



# COMMENT ON “IMPACT OF COLLEGE ENGLISH EDUCATION THOUGHTS ON ENHANCING NATIONAL CULTURAL IDENTITY”


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## COMMENT ON “IMPACT OF COLLEGE ENGLISH EDUCATION THOUGHTS ON ENHANCING NATIONAL CULTURAL IDENTITY”

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The issue of cultural identity in China is a reflection of the challenges and complexities that arise from the country’s economic and social development in the cultural realm. It is rooted in the historical context of China’s modernization and the influence of foreign cultures, resulting in a neglect of its own rich traditional culture. With English being a widely used international language, its increasing popularity has also brought attention to college English teaching. Philosophy, being a highly theoretical and abstract subject, poses challenges for English teachers to effectively engage students and foster their subjectivity and creativity. English, as a valuable resource, can be utilized to enhance cultural identity and yield unexpected teaching outcomes.

Thus, it is crucial to explore how college English education can contribute to the cultivation of national cultural awareness and identity. Liang (2024) aims to discuss strategies for nurturing cultural consciousness within the context of English teaching. By integrating national cultural values and perspectives into English education, new approaches can be developed to enhance the overall development of English teaching in colleges and universities, while promoting the construction of a national culture (Park, 2018, p. 385). The article emphasizes the importance of integrating English knowledge with other subject areas to enable students to gain a deeper understanding of different cultures. By fostering an

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appreciation for the various countries' philosophies and cultures, students can develop their own sense of cultural identity and strengthen their connection to their own national heritage.

Utilizing college English education to promote national cultural identity holds significant importance for the comprehensive development of English teaching in higher education and the advancement of national cultural construction. By integrating cultural awareness into English instruction, students can acquire a broader perspective and deepen their understanding of diverse cultures, fostering their own cultural identity in the process.

## 1 ENGLISH EDUCATION ENHANCES NATIONAL CULTURAL IDENTITY

Cultural identity refers to individuals' recognition and sense of belonging to a particular culture. It encompasses geographical, historical and linguistic factors, as well as elements, such as language, history, religion, traditions, values, customs, art, music and literature. Cultural identity plays a significant role in personal self-identity and national image, shaping individuals' understanding of their own culture and their identification with it.

In the context of economic globalization, cultural identity has gained increasing importance, and China is becoming more aware of the significance of its own cultural identity. However, the dominance of English, as a global language, and the influence of English culture have posed challenges to the preservation and promotion of Chinese philosophical and cultural heritage. The spread of American hip-hop music, Hollywood movies and the dominance of English in scientific research have led to a decline in people's understanding and recognition of their own culture, weakening their connection to their cultural roots. Within the field of English education, there has been a lack of emphasis on the integration of philosophy and culture, resulting in a disconnection from students' actual situation and their sense of identity with philosophical culture. To address this, it is crucial to integrate cultural identity education into college English teaching (Shin, 2021, p. 80). This entails not only teaching the English language, but also cultivating students' cross-cultural awareness, international vision and appreciation for their own culture. English education should empower students to accept foreign cultures while promoting the preservation and promotion of their own national culture.

Incorporating cultural identity education into college English teaching is necessary to foster students' cultural concepts, prevent cultural assimilation, and establish their worldviews and values. It aligns with the primary mission of English education in China, which is to cultivate talents with cross-cultural communication skills and promote understanding and exchanges among different cultures.

(1) Lack of clear English education policy guidance on cultural identity

Before 2000, cultural identity issues were rarely addressed in policy documents related to English teaching in China. The focus was primarily on foreign culture, neglecting China’s cultural identity and its significance in English education. It was not until around 2010 that English education policies started to emphasize the importance of fostering students’ cultural identity and integrating philosophical and English culture into the teaching objectives. Despite progress, the construction of cultural identity in China, through English education, is still in its early stages, and there is a need to further enhance the recognition of the significance of cultural identity in this process.

In the globalized environment, contemporary young students often feel conflicted between traditional and modern cultures. This confusion arises due to the weakening impact of traditional culture and the widespread influence of Western cultural products. Many students rely on movies, the Internet and other sources to understand culture, but these methods often fail to provide a comprehensive and accurate representation of true cultural meaning. As a result, when faced with the choice between Chinese and Western cultures, students may experience misunderstandings and uncertainties about their cultural identity, leading to a sense of cultural dissonance.

(2) Overemphasis on the instrumental nature of language at the expense of its cultural nature

The essence of English education lies in placing human development at the core, where English language proficiency serves as a foundational skill, and cultural awareness acts as a guiding value orientation. However, historically, English education has predominantly focused on the functional aspects of language learning, placing excessive emphasis on knowledge and skills while overlooking the cultural dimension of language. In English textbooks, among English teachers, and even within learners themselves, there is often a lack of awareness regarding the cultural implications inherent in language.

## **2 SIGNIFICANCE OF ENHANCING CULTURAL IDENTITY**

Within the English teaching process, the focus has been primarily on foreign cultural input, while the appreciation and incorporation of philosophical cultural aspects have been limited. This has led to an incomplete understanding of the language and culture learners are exposed to. To foster a holistic understanding and appreciation of English, it is essential to integrate the cultural dimension and recognize that language itself is a conduit for cultural exchange and expression. By embracing philosophical cultural input in English education, learners can develop a more profound and meaningful cultural awareness.

The increasing dominance of English, as a global language, has led to a surge in English learning in China. However, this has also resulted in a shift in students' cultural preferences, with Western culture often being valued more than their own traditional Chinese culture. The imbalance between the importance placed on Western culture and the neglect of philosophical and cultural education in English teaching has contributed to a decrease in students' cultural identity and understanding of their own culture. Both teachers and students have a bias in attaching importance to different cultures in the process of English teaching. Teachers may not provide sufficient input of philosophical culture in English teaching, leading to a lack of connection between the English language and Chinese cultural identity. Students, on the other hand, may develop a short-sighted utilitarian mentality in their pursuit of English proficiency, prioritizing Western culture over their own. This results in a lack of cultural self-restraint and an independent cultural personality.

In current English teaching, there is a lack of emphasis on philosophical and cultural knowledge. High school and university English courses focus mainly on language skills, with minimal attention given to cultural and philosophical content. English exams rarely touch on philosophical and cultural issues, and textbooks often neglect the introduction of philosophical and cultural knowledge. As a result, students struggle to express philosophical concepts and cultural phenomena in English, leading to a condition of aphasia in philosophical culture. To address these issues, it is crucial to integrate philosophical and cultural education into English teaching. Teachers should provide more input of philosophical culture and guide students in understanding and expressing their own cultural identity. English education should not solely focus on language proficiency, but also cultivate students' cross-cultural awareness and appreciation for their own culture. A balanced approach that combines the teaching of language skills with the exploration of philosophical and cultural knowledge is necessary to promote cultural identity and enhance students' understanding and expression of philosophical culture. Overall, by integrating philosophical and cultural education into English teaching, students can develop a deeper understanding of their own culture and enhance their cultural identity. This requires a shift in educational concepts, increased attention to philosophical and cultural knowledge, and a balanced approach to language and cultural learning.

Cultural identity plays a crucial role in students' education, as it strengthens their sense of national identity and promotes the understanding and appreciation of their own culture. Chinese traditional culture, with its rich history and elements, such as ink painting, poetry, music and philosophy, is closely tied to Chinese national cultural identity. However, due to the influence of globalization and modernization, there is a tendency among students to prioritize Western culture over their own, leading to a decline in cultural self-restraint and independent cultural personality.

To address this issue, it is important to stimulate students' national emotions and cultivate their sense of cultural identity and patriotism. Traditional Chinese culture should be promoted and absorbed in combination with practical needs, providing students with a deeper understanding of their own cultural heritage. The promotion of cultural identity helps to strengthen national cohesion and self-confidence, and it also enhances international influence by allowing more countries to understand and accept Chinese culture.

In addition, the integration of philosophical culture in English teaching is essential. English education should not solely focus on language proficiency, but also emphasize the understanding and expression of philosophical and cultural knowledge. Students should be encouraged to express their own culture in English and develop a deeper understanding of their cultural identity. This requires a shift in educational concepts and a balanced approach to language and cultural learning. However, while promoting cultural identity, it is important to avoid neglecting other cultures and maintain respect and acceptance for cultural diversity (Dafouz, 2018, p. 540). Excessive promotion of Chinese culture may lead to cultural conflicts and misunderstandings. Furthermore, the dissemination of culture may face limitations in terms of time and space. Ultimately, by integrating cultural identity education into English teaching and promoting philosophical culture, students can develop a stronger connection to their own culture, spread China's excellent cultural traditions, and contribute to the promotion of global harmony and understanding.

The integration of philosophical culture, in English education, is crucial due to the close relationship between language and culture. As China undergoes reform and opening up, cultural factors in English learning are gaining importance. However, the education of philosophical culture has often been neglected in discussions on cultural identity in English education. Recognizing the significance of national philosophy and culture, in English education, is essential, as it enriches the learning experience for students from different cultural backgrounds and helps them develop a comprehensive understanding of the world.

In the context of advancing social information technology and economic globalization, the absence of a distinct cultural identity can result in imbalanced cultural exchanges among countries, which hinders China's cultural internationalization efforts. By investigating the current state of cultural identity in college English teaching, Liang (2024) aims to emphasize the importance of understanding one's own language and actively promoting philosophical culture in English education. Such an approach aligns with the current need to enhance the soft power of China's national culture and the fundamental principles of college education reform.

Liang (2024) provides insights for improving English learning and teaching in universities. It highlights the undervaluation of philosophy and culture among students and the lack of English education policies addressing these areas. Liang (2024) emphasizes

the need to maximize the benefits of English and incorporate various teaching methods to introduce philosophy and culture, enhancing students' understanding of their own culture. By strengthening students' cultural awareness and confidence and fostering their love for Chinese traditions, students can develop a deeper appreciation for their core cultural values. This, in turn, promotes selectivity when engaging with foreign cultures and enhances the cultural function of interpersonal communication within educational settings. Through English teaching, students can gain a broader understanding of breadth and depth of the Chinese culture, cultivating their interests and hobbies in Chinese traditions. English education can serve as a bridge for cultural inheritance and exchange, nurturing patriotic sentiments and cultural self-confidence among Chinese students. By fostering an appreciation for their own culture while understanding the diversity of global cultures, students can make valuable contributions to the promotion and preservation of Chinese culture.

## CONCLUSIONS

Due to the close connection between language and culture, philosophical culture has become increasingly prominent in English. In China, with the deepening of reform and opening up, cultural factors, in English learning, are increasingly important. Attaching importance to cultural identity is an important direction in current English education in China, and many scholars have conducted in-depth discussions on it from different perspectives. However, most of these achievements are aimed at the target culture in English, while the education of philosophical culture is ignored. In summary, the article highlights the importance of integrating philosophical culture in English education to strengthen cultural identity. It emphasizes the need for a comprehensive understanding of one's own language and culture, and provides insights for promoting cultural awareness and confidence among students. By fostering a love for Chinese traditions and cultivating an appreciation for global cultures, English education can contribute to the cultivation of culturally confident and patriotic individuals.

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