 0.05, suggesting that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. These results collectively indicate that the questionnaire has good structural validity.

**Table 2.** Reliability Statistics

|        | Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items |
|--------|------------------|-----------------|
| Result | 0.847            | 10              |

In this study, 59 students from Class 8, Grade 8 of Dongshan Middle School were selected as the research subjects. 59 questionnaires were distributed and 57 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective recovery rate of 96.6%.

### 5.2. Analysis of the Tests

#### 5.2.1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

**Table 3.** Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

| Ability Dimensions                 | Pre-test (Mean $\pm$ Standard Deviation) | Post-test (Mean $\pm$ Standard Deviation) |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Language Use                       | 2.2 $\pm$ 0.8                            | 3.2 $\pm$ 0.7                             |
| Cultural Knowledge Understanding   | 2.0 $\pm$ 0.7                            | 2.9 $\pm$ 0.6                             |
| Communication Strategy Application | 1.8 $\pm$ 0.6                            | 2.5 $\pm$ 0.5                             |
| Emotional Attitude                 | 2.1 $\pm$ 0.7                            | 2.7 $\pm$ 0.6                             |

From these results, it can be seen that at the pre-test, the mean score for language use was approximately 2.2 points with a standard deviation of about 0.8; the mean score for cultural knowledge understanding was around 2.0 points with a standard deviation of about 0.7; the mean score for communication strategy use was about 1.8 points with a standard deviation of about 0.6; and the mean score for emotional attitude was around 2.1 points with a standard deviation of about 0.7. These data indicate that students were at a lower-middle level in various abilities at the pre-test, with some individual differences.

### 5.2.2. Paired Sample t-test

**Table 4.** Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores Based on t-Test

| Test Items                             | t - value | Degrees of Freedom | Two-tailed Significance Level (Sig.) | Conclusion                                                          |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Language Proficiency Score             | -7.32     | 58                 | 0.000 < 0.05                         | The post-test score is significantly higher than the pre-test score |
| Cultural Knowledge Comprehension Score | -6.85     | 58                 | 0.000 < 0.05                         | The post-test score is significantly higher than the pre-test score |
| Communication Strategy Use Score       | -8.11     | 58                 | 0.000 < 0.05                         | The post-test score is significantly higher than the pre-test score |
| Emotional Attitude Score               | -7.03     | 58                 | 0.000 < 0.05                         | The post-test score is significantly higher than the pre-test score |

Through descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests, it is evident that after learning and training, the 59 students showed significant improvements in language use for cross-cultural communication, understanding of cultural knowledge, use of communication strategies, and emotional attitudes ( $p < 0.05$ ). This further confirms that the strategies for cultivating students' cross-cultural communication skills in junior high school English teaching are effective.

### 5.3. Discussions

In teaching implementation, teachers integrate cross-cultural elements into teaching to a certain extent, such as through role-playing and classroom discussions. However, the overall implementation effect is not ideal. The design of teaching activities is not closely combined with students' actual situation and teaching objectives. The guidance for students during the activity process is not in-depth enough, and students cannot fully experience and understand cross-cultural knowledge.

## **6. Strategies for Cultivating Cross-cultural Communicative Competence**

### **6.1. Strengthening Teachers' Cross-cultural Awareness**

Teachers' self-directed learning is equally crucial to enhancing cross-cultural awareness. On weekdays, teachers can read classic and cutting-edge books on cross-cultural communication, such as *Cultural Patterns*, to analyze the structure and value system of different cultures; pay attention to relevant articles in academic journals to grasp the dynamics of the academic world. In their spare time, watch international documentaries, such as films showing traditional festivals and celebrations in different countries, so as to visualize the charm of foreign cultures. In their lives, they actively participate in international cultural exchange activities, join foreign language learning communities, interact frequently with people from different cultural backgrounds, and accumulate first-hand experience in cross-cultural communication.

### **6.2. Integrating Cross-cultural Content into Textbook Teaching**

To create a rich and up-to-date cultural learning environment, teachers should supplement teaching materials with mainstream newspapers, online articles and diverse multimedia resources such as cultural videos, podcasts and themed film clips, to immerse students in vivid cultural contexts and stimulate their learning interest.

### **6.3. Creating Cross-cultural Communication Scenarios**

#### **6.3.1. Role-playing**

Considering junior high school students' cognitive level and interests, role-playing activities should be close to real life to simulate cross-cultural communication scenarios. For example, in the "International Exchange Day on Campus" activity, students play exchange students from different English-speaking countries (Britain, the US, Australia, etc.) and school hosts respectively, highlighting the cultural characteristics of each country. Teachers observe students' performance throughout the activity, timely correct cultural misunderstandings and supplement relevant cultural knowledge.

## 6.4. Improving Teaching Evaluation Mechanisms

Teachers adopt diversified assessment methods: written tests with multiple-choice questions on cultural customs and taboos; oral presentations on Sino-foreign festival differences; role-play assessments in restaurant ordering scenarios; learning portfolios tracking students' growth; and peer assessment of cross-cultural group activities.

## 7. Conclusion

Under the new curriculum standard background, this case study of Class 8, Grade 8 at Huainan Dongshan Middle School explores cross-cultural communicative competence cultivation in junior English teaching. Questionnaires and interviews reveal that most students have medium or lower competence, featured by insufficient cultural awareness, limited cross-cultural resources and rare direct foreign interaction. Targeted strategies are put forward, such as enhancing teachers' cross-cultural ability, integrating cultural elements into teaching, creating communication scenarios and guiding extracurricular learning, to support junior English teaching reform. This study has limitations like small regional sample, and future research can expand the scope and conduct long-term follow-up.

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