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Practical Dilemmas and Solutions in Teaching Cruise English Conversation from the Perspective of Intercultural Communication

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Abstract: ***With the recovery and continued transformation of the international cruise industry, cruise English conversation teaching is facing a fundamental shift from general language-skill training to the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence. A cruise ship is not merely a mobile tourism facility but also a highly concentrated multicultural workplace in which crew members must communicate with passengers and colleagues from different linguistic, cultural, religious, and social backgrounds. Traditional English conversation courses, however, often remain dominated by grammar explanation, fixed dialogues, vocabulary memorization, and written examinations. As a result, students may acquire basic language knowledge without developing the ability to respond appropriately to complex service encounters. From the perspective of intercultural communication, this paper examines the major dilemmas in cruise English conversation teaching, including the separation of teaching materials from authentic workplace discourse, insufficient industry experience and intercultural literacy among teachers, the fragmentation between classroom situations and shipboard service contexts, the imbalance between cultural knowledge and communicative practice, and the lack of effective competence-based assessment. It further analyzes the structural causes behind these problems, such as the lag between industrial innovation and curriculum renewal, superficial school-enterprise cooperation, insufficient localization of intercultural communication theories, and the conflict between diversified student backgrounds and uniform teaching models. On this basis, the paper proposes a reform framework centered on cultural perception, situational immersion, task-driven learning, and reflective improvement. It also discusses the reconstruction of project-based course content, the establishment of a dual-track teacher development mechanism, the creation of immersive and virtual simulation environments, and the formation of a multidimensional assessment system. Finally, the paper proposes quality assurance measures involving case database construction, digital platform development, school-enterprise collaboration, and evidence-based continuous improvement. The study argues that cruise English conversation teaching should integrate language accuracy, pragmatic appropriateness, cultural sensitivity, professional ethics, and reflective competence so as to better prepare students for the realities of international cruise service.***

Keywords: Intercultural communication; Cruise English conversation; Maritime vocational education; Situated learning; Curriculum reform; Competence assessment.

1. INTRODUCTION

The cruise industry represents one of the most internationalized sectors of contemporary tourism and maritime service. On a single cruise ship, passengers, hotel staff, entertainment personnel, catering workers, safety officers, and technical crew members may come from dozens of countries and regions. English usually functions as the principal working language, but successful communication depends on much more than grammatical accuracy or vocabulary size. Crew members are required to understand indirect requests, interpret different attitudes toward privacy and politeness, manage complaints calmly, explain safety procedures clearly, and respond to cultural differences in food, time, personal space, religious practice, and service expectations. In this sense, a cruise ship can be regarded as a mobile intercultural community, and cruise English is a form of workplace discourse embedded in institutional roles and multicultural relationships [1].

Against this background, cruise English conversation teaching in vocational colleges and maritime institutions has acquired growing importance. However, many courses continue to treat spoken English as an isolated language skill. Classroom activities frequently rely on repetitive dialogue drills, standard question-and-answer patterns, and decontextualized vocabulary lists. Students may memorize expressions for reception, catering, or cabin service, yet remain unprepared for the uncertainty and cultural complexity of real interactions. They may know how to greet a passenger but not how to respond when the passenger's request involves conflicting cultural expectations. They may be able to recite a complaint-handling formula but fail to recognize the emotional meaning and politeness strategy hidden behind the complaint.

The concept of intercultural communicative competence provides a useful theoretical basis for reconsidering this

problem. It emphasizes not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural awareness, pragmatic judgment, attitude, empathy, strategic flexibility, and the ability to reflect on one's own cultural assumptions [2]. From this perspective, cruise English conversation is not simply a process of producing correct sentences. It is a form of professional action through which crew members establish trust, maintain safety, reduce misunderstanding, and deliver culturally appropriate service.

This paper examines cruise English conversation teaching from the perspective of intercultural communication. It addresses three related questions. First, what practical dilemmas currently restrict the development of students' intercultural communicative competence? Second, what institutional, curricular, and pedagogical factors produce these dilemmas? Third, how can teaching content, instructional methods, teacher development, learning environments, and assessment mechanisms be reconstructed to meet the demands of international cruise service?

Rather than reporting a single experimental intervention, the paper adopts a conceptual and curriculum-oriented approach. It analyzes the internal logic of cruise service communication and connects it with intercultural language education, situated learning, task-based instruction, and quality assurance. Its purpose is to provide a systematic reform framework for cruise English conversation courses while leaving sufficient flexibility for institutions with different facilities, student profiles, and industry resources.

2. THE INTERCULTURAL TURN IN CRUISE ENGLISH CONVERSATION TEACHING AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMATION

2.1 The Recovery of the International Cruise Industry and the Upgrading of Intercultural Service Requirements

The resumption and diversification of international cruise operations have renewed demand for crew members who can provide professional service in multicultural environments. Cruise work is characterized by close contact, long service cycles, limited physical space, and high expectations for hospitality. Unlike short encounters in land-based tourism, interactions on a cruise ship may continue across several days or weeks. Passengers communicate with crew members during embarkation, dining, entertainment, cabin service, shore excursions, emergencies, and disembarkation. A single communication failure can therefore affect not only one service transaction but also the passenger's overall evaluation of the cruise experience.

The communication tasks faced by cruise employees are also becoming more complex. Traditional service expressions remain necessary, but they are no longer sufficient. Crew members must respond to passengers with different levels of English proficiency, unfamiliar accents, distinctive communication styles, and varied cultural expectations. For example, some passengers may express dissatisfaction directly, while others may use indirect criticism or silence. Some may expect frequent personal attention, while others may interpret such attention as an invasion of privacy. Crew members must also explain rules related to safety, sanitation, alcohol consumption, age restrictions, or shore-excursion schedules in ways that are firm but not offensive.

These requirements mean that intercultural service competence has become an important component of cruise employability. Language education should therefore move beyond the reproduction of standard dialogues and help students understand why different passengers communicate differently, how cultural assumptions influence service expectations, and which linguistic strategies can be used to manage misunderstandings.

2.2 The Expansion of Cruise English Conversation from General Language Skills to Intercultural Communicative Competence

In conventional teaching, cruise English conversation is often defined as a combination of vocabulary, pronunciation, listening comprehension, and memorized service expressions. This understanding reflects the influence of general English teaching rather than the actual structure of cruise work. Cruise communication is a specialized form of English for occupational purposes. It is goal-oriented, role-specific, institutionally constrained, and closely connected with safety and service procedures.

The intercultural turn requires a broader definition of communicative competence. Students should not only ask, "What should I say?" but also consider "Why should I say it in this way, to whom, at what moment, and with what

possible consequences?" For instance, when refusing a passenger's request, a crew member may need to state a safety regulation, acknowledge the passenger's disappointment, provide an alternative, and preserve the passenger's dignity. The grammatical form of the refusal is only one part of the task. Pragmatic appropriateness, tone, facial expression, cultural awareness, and professional responsibility are equally important.

This transformation also changes the relationship between language and culture. Culture should not be treated as background information added after language instruction. Instead, it should be integrated into the interpretation and production of discourse. Students need opportunities to compare communication norms, recognize the limitations of cultural stereotypes, and adjust their behavior according to the specific person and context. In cruise service, cultural knowledge is meaningful only when it supports effective and respectful action.

2.3 Reconstructing the Objectives of English Conversation Teaching from the Perspective of Intercultural Communication

A reconstructed course should define its objectives across several interrelated dimensions. The first is linguistic competence, including intelligible pronunciation, functional vocabulary, grammatical control, listening comprehension, and fluency. The second is pragmatic competence, which enables students to greet, request, refuse, apologize, explain, persuade, and manage complaints in contextually appropriate ways. The third is intercultural competence, involving cultural knowledge, sensitivity, empathy, openness, and the ability to interpret unfamiliar behavior without rushing to judgment [3].

The fourth dimension is strategic competence. Real communication rarely proceeds exactly as scripted. Passengers may interrupt, misunderstand, speak with unfamiliar accents, or make unexpected requests. Students must learn to ask for clarification, paraphrase, confirm information, use nonverbal support, and repair communication breakdowns. The fifth dimension is professional competence. Cruise employees communicate as representatives of an organization. Their language should therefore reflect service ethics, safety awareness, confidentiality, teamwork, and emotional self-regulation.

Finally, the course should cultivate reflective competence. Students should be able to review their communication performance, identify cultural assumptions, and consider alternative responses. Such reflection is particularly important because no course can provide a complete script for every possible intercultural encounter. The ultimate objective is not to train students to repeat perfect dialogues but to help them become adaptable and responsible communicators.

3. PRACTICAL DILEMMAS AND MANIFESTATIONS IN CRUISE ENGLISH CONVERSATION TEACHING

3.1 The Disconnection Between Textbook Corpora and Authentic Cruise Intercultural Scenarios

A major problem in cruise English conversation teaching is the gap between textbook language and real shipboard discourse. Many teaching materials present short, orderly, and grammatically standardized dialogues. The customer asks a predictable question, and the crew member gives a polished answer. Although such materials are easy to teach, they rarely reflect the hesitation, interruption, repetition, ambiguity, accent variation, and emotional tension found in authentic communication [4].

Cruise service discourse is also highly context-dependent. A conversation at the reception desk may involve booking records, cabin arrangements, billing issues, and passenger identity. A dining-room interaction may include dietary restrictions, religious requirements, food allergies, and service timing. An emergency announcement requires concise wording, controlled tone, and strict procedural accuracy. When textbooks reduce these situations to generic hospitality conversations, students are unable to understand the professional logic behind linguistic choices.

Moreover, many materials present culture through simplified national descriptions. Such descriptions may encourage fixed impressions, such as assuming that all passengers from a particular region communicate in the same way. This approach does not adequately prepare students for individual variation, hybrid cultural identities, or unexpected service situations. The shortage of authentic transcripts, recordings, videos, and workplace documents further weakens the connection between classroom learning and cruise practice.

3.2 Insufficient Industry Experience and Intercultural Literacy Among Teachers

Teachers are central to the implementation of intercultural cruise English teaching, but many have not worked on international cruise ships. Their knowledge of cruise communication may come mainly from textbooks, recruitment brochures, training manuals, or second-hand industry information. Consequently, they may be able to explain vocabulary and grammar but find it difficult to demonstrate the pressure, rhythm, role hierarchy, and cultural sensitivity of actual service encounters [5].

The problem is not merely a lack of industry experience. Some teachers also lack systematic training in intercultural communication. They may understand culture as knowledge about festivals, food, customs, and etiquette, while paying less attention to pragmatic norms, cultural values, identity negotiation, nonverbal communication, and discourse strategies. As a result, intercultural teaching can become a collection of cultural facts rather than a process of developing interpretive and communicative ability.

Teachers may also face institutional constraints. Heavy teaching workloads, limited access to shipboard practice, insufficient research support, and rigid assessment requirements reduce their motivation and opportunity to update course content. Without sustained professional development, even well-designed curriculum documents are unlikely to produce meaningful change.

3.3 The Separation Between Classroom Situations and Real Cruise Workplaces

Ordinary language classrooms cannot easily reproduce the physical and psychological conditions of cruise work. Shipboard communication often occurs in crowded, noisy, time-sensitive, and emotionally charged environments. Crew members may need to listen while performing other tasks, switch between service roles, and respond politely despite fatigue or pressure. In contrast, classroom role plays are usually brief, predictable, and detached from operational consequences.

This separation limits the authenticity of learning. Students may perform well when they know the topic in advance and have time to prepare, but perform poorly when they must respond immediately. They may also fail to understand how physical space affects communication. For example, speaking across a reception counter, escorting a passenger through a corridor, serving food at a table, and giving instructions during a safety drill require different posture, distance, eye contact, volume, and gesture [6].

Another problem is that classroom role plays often emphasize performance rather than genuine communication. Students focus on remembering their lines and avoiding language mistakes. The teacher evaluates whether the dialogue is complete, while insufficient attention is paid to whether the speaker understands the passenger, adapts to new information, or resolves the service problem. Consequently, classroom success may not transfer to workplace competence.

3.4 The Imbalance Between Cultural Knowledge Transmission and Communicative Ability Development

Intercultural elements are sometimes added to cruise English courses in a superficial manner. Teachers introduce cultural taboos, dining customs, greeting rituals, or national characteristics, while conversation practice continues to follow unchanged language drills. This separation produces an imbalance: students may accumulate cultural information but cannot use it to interpret or manage real interactions.

The problem can also lead to cultural essentialism. When culture is taught as a fixed set of national traits, students may believe that one behavioral rule applies to all members of a group. Such thinking may increase rather than reduce misunderstanding. Intercultural communication requires sensitivity to context, individuality, power relations, and changing identities. It also requires learners to reflect on their own cultural assumptions instead of treating their own norms as universal [7].

In cruise service, cultural knowledge must be transformed into communicative judgment. For example, knowing that passengers differ in attitudes toward physical contact is useful only if students can recognize relevant cues and choose an appropriate greeting. Knowing that dietary practices vary is meaningful only if students can ask respectful questions, confirm requirements, and avoid making passengers feel embarrassed. Therefore, cultural teaching should always be connected with communicative tasks and behavioral choices.

3.5 Single Assessment Methods and the Difficulty of Evaluating Intercultural Competence

Assessment remains one of the weakest links in cruise English conversation teaching. Written examinations can measure vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension, but they cannot adequately evaluate pronunciation, interactional flexibility, nonverbal communication, cultural sensitivity, or the ability to manage unexpected problems. Even conventional oral examinations may be too limited if they ask students to recite prepared dialogues or answer familiar questions [8].

Intercultural competence is particularly difficult to measure because it is not a single observable skill. It includes knowledge, attitudes, interpretation, decision-making, performance, and reflection. A student may know the appropriate expression but fail to use it under pressure. Another student may produce imperfect grammar but communicate respectfully, resolve misunderstandings, and maintain professional composure. If assessment focuses only on linguistic accuracy, it may reward the first student while undervaluing the second.

The lack of clear rubrics is another difficulty. Teachers may give general scores based on fluency and pronunciation without specifying criteria for pragmatic appropriateness, problem-solving, cultural awareness, or teamwork. Students therefore receive limited feedback about what they should improve. A valid assessment system must make intercultural communicative competence observable, describable, and developmentally assessable.

4. UNDERLYING CAUSES AND RESTRICTING FACTORS BEHIND THE TEACHING DILEMMAS

4.1 The Structural Contradiction Between Rapid Cruise Industry Iteration and Delayed Curriculum Renewal

The cruise industry changes quickly in response to passenger demographics, digital technology, safety regulations, destination policies, health requirements, and service innovation. New communication situations continue to emerge, including online check-in, self-service systems, mobile applications, smart cabin facilities, and digital complaint channels. Curriculum and textbook development, however, usually move much more slowly.

This creates a structural contradiction. By the time a textbook is compiled, reviewed, published, and adopted, some service procedures may already have changed. Teachers who rely exclusively on fixed materials may therefore teach outdated expressions or overlook emerging communicative tasks. In addition, industry information is often fragmented across recruitment materials, operation manuals, passenger reviews, and internal training documents, making it difficult for colleges to convert it into systematic teaching content.

The problem cannot be solved simply by increasing textbook replacement frequency. Institutions need a dynamic curriculum mechanism through which industry information can be collected, evaluated, anonymized, pedagogically processed, and regularly integrated into teaching.

4.2 Insufficient School-Enterprise Cooperation and the Lack of Authentic Intercultural Corpora

School-enterprise cooperation is frequently presented as a solution to vocational education problems, but in practice it may remain at the level of internship placement, recruitment lectures, or occasional campus visits. Such cooperation does not necessarily provide teachers with access to authentic service discourse. Cruise companies may be unwilling or unable to share recordings, customer complaints, operational documents, or internal evaluation data because of privacy, confidentiality, and commercial considerations [9].

The absence of authentic corpora restricts both teaching and research. Without real examples, teachers must invent dialogues according to their own assumptions. These invented materials may be linguistically clear but professionally inaccurate. Students are then trained in an artificial form of cruise English that differs from the language used by international crew members.

Deeper cooperation requires a clearer definition of shared responsibilities. Cruise companies, training agencies, colleges, teachers, and former crew members need to participate in material collection, scenario design, teacher training, student assessment, and curriculum evaluation. Only through sustained collaboration can industrial experience be transformed into educational resources.

4.3 Limitations in the Localized Application and Pedagogical Transformation of Intercultural Communication Theory

Intercultural communication theory provides valuable concepts, but these concepts do not automatically become effective classroom practice. Some theories were developed in social and educational contexts different from those of Chinese vocational students. If they are introduced without adaptation, students may find them abstract and disconnected from professional communication [10].

For example, abstract discussions of cultural values may not help students handle an angry passenger or explain a safety restriction. Teachers therefore need to transform theory into observable tasks, cases, questions, and assessment criteria. The goal is not to simplify theory beyond recognition but to create a bridge between conceptual understanding and professional action.

Localization also requires attention to students' own cultural identities. Cruise English learners should not be taught to imitate a single foreign communication style mechanically. They need to understand different norms while maintaining professional judgment and cultural self-awareness. Effective intercultural teaching enables learners to move between cultural perspectives rather than replacing one perspective with another.

4.4 The Conflict Between Diverse Student Cultural Backgrounds and Uniform Teaching Models

Students entering cruise English programs differ considerably in English proficiency, cultural knowledge, tourism experience, communication confidence, and career expectations. Some may have strong grammar foundations but limited speaking confidence. Others may be fluent but culturally insensitive or professionally imprecise. Some may have previous hospitality experience, while others have little understanding of cruise work.

A uniform teaching model cannot respond effectively to such differences. When all students complete the same dialogue, at the same pace, and with the same evaluation criteria, stronger students may find the task unchallenging, while weaker students may become anxious and passive. In addition, students from different regional and cultural backgrounds may interpret politeness, silence, humor, and authority differently. These differences can become valuable learning resources if teachers encourage comparison and reflection.

The conflict is therefore not simply between students and the curriculum. It is between learner diversity and standardized teaching organization. A reform model should include diagnostic assessment, differentiated tasks, flexible grouping, and multiple opportunities for practice and feedback.

5. REFORM PATHS FOR CRUISE ENGLISH CONVERSATION TEACHING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

5.1 Constructing a Teaching Model of Cultural Perception, Situational Immersion, Task-Driven Learning, and Reflective Improvement

A four-stage teaching model can provide a coherent structure for reform. The first stage is cultural perception. Students are exposed to videos, transcripts, narratives, images, or critical incidents involving cruise service. Instead of receiving cultural conclusions directly from the teacher, they observe communication behavior, identify potential misunderstandings, and discuss possible cultural explanations.

The second stage is situational immersion. The classroom or digital platform reproduces the basic conditions of a cruise scenario, including role relationships, spatial arrangements, time pressure, service procedures, and unexpected events. Students are not simply asked to perform a dialogue; they are placed in a situation where communication has consequences.

The third stage is task-driven learning. Students must complete a professional task, such as resolving a dietary complaint, reorganizing an excursion arrangement, assisting a passenger who has lost an access card, or explaining an emergency procedure. Language learning is embedded in problem-solving rather than separated from it [11].

The fourth stage is reflective improvement. Students review recordings, compare their performance with assessment rubrics, receive teacher and peer feedback, and attempt an improved version of the task. Reflection helps them connect communicative outcomes with linguistic choices, cultural assumptions, and professional

responsibilities. The four stages form a cycle rather than a one-way sequence.

5.2 Reconstructing Course Content and Project Systems Based on Authentic Cruise Work Scenarios

Course content should be organized around the actual service chain of cruise work rather than isolated language functions. A project-based curriculum may include modules such as pre-embarkation inquiry, check-in and embarkation, cabin service, restaurant communication, entertainment and activity guidance, shore-excursion consultation, health and safety communication, complaint handling, and disembarkation service.

Each module should integrate linguistic, pragmatic, cultural, and professional objectives. For example, a restaurant service project may require students to explain menu items, ask about dietary restrictions, handle a delayed order, respond to religious requirements, and manage a complaint. The same project can train listening, clarification, apology, negotiation, and emotional regulation. In this way, language functions are combined into a complete professional activity.

Projects should also include varying levels of difficulty. At the initial level, students may follow a partially scripted interaction. At the intermediate level, they respond to unexpected information. At the advanced level, they must manage multiple problems simultaneously, such as a passenger complaint involving language barriers, cultural misunderstanding, and service delay. This progression supports the gradual development of communicative autonomy.

5.3 Establishing a Dual-Track Mechanism for Introducing Industry Mentors and Improving Teachers' Intercultural Practical Literacy

Teacher development should combine external industry participation with internal professional growth. On one track, colleges can invite current or former cruise employees, hotel managers, trainers, and recruitment specialists to participate in course design, scenario demonstration, student feedback, and teacher workshops. Their contribution should not be limited to occasional lectures. They should become regular members of the teaching community.

On the other track, colleges should support teachers in obtaining direct industry experience. Possible measures include ship visits, short-term job shadowing, participation in cruise recruitment training, interviews with crew members, and collaborative research with enterprises. Teachers can use these experiences to develop cases, update vocabulary, verify service procedures, and understand the cultural logic of shipboard work.

Intercultural training should also be included in teacher development. Teachers need to examine their own cultural assumptions, learn methods of critical-incident analysis, and become familiar with intercultural assessment tools. A dual-track mechanism can therefore improve both the authenticity and pedagogical quality of cruise English teaching.

5.4 Creating Immersive Intercultural Communication Training and Virtual Simulation Environments

Immersive environments can reduce the distance between classroom learning and workplace communication. Physical simulation spaces may be designed as reception desks, cabins, restaurants, corridors, activity centers, or safety assembly areas. Props, uniforms, service documents, lighting, sound effects, and time limits can increase realism. Students should rotate through different roles, including crew member, passenger, supervisor, and observer.

Virtual simulation can provide additional possibilities. Digital scenarios can present branching dialogues, passenger profiles, accent variation, emergency events, and culturally sensitive choices. Learners may repeat tasks, receive immediate feedback, and compare the consequences of different responses. Technologies such as speech recognition, learning analytics, and AI-supported role play can be useful, but they should supplement rather than replace human evaluation [12].

The design of simulation should focus on communicative complexity rather than technological spectacle. A virtual platform is valuable only when it reproduces meaningful decisions, such as whether to apologize, how to clarify a request, when to involve a supervisor, and how to respect cultural boundaries. Accessibility, data privacy, and ethical use of student information must also be considered.

5.5 Establishing a Multi-Agent and Multidimensional Assessment Mechanism for Intercultural Communicative Competence

Assessment should combine teacher evaluation, peer evaluation, self-assessment, industry feedback, and digital learning records. Multiple agents can provide complementary perspectives. Teachers can evaluate linguistic and pedagogical dimensions, industry mentors can judge professional authenticity, peers can observe teamwork and interaction, and students themselves can reflect on learning progress.

The assessment dimensions should include linguistic accuracy, pronunciation intelligibility, listening comprehension, pragmatic appropriateness, cultural sensitivity, problem-solving, nonverbal communication, emotional regulation, teamwork, and reflective ability. Not every dimension needs to carry equal weight in every task. A safety announcement may prioritize clarity and procedural accuracy, while a complaint-handling task may give greater weight to empathy, explanation, and negotiation.

Assessment should also combine formative and summative approaches. Formative feedback can be provided through rehearsal recordings, observation checklists, learning portfolios, and scenario-based discussions. Summative assessment may include an integrated practical examination in which students complete a sequence of related tasks. Clear rubrics are essential so that students understand both performance expectations and paths for improvement.

6. TEACHING PRACTICE INNOVATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

6.1 Constructing a Conversation Case Database Integrating Chinese and Western Cultural Differences with Cruise Service Situations

A specialized case database can provide the content foundation for teaching reform. Cases should be collected from cruise manuals, interviews with crew members, passenger service records, recruitment training materials, public customer reviews, and simulated professional scenarios. All materials involving personal or commercial information must be anonymized and ethically reviewed.

Each case should contain several components: background information, participant roles, communication objectives, transcript or video, cultural conflict, linguistic features, possible responses, teaching questions, and assessment criteria. Cases can be classified by service department, communicative function, cultural theme, difficulty level, and professional risk. Such metadata will help teachers select cases according to specific learning objectives.

The database should avoid treating Chinese and Western cultures as two fixed and opposite categories. Cultural differences are important, but they should be analyzed alongside individual variation, institutional rules, and service context. A good case does not ask students to memorize a single correct answer. It encourages them to compare alternatives, predict consequences, and justify their communicative choices.

6.2 Developing a Technology-Empowered Virtual Simulation Teaching Platform for Intercultural Communication

A virtual simulation platform can integrate resource management, scenario practice, communication recording, feedback, and learning analytics. At the resource layer, the platform stores cases, vocabulary, cultural notes, pronunciation models, and workplace documents. At the scenario layer, it presents interactive tasks with different passenger identities, communicative goals, and unexpected events. At the interaction layer, students record spoken responses, choose actions, and receive feedback. At the evaluation layer, teachers review performance data and provide targeted guidance.

The platform should support both individual and collaborative learning. Students can practice alone before class, complete team simulations in class, and revise their performance after class. Learning records can show progress across multiple dimensions rather than merely recording completion time or test scores. However, the platform should not use technology to replace interpersonal communication. Complex issues such as empathy, ethical judgment, and cultural sensitivity still require teacher and peer discussion.

Platform development should follow an iterative process. Teachers, students, technicians, and industry experts can participate in needs analysis, prototype testing, classroom application, feedback collection, and revision. This process can prevent the common problem of developing an expensive platform that looks advanced but fails to support actual teaching.

6.3 Building a School-Enterprise Community for Cultivating Intercultural Communicative Competence

Sustainable reform requires a community rather than a temporary cooperation project. Colleges and cruise-related enterprises should establish shared objectives, responsibilities, governance procedures, and evaluation standards. The community may include language teachers, professional course teachers, cruise employees, enterprise trainers, vocational counselors, and student representatives.

The community can jointly develop course standards, collect authentic cases, design simulations, provide teacher training, evaluate student performance, and organize internships. It can also support teacher-industry exchange. Teachers may enter enterprises to observe service operations, while industry mentors may receive pedagogical training to improve their ability to guide students.

To maintain long-term cooperation, both sides need practical benefits. Colleges gain access to industry resources and employment information, while enterprises gain better-prepared candidates, customized training support, and opportunities for collaborative research. Formal agreements should define intellectual property, data protection, workload recognition, and quality standards.

6.4 Establishing an Evidence-Based Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Loop for Teaching Effectiveness

Reform should not be evaluated only through student satisfaction or final examination scores. A more reliable quality assurance system should collect multiple forms of evidence, including diagnostic assessments, classroom observations, performance recordings, project outputs, reflective journals, teacher feedback, internship evaluations, and employer comments.

A continuous improvement loop may contain five steps. First, the course team defines observable indicators of intercultural communicative competence. Second, baseline information about students is collected before instruction. Third, teaching activities and student performance are documented during the course. Fourth, results are analyzed at the end of the course to identify achievements and weaknesses. Fifth, the curriculum, materials, teaching methods, and assessment rubrics are revised before the next teaching cycle.

Evidence-based evaluation should be developmental rather than punitive. Its purpose is to help teachers understand whether students are becoming more accurate, appropriate, flexible, and culturally sensitive communicators. It should also recognize that intercultural development takes time and cannot be fully measured by a single test. A long-term tracking system, including internship and workplace feedback, can provide a more complete picture of course effectiveness.

7. CONCLUSION

The transformation of the international cruise industry requires a corresponding transformation in cruise English conversation teaching. In a multicultural shipboard environment, effective communication depends not only on correct pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary but also on pragmatic judgment, cultural sensitivity, strategic flexibility, emotional regulation, and professional responsibility. Traditional conversation courses that rely on fixed dialogues and written examinations are therefore insufficient for developing the competence required by real cruise service.

This paper has identified five major dilemmas: the disconnection between teaching materials and authentic cruise scenarios, insufficient industry experience and intercultural literacy among teachers, the separation between classroom practice and workplace communication, the imbalance between cultural knowledge and communicative action, and the absence of multidimensional assessment. These problems are produced by deeper structural factors, including rapid industrial change, limited school-enterprise cooperation, inadequate localization of intercultural theory, and standardized teaching models that fail to respond to learner diversity.

The proposed reform framework centers on cultural perception, situational immersion, task-driven learning, and reflective improvement. It reconstructs course content around authentic cruise service projects, introduces industry mentors while strengthening teacher development, creates physical and virtual simulation environments, and establishes multi-agent assessment. Quality assurance depends on a professional case database, a purposeful digital platform, a stable school-enterprise community, and an evidence-based improvement cycle.

The central principle of reform is integration. Language and culture should not be taught as separate components; classroom learning and workplace practice should not be artificially divided; and assessment should not focus only on linguistic correctness. Cruise English conversation teaching should instead cultivate students who can understand cultural differences, respond flexibly to uncertainty, maintain professional ethics, and continue learning from experience. Such an approach can make cruise English education more authentic, inclusive, and responsive to the demands of international maritime service.

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