

# The Exploration of Intercultural Education of Higher Vocational English Teaching under the Background of “Belt and Road”

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## Abstract

Under the background of “Belt and Road”, the country urgently needs a large number of cross-cultural communication talents with skills familiar with English technical skills, so higher vocational English teaching needs to constantly and actively carry out cross-cultural education exploration. This paper emphasizes the necessity of cross-cultural education under the background of “Belt and Road”, further analyzes the current situation of higher vocational English teaching cross-cultural education, and proposes an innovative approach to cross-cultural education from the aspects of textbook content, teaching methods, teachers’ professional quality, and students’ mother tongue cultural identity to realize the cultivation of students’ cross-cultural communication ability.

## Keywords

“Belt and Road”, Higher Vocational Education, English, Intercultural Education

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## 1. Introduction

The “Belt and Road” initiative conforms to the historical trend of world multi-polarization, economic globalization, cultural diversification and social informationization, as well as the trend of promoting opening up and economic cooperation (Cao et al., 2018). As a common language in the world, and as the most important foreign language teaching language in China, it is bound to play a key role in cross-cultural talent training. Under the background of “Belt and Road”, the inquiry of cross-cultural education in higher vocational English

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teaching will certainly improve students' comprehensive humanistic quality, and also cultivate cross-cultural communication talents who have both professional skills and high English level. At present, the irritation traditional teaching methods in higher vocational English can no longer meet the requirements of the "Belt and Road" development strategy. Higher vocational colleges should comply with the needs of application-oriented talent training, actively carry out structural reforms of talent training, and explore the innovative path of higher vocational English teaching across cultural education.

## **2. The Necessity of Cross-Cultural Education in Higher Vocational English Teaching under the Background of "Belt and Road"**

The Action Plan for the Innovation and Development of Higher Vocational Education (2015-2018) clearly points out that higher vocational education should attach great importance to the national "Belt and Road" strategy, actively promote high-quality production capacity to go out, truly serve the needs of "going out" enterprises, and cultivate technical cross-cultural communication talents with an international vision. As a public compulsory basic course, higher vocational English has an instrumental and humanistic nature, and it can cultivate their comprehensive humanistic quality and improve their vocational ability. Under the background of "Belt and Road", higher vocational English teaching needs to continuously and actively carry out cross-cultural education research, strive to broaden students "international vision, strengthen students" understanding of the cultural differences between China and foreign countries, and implement the requirements of the "Belt and Road" development strategy for the cultivation of cross-cultural communication talents.

In addition, the cross-cultural education of higher vocational English teaching needs to meet the sustainable development of higher vocational colleges towards internationalization. The implementation of the "Belt and Road" strategy involves international cooperation in finance, trade, science and technology, and tourism. In order to promote the in-depth development of this strategy, higher vocational colleges need to improve the language skills of professional and technical talents from all walks of life. However, English as a universal language determines that higher vocational English teaching plays an important role in training high-level professional skills and language skills of compound talents. Therefore, under the background of "Belt and Road", higher vocational colleges must strengthen the inquiry of cross-cultural education in higher vocational English teaching, cultivate students' cross-cultural communication ability and improve students' cross-cultural awareness, so as to promote the development of "Belt and Road" strategy.

## **3. The Current Situation of Cross-Cultural Education in Higher Vocational English Teaching in China**

Through interviews, literature review and other research methods, we know that

higher vocational English teaching in China has been inclined to structuralism linguistics, language teaching as the focus of the classroom teaching, emphasizing the internal structure of language knowledge, focusing on vocabulary memory, sentence pattern practice, grammar of language knowledge teaching, and ignore the importance of higher vocational English teaching cross-cultural education, also ignored the English language itself has cultural preservation and inheritance function (Zhang, 2019).

### **3.1. The Content of English Textbooks Is Relatively Boring, Focusing on Language Knowledge and Ignoring Cultural Knowledge**

English textbooks in most higher vocational colleges in China mainly focus on language knowledge learning, among which cultural knowledge is relatively less, especially cross-cultural knowledge. Due to the lack of sufficient cross-cultural knowledge content as supplementary teaching materials, it is difficult to achieve the cross-cultural teaching goal in higher vocational English teaching. Therefore, higher vocational colleges must base themselves on higher vocational English teaching materials, pay great attention to the reform and innovation of higher vocational English cross-cultural teaching, and improve the compilation and revision of higher vocational English teaching materials. Teachers can improve students' cross-cultural communication ability by enriching the cross-cultural teaching content and forms. When designing different topics in the textbook, we do not always introduce the main festivals in western countries, but make a comparative study of the different cultural characteristics of Chinese and western festivals, so as to guide students to correctly understand the differences between Chinese and western cultures and further think about cultural issues.

### **3.2. English Teaching Methods Lack Diversification, and Indoctrination Method Is More Important Than Communicative Teaching Method**

Infusion teaching method is an old and backward teaching problem common in the teaching field of China. Teachers are just like the knowledge porter, who transfer the knowledge to the students' minds, ignoring the subjective initiative of the students' learning. However, the communication teaching law focuses on cultivating students' language application ability. Students can learn cross-cultural related knowledge through various real language situations, so as to improve their personal language communication ability and cross-cultural awareness (Zhao & Yu, 2021). Therefore, in addition to teaching language knowledge, higher vocational English teaching should also cultivate students' ability to use language to improve their own cross-cultural communication skills.

### **3.3. Some English Teachers Have Backward Teaching Ideas and Lack of Cross-Cultural Educational Skills**

Teachers' teaching concept runs through the whole teaching process of higher

vocational English classroom, which can effectively guide teachers' teaching design. However, under the influence of traditional teaching concepts, higher vocational English teachers focus on vocabulary and grammar teaching in classroom teaching, but they tend to ignore the influence of cultural teaching (Jin, 2020). Due to this backward teaching concept, although students have the ability to take exams, but they lack the practical ability to use English. The achievements of Chinese students in English writing, oral communication application and other tests are not satisfactory, which is enough to prove that the traditional backward teaching methods are not conducive to improving students "practical English application ability, and also have a negative impact on cultivating students" cross-cultural communication ability. At present, most higher vocational English teachers gradually realize the importance of cultivating students' cross-cultural communication ability, but they lack cross-cultural teaching skills and targeted guidance in the process of cultivating students' cross-cultural communication ability, and they also need relevant training to guide teachers to improve their cross-cultural education ability.

### **3.4. Some Students Lack the Cultural Identity of Their Native Language and Input Less Local Culture**

Nowadays, cultural globalization has promoted the development of cultures around the world, but at present, there is a serious phenomenon of "mother tongue culture aphasia" in China. Higher vocational English teaching although more seriously than previous teaching in the input of local culture, but due to the input of western culture and the native language culture is too neglected, at the same time lead to students excessive attention to foreign culture and the neglect of local culture, is also likely to let students produce indifference and boredom of local culture learning. Such an unbalanced import phenomenon of Chinese and western culture is not conducive to students to establish a sense of cultural identity, and also hinders the development of cross-cultural education in English teaching in higher vocational colleges.

## **4. The Innovation Path of Cross-Cultural Education under the Background of "Belt and Road"**

### **4.1. Optimize the Content of Cross-Cultural Textbooks for Higher Vocational English**

According to the development needs of schools and students' English level, Chinese higher vocational English teachers should pay attention to the proportion of cultural knowledge in the teaching materials when choosing English textbooks, which will help to carry out cross-cultural educational practice activities. For example, when teaching audio-visual and speaking, reading comprehension and writing modules, English teachers need to choose video or text materials about the cultural knowledge in western countries, aiming to enable students to enhance their personal cross-cultural awareness by learning foreign

cultural knowledge. At the same time, higher vocational English teachers can also independently compile higher vocational English textbooks with distinctive cultural characteristics, which not only contain the cultural customs of western countries, but also include the introduction and dissemination of relevant Chinese excellent local culture. In addition, in terms of optimizing the content of higher vocational English textbooks, teachers should not only choose teaching materials on Chinese and Western cultural customs, but also combine the latest relevant background culture materials of “Belt and Road” countries, which will help students improve their ability in cross-cultural communication. For example, the design of text reading comprehension in English textbooks can increase some thinking and discussion on cultural issues, and the key vocabulary notes of each unit text need to be integrated with more explanations of the cultural background, cultural connotation and the differences between Chinese and Western cultural understanding. When designing the topic of festivals in teaching materials, traditional English textbooks only focus on the introduction of western important festivals, but teachers should guide students to the Chinese and western festival culture commonness and differences, Chinese important traditional festival is mainly related to cultural culture, and the western important traditional festivals are mainly related to religious culture.

#### **4.2. Building up Highly Efficient Way of English Cross-Cultural Teaching Methods**

The new curriculum emphasizes the student-oriented classroom teaching process, and actively encourages students to carry out independent cooperative inquiry learning. Efficient classroom reflects the great change of education and teaching form, and constructing efficient English classroom cross-cultural teaching method is an important measure to promote the development of English cross-cultural teaching. First of all, higher vocational English teachers need to flexibly use discussion method flexibly on the basis of language teaching to let students discuss the common points and differences of Chinese and Western cultures according to vocabulary and sentence patterns. Secondly, teachers can also encourage students to read more English books, newspapers and magazines about culture through the reading guidance method, and guide students to acquire more cultural knowledge and cultivate students' self-study ability. Moreover, in higher vocational English cross-cultural teaching classroom, teachers can according to the communication teaching method to let students in a certain cultural situation, immersive feel the cultural atmosphere, communicate in English language, through students in English dialogue between each other to deepen the understanding of the classroom vocabulary culture connotation, the text cultural background, this will help improve students' cross-cultural understanding ability and communication ability.

#### **4.3. Improve Teachers' Cross-Cultural Professional Quality Ability**

Whether higher vocational English teachers have the ability of cross-cultural

professional quality directly affects their teaching effect. First, higher vocational colleges need to strengthen the vocational training of improving online and offline teachers' cross-cultural teaching ability, with the purpose of improving teachers' English language and cross-cultural teaching ability. In terms of the "Belt and Road" policy is concerned, higher vocational English cross-cultural teaching not only requires teachers to have professional language teaching ability, but also the ability of English teaching cross-cultural education. Vocational training for higher vocational English teachers can be carried out in both online and offline modes to increase the opportunity of new media network technology to exchange and share cross-cultural teaching experience, so that teachers can constantly improve their cross-cultural professional quality ability. The second is to cultivate the spirit of higher vocational English teachers to keep pace with The Times. Higher vocational English teachers should not only improve their ability of English teaching cross-cultural education, strengthen the mastery of information teaching, hybrid teaching and other new technologies, and the combination of professional knowledge and cross-cultural knowledge, take an active part in social practice, expand the teaching breadth, update the new knowledge structure, improve the personal knowledge system, improve the personal cross-cultural teaching effect (Lu & Peng, 2020).

#### **4.4. Cultivate Students to Establish a Native Tongue Cultural Identity**

Students' native tongue cultural identity has a direct effect on the cultivation of students' cross-cultural communication ability. However, according to the current phenomenon of Chinese cultural aphasia in China, higher vocational English teaching need to integrate the native language culture, which will help students establish a sense of identity of native language culture. On the one hand, in higher vocational English teaching, teachers should not only impart foreign cultural knowledge, but also input more local cultural knowledge into classroom teaching, combine English teaching content with national local cultural knowledge, and integrate the socialist core values into English teaching, so as to improve students' own cultural confidence (Lin, 2019). On the other hand, higher vocational English teachers should balance the proportion of foreign culture and local culture in the process of cross-cultural teaching, and actively guide students to realize the importance of local culture, rather than blindly pursuing foreign culture. Under the "Belt and Road" Initiative, in order to improve China's international status, higher vocational colleges, as an important position for talent training, need to spread more local culture to foreign countries. It can be seen that higher vocational English teachers need to devote themselves to cultivating students' native language cultural identity, guide students to learn the language culture, but also pay attention to the study of more knowledge of mother language culture, so as to promote the further spread and development of Chinese excellent traditional culture in the world.

## 5. Conclusion

By emphasizing the necessity of cross-cultural education under the background of “Belt and Road”, this paper further analyzes the current situation of higher vocational English teaching cross-cultural education in China, and puts forward the innovative path of higher vocational English teaching cross-cultural education. First of all, we must optimize the content of cross-cultural textbooks for higher vocational English. Secondly, we must build high-efficiency English cross-cultural teaching methods. Furthermore, to improve teachers’ intercultural professional quality ability, including strengthening online and offline teachers’ intercultural teaching ability to improve vocational training and training vocational English teachers to keep pace with The Times. Finally cultivates students to establish a sense of mother tongue culture. English teaching in higher vocational education needs to integrate into the culture of mother tongue and overcome Chinese culture.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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