



## The Study on Improving Chinese College Students' Intercultural Communicative Competence in College English Teaching

Peng Cui

Linyi University, Linyi City 276000

Philippine Christian University Center for International Education, Manila City 1004

**Abstract:** Intercultural communicative competence refers to the people's ability to communicate when people from different cultural backgrounds come together. Intercultural communicative competence is also an important skill that college students should possess. However, the college students' intercultural communicative competence is not satisfactory at present. Today, there are many college students who have learned English for more than ten years have the obstacle to communicate with the foreigners in the natural way and they could not express what they thought in the mind and some even can not say a word, which put them into an awkward position. Meanwhile, many English teachers got little results and satisfaction in the teaching practice although they adopted many kinds of teaching concepts and teaching methods. How to improve the college students' Intercultural communicative competence is the problem to be solved urgently.

In order to improve college students' current intercultural communicative competence, this paper puts forward a new teaching model to improve students' intercultural competence --the training model based on English movies, and does practical research on this new model. This study carried out the research for a semester by using the freshmen majoring in math from two parallel classes in Linyi University, Shandong Province, China. One is experimental class in which the integration of English movies was used into the college English teaching. The other is the controlled class in which the traditional teaching model based on the teaching of words and sentences, grammars and exercises. At the end of semester, this study finds that compared with the controlled class, the college students' Intercultural communicative competence was greatly improved by comparing the statistic data collected from the pretest and posttest. The main reason is that the college students can master and apply the intercultural knowledge better after the training of the new teaching model based on English movies. Finally, this study proves the effectiveness of this new teaching model.

**Keywords:** English movie, intercultural communication, communicative competence.

### Introduction

With the deep reform and opening up in China, interpersonal and business exchanges between different countries are becoming more and more frequent. Intercultural communication has become an inevitable reality and has got more attention. When people from different cultural backgrounds get together, there will inevitably be barriers in communication<sup>[1]</sup>. Overcoming these barriers in time and effectively is the key to the success of intercultural communication. According to the Latest Requirements for College English Teaching issued by China's Ministry of Education, the main goal of college English teaching at present is to cultivate college students' intercultural communication competence.

However, college students' intercultural communicative competence is generally low. The students have studied English for many years, and they speak English in dumb and unnatural way. Although the majority of teachers try different kinds of new teaching methods, the results of English teaching are not far from satisfaction. Therefore, it is urgent to improve college students' intercultural communicative competence for the time being.

As a cultural carrier, English movies show people's lifestyle, social customs, etiquette and values in the Western countries, providing real scenes for western communication<sup>[2]</sup>. Meanwhile, English movies enable college students to experience western life personally, which is great help to improve their ability of intercultural communication.

After doing research on the existing studies about the application of English movies in English teaching to the improvement of students' intercultural communicative competence, it can be seen that these researches mainly focus on English majors



and vocational students in English teaching, and at the same time, most of them are theoretical studies. What's more, there are few practical researches on integrating English movies into college English teaching to cultivate college students' intercultural communication ability. This also contributed to the formation of this study.

### Literature Review

Film teaching has a long history in foreign countries. It originated in the UK in the 1930s<sup>[3]</sup>. In 1956, the British Modern Language Association introduced film teaching into language teaching for the first time<sup>[4]</sup>. In the late 1980s, Tuffs and Tudor introduced film teaching into the teaching of English as a second language. Film teaching has five advantages in English foreign language teaching, that is to say, film teaching has mobility and can see the speaker with moved pictures<sup>[5]</sup>. Meanwhile, film teaching has the fusion of hearing and vision which can concentrate on teaching materials (Vanderplank, 1993).

Chinese scholars' researches on the integration of English films into language teaching started relatively late<sup>[6]</sup>. However, in recent years, more and more attention has been paid to the roles English movies play in improving intercultural communicative ability in college English teaching, and its development is on the rise. Some domestic scholars have done some studies as follows:

Feng Zhijing (2013) discussed the role of English film clips in English teaching in vocational colleges.

Gao Yongchen (2017) pointed out that English movies can play a great potential in English teaching, especially in cultivating students' intercultural communicative skills.

Hao Chenping (2019) discussed the direct relationship between English movies and the cultivation of intercultural communication skills, and called for the formal introduction of English movies in English teaching.

Li Yuelin (2020) made a feasibility study on how English movies can improve the English majors' listening and speaking abilities.

At present, although more and more scholars in China begin to pay attention to the study of English movies in English teaching, most of them focus on the theoretical level and the objects are English majors in ordinary universities and vocational college students. There are few studies on the application of this model to college English teaching. However, there are fewer practical studies on integrating English movies into college English teaching to improve students' intercultural communicative competence<sup>[7]</sup>.

Therefore, this paper puts forward a new training model--English teaching model based on English movies, and conducts an applied research on it, which is of positive practical significance to the improvement of teachers' teaching efficiency and effect, students' intercultural communicative ability and comprehensive ability.

### Research Design

**Research hypothesis:** The research indicates that the method of combining English movies with cultural contents in textbooks in college English teaching can help students improve their intercultural communication ability. However, there are few practical studies to prove the effectiveness and feasibility of this teaching model. Therefore, this project forms hypotheses and proves the effectiveness of film teaching method in college English teaching through empirical research. The research specifically includes the following questions:

Will the adoption of film teaching method in College English teaching improve college students' intercultural communicative competence?

Compared with the traditional English teaching method based on sentence explanation, grammar explanation and text exercise explanation, does this model better improve the intercultural communicative competence of college students?

What are the implications for college English Teaching reform from the English film-based Approach?

**Experimental subjects:** The subjects involved in this experiment were first-year undergraduate students from two parallel classes in Linyi University, China. The students are from two parallel classes in preschool education. They were taught by the same teacher for one semester. They had the same Level of English and had studied English for at least 10 years. Class one is an experimental class with 40 students in total. There are 40 students in Class 2 which is the control class. Before the implementation of the study, the two classes of students had never received the model training of integrating movies into college English teaching. In order to ensure the validity of the study, the same teacher taught these two classes.

**Experimental tools:** The tools used in the experiment mainly include: teaching materials, pre-test and post-test. The textbooks used by the two classes are the same, namely the first volume of College English in the New Era. The pre-test is entitled English Intercultural Test in which students took in February 2022; The post-test was based on intercultural test questions that students took in June 2022. The selection of test materials was mainly from cross-cultural questions conducted by Linyi University, because the reliability and validity of these questions were tested and verified at that time.

**Experimental process:** In this research, the practice includes two parts: test and experiment. There are two tests in practice: the pre-test mainly tests students' cross-cultural level. The post-test is mainly to test whether there is a significant difference in the cross-cultural level of the students of the two classes. The two tests have the same type of questions and the same

number of questions and points. The experiment will last for one semester from February 2022 to June 2022. Pre-test and post-test were conducted in the first week and the last week respectively.

**Before the test:**In February 2022, cultural tests can be conducted on the students of the experimental class and the control class to determine the starting point of the cross-cultural level of the students in different two classes before the experiment. The test was divided into four parts, which are situational multiple choice, cultural fill-in-the-blank, judgment and translation. The pre-test time is 3 hours, giving all students enough time to complete each section of the exam. Two experienced teachers evaluated their cultural tests using a uniform scoring standard and took mean values. Finally, the evaluation results can be input into SPSS software to obtain the values of the two classes, and then conduct statistics and analysis.

**Teaching experiment:**After the first-week test, the author conducted two different English teaching models for the students in experimental and control class for one semester.

Students in the experimental class should combine the cultural content of English movies and textbooks in their English teaching. That is, after the explanation of each unit, a movie or clip related to the cultural content of the unit will be chosen and relevant cultural exercises will be assigned to students for training so as to cultivate students' intercultural communicative competence.

The control class is taught in accordance with the traditional teaching method in which the explanation of words, grammar and text exercises are mainly focused on , but the content, the time and the correction method is the same as those in experimental class. Meanwhile, the revision and scoring standards are also the same.

The experiment lasts for one semester. Both the experimental class and the controlled class are taught by the same teacher. Both classes have two English lessons a week and one unit every two weeks. The experimental class will watch an English film related to the cultural content of the textbook every two weeks. In the whole experiment, students in the experimental class watched eight English movies related to the cultural content in each unit.

**After the test:** After training in different teaching modes, all students in the experimental class and control class took the intercultural test in June 2022. This test is also mainly from the intercultural test conducted by Linyi University. The exam is 3 hours long and the format of the questions is the same as the pretest, giving students plenty of time to complete each part of the exam. The content in two classes are the same, and the test material selection and scoring standards are the same as the pre-test. The students' scores were still collected by the three experienced teachers who had previously collected the pre-test data, and they were judged according to the same grading criteria and averaged. Finally, the scores were input into SPSS software to calculate the values of the cultural test of the students in the experimental class and the control class, and then the application of knowledge was statistically analyzed.

**Data analysis:** Analyze the data and draw a conclusion.

### Results and Discussion

**Pre-test results and discussion:** The students in the experimental class and the control class were pre-tested, and all the cultural test data were collected and input into SPSS software to calculate and get the values. The comparative test results of experimental class and control class at the beginning of the semester are as follows:

Table 1: Independent sample T-test of cultural test scores in experimental class and control class at the beginning of the semester

(Group Statistics)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest EG	40	58,6514	2,5341	4680,
CG	40	59,2457	2,2963	3879,

(Independent Samples Test)

The cultural data of the students in the experimental class and the control class (full score of 100) were input into the statistical software for independent sample T test. From the table, we found that the average score of the students in the experimental class was 58. 65, while that of the control class was 59,24. By comparison, the average score of the students in the experimental class was only 0. 59 points lower than that in the control class. And  $t=-0.133$ ,  $P=0.872 > 0.05$ , indicating that there is no significant difference in intercultural communication competence between the experimental class and the control class before practical research.

**Post-test results and discussion:** The students in the experimental class and the control class were post-tested, and all the cultural test data were collected and input into SPSS software to calculate and get the values. The comparative test results of experimental class and control class at the beginning of the semester are as follows:

Table 2: Independent sample T-test of cultural test scores of experimental class and control class at the end of the semester

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest EG	40	63. 9534	3. 8936	4789.
CG	40	60. 2442	3. 0381	4532.

(Independent Samples Test)

After the students were tested, the cultural data of the students in the experimental class and the control class were input into the statistical software for independent sample T test. From the table, we found that the average score of the students in the experimental class was 63.95, while that of the students in the control class was 60.24. The average value of the students in the experimental class was 4.0 higher than that in the control class. At the same time, the independent sample T test showed that  $T = 2.8796$ ,  $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ , indicating that there was a significant difference in the cultural test scores between the experimental class and the control class. In other words, after a semester practical research, the cultivation model of integrating foreign language films into college English teaching makes students in the experimental class make greater progress than those in the control class.

**Comparison and discussion of pre-test and post-test results:**

Table3: T-test of paired samples of the experimental class at the beginning and end of the semester (Paired Samples Statistics)

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
EG pretest	58,6514	40	2,5341	4680,
posttest	63,9534	40	3,8936	4789,

Table 4: T-test of paired samples of the results of the control class at the beginning and end of the semester (Paired Samples Statistics)

	Mean	N	Std, Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CG pretest	59,2457	40	2,2963	3879.
posttest	60,2442	40	3. 0381	4532.

(Paired Samples Test)

As is shown in the table, the average score of the experimental class students in the culture test at the beginning of the semester is 58.6514, but the average score at the end of the semester is 63.9534. By comparing the two grades, we can find that after one academic semester, the average score of the students in the experimental class is 5.30 points higher than that of the control class. As shown in the control class table, the average score of students in the pre-test is 59.2457, but the average score at the end of the term is 60.2442. By comparing the two grades, we can find that after one academic semester, the average score of the students in the experimental class is 0.999 points higher than that of the control class.  $M=5.30 > 0.999$  points indicates that after film-based teaching method, students in the experimental class have made more significant progress in their intercultural communication competence than those who have been taught by the traditional method.

From the comparison and discussion of the above data, it can be found that students in the experimental class have better use of culture than those in the control class. After the training of the new teaching methods, the students in the experimental class have a significant difference in intercultural communication ability compared with the students in the control class.

**Conclusion**

This study proves the effectiveness of the new teaching model combining English movies with textbooks in college English teaching through experiments. After a semester of teaching experiment, we can draw the following conclusions from the results of data analysis which can be listed as follows:

This new teaching model combining English movies with textbooks has significantly improved students' intercultural communicative competence [8]. At the beginning of the experiment, the intercultural communicative competence of the students in the experimental class was at the same level as that in the control class. After the experiment, there was a significant difference in the scores of the experimental class students in the cultural communication exercises before and after the experiment, and the average scores of the two times were  $64.02 > 58.65$ , which also indicated that the students' intercultural communication skills had made significant progress after the experiment for a semester. The students in the control class are taught in the traditional model. Although their intercultural communicative competence has been improved correspondingly, the progress is not obvious. Independent sample T-test was conducted on the post-test results of the students in the experimental class and the control class, and the average score of the two classes was  $64.02 > 60.2$ , and  $P = 0$ , less than 0.05, indicating that the intercultural communication level of the students in the experimental class is significantly different from that of the students in the control class. The reasons mainly lie in: By using the method of combining English movies with textbook contents in English teaching, students in the experimental class can better grasp the differences between different languages and cultures, have a deeper understanding of cultures in different countries by discussing film clips, and better grasp the important role of different contexts in cross-cultural communication. The corresponding cross-communication practice can also consolidate and improve college students' intercultural communicative competence.

The College English teaching model based on English movies has changed the attitude of college students in English learning and stimulated their interest in cross-cultural communication<sup>[9]</sup>. College students have always been afraid of difficulties in cross-cultural communication and feel that there are great barriers in communication. When communicating with foreigners of different languages and cultures, they always feel that they have nowhere to start and do not know what to do. Under the training of the new model, students' intercultural communicative attitude has changed. Through the corresponding intercultural communicative training, students who are enjoying the movie have learned cross-cultural knowledge<sup>[10]</sup>. Meanwhile, they have a deeper understanding of the different cultural context of the text content and have a deeper grasp and understanding of the text. Especially in the discussion and intercultural communication practice, their interest, active thinking and ability are greatly improved in learning English.

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