

# Application of Traditional Chinese Culture in Cross-Cultural English Education: A Case Study of the Maritime Silk Road in Guangdong Province

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**Abstract:** The phenomenon of aphasia in Chinese culture is serious. The existing English teaching materials emphasize too much Western culture education and lack traditional Chinese cultural elements. Therefore, this paper takes the Guangdong Maritime Silk Road as an example to study the specific application of traditional Chinese culture in cross-cultural English education. This paper first summarizes the significance of cross-cultural integration into college English education and then points out the serious phenomenon of Chinese cultural aphasia. Next, the paper focuses on English education, using English textbooks as a starting point to explore and integrate strategies related to excellent traditional Chinese culture from the Guangdong Maritime Silk Road. By integrating traditional Chinese culture into business English classes (with the Guangdong Maritime Silk Road as an example), the study explores the influence of such cultural integration on students' cross-cultural communication skills, cultural identity, and learning effects. The results showed that the  $P$  value of the experimental group and the control group was  $< 0.05$ , that is, cultural integration had a positive effect on improving the effect of cross-cultural English education. The overall scores and cultural confidence of the experimental group are higher than those of the control group, which proves that cross-cultural teaching has a positive effect on the improvement of students' scores.

**Keywords:** Cross-cultural English education; Chinese traditional culture; Guangdong Maritime Silk Road; Cultural confidence; English learning effect

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## 1. Introduction

In the field of business English education, the integration of cultural literacy is regarded as the key to improving students' cross-cultural communication skills. This paper aims to explore the effective integration of traditional Chinese culture into business English education, especially taking the Guangdong Maritime Silk Road as an example, and propose innovative teaching strategies to improve teaching quality and students' international competitiveness. Through systematic research and analysis, this paper will demonstrate the

importance of cultural literacy in business English education and provide feasible suggestions for improving current English teaching practices.

This paper first discusses the importance of cross-cultural communication skills in business English education and emphasizes the unique value of traditional Chinese culture. Subsequently, the paper reviews relevant research and reveals English teaching strategies under different cultural backgrounds. The research methods section then details the design and conduct of the experiment, including objectives and hypotheses. Then, the results and discussion section analyzes the experimental results and discusses the influence of cultural integration on students' learning effect. Finally, the paper summarizes the research findings and makes suggestions for improving teaching practices to promote students' intercultural competence and cultural confidence.

## 2. Literature review

There is a large amount of research literature on cross-cultural English education strategies. Mahalingappa *et al.* explored the beliefs of in-service teachers in China and the United States regarding Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF) and compared the views of Chinese EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and American ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers on OCF needs, effectiveness, and commonly used feedback types <sup>[1]</sup>. Akmal *et al.* collected data through discourse completion tasks and found that there were differences in language form, language strategy, and semantic formula usage between Indonesian English learners and Australian native English speakers <sup>[2]</sup>. Porter *et al.* questioned foreign language learning courses that are strictly based on carefully arranged inputs and limited learning opportunities, arguing that language learning not only includes phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar, but also relies on learners' existing language, social, and cultural knowledge <sup>[3]</sup>. Elbes and Oktaviani used Krathwohl's theory and the Likert scale to assess students' progress in the classroom based on surveys and observations <sup>[4]</sup>. Jindapitak *et al.* explored the impact of raising awareness of Global English among Thai English learners on their perceptions of learning and use <sup>[5]</sup>. Meighan explored the issue of coloniallingualism in English language education, pointing out that mainstream interlingual and multilingual teaching often ignores endangered and indigenous languages, while giving priority to colonial languages and neoliberal diversity assessment <sup>[6]</sup>.

Mashudi *et al.* explored the influence of English cultural awareness on Indonesian English students' grammatical knowledge. The results showed that the introduction of English cultural awareness had a positive effect on improving students' grammar levels <sup>[7]</sup>. Through theme coding analysis, Liu *et al.* found that American/British culture dominates in these textbooks, while the cultures of other inner-circle countries are on the periphery, and the cultures of outer and expanded-circle countries are almost completely ignored <sup>[8]</sup>. Shodieva mainly explored the application of sociolinguistic approaches to the meaning of the Internet in an online environment in the English classroom, emphasizing its impact on students <sup>[9]</sup>. Rahman *et al.* explored the reasons for implementing multicultural education in Indonesian classrooms, pointing out that multicultural reading and writing provide a new perspective for language education and bring potential benefits for improving students' literacy levels <sup>[10]</sup>. Many studies focus on the comparison of specific language varieties or cultures, but neglect the representation of outer and extended circle cultures in English teaching, resulting in a narrow cultural perspective.

### **3. Methods**

#### **3.1. Positive significance of cross-cultural integration into college English education**

It is of great significance to integrate cross-cultural factors into college English teaching to improve students' comprehensive quality and international competitiveness. From the perspective of education internationalization, this change conforms to the trend of international cultural exchanges. Introducing cross-cultural content into English teaching can help students better understand and adapt to different cultures, improve their cross-cultural communication skills, and make them better integrate into the global environment. At the same time, cross-cultural integration can also promote the improvement of students' overall quality.

#### **3.2. Serious phenomenon of aphasia in Chinese culture**

It has become a consensus that the main purpose of English teaching is to impart English knowledge and culture to students and to cultivate their knowledge application skills. Traditional Chinese culture has little to do with the practical use of foreign languages, so it has not traditionally been introduced into English teaching. However, in fact, graduates of English majors are more oriented toward the international community and represent China to the world. Without a sufficient understanding of Chinese culture, it is difficult for students to find their own cultural orientation and to act as an effective communication bridge between Chinese and English.

#### **3.3. Taking English teaching materials as the starting point to explore and integrate into excellent traditional Chinese cultural factors**

Only by identifying with Chinese culture can we avoid losing ourselves in exchanges and communication. The identity of the Chinese nation must be nourished by the fine traditions of Chinese culture. However, the integration of traditional Chinese culture in college English teaching materials is insufficient, which requires the joint efforts of schools, teachers, and students to explore it effectively. Chinese traditional culture is rich in resources, so teachers should take English textbooks as the starting point, dig deeply and select the teaching content and subject matter, and at the same time meet the growth needs of college students, the law of success, and the needs of professional development. Taking the Maritime Silk Road in Guangdong as an example, this historically important cultural and economic exchange channel is not only the hub of Sino-foreign trade but also an essential symbol of Sino-foreign cultural integration. Teachers can introduce the historical story of the Maritime Silk Road in English teaching, especially the key role of Guangdong in this historical process, so that students can have an in-depth understanding of the influence of ancient Chinese maritime trade on Sino-foreign cultural exchanges. Firstly, the potential material of traditional Chinese culture should be excavated from textbooks.

### **4. Results and discussion**

#### **4.1. Experimental design**

##### **4.1.1. Experimental objectives**

By integrating traditional Chinese culture into business English classes (with the Guangdong Maritime Silk Road as an example), this paper explored the influence of such cultural integration on students' cross-cultural communication skills, cultural identity, and learning effects.

### 4.1.2. Experimental subjects

Two groups of junior business English majors were selected for comparative study:

The experimental group incorporated traditional Chinese cultural elements into English courses (taking the Guangdong Maritime Silk Road as an example).

The control group learned according to the conventional business English teaching syllabus without incorporating traditional cultural content.

### 4.1.3. Experiment period

The experiment lasted for one semester (16 weeks).

## 4.2. Data analysis

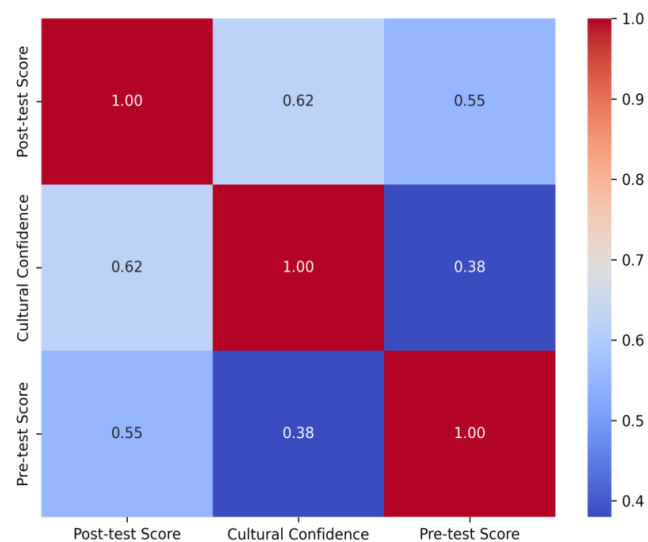
### 4.2.1. Data correlation analysis

It can be seen from the *t*-test data in **Table 1** that the *t* and *P* values are 2.45 and 0.017.  $P < 0.05$  indicated that the difference between the experimental group and the control group in the post-test was statistically significant.

**Table 1.** The *t*-test results

	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
Experimental group vs control group in post-test	2.45	0.017
Conclusion	There is a significant difference ( $P < 0.05$ )	

The relationship between cultural identity, intercultural communication skills, and English learning performance was evaluated using correlation analysis, and the results are shown in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1.** Results of correlation analysis

Based on the correlation analysis in **Figure 1**, there is a strong positive correlation between cultural confidence and post-test scores ( $r = 0.62$ ). There is also a positive correlation between pre-test scores and post-test scores ( $r = 0.55$ ).

In order to further explore the influence of cultural confidence and pre-test scores on post-test scores, multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictive effects of different variables (cultural integration degree, cultural identity, etc.) on English learning outcomes, as shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2.** Results of multiple regression analysis

Variable	Regression coefficient	Standard error	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	Significance
Constant	24.53	5.10	4.81	0	***
Pre-test score	0.45 0.08		5.63	0	***
Cultural confidence	2.15	0.75	2.87	0.006	**

\*\*\**P* < 0.001 (highly significant); \*\**P* < 0.01 (significant); cultural confidence and pre-test scores have significant positive effects on post-test scores.

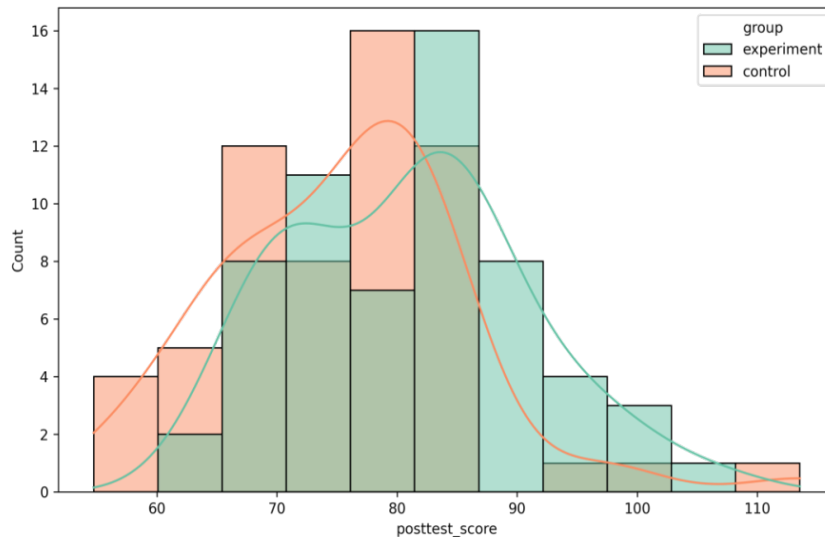
The results in **Table 2** further verified the influence of both pre-test scores and cultural confidence on post-test scores through multiple regression analysis. Through analysis, the following formula can be obtained:

$$G_p = 0.45 \times G_{pre} + 2.15 \times CI + 24.53 \tag{1}$$

In formula (1),  $G_p$  refers to the post-test score;  $G_{pre}$  stands for pre-test scores; CI stands for cultural confidence.

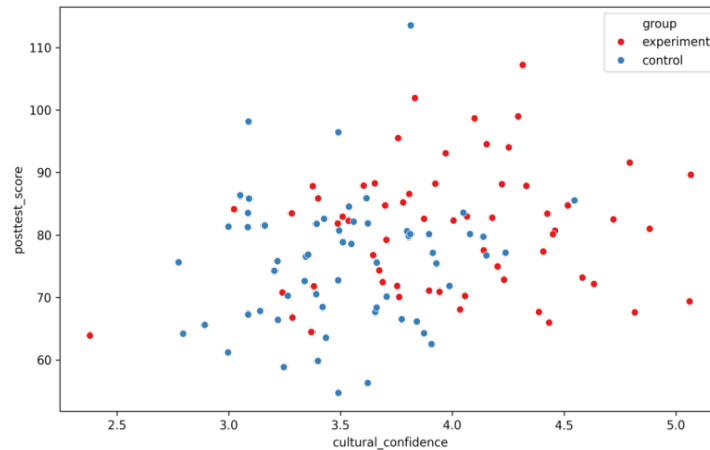
#### 4.2.2. Description of inter-group post-test results

The specific data on student achievement and cultural confidence in the experiment were visualized, and the results are shown in **Figures 2** and **3**.



**Figure 2.** Distribution of test scores after grouping

**Figure 2** shows the distribution of the scores of the experimental group and the control group. According to the figure, the score distribution of the experimental group is relatively high, which proves that cross-cultural teaching has a positive effect on the improvement of students' scores.



**Figure 3.** Cultural confidence and post-test scores in the two groups

As illustrated in **Figure 3**, the experimental group has higher overall scores and cultural confidence than the control group. It suggests that the class integrated with Guangdong Maritime Silk Road can improve students' English performance and cultural confidence.

## 5. Conclusion

College teachers shoulder the responsibility of spreading culture, and college students shoulder the mission of inheriting culture. It is imperative to integrate Chinese local traditional culture into English education, which is also an important way for local traditional culture to regain its glory. By studying the integration of traditional Chinese culture into business English education, especially taking the Maritime Silk Road in Guangdong as an example, this paper revealed the essential role of cultural literacy in improving students' cross-cultural communication skills and cultural confidence. The experimental results showed that the teaching method integrated with traditional culture can significantly improve students' English learning effect and cross-cultural communication skills. This finding not only provides a new perspective for the practice of English education but also emphasizes the necessity of cultural education in the context of globalization. In future teaching, we should continue to explore and enrich the teaching content of traditional Chinese culture, so as to better integrate it with the modern business environment, and help students confidently demonstrate their cultural identity on the international stage.

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## Disclosure statement

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