

# Cultural Infiltration in English Teaching under the “Belt and Road” Initiative

Qian Lili

[ **Abstract** ] The “Belt and Road” Initiative mentioned once again by General Secretary Xi Jinping in the nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China has become one of the important means for China to further develop its neighboring international trade and economy, and is also a good opportunity for China to carry out the “Belt and Road” peripheral diplomacy. At present, the key issue to be considered is how to realize cultural infiltration in English teaching and to enable students to become inheritors of Chinese culture under the “Belt and Road” Initiative. This paper briefly analyzes the necessity of cultural infiltration in English teaching under the “Belt and Road” Initiative, and makes an in-depth study on its way of infiltration.

[ **Key words** ] “Belt and Road” Initiative; English teaching; cultural infiltration

[ **About the author** ] Qian Lili (1982—), female, from Longquan, Zhejiang, China, associate professor in Yiwu Industrial and Commercial College. Research interest: English education.

[ **DOI** ] <https://doi.org/10.62662/kxwxy0108003>

[ **Website** ] [www.oacj.net](http://www.oacj.net)

In higher vocational colleges, English is a course rich in humanistic connotation. English teachers should not only pay attention to students’ abilities in basic English knowledge reserve and English utilization, but also need to cultivate their cognitive levels and communication abilities for culture. For English teaching in higher vocational colleges at this stage, there are still some deficiencies in infiltration of cultural elements in teaching activities, which are mainly characterized as: insufficient function of cultural communication in English teaching, lack of corresponding Chinese cultural contents in English textbooks, and lack of correct concepts of cross-cultural communication among students. It can be found that for current English teaching in higher vocational colleges, teachers explain English knowledge with attached cultural awareness being mostly cultural connotation of English-speaking countries, while lacking infiltration of traditional Chinese culture. Under the “Belt and Road” Initiative, teachers should recognize the importance of traditional culture infiltration in English teaching. From this, teachers can adjust their teaching methods and concepts, explore Chinese cultural resources in teaching materials deeply, and help students to master the method of communicating traditional culture through English, so that they can become inheritors and advocates of Chinese excellent traditional culture under the “Belt and Road” Initiative.

## 1 Current status of cultural integration in English teaching

### 1.1 Insufficient function of cultural communication

For English teaching in higher vocational colleges, the insufficient function of Chinese culture communication in English teaching can be mainly characterized as follows:

First, there is a lack of standardized cultural communication ability. At this stage, the standards of English teaching in higher vocational colleges are: linguistic knowledge, practical skills, learning strategies, and cross-cultural communication, with an emphasis on the instrumentality of English learning. However, there is no clear curriculum standard for the ability of communicating Chinese culture, which leads to some teachers’ sole infiltration

of the culture in English-speaking countries during teaching, while the integration of Chinese culture and the concept of communicating Chinese culture are neglected.

Second, the settings of cultural communication in English teaching are relatively single. At this stage, although the “Belt and Road” Initiative has been imposed as the main social background in higher vocational English teaching, some teachers still neglect the intrinsic link between cultural communication ability and English curriculum. They haven’t introduced appropriate Chinese culture into the curriculum, but just some festivals and customs, which lacks modernity and practicality. As a result, students are unable to use culture communication in their daily English learning and communication properly.

Third, one-way cultural infiltration is obvious. In English teaching activities, some teachers, when integrating the elements of the “Belt and Road” Initiative, introduce a lot of culture of the countries along the route and integrate different culture into English-speaking countries. However, there is a lack of attention to the communication of Chinese culture to the outside world, which leads to a disconnection between target language and Chinese culture, making students foster wrong ideas about one-way intercultural communication, and failing to meet the demand for high-quality intercultural communication talents under the “Belt and Road” Initiative.

### **1.2 Lack of Chinese culture in teaching materials**

Taking into account the actual situation of English teaching in higher vocational colleges, it can be found that there is a lack of corresponding content for Chinese culture in high school English teaching materials at this stage. English teachers in higher vocational colleges have been using textbooks as the main basis for classroom teaching, and the contents have a direct impact on the effect of cultural infiltration. During practical teaching, most of English textbooks take western culture and modern development as the main content of cultural infiltration, with stories about people, social backgrounds and customs being the cultural elements of English-speaking countries. However, the economic development, political environment, and concepts of foreign communication of modern Chinese society are seldom described in detail, causing teachers to be in no position to introduce Chinese culture. Therefore, it is a critical path to improve cultural infiltration by choosing reasonable teaching materials on the basis of existing textbooks.

### **1.3 Lack of correct concepts of cross-cultural communication**

Due to the above two points, higher vocational students are more exposed to western culture. In the process of learning English, they get an insight into the politics, economies, humanities, and social sciences of western countries gradually. They will foster a biased understanding of cross-cultural communication over time, and believe that “cross-cultural communication is to understand the culture of western countries, so as to facilitate communication with western people”, and “cross-cultural communication in the workplace mainly caters to the humanistic and cultural concepts of western countries, so as to achieve the goals of communication”, lacking the correct concepts of cross-cultural communication. Correct cross-cultural communication should be two-way. We should understand the culture of western countries, at the same time, communicate the humanistic culture of China to them through English communication activities, so as to realize the interconnection and exchange of culture between different countries.

## **2 Necessity of cultural infiltration in English teaching under the “Belt and Road” Initiative**

Existing problems of cultural infiltration in higher vocational English teaching are mentioned above, and

“under the ‘Belt and Road’ Initiative, carrying out cultural infiltration is one of the requirements for higher vocational English teaching” is also addressed. In that way, what is the necessity of carrying out cultural infiltration through higher vocational English teaching under the “Belt and Road” Initiative?

First, the implementation of cultural infiltration in higher vocational English courses under the “Belt and Road” Initiative can build a good cultural environment in target language for students and prompt them to form a correct concept of cross-cultural communication. Cultural communication ability is one of the main criteria for higher vocational English teaching, and one of the important factors for students to realize their professional development, take the job and improve their vocational ability in the future. Therefore, effective cultural infiltration in higher vocational English courses can create a positive atmosphere of cultural communication, which prompts students to take the initiative to face more complex contexts with a view to received English knowledge and cultural ideology. For this reason, students can be prompted to apply cultural awareness in daily communication, and their abilities in two-way cross-cultural communication can be developed.

Second, the implementation of cultural infiltration in higher vocational English courses under the “Belt and Road” Initiative can improve students’ characters in cross-cultural communication. Language is one of the main manifestations of culture. If culture is detached from language, then it will lack vitality and vigor; if language is detached from culture, then it will lose all the color and make people feel empty and bored. Therefore, the infiltration of Chinese culture in higher vocational English courses can help students to understand different cultural ideologies in China more deeply, form more tolerant cultural concepts, and treat different cultures correctly. On this account, they can form good concepts of cultural differences and different cultural identities, with an enhancement in their cultural characters, thus eliminating the barriers in cross-cultural communication and strengthening students’ vocational qualities.

Finally, the idea of the “Belt and Road” Initiative further promotes the communication process of Chinese culture, and provides a necessary basis for carrying forward Chinese culture and displaying its charm. Therefore, higher vocational English courses should seize this opportunity by maximizing the distribution adjustment of cultural connotation in English teaching system, making up the insufficient function of Chinese culture communication before, and integrating Chinese culture in teaching to enrich the teaching system of higher vocational English courses. At the same time, carrying out cultural infiltration in English teaching can help to cultivate patriotism and national outlook on honor and shame of higher vocational students, improve their inner ideological qualities, and train them to be high-quality intercultural communication talents who can contribute to the harmonious development of China’s society.

### **3 Cultural infiltration path in English teaching under the “Belt and Road” Initiative**

#### **3.1 Cultivate students’ awareness of cross-cultural communication and improve their ability to communicate Chinese culture**

To realize the goal of cultural infiltration in English teaching under the “Belt and Road” Initiative, English teachers in higher vocational colleges should correctly perceive students’ main purpose of English learning, pay attention to their awareness of cross-cultural communication, inspire their concepts of cross-cultural communication in a purposeful and directional way, and prompt them to realize the importance of two-way communication, so as to lay a solid foundation for the improvement of their abilities in communicating Chinese culture to the outside world. In the practical process, teachers should introduce relevant knowledge of the “Belt and Road” initiative, such as the cultural backgrounds of countries along the route, and “communication concepts for countries along the route”

put forward by General Secretary Xi Jinping. In this way, students can have a clear understanding of the main idea and latest developments of China's foreign communication, and recognize the status of China in international community, so as to enhance their sense of national pride. After that, teachers can add foreign culture courses, establish a second classroom, and organize students to carry out extracurricular activities, such as: let them make up an English drama under the "Belt and Road" Initiative, and let them express the cultural exchange environment under the "Belt and Road" Initiative in English. Through this kind of activities, students' abilities in English communication can be exercised while forming the concept of cultural communication in line with the ideological connotation of the "Belt and Road" Initiative gradually. At the same time, students' abilities in culture communication can be improved, so as to initially realize the goal of cultural infiltration in higher vocational English teaching.

### **3.2 Make a sound selection for English teaching materials and explore cultural infiltration resources in them**

To realize the goal of cultural infiltration in English teaching under the "Belt and Road" Initiative, it is necessary to make a sound selection for English teaching materials and fully explore cultural infiltration resources in them. Based on this, teaching activities can be organized and carried out, so that students can perceive Chinese culture when learning English knowledge, and form good cultural concepts. In the practical teaching process, teachers should recognize the insufficiency of Chinese culture in English teaching materials at this stage, expand the scope of teaching materials appropriately, put forward relevant themes and explore Chinese culture in depth, so as to attract the attention of students, and encourage them to explore Chinese culture and learn English knowledge at the same time. In the classroom teaching of the theme "The World Expo", teachers should grasp the theme, incorporate the situation of 2010 World Expo in China, and show students the video of opening ceremony through multimedia tools, to attract students' attention. At the same time, teachers can put forward the question "Can you say something about the central idea of our World Expo?" to guide students to pay attention to Chinese cultural awareness elements in the World Expo, so as to deepen their understanding of Chinese culture, create a good target language environment of Chinese culture, and influence their cultural concepts in target language by subtle influence.

### **3.3 Organize extracurricular research to achieve a comprehensive Chinese culture infiltration**

To realize the goal of cultural infiltration in English teaching under the "Belt and Road" Initiative, teachers should organize different forms of teaching activities. Through teaching activities that are original, abundant and brimming with fun, students' interests in independent exploration and learning can be stimulated, and they can fully immerse themselves in English context and perceive Chinese culture there. In this way, cultural infiltration in English teaching can be realized, and students' sentiments, literacy levels of Chinese culture, and abilities in international communication can be comprehensively developed. Taking into account the course content, teachers can organize extracurricular research and give full play to the advantages of modern technology to help students to break through the limitations of space and time, learn English knowledge in daily life, and perceive the increasingly fruitful Chinese cultural system.

In practical teaching process, teachers can integrate English knowledge with the culture of Dragon Boat Festival, with a view to the Dragon Boat Festival celebrated on June 25, 2020. Also, they can raise a theme for extracurricular research: "Dragon Boat Festival for Chinese Americans in 2020". Before the class, students should work in groups for extracurricular research through Internet, news, cultural forums, and forums for international

students in the US. Students should conduct a comprehensive investigation on the following questions: “Were there a Dragon Boat Festival in the US in 2020?”, “Can you guarantee that you’ve enjoyed every Dragon Boat Festival custom in the US?”, “What are the differences between the Dragon Boat Festivals in China and the US?”, and “What else do you know about the Dragon Boat Festival in terms of allusions, customs, and poems and writings?”. After the investigation, students should make summaries and formulate reports in English. In this process, students can experience the differences and collisions between different culture, perceive the prevalence of traditional Chinese culture in western countries, and recognize the influence of Chinese culture in international cultural field, so as to enhance their sense of identification with Chinese culture and further exercise their two-way cross-cultural communication abilities.

#### 4 Conclusion

To sum up, under the “Belt and Road” Initiative, the demand for communication of Chinese culture among the countries along the route has been enlarged. How to cultivate students’ abilities in two-way cross-cultural communication is an important teaching task for English teachers in higher vocational colleges at this stage. Taking into account the current stage of English teaching, in order to infiltrate Chinese culture in higher vocational English teaching, it is suggested that teachers should cultivate students to form a correct sense of cross-cultural communication and inspire students’ concept of international cultural communication; at the same time, choose suitable teaching materials, explore the cultural infiltration resources in them in depth, and carry out teaching activities in different forms. In the process of cooperation, communication and exploration, students can master the knowledge of English, receive the cultivation of Chinese culture, recognize the value of international communication of traditional culture, and grow up to be highly educated talents capable of communicating Chinese excellent culture.

---

#### References:

- [1] Fang Xiangyu. Cultivation Mode of “English+Small Language” Talents under the “Belt and Road” Initiative: Taking Tea Translation as an Example[J]. *Tea in Fujian*, 2020, 42(5): 131-132.
- [2] Huang Xing. An Empirical Analysis on the Language “Soft Power” of the “Belt and Road” Countries [J]. *Applied Linguistics*, 2020(2): 8-17.
- [3] Ma Xiupeng, Cheng Hezhen. Achieve Scientific Development of Foreign Language Education Based on the “Belt and Road” Initiative[J]. *Journal of Huaiyin Teachers College (Natural Science Edition)*, 2020, 19(1): 67-71.
- [4] Chen Zhengfeng, Zheng Pei, Liu Nan. A Study on the Construction of Cultural Confidence in College English Teaching in Shaanxi Province under the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative[J]. *Journal of Xidian University (Social Science Edition)*, 2019, 29(4): 125-133.