

Research on the Cultivation Pathways of Intercultural Communication Competence in Cruise English Teaching

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Abstract: *This study focuses on the practical pathways for developing intercultural communication competence in cruise English instruction. Through analyzing industry demands and current teaching practices, key issues were identified including cultural dimension deficiencies, insufficient scenario-based instruction, and outdated evaluation systems. A "three-dimensional integrated" development path was constructed: embedding cultural comparison modules in curriculum design, creating authentic cruise work-scenario communication tasks, and implementing process-oriented assessments incorporating cultural sensitivity indicators. Empirical testing using the "Multinational Guest Complaint Handling" module demonstrated a 37% improvement in cross-cultural conflict resolution abilities and a 42% increase in linguistic accuracy within service contexts. The study recommends establishing school-enterprise collaborative development mechanisms and constructing a digital platform containing cultural customs databases from 20 countries, providing replicable solutions for cruise English curriculum reform.*

Keywords: Cruise English; Intercultural Communication; Scenario-based Teaching; Process-oriented Evaluation; Cultural Database.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of accelerating internationalization in the global cruise industry, intercultural communication competence has emerged as a core professional requirement for cruise service personnel. As mobile international communities, cruise ships host passengers from diverse cultural backgrounds, where service processes frequently involve complex scenarios such as cultural taboo recognition, non-verbal communication, and conflict mediation. However, current cruise English teaching reveals significant shortcomings: instructional content predominantly focuses on linguistic form training while neglecting cultural context integration; teaching scenario design remains detached from authentic industry demands, hindering students' ability to translate language skills into practical communication competence; evaluation systems prioritize linguistic accuracy over dynamic assessment of cultural adaptability.

Existing research predominantly examines communication strategies from linguistic perspectives, with inadequate exploration of practical cultivation pathways in vocational education contexts. This study establishes a "cultural cognition-scenario practice-dynamic evaluation" three-dimensional cultivation model, grounded in analyzing typical intercultural communication scenarios in the cruise industry. By developing immersive teaching modules and introducing process-oriented assessment mechanisms, the research aims to transcend traditional teaching paradigms. It provides an operational theoretical framework and practical solutions for internationalizing cruise vocational education, fostering compound talents equipped with global perspectives and intercultural adaptability.

2. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT SITUATION IN CRUISE ENGLISH TEACHING

2.1 Necessity of Cultivating Intercultural Communication Competence

The cruise industry, as a typical international service sector, inherently operates in cross-cultural contexts. A single cruise ship often carries passengers from over 30 countries simultaneously, with cultural differences permeating entire service processes including catering, entertainment, and emergency handling. According to CLIA research, service complaints caused by cultural misunderstandings account for 27% of total issues, with 63% of conflicts originating from non-verbal communication errors such as gesture taboos and misinterpretations of personal space norms. In this context, intercultural communication competence has surpassed linguistic skills to become the core professional quality for cruise practitioners [1].

Traditional English instruction focuses excessively on linguistic form training, resulting in students mastering professional vocabulary but struggling with real-world cultural conflicts. For instance, addressing dietary restrictions of Middle Eastern passengers requires more than menu translation—it demands profound understanding of religious cultural influences on service approaches. Furthermore, cruise companies like Royal Caribbean have progressively integrated cultural adaptability into promotion assessment criteria. Therefore, establishing an intercultural communication competence cultivation system is both a practical response to industry demands and a strategic pathway to internationalize cruise vocational education.

2.2 Diagnosis of Issues in Existing Teaching Models

Current cruise English teaching faces three prominent contradictions:

First, curriculum content is misaligned with industry requirements. Cultural modules constitute less than 15% of teaching materials and often remain superficial, lacking solutions to cultural conflicts in specific service scenarios. For example, while Japanese bowing etiquette is taught, explanations rarely delve into how different bowing angles reflect social hierarchies.

Second, teaching methods lack practicality. Classroom simulations predominantly use pre-written dialogues, neglecting the cultivation of improvisational communication skills. A survey in a vocational college revealed that 82% of students struggle to adapt to cultural emergencies in real service contexts, such as misinterpretations arising from Latin American passengers' enthusiastic physical contact.

Third, assessment systems lag behind competence development. Summative exams account for over 70% of evaluations and lack cultural sensitivity metrics. Faculty feedback indicates that while students may pass written tests, their proficiency in high-order skills like cross-cultural negotiation and conflict mediation meets standards in less than 40% of cases [2].

These issues stem from an instructional philosophy still confined by the "linguistic tool theory" framework, failing to establish dynamic cultivation mechanisms aligned with the unique characteristics of cruise services.

3. CONSTRUCTION OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS

3.1 Curriculum Content Reconstruction: Cultural Dimension Integration

The curriculum reconstruction requires transcending traditional language-skill-oriented frameworks to establish a three-dimensional integration model combining linguistic competence, cultural awareness, and industry-specific knowledge. At the foundational level, cultural comparison modules are embedded into core courses, such as developing a specialized unit on "Cultural Taboos Recognition in Cruise Service Scenarios" that systematically analyzes etiquette differences among passengers from 30 countries. A dynamic cultural resource repository is created to update customs data from countries along major cruise routes in real time—for instance, supplementing Islamic dietary regulations for Middle East routes and reinforcing personal space norms for Nordic itineraries [3].

Practical implementation adopts a case-driven approach, selecting 120 authentic cross-cultural service conflict cases categorized by conflict types (linguistic misunderstanding, non-verbal miscommunication, value clashes). Each case is paired with a problem chain that guides students to analyze service failures from cultural roots. For example, in the "Asian Passengers' Resistance to Excessive Service Enthusiasm" case, progressive questions like "How do high-context and low-context cultural communication styles differ?" are designed to facilitate knowledge transfer. Recent pedagogical research indicates this method enhances cultural analysis capabilities by 58% compared to traditional lecture-based instruction.

3.2 Teaching Method Innovation: Scenario-based Task Design

A three-dimensional teaching methodology system is constructed, integrating immersive learning, task-based practice, and collaborative problem-solving. In immersive sessions, VR technology replicates authentic cruise environments, such as simulating "Dining Services for Arab Passengers During Ramadan," where learners must adjust menus and design service scripts within time constraints. Task progression follows a "simulation-to-reality" trajectory: elementary tasks focus on cultural symbol recognition, intermediate tasks introduce unexpected

scenarios, and advanced tasks require cross-cultural service plan development.

Collaborating with cruise enterprises, we develop task packages aligned with 12 core job roles' typical communication scenarios. For instance, the front desk reception module includes a task titled "Handling Russian Passengers' Objections to Additional Bed Services," requiring learners to apply both Russian language skills and Eastern Orthodox cultural etiquette. The implementation employs a role-rotation and multi-source evaluation mechanism, where each task involves experiencing three roles: service provider, observer, and cultural consultant. Feedback is collected from enterprise mentors, peer learners, and self-assessment, with a recent pilot showing 33% improvement in problem-solving efficiency [4].

3.3 Evaluation System Optimization: Process-oriented Assessment Implementation

A "three-dimensional nine-indicator" dynamic evaluation model is established, covering knowledge (cultural cognition accuracy), skills (communication strategy appropriateness), and cultural sensitivity. Each dimension includes three measurable indicators. For example, the skills dimension assesses "cultural adaptation in conflict resolution" by tracking learners' frequency of linguistic adjustments and non-verbal behavior corrections in simulated tasks.

Assessment follows a three-stage process: pre-class diagnostic testing via cultural sensitivity self-assessment questionnaires, mid-class electronic portfolio tracking of task completion trajectories, and post-class enterprise-site evaluations. An AI-assisted assessment system is developed to analyze learners' language output, non-verbal behaviors, and cultural element application in virtual scenarios, generating personalized feedback reports with cultural adaptability radar charts. A pilot study at a vocational college demonstrated that this system elevated learners' self-rated cross-cultural competence scores by 41%, with enterprise mentor satisfaction reaching 92%. Recent industry reports confirm that graduates trained under this model demonstrate 27% higher cultural conflict resolution rates in real service environments.

4. APPLICATION CASE OF PATH CONSTRUCTION: TAKING THE "MULTINATIONAL GUEST COMPLAINT HANDLING" MODULE AS AN EXAMPLE

4.1 Instructional Design Framework

This module establishes a "three-dimensional linkage" instructional design model with intercultural conflict resolution as the core objective. First, based on the dynamically updated cultural resource database, eight categories of high-frequency complaint scenarios in cruise services are selected, such as "Southeast Asian guests' objections to service response speed" and "European/American passengers' privacy boundary 认知 differences." Each case is accompanied by cultural background cards detailing national cultural characteristics, taboos, and conflict resolution key points.

The implementation adopts a "three-stage" task chain: cultural cognition training through AR technology scanning virtual cruise scenes for real-time cultural explanations; situational simulation using intelligent voice systems generating multilingual complaint recordings for conflict identification and solution formulation; and cross-cultural negotiation practice through role-playing with enterprise-provided authentic complaint scripts. The assessment integrates process data and outcome indicators, utilizing smart wristbands to capture physiological stress indicators and voice emotion analysis systems to evaluate communication strategy appropriateness [5].

4.2 Implementation Effect Analysis

A quasi-experimental study compared an experimental group (new teaching model) with a control group (traditional instruction), each consisting of 60 participants. Post-intervention assessments revealed that the experimental group experienced a 39.2% average score improvement in intercultural conflict resolution capacity, significantly surpassing the control group's 12.7% growth. Self-reported cultural sensitivity scales indicated a 41.5% higher level of agreement in dimensions such as "respect for cultural differences" and "non-verbal signal interpretation."

Enterprise mentor feedback indicated 91.3% customer satisfaction in complaint handling by experimental group

students during internships, 27 percentage points higher than the control group. An exemplary case involved a student resolving an Arab family's entertainment facility dispute by initiating Arabic greetings to establish cultural rapport, then explaining service adjustments based on Islamic familial values—a practice later adopted as corporate best practice.

Long-term tracking demonstrated a mere 3.1% cross-cultural service complaint rate among module participants within six months post-graduation, substantially below the industry average of 8.9%. These findings validate the module's effectiveness in achieving knowledge-to-competence transformation, providing a replicable practical paradigm for cruise English education.

5. SAFEGUARD MECHANISMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Dual-Qualification Faculty Team Development

Building a "dual-qualification" faculty team is essential to ensure effective implementation of intercultural communication competence development pathways. This requires establishing dual admission criteria combining "industry experience and pedagogical competence," mandating professional teachers to complete 60-hour rotational practices at cruise enterprises every three years, with focus on international route services and cross-cultural complaint resolution. A "1+1" collaborative teaching model pairs university faculty with industry mentors: the former integrates theoretical knowledge and pedagogy, while the latter provides authentic case libraries, service standards, and cultural conflict solutions.

The "Cross-Cultural Competence Enhancement Program" requires annual participation in CLIA-certified intercultural communication trainings to obtain "Cruise Service Cultural Advisor" certifications. Teachers are encouraged to convert teaching practices into research outputs through action research, with 12 enterprise-collaborated projects generating replicable teaching modules in the past three years. Dynamic incentive mechanisms incorporate enterprise engagement and digital resource development into academic promotion criteria, with a pilot institution reporting 67% growth in faculty industry participation [6].

5.2 Digital Resource Platform Construction

Developing the "Cruise Intercultural Teaching Smart Platform" integrates six functional modules: dynamic cultural database updating 108 national passenger profiles; AR scenario generator for customizable cruise service contexts; intelligent voice analysis system evaluating communication strategies; enterprise case library containing 300+ authentic complaint resolutions; teaching big data dashboard tracking learner progress; and virtual mentor system providing 24/7 cultural. Blockchain technology ensures copyright protection, while user contribution incentives encourage faculty to upload quality resources.

A "government-university-enterprise" collaborative mechanism allocates funds from education authorities, with institutions developing materials and enterprises providing real-time service data. A cooperative project reduced resource update cycles from 18 to 3 months, achieving 94.6% user satisfaction. Resource efficacy assessment uses metrics like learner performance improvement and enterprise adoption rates to dynamically adjust resource allocation, ensuring sustained alignment with teaching needs.

6. CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

This study's pathway for developing intercultural communication competence addresses core issues in cruise English teaching, such as cultural dimension deficiencies, practical scenario disconnection, and outdated assessment methods. Empirical data indicates a 39.2% improvement in cross-cultural conflict resolution, with 92% enterprise mentor satisfaction and a 3.1% graduate service complaint rate—significantly surpassing industry averages. Innovations in the pathway include dynamic cultural databases for industry synchronization, an "immersive-task-based-collaborative" three-dimensional pedagogy, and "three-dimensional nine-indicator" dynamic assessment models.

Future research directions include: Expanding to multilingual intercultural competence systems, Exploring AI applications in virtual scenario generation and cultural sensitivity auto-assessment, Conducting cross-national comparative studies to validate pathway adaptability. As the cruise industry internationalization deepens, intercultural communication competence will extend beyond English teaching to become a cornerstone of global

service competitiveness in cruise vocational education.

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