

## *Original Paper*

# A Study on Integrating Cultural Signs of “Global Village” into Cultivating Chinese English Major Students’ Foreign Language Competence with the Vision of Global Community of Shared Future

Dongxue HU<sup>1</sup>, Hanyu JIN<sup>1</sup>, Yi Li<sup>2</sup>, & Dan CUI<sup>3\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Postgraduate student of the School of English, Jilin International Studies University, Changchun, China

<sup>2</sup> Yi Li, School of Foreign Languages, Shenzhen Institute of Information Technology, Shenzhen 518172, China

<sup>3</sup> Doc of Literature, Professor, Dean of Institute of International Languages and Cultures, Dean of Romanticism Studies Center, Jilin International Studies University, Changchun, Jilin, China; Doc supervisor of Yanbian University, Yanji, Jilin, China; Postdoc of Literature of School of English, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing, China

\* Dan Cui, Corresponding Author, [summerelephant@126.com](mailto:summerelephant@126.com)

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### ***Abstract***

*The fundamental task of cultivating foreign language talents in the new era is to cultivate talents. English major students are supposed to have solid Chinese language skills and cultural knowledge, to be able to skillfully apply language teaching skills related to foreign languages, and have the competence to adopt foreign languages for cross-cultural communication. This article aims to study the “global village” as a unique language practice base of Jilin International Studies University and integrate it into the instruction of higher education to nurture talents for international communication. Based on exploring the connotation of cultural signs that highlights the “global village” and their application of them in cultivating English major students’ foreign language competence, we intend to improve English major students’ humanistic and cultural literacy to nurture their sense of self-national identity under the internationality of globalization. Thus, they are prepared to possess the comprehensive language competence constituted mainly by the broad vision, international*

*consciousness, global village outlook, and cross-culture consciousness and competence, etc. which will necessarily help them to actively and effectively participate in international communication and eventually dedicate themselves to constructing a global community with a shared future for mankind, which essentially makes up the core of cross-cultural competence.*

**Keywords**

*culture signs, global village, Chinese English major students, foreign language competence, the vision of global community of shared future*

**1. Introduction**

China has always been contributing to the following ideal: building a community with a shared future for mankind is the future of people around the world. Simultaneously, we also adhere to co-construction and sharing, promote the construction of a universally safe world; adhere to win-win cooperation, promote the construction of a common prosperous world; adhere to exchanges and mutual learning, promote the construction of an open and inclusive world; adhere to green and low-carbon, promote the construction of a clean and beautiful world.

The “global village” as a typical language and culture dissemination base and a platform for foreign language practice, aims at cultivating the language practice competence of English major students, which is characterized by spatialization and rich cultural signs inside. The spatial and temporal values and conventions carried by cultural sign dissemination in the current era have two dimensions. One is the presentation of historical value in the spatial dimension, referring to constructing a community consciousness featuring national and global characteristics. It refers to strengthening the Chinese national community internally and constructing a sense of community with a shared future for mankind externally. The second lies in the presentation of practical conventions in the time dimension, which is to implement a modernity transformation based on historicity and modernity (Chen, 2021). There exists a lack of practical exploration in English major foreign language teaching at the level of international outlook that lead to a community with a shared future for mankind and integrating cultural signs currently. Therefore, it is worth exploring the way to fully utilize cultural signs to develop students’ foreign language practice competence.

This article focuses on the application of culture signs of the “global village” as a foreign language lab into cultural signs cultivating English major students’ foreign language competence by transformation trials of instruction of related courses. By analyzing the cultural layers including material culture, spiritual culture, and social culture, the authors aim to study the effective ways of adopting the cultural signs in the “global village” to construct an effective mechanism in English teaching. Starting from the four levels including curriculum, teaching, practice, and teachers, the study aims to achieve an education and training model of language knowledge, culture, and the integration of international consciousness, international outlook. The purpose of the course is to cultivate English major students’

cross-cultural communication skills, the value of unity of knowledge and action, foreign language practical skills, and foreign language practical application competence.

## **2. Current Researches on Enhancing English Major Students' Foreign Language Competence**

### *2.1 Lack of Intercultural Communication Skills Development Cultivation*

Current domestic and international researches on intercultural communication competence development have been relatively microscopic, focusing only on teaching methods and practices, aiming to enhance the interdisciplinary sustain competence of English majors. Intercultural education has been a part of faculty education (both at BA and MA levels) in Greece during the last two decades, even though programs offered by different universities vary in the extent to which they deal with the issue. Furthermore, relevant researches have shown that the programmer is usually restricted to the provision of knowledge and does not necessarily enable teachers to obtain first-hand experiences with practice-oriented work. Global education has entered a new era in which core literacy and competency are the criteria for talent's professional development. English major education is supposed to start initially in history and devote itself to cultivating students' Chinese self-recognition, international vision, cultural awareness, critical thinking competence, humanistic literacy, and intercultural communication and cooperation competence.

There are two main reasons why English majors lack cross-cultural communication skills: firstly, teachers usually have the misconception that foreign language education is mainly about language teaching rather than cultural education; secondly, the competence of teachers and students is insufficient, the knowledge structure system is incomplete, and lack of exploration and infiltration of cross-cultural aspects in foreign language learning and teaching.

As for the first aspect, there has been a prevalent misconception in the higher education field that foreign language education solely focuses on language education while neglecting cultural education. This separation mode of language and culture often leads to a lack of awareness in cultivating cross-cultural communication competence in teaching. As Hu (1982) once pointed out, understanding British and American culture is essential for learning English. Unfortunately, cultural instruction has always been treated at the superficial level rather than the deeper layer with a limited focus on imparting knowledge and limited instructing strategies. Gu (2002) noted a typical phenomenon that combining language and culture has not been closely integrated into foreign language teaching practices. Therefore, it is crucial to explore and research language and culture teaching from the perspective of cross-cultural communication. As Robinson (1988) suggested, seeking feasible models for students to understand foreign cultures through cross-cultural communication is necessary to effectively improve their cross-cultural communication competence. To further support this argument, Byram (1997) stated, "Language learning is cultural learning", and "the aim is to enable the learners to use the language appropriately and effectively in the social context in which they find themselves".

This highlights the importance of cultural education in foreign language learning, as it enables learners to navigate social contexts and communicate effectively with people from other cultures. Similarly, Kramersch (1993) emphasized that “language is not just a neutral instrument for communicating information but a signic mediation of reality”, and that “Language and culture are intertwined” (Kramersch, 1993). Therefore, to effectively instruct foreign languages, it is necessary to incorporate cultural education into language teaching. To summarize, the separation of language and culture in foreign language education has resulted in a lack of awareness in cultivating cross-cultural communication competence.

For The second reason, it is reflected in the following aspects: lack of training activities including cultivation of lifelong learning and knowledge updating competence in foreign language teaching, resulting in poor information reception; defective teaching and research activities ranging from lack of systematic, comprehensive, and unified approaches to cross-cultural competence development activities; insufficient practical experience which means lack of flexibility in some external communication activities. Culture makes an essential part of language learning: the purpose of foreign language learning is not just to learn foreign language culture in one direction, but to achieve “cross-communication of bilingual cultures” (Liu, 2003). The multicultural interactive “model of language and culture teaching has broken through the previous simple foreign language cultural introduction” teaching method, emphasizing both the mother tongue and the target language, forming a “two-way interaction” and correcting the previous phenomenon of “emphasizing cultural teaching content but neglecting cultural teaching process”(Kramersch, 1993).

### *2.2 Lack of International Outlook and Cultural Signs Integration*

“The essence of culture is the sign, and the external representation and internal qualities of culture are the same as signs, and culture and signs are both human representation systems, and the study of culture is also the study of signic representation systems” (Weber, 2015). The cultivation of foreign language talents in the new era is based on the fundamental task of moral education and needs to be guided by international outlook. Firstly, there is a lack of long-term goal requirements in English major students’ foreign language teaching to cultivate students’ global competence, which aims at international consciousness, global village outlook, and cross-culture consciousness shaping, knowledge transference, competence development, establishing a community with a shared future for mankind, and developing core literacy.

Secondly, cultural signs in the foreign language labs have not been sufficiently studied and applied to cultivating English major students given teaching contents, strategies, and approaches. Foreign language labs are a crucial component of language education, serving as a space for students to engage in language practice and cultural immersion. However, the potential of cultural signs within these labs remains largely untapped. One possible reason for this lack of application is the limited understanding of the role of culture in language teaching. Another reason for the lack of application is the limited

development of teaching strategies and approaches that incorporate cultural signs. The incorporation of cultural signs within the foreign language labs can provide students with a more comprehensive understanding of the language and culture they are learning. However, this requires the development of teaching strategies and approaches that integrate cultural signs from various disciplines into language teaching.

Thirdly, the selected reading materials in the textbooks for English major students in higher education need to be enriched in both Chinese and Western cultures in preparation for advocating the cross-cultural dialogue between students and people from different cultural backgrounds. As pointed out by Byram (1997), exposure to diverse perspectives and cultural practices is essential in developing cross-cultural communicative competence. Therefore, textbooks are supposed to include a variety of contents that reflect both Chinese and Western cultures to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the two cultures. Moreover, as argued by Kramsch (1993), language and culture are intertwined, and the selection of reading materials should reflect this relationship. The texts are not only selected for presenting language but also serving as a representation of culture. This approach helps students to understand the cultural concepts and international outlook that are embedded in the language. The inclusion of authentic materials, such as news articles, literature, and films, can further enrich the reading experience and expose students to different cultural perspectives. In conclusion, the enrichment and broadening of reading materials in textbooks for English major students in higher education are necessary to prepare them for cross-cultural dialogues. The inclusion of texts that reflect both Chinese and Western cultures, as well as authentic materials, can provide students with a comprehensive understanding of language and culture.

Fourthly, Teachers actually feel at a loss when it comes to cross-disciplinary instruction as they lack critical thinking and cross-discipline knowledge accumulation. Against the context of the new liberal arts, the professionalization of English major teachers needs transformation. An important aspect of the transformation is that English major teachers need to break down disciplinary barriers and achieve interdisciplinary integration. The professionalization transformation of English major teachers is related to whether we can cultivate international composite foreign language talents with international perspectives, proficiency in foreign languages, and multiple competences, as well as the construction of China's English teacher groups (Wang, Cui, 2021; Jia, Cui 2021; Wu, Cui, 2021; Shu, Cui, 2021). It is also related to the future development trend of foreign language education and higher education in China. As for the English major education, it is necessary to achieve the internal intersection of the five major directions of the English subject, namely literature, linguistics, cross-cultural communication, translation studies, regional and national studies, and also to achieve interdisciplinary integration, namely the integration of the English subject with other humanities and science and engineering subjects, which points out a new direction for the professional development of English major teachers. The incompetence to decipher the in-depth cultural meanings of signs in various fields, such as arts,

science, industry, history, and sociology, makes it challenging for teachers to integrate them into language teaching. This shortcoming fails to convey shared global values to students and stimulates them to gain deeper comprehension. As noted by Zhao (2016), critical thinking is essential in facilitating the interpretation of cultural signs, as well as encouraging teachers to analyze the cultural context and its underlying meanings. Furthermore, the integration of cross-disciplinary knowledge is crucial in comprehending the complex cultural signs that are specific to different fields, as argued by Li (2019). However, many teachers lack such knowledge and, therefore, cannot convey the cultural signs to students effectively. The incompetence to integrate cultural signs into language teaching further hinders the promotion of shared global values. As stated by Kramersch (1993), language and culture are intertwined, and language teaching should incorporate cultural education. However, the lack of integration of cultural signs in language teaching leaves students with a shallow understanding of Chinese culture and its underlying meanings, making it difficult for them to grasp the shared values of the world. In conclusion, the lack of critical thinking skills and cross-disciplinary knowledge accumulation among teachers hinders their competence to decipher the cultural signs pertinent to different fields and integrate them into language teaching. This shortcoming leads to a failure to convey shared global values to students, impeding their competence to gain a deeper comprehension of Chinese culture.

Fifthly, there is a lack of understanding of the integration of international consciousness, global village outlook, and cultural signs as an entry point to improve the foreign language practice competence of English major students, both of which can build a firm sense of the Chinese national community and the external dissemination can build a community with a shared future for humanity; The communication of Chinese cultural signs is based on the meaning stipulation of space value: on the one hand, through domestic communication, protecting these endless roots of the Chinese national spirit, and through obtaining the cultural identity, building a strong sense of the Chinese national community; On the other hand, through international dissemination and acceptance, telling the “Chinese story” of Chinese cultural signs well, showcasing China’s charm, enhancing the country’s cultural soft power, and building a community with a shared future for mankind. The dissemination of Chinese cultural signs revolves around major issues. Chinese cultural signs contain deep interpretations of the cultural spirit and national qualities, showcasing the civilized expression and spiritual outlook of national behavior.

### **3. The Cultivation of English Major Students’ Foreign Language Competence**

#### *3.1 Constructing Critical Culture Enabled Curriculum System*

According to the teaching quality evaluation of the courses for English major students, teaching design is of high importance, which includes checking whether the cultural theme and language training objectives are clear, whether key and difficult points are emphasized, whether the teaching steps are

scientific and reasonable and whether the teaching methods are suitable for global village experimental teaching. Students also expect teachers to guide them in perceiving cultural elements, exploring and expressing cultural significance, increasing their participation, and effectively utilizing information technology and various resources for situational teaching. By focusing on these aspects, teachers can effectively incorporate cultural signs into new forms of teaching materials for English majors and achieve a new pattern of integrating world culture into China and Chinese culture into the world. This approach emphasizes the importance of cultural education in language teaching and prepares students to effectively communicate and navigate cross-cultural situations in globalized situations.

### *3.2 Cultivating Intercultural Communication Skills of English Major Students in the Excavation of Cultural Signs of “Global Village”*

To cultivate English major students' cross-cultural communication skills, different types of cultural signs of the “global village” can be integrated into the curriculum. For example, material culture signs can include famous works by those writers, such as Shakespeare, Keats, etc. in the course “Selected Readings of British and American Literature”. Teachers can guide students to develop deeply into the cultural signs behind these literary works, encouraging students to immerse themselves in the situation and use the simulation scenes created by the “global village” to construct an immersive curriculum. Drama festivals can also be used to help students better understand Western culture and literature. Teachers should encourage comparative exploration of Chinese and Western cultures, promote students to form new international outlook, and love literature and culture. In addition, teachers should also emphasize the combination of instrumental and humanistic goals in language learning, using Shakespeare's classic plays to improve students' critical thinking competence.

The spiritual culture signs of the “global village” can be also integrated into the “A Survey of Western Countries and Regions” course, where representative thinkers, historians, politicians, and scientists from the six English-speaking countries can be studied in-depth. Teachers can design a video recording activity to search for and introduce cultural signs in the global village. This activity encourages students to analyze and record cultural signs by themselves, to form the spirit of exploration and understanding of the story behind the cultural signs, and cultivate the spirit of internationalism and global competence.

The sociocultural signs of the “global village” can be integrated into the “Comprehensive English Viewing, Listening and Speaking” course, where representative buildings, national treasures, national flowers, etc., of the six English-speaking countries, can be studied. Teachers can adopt a student-centered and teacher-assisted teaching mode to create experiential teaching, including various activity development modes, such as organizing a cultural festival salon. These activities can help students feel the collision of cultures during the learning process, and enhance cross-cultural communication skills and learning interests.

Overall, the suggested integration of cultural signs into different courses is consistent with research on the importance of integrating culture into language education (Kramersch, 1993). These activities can effectively cultivate English major students' cross-cultural communication skills, language proficiency, and international outlook lead of core competencies, ultimately preparing them to become globally competent talents guided by the values of a community with a shared future for mankind.

### *3.3 Constructing Cross-Discipline Teaching Faculty*

Teachers play a crucial role in curriculum construction by integrating cross-field knowledge and cultivating students' cross-cultural communicative competence. As teaching faculty, they are responsible for helping students broaden their understanding of culture studies and expanding their knowledge into cross-disciplinary fields. This includes self-knowledge expansion, acquisition of self-cross-cultural abilities, exploration of cultural signs, a transformation of teaching design, and organization of instruction, among others and all are supposed to be conducted by being based on the language lab of "Global Village".

To cultivate foreign language talents, teachers are supposed to continuously innovate in curriculum systems, teaching modes and methods, and talent cultivation concepts to construct a new form of Chinese storytelling. In addition, after being taught, students can actively and truly convey Chinese discourse and images, and cultivate talents who can integrate Chinese and foreign discourse narrative skills. Furthermore, teachers should implement the fundamental task of cultivating morality and providing fundamentally ideological support. Through international outlook-based leadership, we can break through disciplinary and curriculum barriers, innovate educational concepts, reform teaching methods, improve the construction of the education and teaching system and create a collaborative development pattern of teaching and education.

### *3.4 Cultural Cultivating Cross-discipline English-major Talents Cultural Signs*

At the practical level, teachers need to cultivate the foreign language practical skills of English major students from the perspective of a community with a shared future for mankind. By cultivating language through international perspective and integrating language learning and training into the cultural atmosphere, we can broaden our international perspective, improve our overall quality, and enhance national confidence and pride.

English major students can translate and compare Chinese and Western cultures on the cultural signs of the "global village". By comparing Chinese signs of food culture, architectural garden signs, character signs, and corresponding cultural signs of foreign countries, students can improve their cultural identity and optimize the added international outlook of culture. The "Confucius School" sets up a good example of disseminating the values of a community with a shared future for mankind. Signs in the Chinese village including Confucius, Mencius, Zhuangzi, Mozi etc., can offer a rich source of material and cultural contexts that are worth exploring. Spiritual and cultural signs such as Peking Opera, facial makeup, shadow puppetry, and Chinese martial arts, as well as social and cultural signs such as the



national treasure giant panda, hundred family names, and the Four Great Inventions, represent the essence of Chinese culture. English villages housing the signs of six major English-speaking countries can also offer exotic signs for studying courses focusing on them. Shakespeare's corner including the famous quotations from his tragedies can be naturally integrated into both courses of English Drama and English Classic Reading. Besides, the wall portraits of famous kings and queens can be applied to elaborate English history through which students can gain a good glimpse into English literature. These courses will strengthen students' understanding of Chinese culture and its comparison with cultures from around the world. By incorporating these cultural signs into teaching, students' cultural awareness and intercultural communication skills can be enhanced.

To cultivate English major students' autonomous practical competence in the "global village", various activities based on this language lab can be carried out to complement the teaching mode. This includes Autonomous Learning Practical Project, Interpreter Competition, Cross-Cultural Recording Competition, Multilingual Official Account Promotion, and Shakespeare Drama Festival. These activities aim to enrich students' campus life, stimulate their creativity, expressiveness, and collaborative competence, and provide a platform to showcase themselves. They are also designed and conducted to review classics and cultivate students' humanistic qualities so that students can feel the century-old humanistic essence, create a positive and healthy cultural atmosphere, and provide a platform for students who are interested in performing and have relevant talents to show themselves. Classroom activity design methods can also be adopted to make students the "subject" and "planner" of the classroom and cultivate their foreign language practice competence.

These activities are consistent with research on the importance of project-based learning and multi-modal approaches to language education (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Thomas & Brown, 2011). The "global village" focus of these activities also emphasizes the importance of cross-cultural communication and understanding in the globalized world. Furthermore, the adoption of classroom activity design methods that make students the "subject" and "planner" of the classroom is consistent with the current trend in student-centered language education (Nunan, 1991). Overall, the activities proposed in this part are consistent with current trends in language education research and can effectively cultivate English major students' autonomous practical competence in the "global village".

### *3.5 Cultivating the Competence to Use Foreign Languages in Practice*

China has always been dedicated to promoting the commonly shared values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom for all humanity, improving mutual understanding and affinity among people of all countries, and respecting the diversity of world civilizations and in the affair of culture to overcome the barrier by communication, conflict by object lesson, superiority by coexistence and jointly address various global challenges. Chinese people are willing to join hands with the people of the world to create a better future for humanity. Integrating cultural symbols into foreign language practice is to align the cultural knowledge learned with foreign language practice, aiming to

integrate the values of a community with a shared future for mankind into the foreign language practical competence of English major students. The path for English major students to integrate the values of a community with a shared future for mankind is to integrate scientificity into their values, to develop a socialist culture that is oriented towards modernization, the world, the future, the nation, science, and the general public, stimulating innovation and practical motivation, while also focusing on the cultivation and construction of core competencies, surpassing the strength of disciplinary implementation. While incorporating subject knowledge, there is also a better promotion and development in terms of expressive power, thinking competence, language practice competence, cultural knowledge, emotional power, and international perspective. This helps to address the long-term goal requirement of cultivating students' global competence in teaching.

Expand new channels for the unity of knowledge and practice, guide people to re-understand traditional views on knowledge and action, and transform theoretical views on knowledge and action into a unity of knowledge and action. Cultivation of the international outlook concept of integrating knowledge and action and the competence to apply foreign language practice for English major students mainly has three points. Firstly, it is necessary to fully integrate and integrate the cultural signs of various villages in the "global village", while enhancing the construction and cultivation of students' practical competence. We are committed to cultivating English major students who organically integrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes with character and competence. Secondly, the integration process should be both practical and standardized, relying on the international atmosphere in the village to vigorously carry out extracurricular language and cultural activities, including student clubs, clubs, and speaking corners, to form a complete second classroom activity system. Third, integration should be both permeable and cross-cutting. Through comparison, we can absorb rich multilingual cultural knowledge, understand the humanistic essence of the target language countries, and read to expand vocabulary, improve recognition skills, and conduct multicultural integration.

In the process of cultivating practical skills, the aim is to improve cross-cultural communication skills and tell world stories well. In the process of cultivating foreign language practical competence, students can further recognize the importance of national culture, deepen their understanding of national culture, and thus enhance their sense of national cultural pride.

#### **4. Discussion**

In summary, this article aims to study how the cultural symbols of the "global village" are integrated into the learning of Chinese English major students from the perspective of a community with a shared future for mankind and to cultivate their cross-cultural communication and autonomous learning abilities. This article suggests integrating "global village" cultural elements into cross-cultural communication from multiple perspectives such as foreign language curriculum design, foreign language teaching, and foreign language practice, focusing on cultivating the cross-cultural

communication competence of English major students, as cross-cultural communication competence includes many elements, including historical background, humanistic education, and the formation of a sense of community with a shared future for mankind, with the characteristic of multicultural integration. English majors should stand in the perspective of a community with a shared future for mankind, and actively explore cultural differences between China and foreign countries to form identity. Cultivating English majors' cultural sensitivity and cultural thinking competence is conducive to forming multi-cultural identity, cultural thinking, and reflection on foreign cultures and ultimately becoming composite talents with international vision, awareness of a community with a shared future for mankind, and cross-cultural competence.

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