

# A Study on the Theory and Application of English Teachers' Cross-Cultural Competence in Private Colleges and Universities in the Context of "Internet +"

Suwen Yuan\*

Guangzhou Huashang College, Guangzhou 511300, Guangdong Province, China

\*Corresponding author: Suwen Yuan, moon\_yuan0826@163.com

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**Abstract:** In China's higher education system, the faculty and teaching quality of private colleges and universities have been consistently enhanced, as they play an essential role in the training of professional talents. In the context of "Internet +" and through a detailed analysis of the cross-cultural competence of English teachers in private colleges and universities in China, this paper discusses the necessity and feasibility of cultivating college teachers' cross-cultural thinking to constantly optimize and perfect the strategies for cross-cultural competence, as well as improve the practical application level of English teachers' cross-cultural knowledge theory, so that English teachers can be exposed to the latest educational ideas, constantly broaden their cultural horizons, strengthen professional sensitivity and environmental adaptability, pay attention to local culture, optimize critical thinking, and improve cultural literacy, thus laying a solid foundation for an all-round experience of cross-cultural communication.

**Keywords:** Internet +; Private colleges; English teachers; Cross-cultural competence

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## 1. Introduction

Cross-cultural communication refers to the communication between native language users and non-native language users, as well as any communication behavior with differences in cultural and linguistic backgrounds. With the advent of the "Internet +" era, the training objectives of English teachers' cross-cultural communicative competence in private colleges and universities can be divided into three aspects. The first is to guide English teachers to maintain a positive attitude toward different cultures; the second is to improve English teachers' adaptability in the process of cross-cultural communication, and the third is to enhance English teachers' cross-cultural communication skills. At the same time, English teaching is mainly divided into two aspects: culture teaching and language teaching. Culture teachers are the embodiment of the essential characteristics of English teaching. English culture refers to the traditional customs, local customs, geographical history, code of conduct, literature and art, lifestyle, values, and other aspects in English-speaking countries, from which rich cultural connotations can be found. The cross-cultural competence of teachers have a direct impact on the quality and efficiency of cross-cultural English education. Therefore, improving the degree of application of cross-cultural knowledge theory among English teachers is critical for cultivating cross-cultural English talents in China.

## **2. Establish a multi-dimensional cultural perspective**

In the context of “Internet +,” private colleges and universities should achieve a breakthrough in the limitations of traditional bicultural education and carry out multicultural education from a diversified perspective in the process of cultivating English teachers’ cross-cultural communicative competence. Multicultural education has two meanings. First, English teachers should not be a simple “monocultural person” or “bicultural person,” but rather a “multi-cultural person.” Second, in the process of cultivating English teachers’ cross-cultural communicative competence, teachers should move away from traditional passive learning and toward actively accepting foreign cultures <sup>[1]</sup>.

The ultimate goal of teaching English is to guarantee that students can convey Chinese culture to English users and that global cultural exchanges will not be restricted to two-way communication with multiple characteristics <sup>[2]</sup>.

Against the background of China’s rising international status and the popularization of “Internet +,” international cultural exchanges based on the internet are growing increasingly common, exposing people all over the globe to an increasing number of “transnational dialogues.” In such an environment, people often communicate with native English speakers, in which they may use English to communicate with people from other countries <sup>[3]</sup>.

English is an international language. Therefore, teachers should not only strengthen the research and their grasp of English culture, but also learn Chinese culture to the fullest extent possible. The awareness of cross-cultural communication among teachers can only be fostered by ensuring that intercultural thinking is well-established among teachers, allowing for the flexible application of cross-cultural communication related knowledge and skills <sup>[4]</sup>.

## **3. Cultivate English teachers’ sensitivity and adaptability in cross-cultural communication**

There are different types of cultures in the world, and the cultures of different countries are vastly varied. Between them, there are both synchronic and diachronic elements. English teachers should have a thorough understanding of this aspect of culture and a high regard for cultural variations. In order to ensure that English teachers respect cultural differences, private colleges and universities should ensure that English teachers are aware of the importance of treating different cultures with an equal and objective attitude, as well as describing, elaborating, and evaluating the cultural behaviors of various cultural groups in conjunction with different cognitive styles and standards <sup>[5]</sup>.

In ensuring that they have the awareness and capacity to fully adapt to cultural differences, English teachers must understand the processes involved in psychological adjustment. The fundamental goal of psychological adjustment is to nurture English teachers’ sensitivity to empathy. In the process of learning and understanding English culture, psychological transposition and role changes are constantly carried out; maintaining the attitude of reaching out to others and putting themselves in the shoes of others to understand and tolerate the cultural behaviors of English cultural groups are requisites <sup>[6]</sup>.

English teachers should have the awareness and capability to find a common ground between Chinese culture and English culture. Although there are apparent distinctions in the languages and cultures of different countries, these differences have high relativity. At the level of basic motivation and basic requirements of language and culture, Chinese and English cultural groups share some common ground. They might adopt different behaviors and approaches to solving the same problems. In order to develop our national culture, English teachers should be tolerant and receptive; additionally, excellent English cultural components should be assimilated <sup>[7]</sup>.

In the process of cultivating English teachers’ cross-cultural communicative competence, private colleges and universities should ensure that teachers pay attention to cultural similarity in the context of cultural differences, deeply excavate the common ground between Chinese culture and English culture,

continuously enhance teachers' cultural identity, and comprehensively improve the adaptability and sensitivity of teachers' cross-cultural communicative awareness <sup>[8]</sup>.

#### **4. Strengthen the continuous updating of English teachers' cross-cultural education concepts**

Most private colleges and universities in China have placed a high value on traditional educational concepts, such as whether teachers can fully master English knowledge and maintain the Chinese culture while nurturing English teachers. On the contrary, they are unconcerned about modern educational concepts, such as whether English teachers are aware of different cultural groups, whether they respect English cultural education, and whether they are equipped with cross-cultural perspective <sup>[9]</sup>.

The lack cross-cultural awareness among English teachers will inevitably lead to a lack of cross-cultural education competence. They assume that English education is about imparting English knowledge, explaining English history, and introducing the customs of English-speaking countries. They do not see English education as a form of cultural education, which makes it difficult for students to understand English culture and eliminate the barriers between Chinese culture and English culture. As a result, it is impossible to achieve accurate cultural awareness <sup>[10]</sup>.

Therefore, private colleges and universities must place a high value on the cultural and social significance of English education and actively cultivate the awareness of cross-cultural communication among English teachers. Teachers' traditional educational concepts are changed by strengthening their ideological cognition. English will then be taught as a cultural phenomenon, allowing students to fully grasp the cultural connotation behind English words, phrases, and sentences in a specific context, as well as ensuring that students can continuously deepen their understanding of English culture in subtle learning and develop the capability to effectively carry out cross-cultural communication under the guidance of teachers <sup>[11]</sup>.

Private colleges and universities should encourage teachers to keep a positive and inclusive attitude in the process of assimilating the essence of English culture, constantly enrich their cultural knowledge, further strengthen their cultural literacy, and assist English teachers in developing critical thinking, so as to help them accurately identify English culture in the light of China's actual national conditions and learn English culture in a targeted way. In the process of English teaching, teachers should always follow the two-way interaction principle between Chinese culture and English culture to ensure that students have a comprehensive and systematic understanding of English culture while fully mastering Chinese culture <sup>[12]</sup>.

#### **5. English teachers should place a greater emphasis on Chinese culture**

For traditional English education in private colleges in China, one of the persistent problems is the neglect of Chinese culture education. Before learning English, students must have a thorough understanding of Chinese culture; otherwise, they would not be able to define and introduce Chinese culture in English throughout the cross-cultural communication process. Therefore, in the process of English teaching, English teachers should strengthen the education of Chinese culture and actively cultivate students' cultural self-awareness <sup>[13]</sup>.

The world's diversified development has created a favorable environment for knowledge forms and ideologies that emphasize their own unique characteristics, and the value of Chinese culture has been acknowledged by a number of countries. Chinese culture is a system of cultural knowledge that has been developed, acquired, summarized, and transmitted by the Chinese people through life practice over thousands of years of historical development. It is closely linked to the historical and cultural environment for the development and survival of the Chinese people <sup>[14]</sup>.

In the process of English teaching, teachers should not only actively cultivate students' international awareness and their understanding of English culture, but also constantly strengthen students' Chinese

cultural awareness. In order to do that, teachers must fully grasp the value of Chinese culture and the Chinese cognitive style, as well as clearly understand the significance of these factors in promoting students' physical and mental health development in addition to realizing the society's sustainable growth. Compared with other professionals, college and university English teachers should be acutely aware of the existence of Chinese culture and devote their time and effort to the preservation, protection, and development of Chinese cultural values <sup>[15]</sup>.

## **6. Strengthen the training of English teachers' critical cultural thinking**

Under the background of "Internet +," the penetration of English culture is rapidly expanding. In the process of learning English culture, it is important to carefully identify the relevant contents, rather than taking everything at face value. In English teaching, teachers must ensure that they have correct value judgment and positive value orientation, analyze the content of English culture with dialectical materialism and historical materialism, extract essence and discard dross, as well as establish a solid defense line for students to effectively resist the erosion of decadent culture in English-speaking countries <sup>[16]</sup>.

Many English teachers have created their own perspective of Chinese and English cultures while mastering the English language for a long period. Teachers, as the transmitters of English culture, serve as a bridge to assist students in understanding English culture, enrich their own Chinese culture, and promote the complete integration of the two. If English teachers are lacking cross-cultural awareness and knowledge, it is possible that they will fail to fully appreciate multiculturalism, and there may even be a conflict between English culture and Chinese culture <sup>[17]</sup>.

In light of the vast amount of information resources available on the internet, English teachers should have critical awareness and the capability to accurately identify the distinct factors in English culture, in order to reflect on relevant contents in teaching practice. In the long run, English teachers should not only form their own unique objective cultural awareness, but also promote effective dialogue and cooperation between Chinese culture and English culture on the basis of correct and positive cultural values, so that they can continuously strengthen their cross-cultural awareness and build on the capacity to flexibly apply cultural theoretical knowledge <sup>[18]</sup>.

## **7. Conclusion**

Cross-cultural communication plays an irreplaceable role in English teaching, especially in private colleges and universities. By continuously strengthening their cross-cultural awareness, English teachers can master the application and theory of cross-cultural knowledge, thus laying the groundwork for the development of cross-cultural education and the cultivation of a large number of professionals with high cross-cultural communication competence for the country. This is also an effective way to comprehensively develop quality education and implement various teaching reform measures. Therefore, English teachers in private colleges and universities should take the initiative to understand and explore the connotation and essence of cross-cultural education, constantly optimize and modify the training objectives and training modes in light of the actual situation, as well as actively infiltrate cross-cultural education awareness into English teaching practice, so as to cultivate students with scientific spirit, humanistic temperament, rich Chinese cultural knowledge, and the capacity to interpret western cultural traditions, as well as compound international talents with solid English professional quality and good cross-cultural communication skills.

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