



A Study on Exploring the Innovation of English Writing Teaching Mode in Inner Mongolia Universities Guided by Cultural Identity

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Abstract: This study aims to explore an innovative English writing teaching model guided by cultural identity for universities in Inner Mongolia, addressing the issue of students' "cultural aphasia" and enhancing their ability to express local culture effectively in English. Adopting a theoretical and practical approach, the research integrates the rich ethnic cultural resources of Inner Mongolia—such as grassland ecology, nomadic traditions, and literary arts—into the English writing curriculum. Key methods include restructuring teaching content, designing localized writing themes, incorporating cultural comparison and critical thinking, reforming evaluation mechanisms, and enhancing teachers' cross-cultural literacy. The proposed model fosters students' cultural subjectivity, improves their comprehensive language application skills, and strengthens their cultural confidence and cross-cultural communication abilities. The study concludes that this culturally responsive teaching model not only supports foreign language education reform in ethnic regions but also cultivates students' patriotism and their capacity to disseminate Chinese and Inner Mongolian cultures globally.

Keywords: cultural identity; English writing teaching; Innovation in teaching mode; Inner Mongolia universities; Cross-Cultural Communication

Introduction

In the contemporary era of accelerated globalization, the status of English as an international lingua franca is increasingly prominent, and its teaching objectives have shifted from simply cultivating language skills to comprehensively improving cross-cultural communication skills. For Chinese higher education, English teaching not only shoulders the important mission of helping students understand the world, but also the responsibility of helping students tell the story of China to the world. However, many universities, especially those in Inner Mongolia located in areas rich in ethnic culture, still have significant deficiencies in English writing teaching. Teaching practice is often limited to mechanical training of language forms, template imitation of model essays, and superficial discussions on issues related to English and American culture, which seriously deviates from students' life experiences and cultural foundations. This "contextualized" teaching model can easily lead to students' writing content being hollow and homogeneous, and falling into a state of silence and aphasia in cross-cultural dialogue, making it difficult to establish the cultural confidence and identity they should have.

This conceptual paper aims to address this gap by proposing a theoretically grounded framework for innovating the English writing teaching model. It positions itself not as an empirical study presenting tested results, but as a theoretical proposition that synthesizes cultural identity theory with the unique cultural context of Inner Mongolia to construct a novel pedagogical framework.

The core argument is that by making cultural identity the guiding principle, writing instruction can be transformed from a skill-based exercise into a meaningful practice of cultural expression and negotiation. The proposed model is developed through a critical synthesis of existing theories, including Norton's (2013) Investment Theory, Kramsch's (2009) multilingual subjectivity, and Byram's (2008) intercultural communicative competence, which collectively justify its components. The objective is to provide a coherent and theoretically robust blueprint for future implementation and empirical validation. Therefore, it has become an urgent educational task to deeply reflect on and innovate the existing English writing teaching model. This article is based on the theory of cultural identity and combined with the unique cultural resources of Inner Mongolia, exploring the construction of a distinctive teaching model that can effectively enhance students' written English expression ability and strengthen their cultural subjectivity and national pride.

Literature Review

At present, no fully corresponding research results have been found in the CNKI database when searching for the keyword "Innovative Exploration of English Writing Teaching Mode in Inner Mongolia Universities Guided by Cultural Identity". The existing related research can be mainly divided into two categories: one is the universal research on the innovation of writing teaching mode, and the other is the correlation research between cultural orientation and teaching reform.



i)Research on Innovative Teaching Mode of Writing Course

In the reform of writing teaching in universities, numerous scholars have conducted extensive discussions from the perspectives of teaching modes, technical means, and curriculum design. Based on the BOPPPS teaching model, Liu Yue and Lu Xia (2024) effectively improved students' writing thinking ability and classroom participation in applied writing courses by creating writing scenarios, innovating participatory learning forms, and using multiple evaluation methods. Zhang Ruijue (2021), Gao Pengfei (2021), and You Yi (2020) all focus on the application of new network carriers in English writing teaching, pointing out their advantages of enhancing learning interest, expanding teaching resources, and promoting teacher-student interaction. They also propose specific paths for innovative teaching models. Zhang Shu (2020), starting from teaching practice, pointed out the problems of single mode, insufficient student motivation, and lack of interaction in traditional English writing teaching, and advocated stimulating students' writing enthusiasm and creativity through diversified teaching strategies.

In addition, Tan Yao (2019) attempted to integrate English poetry into English writing courses to cultivate students' innovative thinking abilities, emphasizing the organic combination of language use and thinking training. Earlier studies such as Xu Yongji (2012) and Zhang Changan (2011) also pointed out that writing teaching should break free from the constraints of pure theoretical lectures and shift towards training based, personalized, and hierarchical teaching, highlighting the practicality and innovation of writing courses. Wang Wenjing (2005) called for comprehensive innovation in writing teaching in terms of concepts, methods, and classroom forms from the perspective of educational philosophy.

These studies provide rich theoretical basis and practical cases for English writing teaching, reflecting the important significance of innovative teaching modes in improving writing teaching effectiveness. However, most studies have not deeply integrated cultural identity and regional characteristics, especially lacking localization construction for universities in ethnic regions.

ii)Research on Cultural Orientation and Teaching

Cultural oriented teaching reform has gradually received attention in recent years, especially in the fields of language education and ideological and political education. Lu Haixia (2019) explores the reform of college English teaching in the context of "cultural confidence", emphasizing that the curriculum should highlight "humanity" and enhance students' sense of national cultural identity through strengthening the introduction of Chinese culture and cross-cultural competence cultivation. Cheng Yan and Ding Xiangyan (2020) proposed a teaching model of "listening, reading, writing, speaking, and acting" in ideological and political courses in universities, emphasizing the use of cultural education to achieve value guidance, and enhancing students' theoretical confidence and cultural identity by integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture.

Wang Ying (2025) pointed out from the perspective of quality culture construction that the "Five Self" quality culture plays an important guiding role in university teaching management. The degree of recognition of quality culture by teaching management personnel directly affects management efficiency and teaching quality. It is suggested to improve the level of cultural recognition from multiple aspects such as institutional construction, cultural construction, and training mechanisms. Starting from the "adult value" of aesthetic education, Zhou Jin (2018) emphasizes the comprehensive educational function of education in multiple dimensions such as "knowledge, emotion, and intention", indirectly supporting the importance of culture oriented teaching in the comprehensive development of education.

These studies indicate that cultural oriented teaching reforms not only contribute to the construction of disciplinary connotations, but also promote the formation of students' values and cultural identity. However, existing research has mostly focused on theoretical exploration or general curriculum design at the macro level, and there is still a lack of systematic research on English writing teaching, especially when combined with regional cultural characteristics such as the multicultural background of Inner Mongolia.

The theoretical underpinnings for this study are significantly drawn from Western applied linguistics. The investment theory proposed by Western scholar Norton (2013) suggests that language learners not only acquire language skills during the learning process, but also invest in a cultural identity, which directly affects learning motivation and effectiveness. His concept is central to our model, as it posits that students will be more invested in learning English writing if they see it as a means to assert and negotiate their own cultural identity, rather than merely assimilating into a target culture. Kramsch's (2009) emphasizes from the perspective of multilingual subjectivity that foreign language learners should become active participants in cross-cultural communication, rather than passive cultural receivers. This view informs our approach to assessment, moving beyond accuracy to value the student's unique voice and perspective that emerges from navigating multiple cultural frameworks. Byram's (2008) intercultural communication competence model further provides a theoretical framework for cultural identity oriented teaching, emphasizing the cultivation of students' ability to explain and relate to different cultures. In summary, although there have been abundant research achievements in the innovation of writing teaching modes and the reform of culture oriented teaching, the research on the organic combination of the two and the college English writing teaching mode guided by cultural identity and regional characteristics still needs to be further explored. On this basis, this article intends to explore an innovative path for English writing teaching guided by cultural identity applicable to universities in Inner Mongolia, in order to make up for the shortcomings of existing research and provide theoretical references and practical paradigms for foreign language teaching in ethnic regions.

Theoretical Foundation and Model Rationale:

Cultural identity refers to an individual's sense of belonging, emotional attachment, and value recognition towards a specific cultural system, which is shaped by shared historical memory, language symbols, customs, habits, and values. In

the field of language learning, cultural identity is not an innate static existence, but a dynamic process constructed through continuous social interaction and meaning negotiation. Introducing cultural identity theory into English teaching means a fundamental shift in teaching paradigm: English is no longer just a set of external tools that need to be mastered, but an important medium for students to reflect, express, and reshape their cultural identity.

For students in Inner Mongolia universities, their cultural identity has multi-level and composite characteristics. Many students come from the Mongolian or other ethnic minorities, and their cultural identity includes both macro identification with China's diverse and integrated nation-state, as well as deep emotions towards local knowledge such as grassland culture and nomadic civilization. This complex cultural background provides rich materials and unique perspectives for English writing teaching. English writing, as a high-level language output activity, precisely provides a key field for the expression and refinement of this complex identity. The core goal of the writing teaching model guided by cultural identity is to guide students to achieve a transformation from "speaking for others" to "speaking for themselves", aligning with Kramsch's concept of multilingual subjectivity. This transformation enables them to confidently, accurately, and vividly interpret local culture in English, and thus master the discourse power in cross-cultural communication. Norton's Investment Theory is pivotal here; by writing about their own culture, students are not just completing a task but are making an investment in their identity, which theoretically enhances motivation and engagement.

Construction of English Writing Teaching Model Guided by Cultural Identity:

The proposed model is constructed around several interconnected components, each designed to address the limitations of traditional teaching and foster cultural identity through writing.

In terms of teaching content and theme design, it is necessary to achieve fundamental localization transformation. Teachers should consciously break away from their dependence on topics that are disconnected from students' cultural reality, and instead carefully design writing tasks that are closely related to Inner Mongolia's regional culture. This directly applies the concept of investment, as students are more likely to invest cognitive and emotional resources in writing about familiar and valued cultural schemas. For instance, instead of a generic topic on "festivals," specific prompts could include: "Describe the symbolic meanings and community functions of the Nadam Festival from the perspective of a participant," or "Compare and contrast the ecological wisdom embedded in the design of the Mongolian ger (yurt) with principles of modern sustainable architecture." Students can be guided to clearly introduce the construction concept of Mongolian yurts and the ecological philosophy they embody in English, or encouraged to retell folk legends on the Khorchin grassland and depict the Nadam Festival they experienced firsthand. It is also possible to set up speculative argumentative writing, allowing students to engage in dialectical thinking on the relationship between cultural protection and economic development in the process of grassland modernization. By designing themes that are close to students' cultural backgrounds, it is possible to effectively activate their existing cultural cognition, generate a strong desire to express themselves in the writing process, and deepen their understanding and identification with their own culture in the process of sorting and expressing.

In terms of innovative teaching processes and methods, emphasis should be placed on cultivating cultural comparison and critical thinking. The establishment of cultural identity needs to be based on openness, comparison, and reflection. Teachers can design inspiring comparative analysis tasks to guide students to examine Inner Mongolia's cultural practices from a global perspective. For example, students can be organized to compare the similarities and differences between the Mongolian concept of reverence for nature and Western environmental ethics, or to analyze the cultural differences in the portrayal of heroic images in Chinese and Western epics. Students can also be guided to explore the mobility characteristics of nomadic civilization and the inspirations of the settlement tradition of agricultural civilization for the development of modern society, as well as to study the cultural differences between the traditional Nadam Conference and modern sports events. This comparative approach is fundamental to Byram's model of intercultural competence, fostering skills of discovery and interaction. Through this in-depth comparison and contemplation, students can not only develop higher-order thinking skills and make English writing more thoughtful, but more importantly, they can more clearly recognize the unique value and universal significance of their own culture through comparison, thus establishing an open, confident, rational, and reflective cultural stance. A significant challenge here is the potential reinforcement of cultural stereotypes if comparisons are superficial. The model must therefore explicitly train teachers to facilitate deep, critical comparisons that acknowledge diversity within cultures.

In terms of writing material development and resource construction, it is necessary to guide students to draw nutrients from on-site experiences and local literature. Students can be organized to conduct cultural field investigations, encouraging them to step out of the classroom, visit museums, folk villages, and nature reserves, collect first-hand information through interviews with elders or inheritors of intangible cultural heritage, and write English survey reports or documentary essays based on this. At the same time, attention should be paid to developing local cultural English reading materials, guiding students to read literature and materials related to Inner Mongolia's history, culture, and ecology, and attempting to write summaries, paraphrases, or analyses. Colleges and universities should support the construction of multimedia resource libraries, collect and organize relevant image and audio materials, and establish digital teaching resource platforms. We can also regularly invite ethnic cultural researchers and inheritors of intangible cultural heritage to give special lectures, enriching students' cultural cognition. The challenge of resource scarcity is acute. A viable strategy involves forming cross-institutional consortiums to co-develop and share open educational resources (OERs) focused on Inner Mongolian culture. Through these measures, writing learning is closely integrated with authentic cultural exploration activities, enhancing the authenticity and practicality of learning, and enabling students to continuously

improve their cultural sensitivity and expressive power in the process of collecting, organizing, and interpreting cultural materials.

In the reform of the teaching evaluation system, it is necessary to establish an evaluation mechanism that matches the cultural identity orientation. Traditional writing evaluation criteria often overly focus on the correctness of language form, while relatively neglecting the ideological and cultural connotations of content. The new evaluation system should focus more on evaluating the richness of cultural content, depth of interpretation, originality of viewpoints, and effectiveness of cross-cultural communication while maintaining the basic language requirements. This shift aligns with Kramsch's multilingual subjectivity, where the learner's unique perspective, born from the interplay of languages and cultures, is valued. We need to establish a diversified evaluation system, promote the combination of student self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation, and pay special attention to process evaluation, focusing on students' performance in cultural understanding, material collection, and viewpoint formation. For those works that can consciously, cleverly, and deeply use local cultural elements for expression, even if there are some flaws in language form, they should be fully affirmed and encouraged. Developing a rubric that explicitly weights cultural expression and critical reflection alongside linguistic accuracy is a critical step for implementation. By reforming the evaluation mechanism, the evaluation process itself becomes a process of cultural learning and reflection, guiding students to pay more attention to the cultural connotations and ideological values of writing content.

In terms of teacher professional development, it is necessary to comprehensively enhance teachers' cross-cultural teaching literacy. The implementation of this teaching model has put forward higher requirements for English teachers, who not only need to become experts in language teaching, but also guides in cultural teaching. Teachers need to actively enhance their awareness and understanding of Inner Mongolia's regional culture and excellent traditional Chinese culture, and strengthen their cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural interpretation ability. We should actively explore teaching strategies that integrate cultural content with language teaching and innovate teaching methods. Universities and related educational institutions should support teachers in conducting relevant teaching research and assisting them in completing role transformation and knowledge updating through organizing special training, workshops, academic exchanges, and other activities. We should also encourage the establishment of interdisciplinary teaching and research teams, promote cooperation and exchange between English teachers, cultural scholars, and inheritors of intangible cultural heritage, and jointly build a high-quality teaching team that is proficient in language teaching and good at cultural guidance. The feasibility of the model hinges on teacher buy-in and capability. A major challenge is the potential lack of cultural knowledge among English teachers themselves. Therefore, sustained professional development and collaboration with cultural experts are not optional add-ons but essential prerequisites.

Implementing Challenges and Response Strategies:

Although the cultural identity oriented English writing teaching model has significant advantages, it still faces many challenges in the actual implementation process. The limitation of class hours is a practical issue, and balancing language skills training with cultural content teaching within limited teaching time requires careful design and coordinated arrangement. In this regard, integrated curriculum modules can be developed to organically integrate cultural content into language training, while utilizing extracurricular time to carry out cultural practice activities. Online learning platforms can also be established to expand learning time and space. Student diversity is also a concern, as there are significant differences in students' cultural backgrounds, knowledge structures, and interest orientations. In response to this situation, layered teaching can be implemented, providing diverse writing theme choices, establishing study groups to promote mutual assistance between students, and providing personalized guidance to focus on the growth needs of each student. The existing evaluation system may not fully reflect the effectiveness of cultural identity cultivation, which requires the development of diverse evaluation tools, the establishment of a cultural expression ability evaluation scale, emphasis on process evaluation, recording students' growth trajectory, and conducting longitudinal tracking research to evaluate the long-term effects of teaching models. The construction of teaching resources is also an aspect that needs attention, as there is currently a relative lack of systematic teaching resources. To solve this problem, it is necessary to establish a cross school resource development team to achieve resource sharing, while also seeking government and social support, increasing investment in resource construction, and encouraging students to participate in resource construction, forming a teacher-student co construction mechanism.

Conclusions and Prospects:

This paper has put forth a conceptual model for innovating English writing instruction in Inner Mongolia universities, grounded in the theory of cultural identity. Constructing a writing teaching model guided by cultural identity in English majors in Inner Mongolia universities is a profound response to the essence of foreign language education in the era of globalization. This model transcends the instrumental teaching of language skills and reshapes writing teaching into an enabling process of cultural identity construction and cross cultural ability cultivation. By transforming the rich cultural resources of Inner Mongolia into vivid teaching content, and through comparative, critical, and experiential expression practices, the model, as a theoretical proposition, is designed to truly stimulate students' learning motivation, cultivate their profound patriotism, cultural confidence, and effective international communication abilities. However, its efficacy remains theoretical until empirically validated.

Future research can be conducted in depth from multiple directions. Firstly, empirical research is needed to verify the actual effects of this model on students' cultural identity and writing ability development through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Such research would require a clear methodology section detailing the research

design (e.g., action research, quasi-experimental design), participant selection, data collection methods (e.g., writing portfolios, reflective journals, interviews, surveys on cultural identity), and data analysis procedures. Secondly, we can explore the application of modern information technology in cultural identity oriented teaching, develop digital teaching scenarios such as virtual simulation and augmented reality, and provide students with richer cultural experiences. We also need to study personalized learning paths for students from different cultural backgrounds, provide more accurate teaching support, and meet diverse learning needs. In addition, it is necessary to strengthen comparative research across regions and countries, explore universal models and local variations of integrating ethnic culture into foreign language teaching, and provide reference for other regions. Finally, a long-term tracking mechanism should be established to evaluate the impact of teaching models on students' long-term development, and to continuously improve and optimize teaching practices.

In short, the innovation of English writing teaching mode guided by cultural identity not only has practical significance for improving the quality of foreign language teaching in Inner Mongolia, but also provides a new paradigm for foreign language teaching reform in ethnic regions and even the whole country in China. Through continuous theoretical exploration and practical innovation, we are expected to cultivate more new foreign language talents who are proficient in both foreign language skills and national culture, and can confidently tell the story of China on the international stage. This is not only related to the improvement of foreign language teaching quality, but also to cultural inheritance and innovation, as well as the enhancement of national cultural soft power, which has profound historical significance and practical value.

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