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# An Analysis of the Current Status and Educational Value of Integrating Cross-Cultural Communication into English Classroom Teaching

Rou Li <sup>1,\*</sup><sup>1</sup> Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University, Guangzhou, China

\* Correspondence: Rou Li, Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University, Guangzhou, China

**Abstract:** The 2022 edition of the Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards has fundamentally redefined the unified attributes of disciplinary instrumentalism and humanism within language pedagogy. By explicitly incorporating intercultural literacy into the core competency development framework, it serves as a crucial foundation for implementing the fundamental mission of fostering moral character through comprehensive English education. In an increasingly globalized society, the ability to navigate diverse cultural landscapes is paramount. Grounded in intercultural communication theory and disciplinary educational philosophy, and informed by extensive practical experiences in English classroom instruction at the basic education level, this paper systematically examines the practical challenges of integrating intercultural education into routine teaching practices. Specifically, it analyzes existing pedagogical issues across four critical dimensions: teaching cognition, content construction, classroom implementation, and teacher professional development. Furthermore, the research elucidates the profound educational value of this integrated approach in cultivating deep cultural identity, enhancing advanced critical thinking skills, and advancing overall comprehensive literacy among learners. To bridge the gap between theory and practice, the study also proposes a series of actionable, evidence-based strategies tailored for frontline teaching implementation. Ultimately, this research provides robust theoretical support and practical guidance for the standardized delivery of intercultural English instruction, thereby contributing significantly to the continuous improvement of disciplinary educational quality and the cultivation of global citizenship in basic education.

**Keywords:** intercultural communication; english teaching; teaching practices; educational value; core competencies; cultural identity

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## 1. Introduction

The reform of basic education curricula and the increasing internationalization of education have necessitated significant adjustments in English teaching objectives. Traditionally, English instruction has focused predominantly on developing language skills, often neglecting broader educational goals. However, contemporary approaches are shifting toward fostering students' holistic development, emphasizing the cultivation of comprehensive core competencies. Among these competencies, cultural awareness has emerged as a critical dimension, as outlined in updated curriculum standards. This shift underscores the importance of integrating sustained cross-cultural immersion into language teaching platforms to address the persistent issue of prioritizing linguistic forms over cultural depth. Despite notable advancements in domestic research on cross-cultural classroom design and innovative teaching methods, there remains a lack of systematic and in-depth exploration of the practical challenges and educational essence of cross-cultural teaching [1]. This paper aims to bridge this gap by examining routine English classrooms in primary and secondary schools. By synthesizing cutting-edge research findings, it seeks to identify practical issues, educational implications, and optimization

strategies for embedding cross-cultural communication into classroom instruction. Such integration is essential for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of English teaching in the context of modern educational reforms, ensuring students are equipped to navigate an increasingly interconnected global landscape.

## **2. The Current Reality of Integrating Intercultural Communication into English Classroom Teaching**

Since the introduction of the new curriculum standards, the concept of intercultural communication has gradually influenced the English teaching framework in primary and secondary schools. Despite this progress, current research indicates that the integration of language instruction with intercultural education remains insufficiently developed [2]. A comprehensive and systematic intercultural teaching framework has yet to be fully established, which poses significant challenges to effective implementation. Among the common obstacles are biases in cognitive orientation, fragmented content systems, rigid and inflexible teaching models, and a lack of adequately trained educators [3]. These issues collectively hinder the ability to create a standardized and routine intercultural teaching system, which is essential for realizing the broader humanistic educational value of English as a subject. Furthermore, the absence of such a framework makes it difficult to achieve the intended objectives of cultivating core competencies in students, such as critical thinking, cultural awareness, and effective communication skills. Addressing these challenges requires targeted reforms and resource allocation to support teachers and enhance curriculum design.

### *2.1. The Utilitarian Approach to Teaching Cognition Has Marginalized Cross-Cultural Education*

The long-standing dominance of exam-oriented evaluation systems has fostered a utilitarian approach in English classroom instruction at primary and secondary schools, which has significantly marginalized cross-cultural education [4]. This instructional focus prioritizes modules such as vocabulary memorization, grammar acquisition, and test-type practice, with assessments heavily reliant on written test scores [5]. Consequently, the importance of cross-cultural literacy, which is vital for students' lifelong development, is often overlooked. Within the broader curriculum framework, cross-cultural content is not allocated dedicated teaching systems or sufficient instructional hours, instead being sporadically integrated into text analysis sessions without systematic design. Furthermore, the current assessment systems emphasize language knowledge testing while neglecting the inclusion of cross-cultural awareness and communicative competence as evaluation criteria. This imbalance undermines the holistic development of students and contradicts the objectives of competency-oriented educational reforms. Teachers and students alike exhibit limited enthusiasm and initiative in engaging with cross-cultural teaching, further exacerbating its marginalized status. This disconnect between language instruction and cultural education highlights a critical gap in the curriculum, underscoring the need for a more comprehensive approach that integrates cross-cultural literacy as a fundamental component of English education. Addressing this issue is essential to align educational practices with broader developmental goals.

### *2.2. Superficial Teaching Content and Incomplete Construction of the Cultural System*

Current cross-cultural teaching in primary and secondary English education encounters significant challenges, including superficial content, fragmented resources, and an imbalanced cultural focus. These issues hinder the establishment of a comprehensive and systematic cultural cognitive framework for students. Classroom materials often emphasize surface-level cultural elements, such as Western festival customs, dining etiquette, and lifestyle practices, while neglecting deeper cultural dimensions. These deeper aspects include value systems, cognitive frameworks, social ethics, and historical origins, which are essential for fostering a nuanced understanding of cultural differences. Consequently, students acquire only fragmented cultural knowledge, lacking the ability to grasp the intrinsic logic and defining characteristics that

differentiate Chinese and foreign cultures. Furthermore, the current cultural dissemination structure predominantly promotes a one-way transmission of Western culture, with limited integration of China's rich traditional culture [6, 7]. This approach fails to incorporate regular comparative cultural instruction, which is crucial for fostering a balanced perspective. The absence of such comparative frameworks deprives students of the opportunity to develop a bidirectional cognitive perspective, which is essential for appreciating multicultural diversity objectively. Moreover, this deficiency limits their ability to articulate and interpret local cultural elements in English effectively. Such gaps in cultural education impede the cultivation of critical thinking and cultural confidence, which are vital for students to navigate and contribute to a globalized world with a strong sense of cultural identity and respect for diversity.

### *2.3. The Teaching Model Is Overly Simplistic, Lacking Authentic Communicative Practice Scenarios*

Practicality and interactivity are essential components of effective cross-cultural communication, and the creation of authentic teaching scenarios is a vital prerequisite for achieving meaningful cross-cultural instruction. At present, English classrooms in primary and secondary schools predominantly rely on traditional lecture-based teaching methods, which emphasize teacher-led explanations, static visual aids, and detailed textual analysis. These methods often fail to incorporate immersive, inquiry-based, and interactive teaching designs, which are crucial for fostering active student engagement. The absence of practical elements such as situational simulations, role-playing exercises, project-based explorations, and cultural case analyses leaves students in a passive state of knowledge reception. This limits their ability to independently explore cultural differences, address cultural conflicts, or practice cross-cultural expression effectively. Furthermore, digital teaching resources have not been adequately integrated into the curriculum, resulting in a lack of exposure to real-life, authentic cross-cultural communication scenarios [6, 8]. This disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application hampers students' ability to develop robust cross-cultural communication skills. Consequently, students are more likely to make pragmatic errors and develop cultural misconceptions when faced with authentic cross-cultural contexts. Addressing these gaps requires a shift toward more dynamic and interactive teaching models that bridge the divide between theoretical understanding and practical competence, ensuring students are better equipped to navigate diverse cultural environments.

### *2.4. Deficiencies in Faculty Competence and Insufficient Capacity for Teaching Integration*

The cross-cultural literacy and curriculum integration capabilities of teachers play a pivotal role in determining the quality and effectiveness of cross-cultural teaching and its educational outcomes. At present, English teachers in primary and secondary schools encounter significant challenges, including limited reserves of cross-cultural knowledge and underdeveloped skills in integrating such knowledge into their teaching practices. Many educators have not undergone systematic professional training in cross-cultural communication, which results in a superficial understanding of cultural differences between China and other countries. This lack of depth often reduces their interpretation of multicultural content to symbolic representations, thereby limiting their ability to fully utilize the cross-cultural educational resources embedded within teaching materials. Although some teachers demonstrate an awareness of the importance of cross-cultural teaching, their curriculum design skills remain insufficient. They struggle to seamlessly integrate cross-cultural content with language instruction and skill development, and they often fail to create adaptive teaching activities that align with the diverse learning contexts of their students. Additionally, the current teacher training systems predominantly emphasize language teaching techniques, offering limited and fragmented resources for developing cross-cultural teaching competencies. This gap in professional development further exacerbates the challenges, as teachers are unable to keep pace with the evolving demands of cross-cultural education. Consequently, the integration of cross-

cultural teaching into English classrooms remains superficial and underdeveloped, hindering its potential to enrich students' learning experiences.

### **3. The Core Educational Value of Integrating Intercultural Communication into English Classroom Teaching**

The integration of cross-cultural communication into English classroom instruction addresses the limitations of traditional language teaching, which often emphasizes functional and instrumental aspects over broader educational goals. By embedding intercultural elements, this approach fosters cultural awareness, encourages innovative thinking, and enhances literacy skills. These outcomes align closely with the objectives of the new curriculum standards, which prioritize moral integrity and the holistic development of students. Furthermore, this method equips learners with the ability to navigate diverse cultural contexts, thereby improving their adaptability and global competence. Such an educational strategy not only strengthens students' comprehensive abilities but also lays a solid foundation for their lifelong learning and personal growth, ensuring they are better prepared to meet the challenges of an increasingly interconnected world.

#### *3.1. Cultural Education: Cultivating Rational Cultural Understanding and Strengthening the Foundation of Cultural Confidence*

Cross-cultural teaching plays a pivotal role in enabling the English discipline to fulfill its cultural education objectives. Language instruction, as a core medium for cultural exchange, inherently facilitates the interaction and integration of diverse cultural perspectives. By implementing systematic cross-cultural pedagogy, students are empowered to move beyond the cognitive boundaries imposed by their native culture, gaining a nuanced understanding of the complex characteristics and developmental trajectories of global multiculturalism. This approach allows them to appreciate the distinctive values and contemporary relevance of various cultures while fostering a mindset that respects diversity and embraces pluralism. Comparative teaching of Chinese and foreign cultures serves as a critical tool in guiding students to analyze Western cultural attributes critically, delve into the modern significance of China's rich traditional culture, and articulate their native cultural values effectively in international contexts. This bidirectional comparison addresses the limitations of unidirectional Western cultural transmission, enabling students to develop a comprehensive cultural cognition framework. Through reflective analysis, students can overcome tendencies toward cultural blind conformity or inferiority, cultivating independent and stable cultural value judgments. This process strengthens their cultural confidence and equips them with the intellectual tools necessary to achieve educational goals that are deeply rooted in local cultural contexts while maintaining a global perspective. Such an approach ensures that students are prepared to navigate the complexities of cultural interactions in an increasingly interconnected world.

#### *3.2. Thinking Education: Cultivating Diverse Critical Thinking Skills and Enhancing Cognitive Abilities*

The distinct regional environments, social structures, and cultural systems between Eastern and Western societies have led to fundamentally different cognitive paradigms, particularly in logical thinking patterns. Integrating cross-cultural communication into English language instruction serves as a powerful tool to dismantle rigid and singular thinking frameworks among students, thereby enhancing their cognitive sophistication. Western culture often emphasizes individual development, logical reasoning, and critical reflection, while Chinese culture focuses on holistic coordination, dialectical unity, and collective collaboration. By incorporating teaching components such as cultural case comparisons, analysis of communicative contexts, and exploration of cultural phenomena, educators can guide students to systematically understand the unique characteristics and strengths of diverse thinking models. This approach fosters multidimensional analytical perspectives and encourages students to adopt a more nuanced understanding of global

cognitive diversity. Prolonged cross-cultural immersion further refines students' critical, dialectical, and innovative thinking skills, enabling them to break free from entrenched mental patterns. It also enhances their abilities in cultural analysis, logical deduction, and problem-solving, while continuously improving their cognitive frameworks. Such educational strategies not only prepare students for effective intercultural communication but also equip them with the intellectual tools necessary for addressing complex global challenges in a rapidly evolving world.

### *3.3. Competency-Based Education: Cultivating Core Communication Skills and Holistic Personality Development*

The contemporary methodology for English education prioritizes the development of students' comprehensive language proficiency alongside essential competencies, with intercultural communication skills forming a pivotal element of this framework. Traditional English teaching methods, which focus heavily on systematic instruction of linguistic knowledge and grammatical structures while isolating learners from authentic communicative environments, often lead to an imbalance where students possess extensive theoretical knowledge but lack practical language application skills [9–11]. This approach limits their ability to engage effectively in real-world communication scenarios. In contrast, intercultural teaching adopts immersive and experiential strategies that simulate real-life communication contexts. These methodologies enable students to systematically acquire intercultural communication norms and etiquette, minimize pragmatic errors, and refine the accuracy and contextual relevance of their language use. Furthermore, intercultural learning expands students' global perspectives, fostering international literacy characterized by mutual respect, cultural inclusivity, and the ability to engage in equal dialogue. It also nurtures rational, thoughtful, and open-minded personal qualities. Regular participation in intercultural practical experiences enhances students' language expression, teamwork capabilities, and adaptability to cross-cultural environments. This holistic approach ensures the simultaneous development of linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, and character traits, equipping students with the skills necessary to thrive in a globally interconnected world.

## **4. Optimal Approaches for Integrating Intercultural Communication into English Classroom Instruction**

### *4.1. Transforming Teaching Perspectives and Revisiting Multidimensional Teaching Objectives*

Revising utilitarian teaching philosophies is an essential foundation for achieving a meaningful integration of intercultural communication within English language instruction. Educators must align their teaching practices with the updated curriculum standards, embracing a balanced philosophy that integrates linguistic functionality with humanistic values. This requires moving beyond traditional exam-focused teaching methods to adopt a more holistic approach. The primary teaching objectives should include fostering intercultural awareness, enhancing communicative competence, and cultivating cultural character. Instructional design must seamlessly combine the delivery of language knowledge, skill development, and cultural immersion, ensuring that language teaching and intercultural education progress in tandem. Furthermore, classroom evaluation systems should be restructured to include diversified formative assessments. These assessments should measure students' intercultural cognition, communicative abilities, and critical thinking regarding cultural contexts. By moving away from singular knowledge-based evaluations, educators can adopt scientifically grounded frameworks that support effective intercultural teaching [12–14]. This approach facilitates the establishment of a comprehensive and integrated teaching system that encompasses knowledge acquisition, skill mastery, and cultural literacy. Such a system not only enhances students' language proficiency but also prepares them to navigate complex intercultural interactions with confidence and sensitivity, fostering a more globally competent generation of learners.

### *4.2. Enrich Teaching Content and Establish a Two-Way Cultural Teaching System*

To address the prevalent challenges of superficial teaching content and one-way cultural input, it is imperative to establish a comprehensive cross-cultural teaching framework that integrates both Chinese and Western elements [15–17]. This framework should aim to foster mutual empowerment and ensure systematic coherence in cultural education. Teachers must delve deeply into the implicit cross-cultural resources embedded within textbook materials, moving beyond mere cultural symbolism to provide a thorough analysis of the underlying values, cognitive paradigms, and social implications of various cultures. This approach shifts cultural instruction from surface-level recognition to a more profound and critical reflection. Simultaneously, it is essential to enhance the integration of China's rich traditional culture into classroom settings. This can be achieved by incorporating local resources such as folk customs, classical philosophies, and contemporary cultural achievements into the curriculum. Regular comparative studies of Chinese and foreign cultures should also be conducted to guide students in critically analyzing cultural differences and accurately understanding unique cultural characteristics. Furthermore, updating teaching materials to reflect contemporary developments, including cutting-edge international cultural exchange cases, is crucial. These updates should align with students' cognitive patterns and modern educational demands. By adopting these measures, educators can construct a balanced, systematic, and robust cross-cultural teaching framework that effectively prepares students for the complexities of global cultural interactions.

#### *4.3. Innovate Teaching Models and Create Immersive Communication Scenarios*

By leveraging the practical nature of cross-cultural communication and addressing the limitations inherent in traditional lecture-based teaching methods, educators can establish a transformative classroom paradigm that emphasizes immersion, interaction, and inquiry-based learning. Teachers have the opportunity to design a variety of practical activities, such as situational simulations, role-playing exercises, cultural debates, and project-based learning tasks, all tailored to specific unit teaching themes. These activities aim to create highly realistic cross-cultural communication scenarios, enabling students to actively perceive cultural differences, apply communication strategies, and navigate cultural conflicts through experiential learning. Furthermore, the integration of multimedia resources, online teaching platforms, and digital cross-cultural communication tools allows educators to overcome the temporal and spatial constraints of conventional classrooms. This approach enriches the teaching context and diversifies instructional formats, fostering a seamless connection between theoretical instruction and real-world application. As students transition from passive knowledge acquisition to active cultural exploration, they deepen their understanding of cross-cultural dynamics. Immersive experiences significantly enhance their language proficiency and practical communication skills, equipping them to engage effectively in diverse cultural environments and adapt to the complexities of global interactions.

#### *4.4. Strengthen Faculty Development and Enhance Cross-Cultural Teaching Capabilities*

Refining a sustainable teacher development system is fundamental to ensuring high-quality cross-cultural teaching practices. Schools should prioritize the establishment of comprehensive, long-term teacher training mechanisms that integrate specialized modules designed to enhance educators' cross-cultural competencies. These modules may include cross-cultural communication theory, comparative analysis of Chinese and foreign cultures, and innovative approaches to cross-cultural curriculum design. Such training programs aim to expand teachers' knowledge frameworks while simultaneously modernizing their pedagogical strategies to align with evolving educational demands. Furthermore, institutions should create regular platforms for teaching research and exchange, employing formats such as open class demonstrations, thematic research sessions, and case study discussions [18]. These platforms facilitate the sharing of practical teaching experiences, the refinement of instructional designs, and the resolution of complex teaching challenges. Teachers are also encouraged to engage in research grounded in frontline classroom practices, fostering the development of innovative

teaching methods tailored to diverse student needs. By continuously improving their cross-cultural competence and curriculum integration skills, educators can effectively support the seamless integration of cross-cultural communication into English language instruction, thereby enhancing the overall quality and relevance of educational outcomes in increasingly globalized learning environments.

## 5. Conclusion

Integrating cross-cultural communication into English classrooms represents an inevitable trend in the reform of foundational English education in the new era, serving as a crucial pathway for the discipline to achieve its educational objectives of fostering moral integrity and cultivating students' core competencies. However, current cross-cultural teaching practices in K-12 English education face significant challenges, including cognitive biases, superficial content, rigid methodologies, and inadequate teacher expertise. These issues often result in a fragmented and shallow integration of cross-cultural elements, thereby limiting the full realization of pedagogical effectiveness and failing to meet the rigorous demands of competency-oriented English education reform. The cross-cultural teaching model, when effectively implemented, has the potential to cultivate students' rational cultural understanding, strengthen their cultural confidence, foster critical thinking skills, and enhance their overall literacy and international adaptability. To achieve these outcomes, it is essential to adopt a multifaceted approach that includes updating teaching philosophies to align with global educational trends, refining instructional content to ensure depth and relevance, innovating classroom models to promote active engagement, and strengthening faculty development through targeted training programs. Furthermore, this approach underscores the importance of achieving an organic unity between the instrumental and humanistic dimensions of English education. By doing so, it nurtures contemporary youth who possess both a strong sense of national pride and a global vision, equipping them to meet the complex demands of an increasingly interconnected world. Future research should explore the longitudinal impacts of cross-cultural teaching models on student outcomes, as well as the development of scalable frameworks that can be adapted across diverse educational contexts to ensure sustained and meaningful integration.

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