

Research on the Penetration Paths of Cross-Cultural Communication in College English Teaching

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Abstract: Language serves as both a means of communication and a crucial carrier of culture and thinking. A primary objective of college English curriculum teaching is to cultivate and enhance students' ability to use English for cross-cultural communication. However, currently, the integration of cross-cultural communication in college English teaching commonly faces issues such as overemphasis on basic knowledge, lack of innovative teaching methods, insufficient curriculum resources, limited cross-cultural interaction, and imperfect teaching evaluation. These significantly restrict the improvement of students' cross-cultural communication skills. To address this, this paper conducts a related analysis and research on the significance, current status, principles, and paths of integrating cross-cultural communication into college English teaching. The aim is to further enhance the effectiveness of this integration, thereby better supporting the enhancement of students' cross-cultural communication awareness and capabilities. This serves as a reference for relevant practices.

Keywords: Cross-cultural communication; College English; Teaching integration

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1. Introduction

For students, cross-cultural communication refers to their ability to use different languages for communication in various fields after understanding cultural differences^[1]. It is evident that cross-cultural communication places relatively high demands on students' practical language proficiency, as well as requiring high cultural sensitivity and rich cultural knowledge. Integrating cross-cultural communication into college English teaching not only broadens students' intellectual horizons but also effectively enhances their comprehensive ability to use the English language, making it of great significance. Therefore, there is a need to study the paths for integrating cross-cultural communication into college English teaching.

2. The significance of integrating cross-cultural communication into college English teaching

2.1. Enhancing students' comprehensive English language proficiency

Customs, habits, and cultural ideologies vary across different countries and regions. Therefore, misunderstandings or failures in communication are inevitable during cross-cultural interactions ^[2]. Integrating cross-cultural communication into college English teaching can effectively broaden students' intellectual horizons, enrich their accumulation of English cultural knowledge, and enhance their cultural literacy in the English language. This is of great significance for improving students' comprehensive ability to use English, ensuring more efficient and effective cross-cultural communication ^[3].

2.2. Stimulating students' interest in learning English culture

Against the backdrop of globalization, the social market's demand for English professionals is growing, along with higher requirements for their qualities and capabilities ^[4]. In this context, it is necessary to reform and innovate the teaching content, methods, and models of college English. Integrating cross-cultural communication into college English teaching allows students to learn and understand the cultures of more countries and regions. This not only transforms students' traditional concepts of English learning but also encourages them to adopt a more open and inclusive mindset toward diverse cultures. This is conducive to stimulating students' interest in learning English culture, thereby motivating them to take a more proactive approach to English learning and cross-cultural communication ^[5].

2.3. An important measure to adapt to societal and era development

Today, with the continuous development and deepening of globalization, cooperation and exchanges between China and Western countries in economic, cultural, and other fields have become increasingly frequent ^[6]. Under this influence, the value and role of cross-cultural communication have become increasingly prominent. Introducing cross-cultural communication into college English teaching can help students better understand and grasp the similarities and differences between English culture and local culture. In this way, when engaging in cross-cultural communication, students can better reflect on and understand the connotations from the content and context expressed by the other party, which helps them better adapt to the development requirements of society and the era.

3. Current status of cross-cultural communication integration in college English teaching

Against the backdrop of globalization, exchanges between countries and individuals have become increasingly profound and frequent ^[7]. English is not only a vital medium and linguistic carrier for social communication, with high cultural communication value, but also a foundational subject in China's higher education curriculum system, playing a significant role in enhancing the comprehensive literacy of talent ^[8]. However, at present, despite the continuous advancement of cross-cultural communication, college English teaching still faces several issues that hinder the effective improvement of students' cross-cultural communication awareness and capabilities. The main manifestations are as follows:

3.1. Overemphasis on basic knowledge in teaching

Currently, some college English teachers place excessive importance on teaching basic knowledge, solely

emphasizing the instrumental role of English teaching while neglecting the cultivation of students' language application abilities. For example, in teaching practice, some teachers merely put forward basic requirements for English learning based on the curriculum syllabus and teaching objectives, providing educational guidance accordingly. For students, this leads to a dull learning process dominated by basic drills such as vocabulary memorization, reading comprehension, English translation, and writing, with a lack of opportunities for mutual communication^[9]. Over time, students' desire to communicate in English gradually diminishes, and the development of their cross-cultural communication literacy is constrained.

3.2. Lack of innovation in teaching methods

Influenced by various factors, many college English teachers still predominantly use lecture-based and cramming teaching methods, lacking innovation. This not only lacks communication between students and between teachers and students, but also fails to guide students in cross-cultural communication from the perspective of cultural differences. In such an English learning environment, students' cross-cultural communication skills are difficult to improve effectively, and their learning enthusiasm is also affected.

3.3. Insufficient curriculum teaching resources

At present, teaching with single-dimensional content can no longer meet the learning and development needs of contemporary college students, especially against the backdrop of educational digital transformation, where massive online resources have become important materials for students' extended learning. However, from the perspective of cross-cultural communication, some college English teachers have not sufficiently integrated English cultural resources from the internet, making it difficult to fully exploit the cultural value of these online resources. This, to some extent, hinders students' understanding and cognition of English culture, thereby restricting the improvement of their cross-cultural communication abilities.

3.4. Limited cross-cultural communication opportunities

The development of cross-cultural communication activities relies on a supportive and enabling language environment^[10]. However, in current college English teaching, limited by the overall language environment, students have relatively few platforms and opportunities for cross-cultural communication, especially for direct dialogue with native speakers. In such circumstances, students' cross-cultural communication skills are often difficult to effectively enhance.

3.5. Imperfect teaching evaluation

Currently, many college English teachers still evaluate students primarily based on their listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation abilities, lacking assessment and evaluation of cross-cultural communication, cultural awareness, and understanding^[11]. Such a teaching evaluation mechanism is incomplete and one-sided, significantly weakening the importance of learning English culture and engaging in cross-cultural communication. Ultimately, this will inevitably restrict the development of students' cross-cultural communication capabilities.

4. Principles for integrating cross-cultural communication into college English teaching

4.1. Reasonable Respect for English Culture

For students, only after fully recognizing the importance of cross-cultural communication can they better

understand and respect English culture, thereby establishing a sound awareness of cross-cultural communication. However, currently, some college students hold extreme views toward English culture, such as excessive admiration or complete disregard. Therefore, when organizing cross-cultural communication activities for students, college English teachers should follow the principle of reasonable respect for English culture to help students correctly understand and perceive English culture, avoiding extreme misconceptions.

4.2. In-depth exploration of English culture

When guiding students in cross-cultural communication, college English teachers should adhere to the principle of “seeking common ground while reserving differences” and encourage in-depth discussions on English culture to help students comprehensively understand the similarities and differences between cultures. Generally, “seeking common ground” is relatively straightforward, as contemporary aesthetic trends tend to be unified across diverse cultural systems^[12]. In contrast, “reserving differences” is more challenging, as many students habitually separate Western foreign cultures from local Chinese cultures^[13]. Under such cognitive biases, students’ cross-cultural communication is easily hindered. Therefore, when integrating cross-cultural communication into English teaching, teachers must focus on in-depth exploration of English culture.

4.3. Extracting the essence of English culture

With numerous cultural categories and a long historical development, it is often impractical for college English teachers to teach all knowledge related to English culture or organize corresponding cross-cultural communication training within limited class hours and curriculum content. Therefore, teachers need to carefully extract the essence of English culture during teaching, prioritize it in instruction, and achieve the goal of effectively improving students’ cross-cultural communication capabilities.

5. Pathways for integrating cross-cultural communication into college English teaching

5.1. Rational utilization of teaching materials to lay a language foundation

Teaching materials serve as a critical basis for teachers’ instruction and students’ learning. To enhance the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication integration, college English teachers should strengthen the rational exploration and application of teaching materials to help students build a solid foundation in English.

Horizontally: Current college English textbooks typically include at least two articles per unit. Teachers can use these articles as a basis to organize listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation exercises, enabling students to continuously expand their English vocabulary and master grammatical rules through practice, thereby applying knowledge in real contexts. On the other hand, from a vertical perspective, teachers can leverage the textbook’s structured progression (“from shallow to deep, from easy to difficult”) to design gradual teaching plans. For example, in the early stage, focus on cultivating students’ learning habits and autonomous learning methods. In the intermediate stage, strengthen training in various English skills and guide them to explore the internal rules of English expression. In the later stage, prioritize cultivating students’ English language application abilities and text appreciation skills, allowing them to fully experience the charm of English culture^[14]. This approach ensures comprehensive support for cultivating students’ cross-cultural communication awareness.

5.2. Innovating teaching methods to enhance integration effects

From the perspective of cross-cultural communication, teachers need to innovate teaching methods to motivate students to actively learn and understand English culture, thereby effectively improving the integration of cross-cultural communication in college English teaching. In teaching practice, teachers can provide more opportunities for language expression and communication in class. For example, use multimedia devices to play video clips from shows like Friends, enabling students to learn and understand Western daily communication habits, cultural attitudes, values, and festival customs through the plot^[15]. Meanwhile, teachers can organize group-based language activities, allowing students to experience and gradually accept English culture in a positive classroom atmosphere, thereby improving their oral expression and cross-cultural communication skills. Additionally, teachers can design project-based tasks with cross-cultural communication as the theme, requiring students to collect and compare data on cultural similarities and differences between China and the West through group collaboration or independent research, thereby continuously enhancing their cross-cultural awareness in practice.

5.3. Utilizing online resources to broaden communication scope

The internet offers abundant high-quality resources that can be integrated into college English teaching. Teachers can fully exploit online learning materials to provide more excellent English cultural resources for cross-cultural communication integration. For example, teachers can introduce videos, animations, and other multimedia materials into teaching to broaden students' intellectual horizons and gradually correct their subjective assumptions about English culture. Meanwhile, teachers can also use online resources to implement flipped classroom models, requiring students to independently learn and explore topics outside class and encouraging them to engage in online English communication with peers, teachers, and international students via online platforms. This further expands the space and scope of cross-cultural communication, laying a foundation for improving their cross-cultural competence.

5.4. Organizing cultural activities to increase communication opportunities

The integration of cross-cultural communication and college English teaching should not be confined to the classroom but extended to extracurricular settings. Therefore, college English teachers can organize cultural exchange activities to provide more opportunities for students to express themselves and communicate in English, thereby enhancing their cross-cultural communication abilities. For instance, teachers can launch "English Corner" activities, where students introduce themselves in English, express their opinions, and interact within and between groups. This deepens their understanding of different cultures through practical communication.

5.5. Optimizing teaching evaluation to promote student development

To enhance the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication integration in college English teaching, teachers must also focus on optimizing teaching evaluation to better facilitate students' all-around development. In addition to evaluating academic performance, teachers should establish culturally specific evaluation criteria, such as: students' cross-cultural communication competence, motivation for cultural learning, cultural cognition and understanding, etc., thereby improving the comprehensiveness of teaching evaluation.

6. Conclusion

In summary, against the backdrop of globalization, an increasing number of students may need to go

beyond national boundaries and engage with the world in the future. In this context, integrating cross-cultural communication into college English teaching has become a crucial direction for teaching reform and an educational mission, primarily aiming to further enhance students' cross-cultural communication awareness and capabilities. In teaching practice, college English teachers can promote the integration of cross-cultural communication through measures such as rationally utilizing teaching materials to lay a language foundation, innovating teaching methods to improve integration effects, leveraging online resources to broaden communication scope, organizing cultural activities to increase interaction opportunities, and optimizing teaching evaluation to facilitate student development. These efforts collectively aim to cultivate and enhance students' cross-cultural communication competencies.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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