



Research Article

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## A Study on Post-CET4 College English Teaching Model Based on Intercultural Communication

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### ABSTRACT

*Intercultural communication competence reflects the comprehensive capacity for foreign language students to use language skills and professional knowledge, which is the mission and teaching goal for the English education. A post-CET4 college English teaching model based on intercultural communication was designed and applied in English teaching in sophomore students of clinical medicine science major. The students were divided into experimental group and control group. Conventional teaching model was adopted for the control group, while the new model was applied for the experimental group for one academic year. According to experimental statistics, it is shown that the experimental group presents some advantages in English learning ability and confidence in communication. The post-CET4 English teaching model has a significant effect on the intercultural communication competence with scores in the middle and lower levels and it is expected to be promoted throughout the whole university.*

**Key words:** intercultural communication; post-CET4 college English teaching; teaching model

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### INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is to cultivate college students to possess intercultural communication competence, rather than merely to teach basic knowledge of language. The cultivation of intercultural communicative competence in college English teaching has drawn emphasis [1]. In College English Curriculum Requirements, it is pointed that college English is a system includes English language knowledge and application skills, intercultural communication and learning strategies as the main content, and collects a variety of teaching models and teaching methods guided with foreign language teaching theory [2]. To cultivate learners' cognitive ability of foreign culture and cross-cultural communication competence, to avoid possible cultural conflicts in the process of foreign language application are important goals of English teaching.

However, college English teaching as main channel of cultivating intercultural communicative competence still lacks the feasible and recognized frame, which limits the ability of teachers to play and influence the cultivation of students' quality. In recent years, the teaching practice is far behind the theoretical research of it, and there are still shortcomings in post-CET4 college English teaching model: 1) Lacking of real language environment and environment of communication. The teachers tend to give students fictional learning environment which lacks of necessary communication with various contexts; 2) Teacher-based teaching model. Too much emphasis are taken on the role of teachers in teaching process ignoring the role of students as the main subject of learning; 3) Focusing input mode on linguistic knowledge. The information teachers input into students is too little to satisfy the need of intercultural communication; 4) Imperfection in information processing model of students. Teachers only require the students to practice on received information what they have learned such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, which lacks of verbal and nonverbal comprehensive application skills [3].

The concept “communication competence” formed in the late 1960s and 70s, Hymes, the influential scholars of linguistics, proposed the communicative competence include four aspects, namely four communication parameters: possibility, feasibility, appropriateness, actual application [4].

English teaching experienced Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-lingual Approach, Cognitive Method, and Communication Approach as the milestone of five important stages of development. Chinese scholars and English teachers have done a lot of work in the field of culture teaching research and practice. Deng Yanchang & Liu runqing (1989), GuJiazuo (1990), Wang Fu-xiang, Wu Hanying (1994), Hu Wenzhong, Gao Yihong (1997), Chen Shen (1999), Wang Zhenya (2005) and other well-known scholars have successively accomplishment on language and culture, language teaching and culture teaching. In addition, many English teachers apply culture teaching theory into practice and explore cultural teaching methods. On relationship between language and culture, Samovar posted: “Language and culture are inseparable, language is a reflection of culture and culture is a reflection of language.” [5] (Samovar et al. 2000) The concept of “culture of knowledge” and “culture of communication” were originally formed by Chinese foreign language scholar Zhang Zhanyi (1984), according to the role of cultural factors in communication process, he divided culture into 2 parts [6]. Hu Wenzhong and Gao Yihong made clear that the division of culture of knowledge and culture of communicative is practical in foreign language teaching curriculum, and in the actual teaching process they should be paid equal attention, we should put the former in the teaching process of the later under the premise of teaching of culture of communication [7].

The construction of post-CET4 college English teaching model and practice aims to improve culture teaching and concept of talent cultivation, to establish the new teaching concept, to deeply clear the basic principles of culture teaching, to correctly carry out intercultural teaching strategies, to improve the localization, diversification and teaching forms and to further promote the college English teaching reform.

#### **POST-CET4 COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING MODEL DESIGN AND REALIATION**

The research team establishes post-CET4 college English teaching model suitable for the current condition, that is to combine the current teaching materials for college English with extracurricular supplementary based on scientific, practical, moderate principle to construct in English teaching procedure

1) Teaching principles: “Communication” is the essence of the English teaching, so its basic characteristics is “cultural adaptation”, namely, the three process of language, usage, and culture, which determines the post-CET4 English teaching model is “intercultural communication model” on theoretical basis of cultural linguistic and cross-cultural communication. The construction of the model aims to overcome and improve the major shortcomings in traditional English teaching: Firstly, make teaching process into inter-communication between teachers and students, which can help to form and cultivate students’ cross-cultural communicative competence; Secondly, combine pragmatic information, cultural information and behavior information to the current model, which can not only increase the amount of information input, also ensure the optimization of students’ knowledge structure and ability structure; Thirdly, focus on communication and make classroom the right place for communication, apply the input information directly to the scene for communication so as to make language and culture learning more effective; Finally, should be on the whole the content of the four as a language communication behavior training, in order to make students in a particular language and culture atmosphere grasp its essentials, the verbal and non-verbal skills.

2) Teaching objective: On perspective of cross-cultural communication, English teaching should focus on the construction of students’ ability to communicate; language skill as one aspect of communication skills is included in macro ability and quality. The overall teaching objective is to cultivate the students’ intercultural communicative competence. Cross-cultural communication system established the basic framework for the cultivation of intercultural communication competence in foreign language education, which includes 3 levels: overall ability, three dimensions and thirteen factors [8]. These 3 levels can be set to three objectives: First grade objective is the overall training objective, that is, intercultural communicative competence. Second grade objective is made by three dimensions of the first grade, namely, cultural awareness, cultural knowledge and communication practice. Third grade objective is detailed and specific content according to the second grade and starting point of cultivating the competence. These 3 objectives are interdependent and interrelated. See figure 1

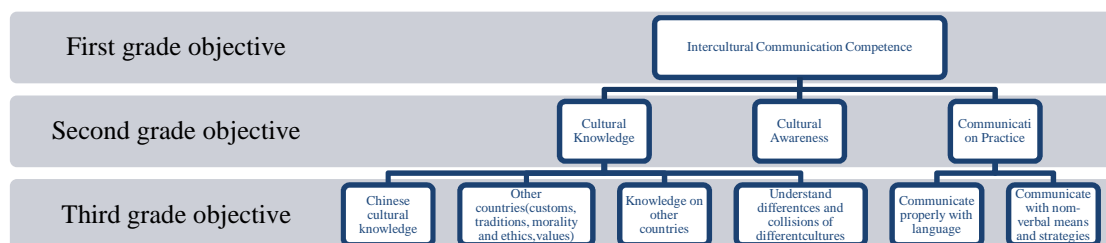


Figure 1: Three grades of teaching objectives

3) Teaching contents and materials: In the research, the teaching content covers language teaching content and culture embedded & culture teaching content, and the latter is given more emphasis. At present the research team applies the current college English textbook New Horizon College English Reading and Writing, New Horizon College English Listening and Speaking (second edition, Book III, IV) as the teaching materials. It has abundant materials, CDs and network platform, which provides a more convenient condition for the development of cross-cultural teaching and evaluation. Embedded culture & culture teaching materials: Brief Introduction of Britain and America, British and American Literature, English and American History, American Society and Culture, Selected British and American Newspaper Reading, Western culture, Appreciation of American Television Programs and Movies, etc.

4) Teaching project: Teaching project is the basic part in the whole process, affecting the quality of cultivation. Teaching project aims to reasonably design related courses under the guidance of specific training objectives, and to develop corresponding standards of intercultural communication competence on basis of course characteristics. It applies project classification method, a total of three grades. First grade project divides the course system into two modules, namely “culture of knowledge” and “culture of communication”. Second grade project consists six parts, namely, Chinese culture, lowercase culture, capital culture, cultural comparison, language proficiency and communication practice. Third grade project is specific content according to the second grade and terminal project of teaching object. As shown in figure 2.

First grade project	Culture of Knowledge				Culture of Communication	
Second grade project	Chinese Culture	Lowercase Culture	Capital Culture	Cultural Comparison	Language Proficiency	Communication Practice
Third grade project	Book3: Unit 8; Chinese Culture	Book3: Unit 1, 5, 6, 7, 9; Book4: Unit 1, 2, 5, 7, 10; Appreciation of American Television Programs and Movies	Book3: Unit 2, 3, 4; Book4: 3, 4, 6, 8, 9; Brief Introduction of Britain and America, British and American Literature, English and American History, American Society and Culture	All Units (except Book3 Unit 8; Book4 Unit 7, 9); Selected British and American Newspaper Reading, Western culture, Intercultural communication	All Units	All Units

Figure 2: Three grades of teaching projects

5) Teaching method: Intercultural teaching methods usually include dominant culture teaching, recessive culture teaching and the comprehensive cultural teaching. The research team adopts comprehensive culture teaching method which combines advantages of the first two methods in one and focuses on both imparting knowledge of culture and cultivating intercultural awareness and communicative competence.

6) Teaching strategy: Effectively carrying out culture teaching in college English cannot depart from the support of systematic culture teaching strategies. The research team reviews domestic and foreign works on language-culture teaching and cross-cultural communication research (Chen Shen (1999), Hu Wenzhong & Gao Yihong (1997), Chen Junshen (2006), Yan Ming (2006), and other scholar's research achievements), introduces comprehensive cultural teaching method, and integrates a set of teaching strategies suitable for the college actual situation and diversification, allowing students to learn through self-study, discussion, lecture, performance, experience, on-line interaction, etc. As shown in figure 3

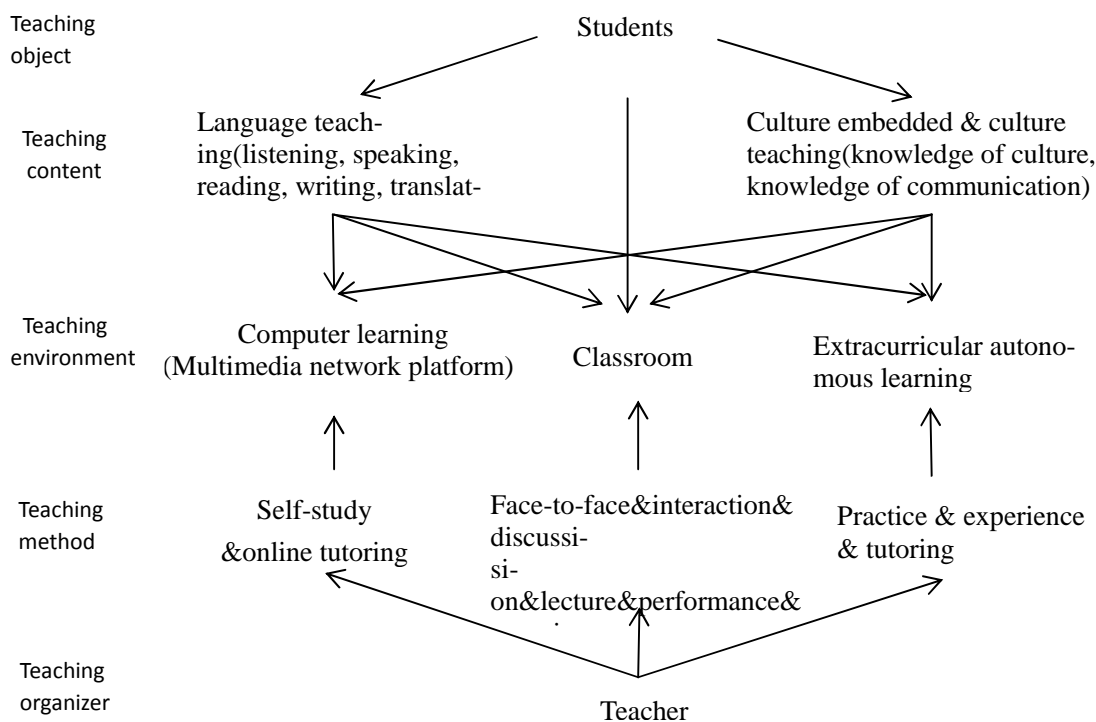


Figure 3: English teaching model and flow diagram

## MULTIMODE-BASED ONLINE TEACHING EXPERIMENT

### A. Experimental objects

A lecture on the importance of learning English after CET-4 exam is selected to be carried in sophomore students of Clinical Medicine Science major in college. There are 569 students in the major and 227 students have passed CET-4; each student who has passed CET-4 is notified to participate in the lecture through a short message; 227 students attended the lecture, with an attendance rate of 100%. After the lecture, the students voluntarily attending experiment were counted, totaling 208, accounting for 91.6% of the participants.

The 208 students were divided into two groups, respectively the experimental group and control group with 104 in each group. Each of them was evaluated intercultural communication competence through their CET-4 scores (June 13, 2015). Wen Qiufang proposed that students in China lack of real intercultural communication environment with people from different cultures, so their foreign language level can be defined as intercultural communicative competence [9]. Hu Yn hong researched the cognitive and behavioral assessment of intercultural competence in CET-4 is revealed respectively in test items labeled as culture of knowledge and those labeled as culture of communication [10]. The competence of the students was classified in the following levels according to the score: 1. entry level ( $60 \leq \text{score} < 70$ ); 2. good ( $70 \leq \text{score} < 80$ ); 3. skillful ( $80 \leq \text{score} < 90$ ), and master ( $90 \leq \text{score} \leq 100$ ), in which entry level represents basic competence but still have many problems in both culture and communication; Master represents that the students can communicate as a native speaker. The results are shown in Table 1.

In the experimental group, there were 55 students at entry level, with a minimum score of 60 and a maximum score of 68; 40 at the good level, with a minimum score of 70 and a maximum score of 78; 7 at the skillful level, with a minimum score of 80 and a maximum score of 88, and 2 at the master level, with a minimum score of 90 and a maximum score of 93. In the control group, there were 58 students at entry level, with a minimum score of 60 and a maximum score of 69; 34 at the good level, with a minimum score of 70 and a maximum score of 79; 9 at the skillful level, with a minimum score of 81 and a maximum score of 88, and 3 at the mastered level, with a minimum score of 91 and a maximum score of 94. The scores of the two groups were input into SPSS V19.0 for statistical analysis, and the mean value and deviation were respectively calculated, as shown in Table 1:

TABLE I : TEST RESULT OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND CONTROL GROUP BEFORE EXPERIMENT

	Experimental group	Control group
Number of students	104	104
Mean value	68.28	68.73
Deviation	12.79	11.52

According to the mean value and deviation, it finds that the intercultural communication competence of the two groups did not have a large difference before the experiment. By summarizing the scores from the two groups, it can be concluded that the mean value of the overall is 68.5, showing that intercultural communication competence of sophomore students in the college is not good, the scores of the students are mainly concentrated at the entry level and the good level, respectively accounting for 54.32% and 35.58%, while the total number of students in the good and skillful states is only 21, accounting for 10.10% of the total number.

### B. Experiential method

The teaching model of control group was not changed and English class was taken as usual, while in the experimental group, the English teaching model based on intercultural communication was applied into English teaching procedure. One academic year later, the two groups of students were tested in intercultural communication competence through the CET-4 model test.

### C. Experiential results

The table II below shows the comprehensive ability test of experimental group and control group.

TABLE II: TEST RESULT OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND CONTROL GROUP AFTER EXPERIMENT

	Experimental group	Control group
Number of students	104	104
Mean value	76.67	69.82
Deviation	8.75	12.43

With analysis of statistical results above, it was found that the score of the control group without any model change is slightly increased, with the average score increasing from 68.73 to 69.82, only increasing by 1.09. While in the experimental group, after applying new teaching model for 1 academic year, the score increased significantly; the average score increased from 68.28 to 76.67, increasing by 8.39. Comparing the scores of the two groups, it was found that the score in the experimental group greatly increased compared to the control group, which is persuasive, verifying the effectiveness of the English teaching model based on intercultural communication.

Upon segmentation of the scores of the students in the experimental group, it can be concluded that the number of students in entry level is 35, 53 in the good level, 11 in the skillful level and 5 in the master level. Figure 4 shows the histogram of the score frequency distribution of the experimental group before and after the experiment, plotted by score range on the horizontal axis and the number of students corresponding to each score segment on the vertical axis. Through the analysis Figure 4 showed that before and after the experiment, there was a great change in score for the experimental group, with the number of students with scores ranging from 60 to 70 decreasing from 55 to 35, reducing by 20, with a decreasing rate of 36.36%. The number of students with scores ranging from 70 to 80 increased from 40 to 53, increasing by 13, with an increasing rate of 32.50%. The number of students with scores ranging from 80 to 90 increased from 7 to 11, increasing by 4, with an increasing rate of 57.14%. The number of students with scores ranging from 90 to 100 increased from 2 to 5, increasing by 3, with an increasing rate of 150%.

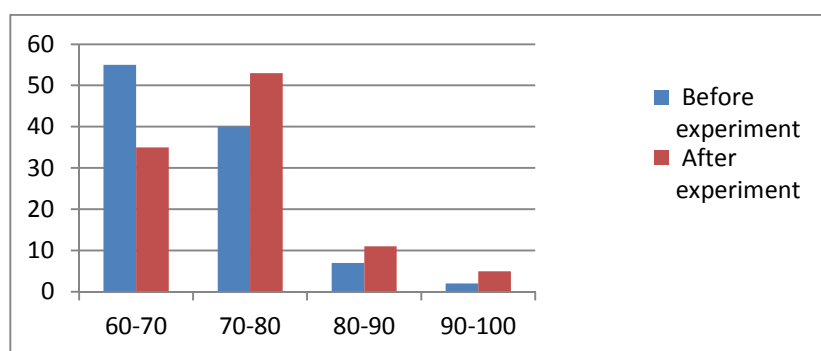


Figure 4: Score frequency distribution of the experimental group before and after experiment

After experiment, a questionnaire investigation was conducted with participants from the experimental group which mainly examined whether the experimental participants increased their awareness and interest of intercultural communication and whether they improved their confidence in communication with people from different cultures; 78.43% of the interviewees expressed that the new model changed the traditional English teaching, making them "fresh" and stating that it has rich content closer to practical application. Of the interviewees, 65.82% expressed that after a period

of learning, they felt their English had improved significantly and to a certain extent they increased their confidence in English communication.

### CONCLUSION

A post CET-4 college English teaching model based on intercultural communication was designed, and through demonstration in teaching procedure it was found that the new model was of great help in improving the students' English learning ability and had a significant effect on the intercultural communication competence with scores in the middle and lower levels. At the same time, this model also increased the students' English learning interest and enhanced their self-confidence to communicate with people from different cultures. The experiment has fully proved the efficiency of English teaching model and is expected to be promoted throughout the whole university; it also needs practicing and further improvement in future teaching and research.

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