

A Practical Exploration of Intercultural Communication Competence Training under the Language and Culture Integration Teaching Model

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ABSTRACT: *With the economic globalization, intercultural communication is becoming more and more frequent. To communicate with people of different cultural backgrounds effectively and appropriately, people need intercultural communication competence. However, the current situation of intercultural teaching in secondary vocational schools is not optimistic (Huang Yaqiao, 2016; Gu Xiaole, 2017). English teaching pays more attention to language teaching, and ignores the foundation and precondition roles of intercultural knowledge and intercultural attitude in the training of intercultural communication competence. The students' intercultural communication competence needs to be improved urgently. Based on Byram's EU Model and referring to the practical teaching circular model of Gu Xiaole (2017), the study designs the language and culture integration teaching model to explore the effects of the language and culture integration teaching model on intercultural knowledge and intercultural attitude in English reading teaching in secondary vocational schools.*

KEYWORDS: intercultural communication competence; language and culture integration teaching model; English reading teaching; secondary vocational schools

INTRODUCTION

With the economic globalization, intercultural communication is becoming more and more frequent and important (Shen Tingting, 2021). With the deepening of the "Belt and Road" construction, China will cooperate with countries along the "Belt and Road" in economics, education, infrastructure, energy, tourism, trade and many other fields; all industries are in need of a large number of talents with both professional skills and good intercultural communication competence urgently to adapt to the diversified working environment (Zhang Yanxin, 2019). However, different countries have different cultural backgrounds, ideologies, values and religious beliefs. In order to

achieve this goal, we need a large number of composite applied talents who have both technical skills and foreign language knowledge and are familiar with local laws and culture. They should not only have professional skills, but also have certain language application ability and intercultural communication competence (Han Ling, 2020).

In addition, the National Medium and Long-Term Plan for Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) points out that we should “cultivate a large number of international talents”. International talents should not only have a solid knowledge of English, but also be familiar with the cultural backgrounds behind the language, especially the cultural differences of different countries and regions. Therefore, the intercultural communication competence training has become an urgent requirement of the new era and a basic literacy of citizens in the 21st century. English Curriculum Standards for Secondary Vocational Schools (2018) clearly points out that the tasks of secondary vocational English courses are to fully implement the party’s educational policy and the basic tasks of Building Morality and Cultivating People. It can be seen that the intercultural communication competence is a necessary ability in the career of the secondary vocational school students.

However, English teaching pays more attention to language teaching and ignores the foundation and precondition role of intercultural knowledge and intercultural attitude in improving intercultural communication competence, which leads to the lack of intercultural communication competence (Huang Yaqiao, 2016). Although students have a wealth of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, as well as some English reading skills, it is still difficult for them to break through in reading speed and comprehension (Yu Yuyu, 2017).

To sum up, students’ intercultural communication competence training is a crucial factor in solving the problems of English reading teaching. Therefore, this thesis aims to study intercultural communication competence training in English reading teaching in secondary vocational schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Models of ICC

With the development of the intercultural communication, different intercultural communication models emerge one after another (Wang Qiang, 2016). The existing models of intercultural communication competence abroad can be roughly classified into three categories: constitutive elements models, developmental stage models and interactive dialogue models (Berardo 2005; Spitzberg & Changnon 2009). From the

perspective of the constitutive element models, Ruben (1976) proposes the seven-dimension model of communication competence. Spitzberg (1984) proposes intercultural communication competence consists of knowledge, motivation and skills. In Byram's (1997) EU Model, students are required to acquire knowledge, attitudes, skills and critical cultural awareness. Chen (1989, 2010) proposes the four-dimension model of intercultural communication competence. Deardorff (2006) puts forward the pyramidal model of intercultural competence.

From the perspective of the developmental stage models, Bennett (1986, 1993) puts forward the intercultural sensitivity development model; King & Magolda (2005) raise intercultural maturity model; Fantini & Tirmizi (2006) put forward four stages model of intercultural communication competence.

From the perspective of the interactive dialogue models, Spitzberg (2000) puts forward the binary dialogue model; Liddicoat & Scarino (2013) suggest that the intercultural communication competence training goes through a cycle of four stages: attention, comparison, reflection and communication. Chinese scholars mainly discuss the intercultural communication competence models from two aspects.

First, the model of intercultural communication competence is constructed from theoretical perspective (Jia Yuxin, 1997; Xu Lisheng, 2000; Zhang Hongling, 2007). For example, the theory of intercultural communication competence put forward by Jia Yuxin (1997) consists of four parts: basic communication competence system, emotional and relational competence system, plot competence system and strategic competence system. Gao Yihong (1998) interprets intercultural communication competence from the concepts of "Tao" and "Qi" in Chinese traditional philosophy. "Tao" refers to a sound personality and communication orientation; "Qi" refers to cultural knowledge, communication skills and efficacy. Yang Ying & Zhuang Enping (2007) point out intercultural communication competence includes four systems: global consciousness, cultural adjustment, knowledge practice and communication practice. Zhuang Enping (2012) proposes an implementation model for intercultural classroom teaching.

Second, some scholars have put forward practical models of training intercultural communication competence in foreign language teaching (Wen Qiufang, 1999; Gao Yihong, 2002; Yang Ying & Zhuang Enping, 2007; Zhang Hongling, 2007, 2012; Zhong Hua & Fan Weiwei, 2013; Gao Yongchen, 2014; Gu Xiaole, 2017). For example, the practical model of Kong Deliang & Luan Shuwen (2012) integrates training principles, contents and strategies. Gu Xiaole (2017) proposes the practical teaching

circular model of intercultural communication competence. Based on the theoretical model of national cultural translation competence, Wu Dan (2018) proposes the integration of language, culture, translation and intercultural communication.

The language and culture integration teaching model used in experimental class is designed according to Byram's theory of intercultural communication competence and the practical teaching circular model of Gu Xiaole (2017). The teaching model includes four dimensions of intercultural communication competence, five teaching procedures and a series of teaching activities.

Byram's EU Model

Byram's theory of intercultural communication competence, known as the EU Model, is based on linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence. It includes four dimensions: knowledge, attitude, skills (interpreting and relating skill; discovery and interaction skill) and critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2013). The details are as follow.

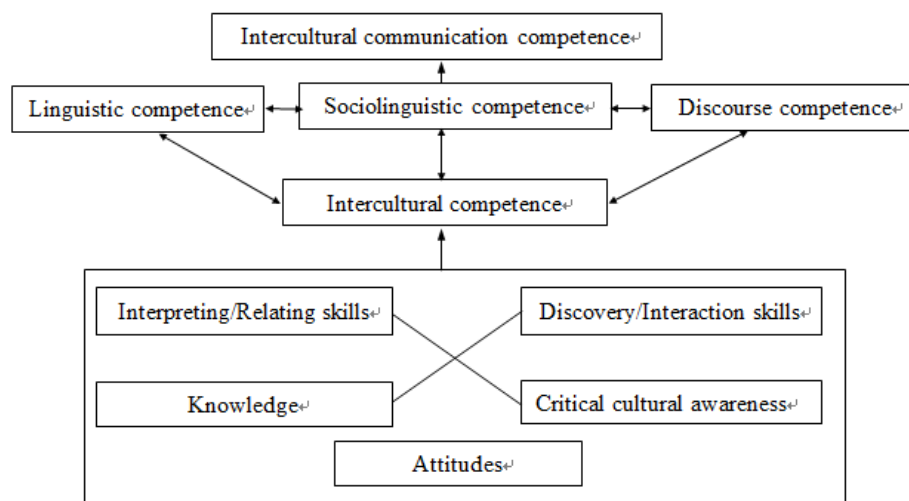


Figure 2-1 Byram's EU Model

(1) Knowledge. Knowledge in intercultural communication competence refers to the information needed to communicate effectively and appropriately, which is fundamental to successful interaction (Byram, 2013). It also refers to an individual's understanding of his own culture and social groups, as well as the understanding of the knowledge of the target countries and social groups (Byram, 2013). Knowledge mainly involves the following contents: social identity and group, law, belief and behavior,

school life, national history and geography, etc. Research shows that understanding of knowledge in one's own culture and the target culture is positively correlated with intercultural communication competence (Wiseman, Hammer & Nishida, 1989; Gudykunst, Yang & Nishida, 1987). If communicators lack relevant cultural knowledge in intercultural communication, they are easy to have cultural misunderstandings and cultural conflicts, which is more serious than grammatical mistakes (Hu Wenzhong, 1994). Therefore, an excellent intercultural communicator should not only know about the cultural knowledge of one's own country, but also understand the customs of other cultures, current important and popular events and so on.

(2) Attitude. Attitude in intercultural communication competence refers to the emotion and willingness in communication, which is the precondition of successful intercultural interaction (Byram, 2013). It is concerned about being curious and open to cultural issues; no longer doubts about other cultures and no longer regards our own culture as "central culture" (Byram, 2013). Attitude is an acceptance or recognition of other cultures from an emotional point of view. Only when communicators are full of confidence and interest in communication and take part in communication with a positive attitude, can they improve their intercultural communication competence.

(3) Skills. Skills in intercultural communication competence refer to the appropriate and effective behavior in specific communication situations, which are the guarantee of intercultural communication. Skills include interpreting and relating skill as well as discovery and interaction skill. Specifically, interpreting and relating skill refers to "the ability to interpret documents or events from another culture, and relate them to one's own" (Byram, 2013); discovery and interaction skill can be described as "the ability to acquire new knowledge in cultural practice and the ability to use skills to solve practical interaction problems, which emphasizes the flexibility and adaptability in the process of intercultural communication" (Byram, 2013). Skill is a kind of practical operation ability with a certain intercultural knowledge and positive attitude, which needs to be developed for a long time.

(4) Critical cultural awareness. It is the ability to look at the culture of one's own country and other countries objectively and make their own judgments on the basis of objective analysis (Byram, 2013). It requires intercultural communicators to have a certain critical spirit and independent thinking ability.

Byram (1997) firstly believes that cultural knowledge is essential for successful intercultural communication, which includes knowledge about communication objects, communication rules, communication situations, as well as knowledge of one's own

countries. Besides, it needs to rely on attitude factors to achieve the effective exchange of information, and the establishment and maintenance of good relationships (Byram, 1997). A certain amount of cultural knowledge reserve is the foundation of intercultural communication; the attitude towards other cultures and the willingness to communicate also determine the success or failure of communication to a certain extent. In all, knowledge and attitude are the foundations and preconditions, and skills shown in the process of communication are the important guarantee of intercultural communication (Byram, 1997).

Among the models of intercultural communication competence, Byram's EU Model has an important influence in the field of foreign language education (Gu Xiaole, 2017). It has long been the mainstream theory of intercultural foreign language teaching and is still being perfected (Tran & Duong, 2018). It focuses on the interaction among various abilities and skills, which helps us to understand it in an all-round way (Gao Yongchen, 2014). Byram's EU Model has profound influence with the following main characteristics.

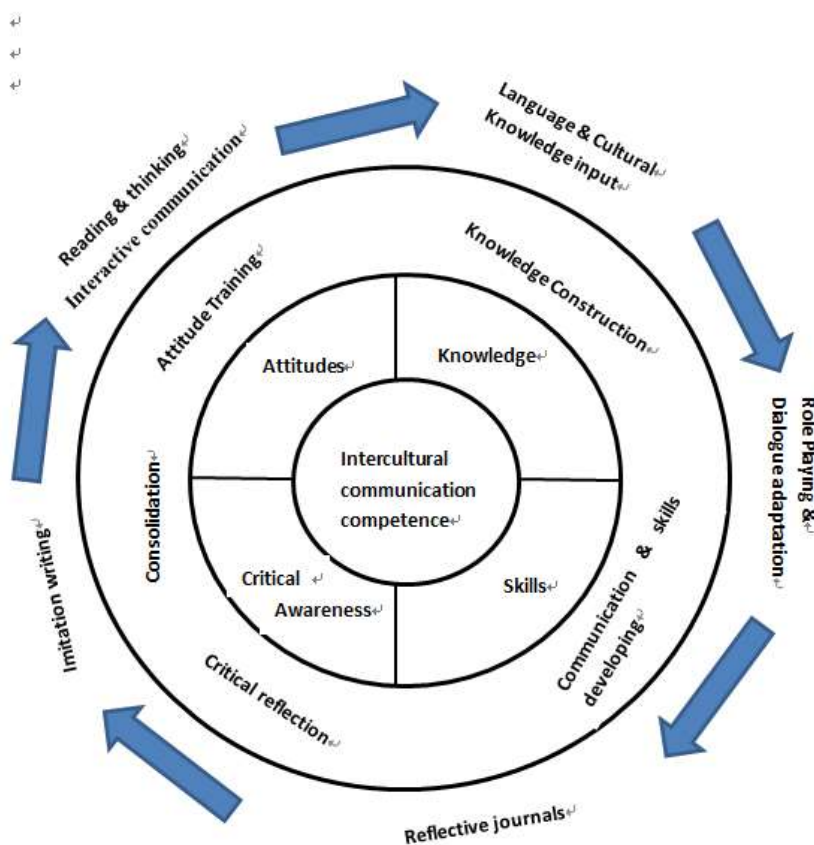
Firstly, Byram's EU Model focuses on how to effectively cultivate intercultural communication competence in foreign language teaching, which is operable (Sauve, 1996). Byram (1997) uses the "discovery" and "comparison" dimension, emphasizing that teachers should guide learners to compare cultural phenomena in textbooks with those of their own nationalities. Even if teachers use traditional textbooks, they can carry out meaningful intercultural teaching, which provides a model for intercultural teaching in China.

Secondly, based on the actual situation of foreign language teaching, Byram (2014) developed a new curriculum and syllabus with intercultural communication as the core content. It is great significant to the training of intercultural communication competence and foreign language teaching.

Finally, Byram (2014) incorporated the concept of communication competence into the EU Model, emphasizing the importance of language competence and critical cultural awareness. Therefore, according to secondary vocational students' actual situation, based on Byram's EU Model and combined with the language and culture integration teaching model, this thesis aims to study the intercultural communication competence in English reading teaching in secondary vocational schools.

Language and Culture Integration Teaching Model

Based on Byram’s EU Model, referring to the practical teaching circular model of Gu Xiaole (2017), the language and culture integration teaching model is designed. During the experiment, one of the two parallel classes serves as the control class, and the other as the experimental class. The language and culture integration teaching model will be used in the experimental class. As is shown in the following graph, the teaching model includes four dimensions of intercultural communication competence. It also consists of five teaching procedures and a series of teaching activities. The four dimensions are in the center; the five teaching procedures are in the intermediate level and the teaching activities are in the peripheral level. It should be emphasized that there is no strict dividing line between the different procedures of training ICC.



METHODOLOGY

This study adopts quantitative analysis methods to explore the effects of the language and culture integration teaching model on secondary vocational school students’ intercultural knowledge and intercultural attitude. According to above purposes, two

questions are proposed in this research.

(1) Can English reading teaching in secondary vocational schools under language and culture integration teaching model improve students' intercultural knowledge level? If so, in what aspects can it improve students' intercultural knowledge level?

(2) Can English reading teaching in secondary vocational schools under language and culture integration teaching model improve students' intercultural attitude? If so, in what aspects can it improve students' intercultural attitude?

Participants

The subjects are 85 students from two parallel classes of a secondary vocational school in Xuzhou. One is an experimental class with 43 students and the other is a control class with 42 students. They are at an average age of 15 years old. The reasons why they are chosen as the subjects are as follows. First, they are from two secondary vocational classes of Grade 2022, with similar English level. Second, they all have been learning English since Grade Three, about 6 years. Both classes have 4 English lessons a week, each of which lasts 40 minutes. In addition, both classes have the same English teacher, and use the same text book (English for New Skills). Moreover, all subjects are not familiar with the language and culture integration teaching model before the experiment. The above actual situations of subjects provide a great convenience for the research.

Data collection

The application research lasts four months from September 2022 to January 2023. In this period, the following research instruments are adopted for data collection and analysis, which are test paper and questionnaire. The test paper is designed to explore the effects of the teaching model on students' intercultural knowledge before and after the experiment, and is mainly used to answer the first question; the questionnaire on "attitude dimension" is to explore the influence of the teaching model on students' intercultural attitude before and after the experiment in English reading teaching, which aims to answer the second questions.

Test paper

Based on Byram's EU Model, combined with English Curriculum Standards for Secondary Vocational Schools (2018) for the requirements of intercultural knowledge and referring to the cultural learning test paper designed by Fu Yonggang & Li Tianxing (2003), the intercultural knowledge test paper is designed. To ensure the reliability and validity of the test paper, the difficulty of test papers in pre-test and post-test is similar, and the contents of both tests are different. The intercultural knowledge test paper is

made up of 25 items, which contains 5 aspects. The total score of the test paper is 100. The content classifications of the test paper are as follows:

Table 3-1 Content Classifications of the Test Paper

Content	Order number	Total
knowledge of English-speaking countries	1,2,4,10,11,15	6
social values	5,6,7,12	4
time concept	8,9	2
words with cultural connotation	13,14,20,21,22,23,24	7
cultural knowledge in textbooks	3, 16,17,18,19,25	6

The test paper was issued twice through Questionnaire Star online questionnaire survey platform. A total of 85 test papers were sent out each time, and 85 valid ones were collected. The effective rate is 100.00%. After the completion, the data obtained in the test paper are analyzed by SPSS23.0 (See Appendix II and III). The results are as follows:

Table 3-2 Reliability Test Case Processing Summary of the Test Paper

		Number	%
Cases	Valid	85	100.00
	Excluded	0	0
	Total	85	100.0

Questionnaire

Based on Byram's EU Model, combined with English Curriculum Standards for Secondary Vocational Schools (2018) and referring to the questionnaire designed by Zhong Hua, Bai Qianhui & Fan Weiwei (2013), the questionnaire is formed. This questionnaire employs the 5 Likert scale, which corresponds to the Arabic number 1-5 (1= fully disagree; 2= disagree; 3= uncertain; 4= agree; 5= strongly agree).

To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, a pilot study was made among some students in Grade 2019. According to the results of this pilot study analyzed by SPSS23.0, some questions that students could not really understand were deleted. In addition, the author and teachers with rich experience in intercultural teaching repeatedly studied, modified and improved the questions to ensure that the questionnaire not only conforms to the theoretical category of Byram's intercultural communication competence, but also is in line with the actual situation of secondary vocational school students.

A total of 85 questionnaires in two classes are handed out and collected separately. The data are analyzed separately through SPSS25.0 to answer the second question. In terms of “attitude dimension”, there are 8 items altogether, covering five aspects of intercultural attitude. The contents are classified as follows.

Table 3-3 Content Classifications of “Attitude” Dimension

Content	Order number
interaction engagement	1, 2
respect for cultural difference	3
interaction confidence	4,5
interaction enjoyment	6
interaction attentiveness	7, 8

According to Gay (1992), the acceptable reliability coefficient should not be less than 0.7. According to Table 3-4, it can be seen that the overall reliability is 0.808; the reliability of each dimension in the questionnaire is higher than 0.70. It indicates that the reliability of the questionnaire is high and the design of each part is scientific, which can meet the needs of data analysis.

Table 3-4 Reliability Analysis of the Questionnaire

Reliability statistics	Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
overall reliability	.808	30
knowledge dimension	.762	6
attitude dimension	.746	8
skills dimension	.722	9
awareness dimension	.730	7

Table 3-5 Test of KMO and Bartlett of the Questionnaire

KMO Sampling Appropriateness Quantity		.765
Bartlett Sphericity Test	chi-squared approximation	906.479
	df.	435
	sig.	.000

As can be seen from Table 3-5, the KMO value is 0.765, which shows that the internal validity structure of the questionnaire is good. It indicates that the design of this questionnaire meets the requirements and the data are suitable for factor analysis.

Generally speaking, the lower the significance of Sphericity Test (< 0.05), the greater the possibility that there is a meaningful relationship between the original variables. If the significant level of Sphericity Test is large (>0.1), it indicates that the data are not suitable for factor analysis. It can be seen from Table 3-5 that the significant value is 0.00, < 0.05 , indicating that there is a significant relationship between the questionnaires. In conclusion, the questionnaire meets the requirements of Byram's theory, which proves that the reliability and validity of the questionnaire is ensured.

Data analysis

The research is carried out in a secondary vocational school in Xuzhou, lasting four months from September 2022 to January 2023. Firstly, the independent sample T-test is used to compare the differences in the results of intercultural knowledge and intercultural attitude respectively between control class and experimental class. Secondly, the paired sample T-test is employed to compare the differences between pre-test and post-test in intercultural knowledge and intercultural attitude respectively in experimental class. The experiment has the following stages:

Stage 1: Before the teaching experiment, the pre-tests are conducted in the two classes, which include test paper and questionnaire. 85 subjects are instructed to finish these tests anonymously. 85 test papers and questionnaires are given out and 85 ones are valid.

Stage 2: During the experiment, the language and culture integration teaching model was used in experimental class in the weekly reading class. Relevant cultural knowledge is introduced through the following activities: group discussion, discourse analysis, cultural introduction and comparison, role play, writing and so on, so that students can explore and experience actively; however, the reading teaching method in the control class remained the same, relevant cultural knowledge is only presented to students with brief oral introduction or PPT.

Stage 3: After the experiment, the post-tests were conducted again. The purpose is to compare the differences of intercultural knowledge and intercultural attitude before and after the experiment, and find out whether the teaching model has significant effects on the subjects' intercultural knowledge and intercultural attitude.

Classroom application of cultivation mode

Title: Unit 5 What's your travel plan?

Lesson type: Reading

Duration: 40 minutes

Teaching Material analysi

This module is about making travel plans and understanding travel knowledge. Students are required to be able to understand conversations about travel plans, and introduce familiar tourist attractions in English. Firstly, through the study of this unit, students can make different tourism plans and talk about tourism plans skillfully. They can introduce tourist attractions according to their requirements. Secondly, through the study of this module, it can help students broaden their horizons, understand tourism cultures around the world and the differences between Chinese and western cultures in tourism, so that students can keep exploring and learning the rich tourism resources knowledge in China and around the world. Through this module, it can also arouse their patriotic enthusiasm, enhance their confidence in learning. Students realize that different travel attractions differ in geographical conditions, religious beliefs, customs and habits in many parts of the world, which guides them to think deeply about the differences of different cultures, treat different cultures with equal tolerance and cultivate their ability of interpersonal communication and cooperation with others.

Learning analysis

After three years' study in junior high school, students have acquired simple language knowledge of expressing personal preference. They have also mastered a certain amount of vocabularies and sentence structures, as well as certain reading and oral expression abilities.

However, students do not know enough about tourism in their own country and all over the world, especially about the tourist attractions. Furthermore, the reading materials students are exposed to on this aspect are very limited. Therefore, in this course, teachers should fully excavate the tourism culture knowledge in this unit, broaden students' horizons, and design different communication tasks in the teaching process. Teachers should attach equal importance to language learning and cultural knowledge learning.

Teaching objectives:

At the end of the class, students will be able to

1. Learn the introduction of famous tourist attractions and different ways of travelling.
2. Skim, scan, infer and extract specific information for summary.
3. Pay attention to the tourism culture at home and abroad to inspire love for the motherland; understand the customs of different cultures and cultivate intercultural awareness.
4. Cooperate with others, establish good interpersonal relationships, and feel the

joy of cooperation and communication with others.

Key points:

1. Master and apply English reading skills: skimming, scanning, inferring
2. Cultivate students' interpersonal skills and the ability to cooperate with others

Difficult points:

1. Stimulate students' interest and cultivate their good study habits
2. Guide students to use key sentence patterns flexibly in real situations.

Teaching methods:

Language and culture integration teaching methods

Teaching aids:

Video, pictures, PPT

Teaching procedures:

Activity 1: Interactive communication

Many students may prefer to go traveling. The teacher guides students to discuss the following questions:

- (1) Where would you like to go for a holiday?
- (2) What should you prepare before traveling?
- (3) Can you describe your travel in some simple words?

Students are asked to share the answers with the whole class.

Purpose: interactive communication will lead in the topic: traveling, which will guide students to define learning objectives. As they are still young and yearn for the outside world, this topic is related to students' lives and can greatly stimulate their interest and enthusiasm, so they have many opinions on this topic.

Activity 2: Skimming, scanning and group discussion

Present the topic to students: they will read the following short sections about different styles of traveling. Ask the students to read the tips, and predict the meaning of package tours and DIY tours.

First, the teacher asks students to skim the passage on page 45 with the following question: *How many choices of traveling are mentioned in the passage? What are they?* And try to check the accuracy of their former predictions. Then, ask students to read the passages again and complete the exercises in Activity ②. Next, ask them to discuss the differences between the two ways of traveling in groups and express their opinions about which way of traveling is their favorite.

Purpose: this link focuses on students’ reading skills input. Through “skimming, scanning and group discussion”, students can understand different ways of travelling. This activity helps students to enter the situation quickly and cultivate their inferring skills. Meanwhile, it can also cultivate students’ healthy and positive attitude towards life. It helps to train their interpersonal communication ability and cooperation ability with others.

Activity 3: Culture knowledge input

(1) Students are presented some pictures of tourist attractions at home and abroad through PPT. For example: the Forbidden City, Mount Tai, West Lake, National Park, the Taj Mahal of India, the Eiffel Tower, the London Bowl, etc.

First, ask them to speak out these travel attractions and then, ask them to discuss the question in groups and express their opinions: *If you have a chance to travel one of these places, which place would you like to go? Why?* At last, let the students introduce one of these tourist attractions in English. (This question will be assigned to students in form of extra-curricular homework. They can learn about these attractions through the Internet or by looking up relevant books).

(2) Students are required to read the passage again. Complete the following form on Page 46.

Scenic Spots	Names	Places to go
The Palace Museum	Lily Xiao Ming David	
The Great Wall		
Mount Tai		
Grand Canyon		
Mount Fuji		
Pyramids		

(3) Students are guided to skim the reading material on page 47 and discuss the following question: *If your friend is planning a trip to a foreign city/the seaside/a mountain, what advice could you give?*

Ask the students to read it again, learn relevant cultural knowledge, and then match the different resorts with relevant travel necessities:

A foreign city--- a little English, local customs, smile

Seaside --- sunscreen, a sunhat, a pair of sunglasses, a swimsuit

Mountain --- warm clothes, a walking stick, a camera

Purpose: this link focuses on students' intercultural communication knowledge input. Teaching activities are mainly centered on linguistic knowledge, cultural knowledge, which can make students enhance cultural consensus in knowledge construction and master the vocabulary and key sentences related to tourism and tourist attractions. After finishing this activity, the students will get a general view of scenic spots in the world, which can help students enlarge their cultural knowledge.

Activity 4: Role playing and dialogue adaptation

(1) Play a role. Each group sends a representative to say part of "what to take". The other students guess "where he is going". Then, work in pairs to make a dialogue and share it with the class.

(2) Imitate the dialogue. The teacher organizes students to watch the video clips of the travel attractions. Imagine you were a tour guide, your friend would like to go to the city: London, but he knows nothing about it. You can recommend the local tourist attractions and customs to him/her according to his/her preference. Please imitate the dialogue using the key sentences of travel tips: "Do you have any plan for the coming holiday? "If you are planning to, remember to.....; if you are going to..., don't forget to.....".

Purpose: This part aims at performing the effective communication activities. Students use the language and culture knowledge learned in the above steps to imitate communication tasks through role playing and dialogue adaptation in a relaxed and active atmosphere. These activities are conducive to developing their interpersonal communication ability. It is also helpful for them to learn the culture around the world and spread Chinese culture. Through the above activities, students can be aware of the cultural conflicts with people from different cultural backgrounds. Students can use cultural knowledge and skills flexibly, adjust their own behaviors with an open and inclusive attitude and realize effective intercultural communication.

Activity 5: Assignment (reflective writing)

Students are asked to write down their own experiences on traveling. It should include the following aspects: Where to go, how to get there, what to take, where to stay, what to visit. It is suggested that students should pay attention to introduce the tourist attractions, history, customs, culture, and the appropriate behaviors when they encounter people from different cultural backgrounds, etc.

Purpose: This part focuses on training students' critical awareness. Students use knowledge, attitudes and skills of intercultural communication competence to analyze their behaviors rationally through reflective writing, which is helpful to find the

progress and shortcomings of students' intercultural communication competence.

DISCUSSION

Effects on Intercultural Knowledge

This part mainly discusses whether the language and culture integration teaching model in English reading teaching can improve students' intercultural knowledge level and in what aspects it can improve their intercultural knowledge. This part provides the answer to the first question of the study by analyzing the results of intercultural knowledge.

The results and discussions of intercultural knowledge are shown.

Before the experiment, two classes were tested with the intercultural knowledge test paper to make sure that there is no significant difference between the two classes (See Appendix II). The results are reflected in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1 Comparison of I K between CC and EC in Pre-test

Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.
Control class	42	56.76	9.23	-.560	.577
Experimental class	43	55.63	9.43		

It can be seen from Table 4-1 that in pre-test, the averages of control class and experimental class are 56.76 and 55.63 respectively, which is below the passing line of 60; the t-value is -.560. Meanwhile, the value of significance (2-tailed) is .577, which is more than 0.05. It indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between control class and experimental class. Before the experiment, the intercultural knowledge of the two classes is at the same level. They were tested again with different intercultural knowledge test paper after the experiment to find out whether there is significant difference (See Appendix I). The results are shown in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2 Comparison of IK between CC and EC in Post-test

Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.
Control class	42	57.52	8.05	3.78	.000
Experimental class	43	63.63	6.81		

From Table 4-2, we can see that in post-test, the average of control class is 57.52 and that in the experimental class is 63.63. Meanwhile, the value of significance (2-tailed) is .000, less than 0.05. It reflects that the difference between control class and experimental class is statistically significant after the experiment.

Table 4-3 the Correlations in EC between Pre-test and Post-test

	Number	Correlation	Sig.
Paired 1 Pre-test results & Post-test results	43	.899	.000

Table 4-3 is the correlation analysis of pre-test and post-test. Generally speaking, if the correlation coefficient is higher than 0.6, the two tests have a strong correlation with each other. From Table 4-3, we can see that the correlation is 0.899, much higher than 0.6, which means that all statistics are relevant and the teaching experiment is effective; The corresponding test value of significance (2-tailed) is 0.000, < 0.05. In conclusion, the test paper of intercultural knowledge conforms to Byram's theory, and there is a positive correlation between pre-test and post-test.

After that, the paired samples T-Test was carried out to investigate whether the differences have undergone significant changes in experimental class between pre-test and post-test after the experiment. The results are shown in Table 4-4.

Table 4-4 Comparison of IK in EC between Pre-test and Post-test

		Paired Differences					t	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
					Lower	Upper		
Paired 1	Pre-test Post-test	-8.00	4.45	.67874	-9.369	-6.630	-11.78	.000

It can be seen from Table 4-4 that the average in post-test in experimental class is 8.00 higher than that in pre-test. The T-value is -11.78 and the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000, less than 0.05, which shows that the subjects' intercultural knowledge has been improved significantly through four months' teaching experiment. It also indicates that there is statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test in experimental class.

Therefore, according to the above results and discussion, it can be concluded that the language and culture integration teaching model in English reading teaching in secondary vocational schools can improve the students' overall level of intercultural knowledge significantly.

The reasons are as follows. Firstly, the importance of cultural teaching in English reading teaching has attracted people's attention and many scholars have put forward valuable suggestions in this aspect (Grabe, 2001; Grabe & Stoller, 2013; Tran & Duong, 2018; Jia Yuxin, 2009; Huang Yaqiao, 2016; Wang Ying, 2016; Jin Min, 2017; Zhang Lingling, 2017). Secondly, based on Byram's EU Model, the language and culture integration teaching model emphasizes that by "discovery" and "comparison", teachers can guide learners to learn cultural phenomena in textbooks and carry out meaningful intercultural teaching. Through the discussion and analysis of cultural phenomena in reading materials, students can master intercultural knowledge subtly, which has a positive impact on improving the level of intercultural knowledge. Thirdly, Byram's EU Model pays attention to the interaction among various abilities and skills, which helps us to understand it in an all-round way (Gao Yongchen, 2014). The language and culture integration teaching model focuses on cultivating students' exploration ability and cooperative learning ability to improve their comprehension ability. Secondary vocational school students are sensitive and they are willing to take the initiative to learn intercultural knowledge in this way.

Effects on Intercultural Attitude

This part mainly discusses the effects of the language and culture integration teaching model on subjects' intercultural attitude. The part provides the answer to the second question of this study by analyzing the results of intercultural attitude. The results and discussions are shown. Before the experiment, the independent sample T- test was carried out firstly to make sure that two classes have the same level of intercultural attitude. The results and discussions will be fully presented in Table 4-5.

Table 4-5 Comparison of IA between CC and EC in Pre-test

Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.
Control class	42	2.91	.228	.899	.37
Experimental class	43	2.95	.173		

From Table 4-5, we can see that the average of pre-test in control class is 2.91 and that

in experimental class is 2.95, whose total score is 5. The T-value is 0.899 and the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.37, which is more than 0.05. It can be indicated from the statistics that the results are not statistically significant between experimental class and control class. The intercultural attitude of control class and experimental class was in the same level before the experiment.

After the experiment, the independent sample T-test was performed again to test whether there is statistically significant difference between the experimental class and the control class.

Table 4-6 Comparison of IA between CC and EC in Post-test

Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.
Control class	42	3.16	.169	3.829	.000
Experimental class	43	3.28	.138		

As is shown above, the average of post-test in control class is 3.16 and that in experimental class is 3.28; the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000, less than 0.05. It indicates that the difference in intercultural attitude between two classes is statistically significant after the experiment. It shows that the students' intercultural attitude has improved through four months' teaching experiment.

Table 4-7 the Correlations in EC between Pre-test and Post-test

	Number	Correlation	Sig.
Paired 1 Pre-test results & Post-test results	85	.725	.000

Table 4-7 is the correlation analysis of pre-test and post-test. Generally speaking, if the correlation coefficient is higher than 0.6, the two tests have a strong correlation with each other. From Table 4-7, we can see that the correlation is 0.625, higher than 0.6, which means that all statistics are relevant and the teaching experiment is effective; The value of significance (2-tailed) is 0.000, < 0.05; In general, both tests comply with the categories proposed by Byram's theory, and have a positive correlation.

After that, the paired samples T-Test was used to test the differences between pre-test and post-test in experimental class, aiming to discuss the influences of the language and culture integration teaching model on subjects' intercultural attitude. As is illustrated in

Table 4-8:

Table 4-8 Comparison of IA in EC between Pre-test and Post-test

		Paired Differences					t	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
					Lower	Upper		
Paired 1	Pre-test Post-test	-.33	.184	.028	-.389	-.275	-11.81	.000

From Table 4-8, we can see that the average of post-test in experimental class is 0.33 higher than that of pre-test, and the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000, < 0.05 . We could also find that the standard deviation decrease, showing that the gap has been narrowed after the experiment. It indicates that after the experiment, there is significant difference in overall level of intercultural attitude between pre-test and post-test in experimental class.

Therefore, according to the above analysis and results, it can be concluded that the language and culture integration teaching model in English reading teaching can improve students' overall level of intercultural attitude significantly in a certain time.

There are three reasons. Firstly, Byram's Ph.D. student Melina Porto (2017) combines text reading with the training of intercultural attitudes and conducts an empirical study in Argentina University, which lays a foundation for the combination of theory and practice of intercultural attitude. Secondly, as Byram (2013) introduced, attitude is the prerequisite for successful intercultural communication. It is concerned about being curious and open to cultural issues; no longer doubts about other cultures and no longer regards our own culture as "central culture". The language and culture integration teaching model emphasises enhancing students' understanding, appreciating and searching for the other cultures through a series of activities, such as role playing, dialogue adaptation, imitation writing, etc. These activities can give students more opportunities to comprehend the target culture and their own culture. They can gradually overcome the tendency of "Chinese culture aphasia" for the target culture, and are more willing to accept and appreciate different cultural views. Thirdly, Byram (2014) focuses on training students' exploration ability based on the specific situation

of foreign language teaching. According to Byram's EU Model, the teaching model emphasizes student-centered, gives them autonomy and makes them discover and explore cultural differences on their own initiative. All of these make students more susceptible to cultural differences to better train their intercultural attitude.

CONCLUSIONS

Findings

In accordance with the analyses of the results gathered from test papers and questionnaires, the following are the main findings of this study.

Firstly, language and culture integration teaching model has a significant impact on secondary vocational school students' intercultural knowledge. In general, in experimental class, the average in post-test is 8.00 higher than that in pre-test, 6.11 higher than that in control class, and the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating that the difference is statistically significant.

Secondly, the language and culture integration teaching model has a significant effect on secondary vocational school students' intercultural attitude. In the overall level, in experimental class, the average in post-test is 0.33 higher than that in pre-test, 0.12 higher than that in control class, and the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. It indicates that there is significant difference in subjects' overall level of intercultural attitude after the experiment.

Limitations

Although this research has successfully answered the two questions proposed in the study, there are still some limitations and suggestions for future study.

First, the sample of this research is not large enough. This research is carried out in a secondary vocational school in Xuzhou. The sample of teaching experiment is only 85 students. In the future, we should enlarge the sample to obtain higher reliability.

Second, the time duration of teaching experiment is a little short. Except the preparation work and the data collection, the actual teaching experiment is only 4 months.

Third, the influence of the teaching model on skill dimension of intercultural communication competence is not verified. Skill is a kind of practical operation ability, which needs to be developed for a long time. In addition, the time duration is not long enough and it is hard for students to change their behavior in a short period of time.

In the future, we should perfect the research from the following three aspects: the investigation scope, the research time, and the influence of the teaching model on skill dimension of intercultural communication competence.

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