

Research on the Innovation of Teaching Strategies and Practical Pathways for International Chinese Education from the Perspective of Cultural Integration

Lihong Ding^{1*}, Canyi Xu², Ying Liu²

¹Lanzhou University of Arts and Sciences, Chengguan District, Lanzhou 730000, Gansu, China

²Krirk university, Bang Khen District, Bangkok 10100, Thailand

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Copyright: © 2025 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract

Based on the core concept of cultural integration, this paper explores the necessity and feasibility of deeply integrating language teaching and cultural dissemination in ICE. By analyzing current challenges such as superficial cultural presentation, monotonous teaching methods, and learners' difficulties in cultural adaptation, it proposes innovative strategies including creating immersive cultural contexts, project-based cultural inquiry learning, digital empowerment for deepened cultural experience, localized selection of cultural content, and intercultural communication competence-oriented interactive teaching. The implementation pathways and expected outcomes are elaborated with case studies, aiming to provide theoretical references and practical guidance for ICE practitioners, promoting the shift from "language instrumentality" to "language-culture symbiosis".

Keywords

International Chinese Education
Cultural Integration
Teaching Strategy Innovation
Intercultural Communication
Cultural Dissemination
Immersive Learning

Online publication: May 26, 2025

1. Introduction

1.1. Research background and significance

- (1) Surge in Global Chinese Learning Demand: China's economic growth and rising international status have highlighted Chinese as a key tool for global communication and cultural carrier. The global network of Confucius Institutes, increasing HSK candidates, and booming online Chinese platforms reflect this trend ^[1].
- (2) Elevated Importance of Cultural Dimension: Language embodies culture, and learners seek not only language skills but an in-depth understanding of Chinese history, philosophy, and values to achieve effective cross-cultural

communication^[2]. The traditional “structural-functional” model fails to meet diverse needs.

- (3) Cultural Barriers and Teaching Challenges: Cultural content is often simplified as appendices (e.g., festivals, food), lacking interactive depth. Learners face “culture shock” and struggle to apply language in authentic contexts, undermining motivation^[3].
- (4) Necessity of Cultural Integration: Integrating cultural elements systematically into language teaching (phonetics, vocabulary, grammar) rather than superficial addition is key to enhancing ICE quality and sustainability^[4].

1.2. Research purpose and content

This paper aims within the cultural integration framework to:

- (1) Analyze the current status and dilemmas of cultural integration in ICE;
- (2) Propose innovative teaching strategies based on cultural integration;
- (3) Explore implementation pathways with case analyses;
- (4) Forecast the role of cultural integration in promoting high-quality ICE development.

2. Cultural integration: The core concept of international Chinese education

2.1. Connotation of cultural integration

In ICE, cultural integration refers to the natural and contextual integration of target culture (Chinese culture) learning into language teaching, focusing on:

- (1) Intersubjectivity: Respecting learners’ native cultures, understanding differences through comparison, and avoiding cultural centrism^[5];
- (2) Deep immersion: Moving beyond surface symbols to explore cultural deep structures (values, thinking patterns);
- (3) Contextual relevance: Linking linguistic forms with cultural meanings in specific socio-cultural contexts;
- (4) Competence orientation: Cultivating Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), including cultural knowledge, attitudes, skills, and critical

awareness^[6].

2.2. Theoretical foundations

- (1) Constructivist learning theory: Emphasizes learners’ active knowledge construction based on prior experience, requiring rich cultural contexts for active exploration^[7].
- (2) Sociocultural theory: Vygotsky’s mediation theory views language as the primary tool for thought and cultural transmission, advocating language-culture learning in authentic interactions^[8].
- (3) Intercultural communication studies: Provides the ICC framework and principles (e.g., cultural relativism) for integration^[9].
- (4) Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): Offers an operational model for integrating cultural content with language teaching^[10].

3. Dilemmas in the cultural integration of current ICE

- (1) Superficial and fragmented cultural presentation: Teaching focuses on explicit culture (festivals, food) rather than implicit aspects (values, social norms), with minimal cultural points lacking systematic coherence^[3,11].
- (2) Monotonous and didactic methods: Reliance on one-way input (lectures, videos) leaves learners passive, lacking interactive tasks for active cultural observation and reflection¹.
- (3) Learners’ cultural adaptation difficulties: Cultural differences cause confusion or resistance (“culture shock”), while textbooks may reinforce stereotypes, hindering objective cultural cognition^[12].
- (4) Inadequate localization of cultural content: Materials are overly “China-centric”, ignoring learners’ cultural backgrounds and failing to reflect contemporary Chinese culture (e.g., internet subcultures)^[13].
- (5) Neglect of cultural competence in assessment: Current assessments (e.g., HSK) focus on language skills, with minimal evaluation of

intercultural understanding and communication
[14].

4. Innovative teaching strategies from cultural integration perspective

4.1. Creating immersive cultural contexts

- (1) Core strategy: Use media and technology to build highly simulated cultural environments for “learning by doing”.
- (2) Physical setup: Decorate classrooms with Chinese calligraphy, handicrafts, and a “Chinese Culture Corner”;
- (3) VR/AR application: Simulate scenarios like Forbidden City tours or Spring Festival fairs [15];
- (4) Role-play tasks: Design authentic scenarios (e.g., ordering in a Chinese restaurant, business negotiations) with etiquette integration;
- (5) Authentic materials: Utilize Chinese film clips, social media content, and pop songs.

4.2. Project-based cultural inquiry learning

- (1) Core strategy: Learner-centered exploration of cultural themes (e.g., “Changes in Chinese Family Values”) through group collaboration, information gathering, and outcome presentation [16].
- (2) Theme selection: Align with learners’ interests, proficiency, and local cultural resources;
- (3) Process guidance: Teachers act as facilitators for planning and language support;
- (4) Holistic assessment: Evaluate inquiry processes (collaboration, information processing) and outcomes (cultural insight, creativity).

4.3. Deepening cultural experience via digital empowerment

- (1) Core strategy: Leverage internet, social media, and online communities to expand cultural learning boundaries.
- (2) Online resources: Integrate digital exhibitions from the National Museum of China and cultural MOOCs;
- (3) Social media interaction: Guide learners to follow Chinese influencers, observe internet slang and

trends;

- (4) Digital creation: Encourage learners to produce short videos comparing their culture with Chinese culture.

4.4. Localized selection and reconstruction of cultural content

- (1) Core strategy: Adapt cultural content to learners’ backgrounds while respecting authenticity, enhancing relevance [13].
- (2) Cultural comparison: Systematically contrast Chinese values (e.g., “face” concept) with learners’ native cultures;
- (3) Common ground seeking: Use universal themes (family, environmental protection) as cultural bridges;
- (4) Diverse perspectives: Present regional cultural variations and collisions between traditional and modern ideas.

4.5. Intercultural communication competence-oriented interactive teaching

- (1) Core strategy: Treat the classroom as an intercultural communication field through tasks requiring language and cultural knowledge application.
- (2) Contextual dialogues: Discuss scenarios prone to cultural misunderstandings (e.g., declining invitations, expressing disagreement);
- (3) Case analysis: Analyze authentic cultural conflict cases to foster sensitivity and problem-solving;
- (4) Reflective practice: Encourage learners to record cross-cultural experiences with teacher feedback.

5. Practical pathways and case outlines

5.1. Case 1: Immersive + Project-Based - “Exploring Chinese Spring Festival Culture”

- (1) Target: Intermediate-level overseas university students.
- (2) Strategy: Immersive setup (VR videos, Spring Festival decorations, traditional food tasting); group projects on themes like “Evolution of New Year’s Eve Dinner” or “Sociology of Red Envelopes”; outcomes via bilingual posters and

“cloud New Year greeting” simulations.

- (3) Effect: Deep understanding of customs and socio-cultural meanings, integrated language use in authentic tasks.

5.2. Case 2: Digital Empowerment + Localization - “Chinese Youth on Social Media”

- (1) Target: Advanced-level working professionals interested in Chinese society.
- (2) Strategy: Analyze Chinese youth bloggers’ content (e.g., Bilibili, Xiaohongshu); compare with local social media trends; rewrite Chinese internet buzzwords (e.g., “tangping”) into localized briefings; online discussions on shared youth topics (e.g., work-life balance).
- (3) Effect: Exposure to contemporary Chinese social dynamics enhances cross-cultural material handling skills.

6. Conclusion

Cultural integration is essential for enhancing ICE quality, requiring a shift from pure language skills training to “language-culture symbiosis”. The proposed strategies (immersive contexts, project-based inquiry, etc.) aim to infuse cultural vitality into language teaching, enabling deep cultural understanding and effective intercultural communication.

Implementing these strategies demands teachers with profound cultural literacy, intercultural competence, and technological skills, alongside collaborative efforts from curriculum designers and assessment institutions. Looking ahead, ICE under cultural integration will focus on: learner-centered deep experience, technology-humanities integration, global-local balance, and serving the community with a shared future. The value of cultural integration in ICE will become more evident as practice deepens.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban), 2023, Annual Development Report of Confucius Institutes. Confucius Institute Headquarters, Beijing.
- [2] Liu X, 2000, An Introduction to Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. Beijing Language and Culture University Press, Beijing.
- [3] Li Q, 2011, Presentation Methods of Cultural Content and the Effectiveness of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. *Language Teaching and Linguistic Studies*, 2011(2): 1–8.
- [4] Cui X, 2010, Issues of Cultural Teaching in International Chinese Education. *World Chinese Teaching*, 24(3): 291–299.
- [5] Byram M, 1997, Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence. *Multilingual Matters*, Shanghai.
- [6] Fantini AE (Ed.), 2006, Assessing Intercultural Competence. School for International Training, Shanghai.
- [7] Chen X, 2000, Qualitative Research Methods and Social Science Research. Educational Science Publishing House, Beijing.
- [8] Lantolf J, Thorne S, 2006, Sociocultural Theory and the Genesis of Second Language Development. Oxford University Press, London.
- [9] Samovar L, Porter R, McDaniel E, et al., 2017, Communication Between Cultures (9th ed.). Cengage Learning, London.
- [10] Coyle D, Hood P, Marsh D, 2010, CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning. Cambridge University Press, London.
- [11] Wu Y, 2010, Review of Research on the International Dissemination of Chinese. *Journal of Yunnan Normal University (Teaching and Research on Chinese as a Foreign Language Edition)*, 8(5): 1–8.
- [12] Wang J, 2007, Research on Cultural Acquisition by Second Language Learners. *World Chinese Teaching*, 2007(4): 73–83.

- [13] Zhang Y, 2004, Research on Cultural Textbooks for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language—Also on Principles for Compiling Cultural Textbooks. *Chinese Language Learning*, 2004(1): 56–61.
- [14] Li W, Liu S, 2012, Research on Standards for Chinese as a Second Language Proficiency. *Language Teaching and Linguistic Studies*, 2012(4): 1–9.
- [15] Zheng Y, 2021, The New Ecology of International Chinese Education Empowered by Technology. *World Chinese Teaching*, 35(4): 435–447.
- [16] Jin H, 2004, Ten Principles of Modern Foreign Language Teaching. *World Chinese Teaching*, 2004(1): 74–81.

Publisher's note

Whioce Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.