

# Study on the Teaching Mode of Comprehensive English for English Majors under the Concept of Cross-Cultural Thinking Education

Xianxian Wu

<sup>1</sup> School of Foreign Languages, Taishan University, Tai'an 271000, China

## Abstract

The cultivation of cross-cultural thinking ability is an important training goal for the foreign language teaching in colleges and universities, and it is also the national positioning requirement for the cultivation of foreign language professionals. Comprehensive English is a basic course and one of the core courses for English majors. By reflecting on the problems existing in the current comprehensive English teaching, this paper proposes to build a comprehensive English teaching model from three aspects of teaching content, teaching methods and teaching evaluation, with the foreign language teaching concept of "cross cultural thinking education" as the guidance, student development as the center, and cultivating language application ability and cross cultural thinking ability as the goal, so as to promote the integration and improvement of students' cross cultural ability and thinking ability and achieve the aim of the ideological and political education.

## Keywords

Cross-Cultural Thinking Education Comprehensive English Course; Teaching Mode; The Ideological and Political Education.

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, the world's economic and cultural exchanges are increasingly frequent. With the implementation of China's "the Belt and Road" policy, it is necessary to cultivate a large number of application-oriented talents with cross-cultural thinking ability from foreign language majors, in order to build foreign discourse and strengthen international cooperation. Comprehensive English is a basic course and one of the core courses for English majors. This course is an important platform for students both to carry out basic skills training at the basic stage of English major learning, and to improve their humanistic quality. The main teaching purpose of the course is to help students lay a solid foundation for their basic language skills, lead the students to learn the language knowledge at the basic stage and have the training of basic skills, by focusing on the comprehensive development of five language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation, so as to lay a solid foundation for students to enter senior grades. Among all the courses for English majors, Comprehensive English needs the longest teaching time, the highest teaching density, and takes up the most credits. It has always been one of the most important courses in the minds of teachers and students, and an important carrier to cultivate students' cross-cultural ability and thinking ability. Guided by the foreign language teaching concept of "cross cultural thinking and educating people", this paper focuses on the development of students and aims to cultivate the ability of language application and cross-cultural thinking, so as to better improve the deficiencies of traditional classroom teaching.

## 2. The Connotation of Cross-cultural Thinking Education

Cross-cultural thinking ability includes two aspects, namely, cross-cultural ability and thinking ability, both of which are specific objectives of humanistic education. Cross-cultural competence refers to the ability of people to communicate appropriately and effectively under different cultural backgrounds, including four aspects: cross-cultural attitude, cross-cultural knowledge, cross-cultural skills and cultural critical awareness.[1] Critical thinking ability, is "the thinking of self-guidance, self-restraint, self-supervision and self-correction that follows strict standards and flexibly applies"[2]. Chinese scholar Sun Youzhong pointed out that in the language teaching of English majors in colleges and universities, the improvement of language ability should include the cultivation of thinking ability, that is, "the ability to interpret, analyze and evaluate input information (oral or written), and the ability to reason and explain based on information obtained indirectly or directly.[3] On this basis, he put forward the foreign language teaching concept of "cross-cultural thinking education". The National Standards for the Teaching Quality of Foreign Language and Literature in Colleges and Universities also puts forward the ability requirements for English majors: students that they should have the ability of cross-cultural communication, the learning ability to acquire and update professional knowledge, and the ability to use their professional knowledge to think, innovate and participate in scientific research. It can be seen from this that the cultivation of cross-cultural thinking ability is an important training goal of foreign language teaching in colleges and universities, and is the national positioning requirement for the cultivation of foreign language professionals.

## 3. An analysis of the Current Teaching Situation of Comprehensive English Course

Comprehensive English course is aimed at lower grade students in English majors who have just entered the university and are in the adaptive stage of learning English courses. Through the study situation survey, we learned that students have strong motivation and learning needs, high learning enthusiasm and awareness of classroom participation, and strong exam-taking ability. However, their comprehensive application ability of language needs to be improved. And their ability of discourse interpretation, critical thinking and cross-cultural awareness is weak. These reflect the "pain points" in previous teaching, which are mainly shown in the following aspects.

### (1) Inadequate comprehensive language application ability

Through independent learning Students can better master vocabulary, grammar and other knowledge. However, influenced by traditional English teaching, students have a better acceptance of English input knowledge, while their own output ability is poor. The practical skills of translating learned vocabulary and grammar into language communication are weak, and the richness, appropriateness and high-level of language production need to be improved.

### (2) Insufficient ability of text interpretation

Students should not only have a literal understanding of the articles they have learned, but also have the ability to analyze texts from the outside to the inside, from the simple to the deep, and have the ability to appreciate the beauty of ideas, rhetoric, structure, logic, and phonology of articles. However, due to the relatively insufficient knowledge of text genres that students have mastered, their discourse awareness needs to be improved, and their discourse production ability is relatively weak.

### (3) Weak critical thinking ability and cross-cultural awareness

Students lay particular emphasis on the learning of vocabulary, grammar and other language knowledge and the training of basic skills, but their analytical, reasoning, evaluating and other

thinking abilities have not been effectively exercised, and there is a phenomenon of "learning" rather than "thinking". At the same time, high-level cross-cultural competence needs to be improved. Cross-cultural competence focuses on simple interpersonal communication skills and knowledge of customs and cultures, and lacks the ability to compare, identify, accept or reject different cultural traditions and learn from each other in a multicultural context. To tell our Chinese stories well and cultivate an international perspective, we need to further improve our cross-cultural competence.

#### **4. The Construction of Comprehensive English Teaching Mode for English Majors Under the Concept of Cross-cultural Thinking Education**

In view of the teaching "pain points: and problems, this paper puts forward that the key point in the training of English majors is to cultivate their cross-cultural thinking ability, mainly focusing on the improvement of language application ability and cross-cultural thinking ability, in order to provide a new exploration path for college foreign language teaching.

##### **4.1. Main Idea**

This teaching mode is guided by the foreign language teaching concept of cross-cultural thinking and education and student-centered. It carries out teaching innovation and practice from three aspects: reconstructing teaching content, improving teaching methods and reforming teaching evaluation. Text driven, text intensive reading oriented, language and content focused, it intends to guide students to achieve in-depth reading. At the same time, it pays attention to the integration of Chinese and Western cultures, emphasizes the equal importance of knowledge and literacy, and enhances cultural self-confidence. Finally, it aims to build a diversified evaluation system, take the output as the guidance, and achieve the dual improvement of thinking and cross-cultural ability.

This teaching mode advocates that in foreign language teaching, the cultivation of language ability, cross-cultural ability and critical ability should be organically integrated, the depth of cross-cultural communication should be explored by critical thinking ability, and the breadth of critical thinking should be expanded by cross-cultural ability. The two promote each other. In this process, language ability should be steadily improved, and the cultivation of soul and morality should be imperceptibly realized.

##### **4.2. Measures**

###### **(1) Reconstructing the teaching content**

This teaching mode reconstructs the teaching content system with the goal of cross-cultural thinking education, and expands and integrates the teaching content with the goal of improving the multiple abilities with the core of language ability, thinking ability and cross-cultural ability. On the basis of teaching materials, while expanding basic knowledge such as phonetics, vocabulary, grammar and cultural background, the integration of language teaching content and knowledge of other disciplines is realized: ① integration of text style knowledge, so as to achieve the integration of language teaching and text teaching; ② guiding students to integrate Chinese traditional cultural knowledge while paying attention to western cultural background knowledge, so as to achieve the integration of language teaching and cultural teaching. Through the above integration, we will combine knowledge exploration and value guidance, guide students to actively extract cross-cultural knowledge they are interested in on the basis of learning the content of the textbooks, help students independently and dynamically build a cross-cultural knowledge system, and achieve the aim of critical thinking and cross-cultural ability training.

At the same time, the ideological and political education of the curriculum runs through the whole teaching process. In teaching, we will integrate all the unit topics we have learned, extract common keywords, and use them as the common topics for discussion this semester. For example, the key word "love", which is close to the students' actual situation, is selected as one of the thematic topics of the first semester in the course of teaching to guide students to think deeply from different aspects, launch discussions, expand students' thinking, stimulate students to read and think deeply, share their own views through the classroom or online, so as to cultivate students' comprehensive language use ability and thinking ability, and achieve ideological and political education by silently and imperceptively shaping students' correct outlook on the world, life, values and culture.

## (2) Improving teaching methods

With the comprehensive language application ability as the main body, cross-cultural ability and critical thinking ability as the two wings, we are committed to building a "one body, two wings" online and offline hybrid teaching mode.

Before class, teachers urge students to pay attention to the text and improve the quality of preview through online test and discussion. And language test is conducted by selecting "small words" in the text to guide students to pay attention to language details and improve their language understanding, appreciation and application abilities; At the same time, some relevant questions are set up to stimulate students to think and input ideas, and cultivate their thinking ability through peer sharing and mutual evaluation.

In class, students' ability of perceiving, understanding and analyzing language will be improved by means of text intensive reading, problem solving, cross-cultural comparison, etc., thus improving their thinking ability and cross-cultural ability. The main measures are as follows: ① Through classroom presentation, group discussion and other activities, we can mobilize students' enthusiasm for learning and improve their language application ability. ② While expanding the knowledge of literature, linguistics and other disciplines, we should guide students to learn to read texts in an intensive way and seek "refinement" and "depth" in language learning, improve students' comprehensive English language skills of "listening", "speaking", "reading", "writing" and "translating", help students understand the deep meaning between lines in text, and improve students' understanding, appreciation and application abilities. ③ Through heuristic questioning, we set different levels of questions in the text analysis to gradually exercise students' ability of understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating", so that students can have a transition from the stage of memory and understanding in high school learning to the stage of application, analysis and production. ④ According to different unit themes, the students are guided to integrate Chinese excellent culture, while understanding the history and cultural background of English-speaking countries, to improve the framework of their' humanistic knowledge. The students are also guided to make cross-cultural comparisons to improve their cross-cultural ability and critical thinking ability, and enhance their cultural self-confidence.

After class, the combination of online and offline production practice guides students to conduct inquiry learning and cooperative language learning through story retelling, role play, debate, writing, practice and other ways, and promotes the formation of students' lifelong learning awareness.

## (3) Reforming the teaching evaluation to build a diversified evaluation system

In the teaching evaluation and assessment, the method of combining the formative assessment with the summative assessment is adopted, focusing on the construction of a multiple evaluation system. The positive evaluation principle of "promoting learning through evaluation", should be followed in order to stimulate students' internal drive for learning.

The focus of the teaching evaluation lies in the construction and improvement of the formative assessment, so that the effective combination of teaching and evaluation runs through the curriculum all the time. In the process assessment, three combinations are emphasized: ① combination of online and offline assessment. Online assessment of students' task completion and quality, offline assessment of students' classroom participation and output results. ② The combination of teacher's assessment and students' assessment. Students' mutual assessment is the main part, and teachers' assessment is the auxiliary part. ③ Combination of individual assessment and group assessment. It includes both individual performance assessment and group cooperation assessment. On the one hand, it promotes the development of students' personality and encourages students to explore their own personal learning style. On the other hand, it encourages students to carry out cooperative learning, promote sincere communication and cooperation among students, and cultivate their communication and cooperation ability.

## 5. Conclusion

The comprehensive English teaching mode for English majors under the concept of "cross cultural thinking and educating people" aims at improving students' comprehensive language use ability, thinking ability and cross-cultural ability, and evaluates the teaching effect against the "pain points" in teaching. In the teaching, the students are guided to achieve in-depth reading through the dual focus of language and content. At the same time, it pays attention to the integration of Chinese and Western cultures, emphasizes the equal importance of knowledge and literacy, and enhances cultural self-confidence. Finally, a diversified evaluation system is built, taking the output as the guidance, and achieving the dual improvement of thinking and cross-cultural ability. It can improve students' discourse analysis ability and cross-cultural thinking ability simultaneously, and achieve the effect of ideological and political education.

## Acknowledgments

The study is supported by Teaching Reform Research Project of Taishan University, "A practical teaching study on the ideological and political education in Comprehensive English course for English majors" (No. JG202173).

## References

- [1] Byram, M: Language awareness and (critical) cultural awareness -relationships, comparisons and contrasts, *Language Awareness*, Vol. 21 (2012), p.1-2, 5-13.
- [2] Guixiang, Duan: A Study on the Mixed Teaching Mode of College English Based on the Cultivation of Cross cultural Thinking Ability, *Comparative Research on Cultural Innovation*, (2019) No.11, p.161-162.
- [3] Youzhong, Sun: Principles of Language and Critical Thinking Integrated Teaching, *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, (2019) No.6, p.825-837.
- [4] Shouren, Wang: An Interpretation of the Guidelines on College English Teaching, *Foreign Language World*, (2016) No.3, p.2-10.