



The Author(s). Published by Global Insight Publishing Ltd, USA.

This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

# The Transformation of College English Teaching Concepts and the Cultivation of Intercultural Communicative Competence in the New Era

Guoliang Zhang<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This study explores the transformation of teaching concepts in College English education and the strategies for cultivating ICC. It highlights the limitations of traditional teaching methods, which often focus on language knowledge while neglecting cultural aspects. The study proposes a student-centered, culturally immersive approach that integrates language learning with cultural experiences. By incorporating diverse cultural materials, innovative teaching methods, and modern educational technologies, educators can foster students' cultural sensitivity, global vision, and adaptability. The study also addresses current challenges in teaching ICC, such as imbalanced cultural content in textbooks, the separation of language and cultural teaching, and the under-utilization of technology. It further emphasizes the importance of comprehensive evaluation systems that assess students' ICC alongside language skills. Teachers are identified as key facilitators in this process, with a need for continuous professional development to enhance their ability to teach intercultural competence effectively. The findings offer valuable insights for reforming College English teaching and preparing students to navigate the complexities of global communication. Future research can focus on interdisciplinary approaches, the use of big data, and AI in teaching to further enhance ICC cultivation.

**Keywords:** New Era; College English; Teaching Concepts; Intercultural Communicative Competence; Cultivation Strategies

## 1. Introduction

In the current new era of globalization, the world has become an interconnected global village where international exchanges, be it in the fields of business, academia, or cultural collaborations, have reached an unprecedented level of frequency and intensity. College students, as the future leaders and global citizens, are required to possess strong intercultural communicative competence in order to thrive and succeed in this highly globalized and competitive world. College English teaching, which stands as a core and essential part of higher education, shoulders the significant responsibility of cultivating this crucial competence among students<sup>[1]</sup>. Research centered around the transformation of teaching concepts and the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence is of utmost importance. Firstly, it serves as a powerful catalyst for promoting the much-needed reform of College English teaching. By reevaluating and reinventing teaching concepts, educators can break free from the shackles of traditional and often ineffective teaching methods. Secondly, it plays a vital role in enhancing students' overall quality. When students are exposed to diverse cultures and are trained in cross-cultural communication, they develop a more comprehensive set of skills and a broader mindset. This enables them to better adapt to the international environment. For instance, when students study abroad or engage in international internships, they can smoothly interact with people from different cultural backgrounds, understand and respect cultural differences, and avoid misunderstandings. It also helps in enhancing their cultural awareness. They become more attuned to the richness and diversity of global cultures, which in turn enriches their own cultural perspectives. Moreover, it broadens their global vision, allowing them to see the world from a more inclusive and international perspective. This is highly beneficial for their future career development as many industries today require employees who can communicate effectively across cultures. In international business negotiations, for example, understanding the cultural nuances of the other party can make or break a deal.

## 2. Literature Review

Previous studies in the domain of college English teaching concept reform and intercultural communicative competence cultivation have indeed made certain strides. However, there are still notable limitations. Some research efforts on teaching concept transformation merely scratch the surface and fail to conduct an in-depth exploration of how these new concepts can be seamlessly integrated into practical teaching scenarios<sup>[1]</sup>. On the other hand, some studies on the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence tend to get overly entangled in theoretical discussions, while the practical strategies proposed lack sufficient portability and effectiveness in real classroom

---

<sup>1</sup> Pakistan Research Centre Inner Mongolia Honder College of Arts and Sciences, Hohhot010000, China  
Email: 510566719@qq.com

settings, leaving much room for improvement <sup>[2]</sup>. This present study is specifically designed to bridge these existing gaps and offer more comprehensive and highly practical research outcomes that can be directly applied and beneficial in the context of College English teaching. Traditional college English teaching, which has been the norm for a long time, mainly zeroed in on the teaching of language knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary. Regrettably, cultural elements, which are an inseparable part of language, were frequently overlooked. Additionally, the active participation of students was not given due emphasis. To illustrate, in a typical traditional classroom, teachers would typically allocate the majority of the teaching time to painstakingly explaining grammar rules and introducing new words. There was minimal attention paid to the cultural background and context within which the language was actually used. As a result, students might be proficient in understanding individual words and sentences in isolation, but when it came to real cross-cultural communication situations, they faced significant difficulties. They lacked the essential cultural sensitivity and adaptability, which are key ingredients for successful cross-cultural interactions.

### **3. Core Elements of New Era College English Teaching Concepts**

The new era teaching concepts emphasize student-centeredness. Teachers should understand students' needs, interests, and learning styles and design teaching activities accordingly. For instance, if students show an interest in a particular cultural topic, such as British literature, teachers can organize relevant reading and discussion activities. Cultural import and experience are also crucial. Teachers can introduce different cultural products, like movies, music, and artworks. For example, showing the movie "Pride and Prejudice" to help students understand British social customs and values in the 19th century. The integration of language and culture means that language is taught in the context of culture. When teaching English idioms, teachers can explain the cultural origins and meanings, such as the idiom "raining cats and dogs," which has a unique cultural background. Cultivating global vision and multicultural awareness enables students to respect and understand different cultures. Group projects comparing different cultural festivals can be assigned to achieve this goal.

The transformation is driven by multiple factors. Socially, the increasing demand for international cooperation and competition requires college graduates to have intercultural communicative competence. For example, in the field of international business, employees need to understand different cultural business etiquettes and negotiation styles <sup>[3]</sup>. Technologically, the development of educational technology provides new tools and platforms. Online learning platforms like Duolingo offer personalized learning experiences, and multimedia resources such as virtual reality language labs can create immersive learning environments <sup>[4]</sup>. Internationally, educational exchanges and cooperation allow educators to learn from different teaching systems and cultures. For example, through teacher exchange programs, Chinese teachers can observe and learn from Western teaching methods and vice versa <sup>[5]</sup>.

### **4. The Importance of Intercultural Communicative Competence in College English Teaching**

Intercultural communicative competence includes language ability, cultural knowledge, communicative skills, attitude, and awareness. Language ability is the foundation for communication. However, cultural knowledge is equally important. For example, knowing about the cultural taboos in different countries can avoid misunderstandings. Communicative skills involve listening, speaking, reading, and writing in cross-cultural contexts. A positive attitude and awareness of cultural differences are also necessary. Students with an open attitude are more willing to learn and adapt to different cultures.

The goal of College English teaching in the new era is to cultivate students who can not only use English proficiently but also communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations. For example, in a tourism English course, students need to learn not only English expressions related to tourism but also the cultural customs and behaviors of tourists from different countries. This helps them provide better services and avoid cultural conflicts.

For students' personal development, intercultural communicative competence expands their horizons. Students who have participated in international cultural exchange programs often report a significant improvement in their understanding of different cultures and their own personal growth. In a social context, it helps build harmonious multicultural communities. For example, in a city with a large number of international immigrants, people with intercultural communicative competence can better interact and cooperate with others from different cultural backgrounds.

### **5. Current Problems and Challenges in Cultivating Intercultural Communicative Competence in College English Teaching**

Existing college English textbooks often have insufficient and unbalanced cultural materials. They may focus too much on Western culture and lack diversity. For example, some textbooks have a large number of texts about American and British cultures but few about Asian, African, or Latin American cultures <sup>[6]</sup>.

Insufficient Integration of Cultural Teaching and Language Teaching In teaching, cultural and language teaching are often separated. Teachers may teach grammar and vocabulary in one part and cultural knowledge in another, without effectively integrating them. This makes it difficult for students to understand the relationship between language and culture and apply them in practice.

Traditional teaching methods, such as teacher-centered lectures, limit students' participation and interaction. Students are passive recipients of knowledge and lack opportunities to practice cross-cultural communication. For example, in a traditional lecture, students mainly listen and take notes, with little chance to engage in real cross-cultural dialogue.

Although modern educational technology has developed, it is not fully utilized in college English teaching. Some teachers may not be proficient in using online learning platforms or multimedia resources. For example, they may only use powerpoint slides in a simple way and not explore the interactive functions of online platforms to enhance students' learning experience.

Current teaching evaluation mainly focuses on language knowledge and skills, such as vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension. There is a lack of evaluation of students' intercultural communicative competence. For example, a student with high test scores in language knowledge may still have difficulties in real cross-cultural communication, but this is not reflected in the evaluation. The evaluation methods are mainly examinations and written assignments. There is a lack of evaluation of students' performance in classroom activities, group projects, and practical cross-cultural experiences. This one-sided evaluation method cannot comprehensively assess students' intercultural communicative competence.

## **6. Strategies for Cultivating Intercultural Communicative Competence in College English Teaching**

### **Optimizing Teaching Content Enriching the Cultural Connotation of Textbooks**

Textbooks should include more diverse cultural materials. For example, adding stories, articles, or case studies about different cultures. A textbook could have a section dedicated to the cultural heritage and modern life of countries like India, with topics ranging from Indian festivals to its emerging high-tech industry. This helps students understand different cultures more comprehensively<sup>[7]</sup>.

Colleges can develop their own cultural curriculum resources. For instance, a university in a region with a rich history of silk production can develop a curriculum resource about the history and cultural influence of silk in different cultures. It can include field trips to local silk museums, guest lectures by silk industry experts, and research projects on the international trade of silk products.

### **Innovating Teaching Methods and Means**

Create cross-cultural situations in the classroom. For example, setting up a simulated international business meeting scenario. Students play different roles, such as business representatives from different countries. They need to research the cultural business norms of their respective countries and conduct negotiations. This helps students improve their cross-cultural communication skills in a practical context.

Organize students into groups for cross-cultural projects. For example, a project about comparing and contrasting the education systems of different countries. Each group consists of students with different majors and cultural backgrounds. They collect data, analyze, and present their findings. Through this process, students learn to cooperate and communicate with each other across cultures.

Make full use of modern educational technology. Teachers can use online learning platforms to assign cross-cultural learning tasks, such as watching cultural documentaries and participating in online discussions. For example, on platforms like TED-Ed, there are many videos about different cultures. Teachers can require students to watch relevant videos and then have online discussions about the cultural concepts presented in the videos.

### **Improving the Teaching Evaluation System**

Establish an evaluation index system that includes multiple aspects of intercultural communicative competence. In addition to language knowledge and skills, it should also evaluate cultural knowledge, communicative skills, attitude, and awareness. For example, evaluating students' ability to analyze cultural differences in a case study, their performance in cross-cultural group projects, and their attitudes towards different cultures.

Use a variety of evaluation methods. Combine examinations with classroom performance evaluations, group project evaluations, self-evaluations, and peer evaluations. For example, in a group project evaluation, students evaluate each other's contributions and cross-cultural communication skills. Classroom performance evaluations can include observations of students' participation in cultural discussions and activities.

## **7. The Role and Ability Improvement of Teachers in Cultivating Intercultural Communicative Competence**

In the pursuit of cultivating students' intercultural communicative competence, teachers emerge as the linchpin. Acting as cultural guides, they possess the unique ability to unlock the doors to different cultures. When dissecting a text centered around a particular culture, say, one that delves into the ancient Aztec civilization, teachers can artfully unfurl the tapestry of Aztec religious beliefs, their advanced agricultural practices, and the hierarchical social structure. By posing thought-provoking questions that prompt students to juxtapose Aztec culture with, for instance, modern Western culture, students are spurred to construct their own well-rounded cultural perspectives. This not only broadens their intellectual horizons but also hones their cross-cultural analytical skills. Teachers are also the masterminds behind

a rich array of cross-cultural teaching activities. A cultural festival, for instance, transforms into a global carnival of learning. Students from far-flung corners of the world can congregate to present the subtleties of their native traditions. From the intricate dance forms of India to the soul-stirring folk music of Ireland, and from the mouthwatering delicacies of Thailand to the exquisite handicrafts of Morocco, every display becomes a living, breathing lesson in cultural diversity. International student exchanges and cross-cultural competitions further stoke the fires of learning. These platforms encourage students to step out of their comfort zones, engage in meaningful dialogue, and test their mettle in the crucible of cross-cultural communication. The development of learning resources is another forte of teachers. They painstakingly craft teaching materials that are replete with real-world cross-cultural vignettes. A case study on a diplomatic encounter between China and France, highlighting the nuances of protocol and communication, can prove invaluable. Their online creations, such as a comprehensive website, act as a gateway to a vast repository of knowledge. Online courses like the one on Coursera dedicated to intercultural communication equip students with practical tools and strategies. Cultural blogs offer a peek into the personal experiences and insights of globetrotters and cultural enthusiasts, while virtual museum tours whisk students away on a digital odyssey through the annals of human civilization. To continuously augment their capabilities, teachers actively engage in professional development. International conferences serve as a melting pot of ideas. Renowned scholars and educators converge to share cutting-edge research and innovative teaching methodologies. Workshops might focus on leveraging technology, like augmented reality, to enhance cross-cultural learning experiences. Online courses, such as the esteemed offering by James W. Neuliep, provide a structured and in-depth exploration of intercultural communication. International exchanges and cooperation activities open new vistas. When teachers embark on a sojourn as visiting scholars in a foreign university, they are immersed in a different educational ecosystem. They can observe the dynamics of a classroom in Japan, where respect for authority and group harmony are deeply ingrained, and glean valuable lessons to infuse into their own teaching. The reverse exchange, inviting foreign educators, injects a fresh dose of international flavor into the local teaching milieu. Self-learning and reflection form the bedrock of a teacher's growth. Regularly perusing academic tomes and periodicals on intercultural communication, such as the latest issues of "Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology," keeps them abreast of the latest trends and research breakthroughs. After orchestrating a cross-cultural group project, teachers meticulously dissect the experience. They analyze the ebb and flow of student participation, the effectiveness of communication channels, and the overall achievement of learning objectives. This introspection paves the way for the refinement and evolution of teaching methods and strategies, ensuring that students are always at the forefront of a dynamic and enriching learning journey.

## 8. Conclusion

This study has comprehensively analyzed the transformation of college English teaching concepts and the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence in the new era. It has pointed out the limitations of traditional teaching concepts, expounded the core elements and driving factors of new era teaching concepts, and revealed the importance of intercultural communicative competence in college English teaching. By analyzing the current situation and problems of teaching, a series of targeted and operable cultivation strategies have been proposed, and the role and ability improvement path of teachers have been emphasized. The research results have important theoretical and practical guiding significance for promoting the reform of college English teaching and cultivating students with international vision and intercultural communicative competence.

This study also has some deficiencies in theory and practice. Future research can focus on interdisciplinary research, the application of big data and artificial intelligence technology in teaching, and further explore the more effective cultivation mode and evaluation system of intercultural communicative competence. It is hoped that more in-depth and comprehensive research will be carried out to continuously promote the innovation and development of college English teaching.

## References

- [1]. Chen, J. L. (2016). *Information Technology Guide for College English Teaching*. Higher Education Press.
- [2]. Wen, Q. F. (2021). The Construction of Ideological and Political Teaching System in Foreign Language Courses in Colleges and Universities in the New Era. *Foreign Language Research*, (5), 1-7.
- [3]. Zhang, H. L. (2017). *Intercultural Foreign Language Teaching*. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [4]. Hu, W. Z. (2020). *Beyond the Barrier of Culture - Hu Wenzhong's Collected Works on Comparative Culture*. Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [5]. Wang, S. R. (2020). Interpretation of the College English Teaching Guide (2020 Edition). *Foreign Language World*, (6), 13-18.
- [6]. Sun, Y. Z. (2021). The Cultivation of Intercultural Communicative Competence and College English Teaching. *Foreign Languages in China*, (1), 66-70.
- [7]. Li, Z. Z. (2022). Multimodal Discourse Analysis and Foreign Language Teaching. *Foreign Language Research*, (3), 53-59.