

# A Study on the Significance of Integrating Traditional Chinese Culture into Junior High School English Teaching

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**Abstract:** The study aims at the Integrating Traditional Chinese Culture into Junior High School English Teaching. According to the four-dimensional objective of English subject, namely language ability, learning ability, cultural awareness and thinking quality, it is very important to pay attention to the cultivation of students' cultural awareness. For junior high school English learning, students are required to have the ability of observation and abstract thinking. Therefore, integrating traditional Chinese culture into junior high school English teaching can help students learn more about excellent traditional Chinese culture in the process of learning knowledge. At the same time, cultural integration can further enrich teachers' teaching content, help students understand cultural differences, further build cultural self-confidence, cultivate cross-cultural communication awareness, and enhance cross-cultural communication ability.

**Keywords:** Cultural awareness; Traditional culture; Junior high school English; Difference; Cross-cultural communication

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## 1. Introduction

With the deepening of global integration, intercultural exchanges have become increasingly frequent. In this context, the key mission of education is to cultivate individuals with international vision and cross-cultural communication skills. During the study of English in junior high school, students need to engage in efficient learning that connects memory and practice. Meanwhile, the junior high school stage is also a crucial period for students to build their language skills and cultural literacy. Additionally, the four-dimensional target set by the English subject education in middle schools, namely cultural awareness, aims to shape students' cultural understanding ability. Therefore, integrating traditional Chinese culture into junior high school English teaching not only highlights the effective integration of Chinese and Western cultures, but also helps enhance students' cultural literacy, boost their cultural self-confidence, and lay a solid foundation for future cross-cultural communication.<sup>[2]</sup>

## 2. Current Situation of Junior High School English Teaching

With the ongoing advancement of quality education, educational reform has been consistently advanced, leading to a growing emphasis on the English subject. The introduction of new curriculum standards has placed teachers in a pivotal role. Historically, educators have heavily relied on the curriculum, textbooks, and instructional materials to define their teaching approach, often overlooking its relevance to students' real-life experiences and cultural background. Junior high school English instruction tends to be skewed towards language knowledge dissemination and skill development, with insufficient focus on cultural education. Additionally, some teachers lack a profound understanding of traditional Chinese culture and struggle to effectively incorporate it into their classroom practices.

## 3. Reforming Intercultural Communication through the Lens of Cultural Variances

There exist diverse cultural backgrounds between China and the West, encompassing linguistic customs and ways of life. Directing students to embrace cultural disparities and acknowledge the prospects and challenges of intercultural communication in both daily life and education will serve to deepen their comprehension of culture while bolstering their cross-cultural communication proficiency and cultural self-assurance.

### **3.1 Differences in Chinese and Western Values**

In the context of cross-cultural research, conflicts in values may arise between Eastern and Western cultures. These conflicts encompass attitudes towards time, perceptions of authority, and interpretations of personal space and privacy. In Western societies, time is often perceived as a valuable resource, emphasizing punctuality and efficiency. Conversely, Eastern cultures prioritize flexibility and emotional communication. Additionally, collectivist cultures tend to overlook or compress personal space, whereas individualist cultures place greater emphasis on respecting unique individual needs and desires. These divergences give rise to clashes in value systems across different cultural contexts.

### **3.2 Different behavior patterns between East and West.**

In diverse cultural contexts, behavioral norms can vary significantly. For instance, individuals from Western cultures prioritize personal privacy as well as adherence to etiquette customs and societal norms. Consequently, in intercultural exchanges, it becomes imperative to comprehend and honor the distinct cultural disparities of counterparts in order to circumvent misinterpretations or discordance. Hence, during intercultural communications, cultivating patience and an all-encompassing demeanor while being receptive to assimilating alternative behavioral standards and value systems is pivotal for fostering robust inter-ethnic collaborative relations.<sup>[4]</sup>

## **4. The Challenges of English Instruction in Intercultural Communication within Contemporary Middle School Education**

### **4.1 Teacher's Cross-Cultural Communication Skills**

The concepts of teachers in cross-cultural communication are relatively outdated. Many middle school English teachers excessively focus on students' English grades, while neglecting the development of their practical English skills. They overly emphasize grammar application and problem-solving ability in daily teaching, resulting in a deficiency in students' language communication skills and an inadequate understanding of Western culture, leading to blind spots in problem-solving. The absence of cross-cultural communication integration may somewhat limit the long-term development of middle school English education and hinder the further learning and growth of students.

### **4.2 Students lack adequate understanding of traditional Chinese culture.**

Currently, the education system is mainly oriented towards exam-based education, and students face huge pressure to enter higher education. In this case, students tend to focus more on the study of exam subjects and neglect the in-depth study and understanding of traditional Chinese culture. Meanwhile, in the course setting, although some schools will set up courses related to traditional culture, they are often limited by the number of classes and the lack of depth in content, making it difficult to arouse students' interest and attention.

## **5. The Importance of Integrating Traditional Chinese Culture into Junior High School English Teaching**

### **5.1 Enriching Teachers' Teaching Content**

The diverse and abundant aspects of Chinese traditional culture present numerous opportunities for integration into the English curriculum for junior high students. By including elements such as calligraphy, traditional music, and philosophical concepts like Confucianism and Taoism, students can deepen their understanding of China's cultural heritage while improving their English language skills. Incorporating traditional festivals, customs, and delving into the symbolism behind various cultural practices can help foster an appreciation for the intricate layers of meaning embedded in Chinese traditions.

### **5.2 Improving Students' Cultural Literacy**

Traditional Chinese cultural heritage is an intricate mosaic encompassing diverse facets spanning primitive times through antiquity to modernity up until contemporary periods. Each epoch has etched an enduring imprint on this rich tapestry by molding beliefs, traditions, and artistic expressions. Viewed spatially, Eastern cultural values diverge distinctly from those prevalent in Western societies. Likewise, maritime cultures exhibit contrasting perspectives on nature and community compared to their continental counterparts—contributing significantly to the multi-dimensional essence characterizing traditional Chinese civilization. At varying strata within traditional Chinese society emerge aristocratic refinement emphasizing sophistication; grassroots-originated popular manifestations; bureaucratically entrenched official conventions; everyday-rooted folk expressions; norm-representing mainstream phenomena alongside marginally accepted subcultures.

### 5.3 Developing students' cross-cultural communication skills

Studying Chinese traditional culture not only enhances students' understanding of the differences between Chinese and Western cultures but also provides them with valuable insights into the historical, philosophical, and artistic aspects of China. This in-depth knowledge can significantly contribute to their ability to navigate cross-cultural interactions with sensitivity and respect. Moreover, delving into traditional Chinese culture allows students to appreciate the rich tapestry of customs, rituals, and beliefs that have shaped Chinese society for centuries. By immersing themselves in these cultural nuances, they gain a deeper appreciation for the complexities of human expression and experience across different societies.

## 6. Strategies for integrating traditional Chinese culture into junior high English teaching

### 6.1 Mining traditional elements from the textbook

In addition to "Making zongzi" and "Watching the boat races," Unit 6 of Book 7 of the People's Education Press also encompasses various traditional Chinese cultural elements that can be effectively integrated into English language instruction. For instance, students can delve into the significance of the Dragon Boat Festival and its associated customs, such as wearing sachets and participating in dragon boat races.

### 6.2 Designing diverse teaching activities

Teachers can design diverse teaching activities to help students learn traditional Chinese culture through English learning. For example, teachers can organize traditional Chinese culture-themed English debates, role-playing games, or creative writing competitions to stimulate students' interest in traditional Chinese culture and improve their English language skills. Additionally, teachers can also integrate traditional Chinese culture into English classroom games, such as crossword puzzles or hangman, to make the learning process more engaging and enjoyable. Teachers can engage students in diverse teaching activities such as role-playing, cultural experiences, and theme discussions in the course, allowing them to experience traditional culture firsthand and gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of it.

### 6.3 Utilize multimedia technology for teaching assistance

With the development of education, integrating multimedia technology into traditional teaching methods can significantly enhance the learning experience for students. Multimedia technology offers a range of benefits, including its intuitive, vivid, and concrete nature, making it an effective tool for disseminating traditional Chinese culture in educational settings. By incorporating multimedia elements such as videos and audio related to traditional culture into lessons, teachers can create immersive learning experiences that allow students to better understand and appreciate the richness of their cultural heritage.

## 7. Conclusion

Expanding on the original statement, it is important to recognize the value of integrating traditional Chinese culture into junior high school English teaching. By doing so, we can enhance students' understanding of cultural diversity and foster cross-cultural communication skills. This integration not only enriches the content and forms of English education but also serves as a bridge for students to appreciate the differences between Eastern and Western cultures. It is essential to acknowledge that while this approach has its merits, there are limitations that need to be addressed. Research objectives, methods, and strategies should be continuously refined to ensure effective integration of traditional Chinese culture into English education. All in all, by actively promoting the integration of traditional Chinese culture into junior high school English teaching, we can create an enriched learning environment that fosters greater cultural awareness and appreciation among students.

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