

# A Study on Strategies for Cultivating College Students' English Listening and Speaking Skills from the Perspective of "Telling Chinese Stories Well in English"

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**Abstract:** *Fostering college students' ability to tell Chinese stories well in English is pivotal to talent cultivation and English language teaching, which is an effective way to improve the moral education in English language curriculum. Telling Chinese stories well in English not only enhances their understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture and improves their cross-cultural communication but also effectively boosts their English listening and speaking proficiency. This study analyzes the necessity and current challenges of cultivating college students' ability to tell Chinese stories well in English, and proposes strategies for integrating "telling Chinese stories well in English" into English listening and speaking teaching, aiming to enhance college students' awareness of telling Chinese stories well in English, and effectively cultivate students' English listening and speaking abilities while meeting the country's requirements for the cultivation of talents in international communication.*

**Keywords:** *Telling Chinese Stories Well in English; Problems and Strategies in English Teaching; Listening and Speaking Skills*

## 1. Introduction

In May 2020, "Guidelines for Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Courses" issued by the Ministry of Education, explicitly stated that one of the contents of ideological and political education in college courses is to strengthen the education of excellent traditional Chinese culture. It is necessary to promote the national spirit centered on patriotism and the contemporary spirit grounded in reform and innovation, and educate and guide students to deeply understand the ideological essence. Students should be educated to inherit the legacy of Chinese culture, fostering a Chinese heart, Chinese sentiment, and full of Chinese flavor[1]. The "College English Teaching Guidelines" (2020 edition) also put forward the requirements for ideological and political education in College English courses for the first time, stating that the nature of College English courses is to "cultivate students' understanding and interpretation of Chinese culture and serve the international dissemination of Chinese culture" [2].

Cultivating college students' ability to spread Chinese culture is a new goal of foreign language education. Telling Chinese stories well aims to let the world understand China, correctly recognize China, and is an effective way to spread the Chinese voice, showcase Chinese wisdom. Language is an important component of culture and a tool for cultural inheritance and expression. In the process of cultivating students' English listening and speaking skills, telling Chinese stories well can help students better understand the characteristics of Chinese culture, understand the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western cultures, and thereby better master English language. Telling Chinese stories in English not only helps cultivate college students' cultural dissemination ability but also helps shape their values.

Based on this, this paper explores the strategies for cultivating college students' English listening and speaking abilities from the perspective of "telling Chinese stories in English", combines cultural knowledge with language knowledge learning in English listening and speaking class. By storytelling, the aims of enhancing students' English communication skills and cross-cultural communication can be effectively achieved[3].

## **2. The Necessity of Cultivating College Students' Ability to Tell Chinese Stories Well in English**

### ***2.1 Cultivate college students' sense of identification with Chinese culture and enhance their confidence***

In English teaching process, introducing Chinese culture can deepen students' understanding of the essential features and development process of Chinese culture, enable them to have a more profound understanding of Chinese culture and China's development, which can enhance their cultural confidence. Only by enhancing students' insights and comprehensive understanding of Chinese culture can they carry out activities of expressing Chinese culture in English, fostering their identification with Chinese culture, promoting the improvement of cultural confidence and strengthening their national pride. On the other hand, students should be guided to compare Chinese culture with other cultures in the world, especially with the cultures of English-speaking countries. By comparison, students can deeply appreciate the unique characteristics and excellent traditions of Chinese culture, and form a model for expressing Chinese culture in English. Besides, students can also discover the advanced nature of Chinese culture and identify with the development of Chinese culture, thus forming a deeper sense of cultural pride, and developing the habit of correctly spreading Chinese culture worldwide, demonstrating stronger and more powerful cultural confidence.

### ***2.2 Promote the realization of College English teaching objectives***

As a fundamental compulsory course in higher education, College English possesses both humanistic and functional characteristics. The humanistic aspect typically refers to its role in providing students with cultural education, while the functional aspect specifically focuses on developing students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation based on their mastery of English knowledge. The primary teaching objective of College English is to enhance students' English proficiency and strengthen their language skills. Language serves as the medium for cultural exchange and dissemination, while culture represents the intrinsic value of language expression. By gaining a strong command of English, college students can not only more efficiently access foreign knowledge and information but also can use English as a medium to spread Chinese culture and tell China's stories effectively. Moreover, improving students' English proficiency helps them understand the differences between Chinese and Western cultures and foster their cross-cultural communication competence.

### ***2.3 Cultivate versatile talents to serve national development***

Under the background of the "Belt and Road" and "Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind", it is necessary to enhance students' ability to tell Chinese stories in English, cultivate good oral English skills and internal core qualities, encourage them to firmly hold their political stance. By the introduction of Chinese culture and the comparison of Chinese and foreign cultures, students should be active participants in "telling China's stories well" by demonstrating the richness of China's outstanding traditional culture, which is conducive to cultivating compound talents who are rooted in Chinese culture with an international perspective. It is also helpful to eliminate misunderstandings between different cultures, promote cultural exchange and communication, and serve the needs of the development of our country.

## **3. The Existing Problems of Cultivating the Ability to Tell Chinese Stories Well in English**

At present, imparting language knowledge and training language skills are emphasized on College English listening and speaking teaching, while the integration of native culture is neglected. On the one hand, influenced by the backwash effect of English proficiency tests, English teaching tends to focus more on the instrumental aspect of language learning, such as pronunciation and vocabulary, as well as some skills for exams. On the other hand, due to limited class arrangement, in English listening and speaking classes, most of the time is taken to train listening skills, while the training of oral practice, critical thinking ability, and cross-cultural communication skills are generally neglected. There is a lack of deep integration of Chinese cultural into English teaching. Generally speaking, there are the following problems.

### ***3.1 Students' lack of awareness of cross-cultural communication***

For many years, College English teaching has predominantly emphasized the transmission of social and cultural knowledge related to English-speaking countries, while under-estimating the significance of expressing Chinese culture in English. English listening and speaking courses primarily focus on one-sided Western cultural input, with insufficient attention given to guiding students in cross-cultural awareness and the development of critical thinking. Due to a lack of emphasis on cultivating cross-cultural communication competence, English teachers often fail to deeply interpret teaching materials, limiting instruction to the analysis of linguistic phenomena and superficial cultural background information. Consequently, college students lack adequate linguistic and cultural support when conveying Chinese narratives in English, which hinders the development of their related competencies. Meanwhile, non-English major students, who primarily acquire English through general College English courses, face limited learning channels, which impede their mastery of spoken English. These students often exhibit rigidity and difficulty when translating culturally specific Chinese content into English, struggling to employ flexible and expressive translation strategies. As a result, their performance of telling Chinese stories in English tend to lack depth and vitality, failing to effectively convey the cultural essence embedded within these narratives. Moreover, the underlying values and cultural conflicts present in the teaching materials are seldom critically examined, thereby limiting the potential of such materials to enhance students' cross-cultural communicative competence.

### ***3.2 Some teachers' deficiency in their knowledge of Chinese culture***

To effectively cultivate students' ability to tell Chinese stories well in English and enhance overall quality of English courses, teachers, as central figures in pedagogy—play an indispensable role in training students' cross-cultural communication skills. This requires teachers to possess a solid foundation in Chinese cultural knowledge. However, some teachers lack a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of Chinese culture, which hinders the effective integration of Chinese cultural into English teaching. Teachers must practice what they preach, enhance their cultural literacy, and first develop their own ability to convey Chinese stories effectively in English within the classroom setting. Only in this way can they guide students to proficiently communicate Chinese stories in authentic, real-world contexts. Furthermore, some educational institutions fail to attach enough importance to the cultural literacy training of teachers, which limits English teachers' capacity to integrate Chinese culture into their actual teaching. In addition, the absence of "telling Chinese stories well" as a formal component in English performance assessments further decreases students' motivation and enthusiasm for participating in English courses that teach telling Chinese stories well. Therefore, it is imperative for teachers to commit to continuous self-improvement, while educational institutions must also place greater emphasis on providing targeted training and support for English teachers.

### ***3.3 Students' lack practical training and platforms for showcasing their ability to tell Chinese stories well in English***

To tell China's stories well in English, the key lies in active practice. To achieve this, it is essential to provide students with structured platforms for presentation and ample opportunities for practical engagement. Only through corresponding training and meaningful exposure can college students truly internalize and refine this skill. However, at present, there are not enough well-designed platforms and sufficient opportunities in higher education institutions, which hinders the progress of students' storytelling proficiency. Although colleges and universities have begun to pay attention to the teaching of listening, speaking and reading, there is no dedicated section for telling Chinese stories in English, nor are there related practice and presentation tasks provided for students. Consequently students lack sufficient motivation to engage actively in such learning, which further hampers their competence development. Moreover, college students have limited chances to practice telling Chinese stories in English in daily activities. Without authentic communicative situations, they tend to avoid speaking English, making it difficult to enhance their ability to tell Chinese stories well in English.

#### **4. Strategies for Integrating “Tell Chinese Stories in English” into English Listening and Speaking courses**

##### ***4.1 Explore and integrate the elements of Chinese stories in teaching materials to enhance students' awareness of cross-cultural communication***

Textbooks are important tools for students to acquire systematic knowledge and serve as primary references for teachers in teaching[4]. The presence of Chinese cultural elements in textbooks directly influences students' capacity to convey the essence of China's excellent traditional culture. According to the "Guidelines for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in College Courses," the content of ideological and political education should center on core aspects such as political identity and national awareness, and systematically promote education on excellent traditional Chinese culture[1]. The "Teaching Guidelines for College English" (2020 Edition) further emphasizes that socialist core values and elements of traditional Chinese culture should be deliberately integrated into textbook[5]. To achieve these goals, textbook reform is necessary. While utilizing existing materials to develop students' English listening and speaking skills, teachers can introduce audio-visual or textual materials related to China's development, Chinese spirit, Chinese values, and Chinese achievements into the classroom based on teaching themes and contents. The materials can be selected from audio and video materials, news reports, government work reports published by Chinese media, and documentaries related to Chinese history, society, and culture.

Building upon students' understanding of Western culture and customs, teachers can guide them to explore Chinese excellent traditional culture. The purpose is to create teaching conditions for further cultivating students' English listening and speaking abilities. Following the introduction of themes and content incorporating Chinese cultural elements, teachers can organize students to conduct critical discussions on Chinese traditional culture and Chinese stories in English; or create situations for the collision of Chinese and Western cultures, guiding students to view Western culture from a foreign language perspective and Chinese culture from an international perspective, analyze and discuss the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, think and determine appropriate and effective cross-cultural communication methods, thereby enhancing students' cross-cultural communication awareness. This process also reinforces students' understanding of the significance of accurately grasping both Chinese cultural knowledge and Western cultural connotations in cross-cultural communication. Improved cross-cultural communication awareness, in turn, stimulates students' intrinsic motivation to study traditional Chinese culture, strengthens their self-initiated consciousness in telling Chinese culture in English, and further promotes their English listening and speaking skills.

##### ***4.2 Strengthen the training of English teachers and enhance their ability to tell Chinese stories well***

Teachers bear the critical responsibility of disseminating knowledge, transmitting values, shaping moral character, and nurturing well-rounded talents in this era. Integrating "telling good Chinese stories" into College English courses, teachers are expected to assume the central role of cultural narrators. However, certain English teachers demonstrate limited familiarity with and inadequate understanding of traditional Chinese culture. Some students' feedback indicates that "teachers' instructional methods are relatively monotonous" and "their humanistic literacy is insufficient with vague explanations of traditional Chinese thought and culture". Some teachers have also stated: "They lack sufficient knowledge reserves in excellent traditional Chinese culture and are unable to deliver in-depth English explanations of Chinese cultural content." Therefore, to cultivate high-level talents who can "tell good Chinese stories and spread the Chinese voice well", teachers must first develop a solid foundation in political theory, continuously enhance their political theory literacy, and take long-term political theory learning as a part of their professional qualities. Only by maintaining a firm political stance and cultivating strong ideological awareness can teachers establish appropriate educational concepts, dig out the most suitable Chinese stories from existing textbooks to impart correct and positive values to students.

Secondly, teachers should attach great importance to enhancing their cultural literacy by thoroughly studying classical works and gaining deep familiarity with China's excellent traditional culture and philosophical thought systems. In classroom, they should integrate Chinese culture into teaching content as the entry point, and conduct comparisons between foreign cultures and Chinese traditional values, ways of thinking, and ethics. This approach guides students toward critical thinking and objective perspectives on China's relationships with other nations. Finally, educational institutions should increase financial investment to introduce more relevant literature and reading resources,

thereby providing substantial support for teachers' cultural and intellectual development. Only when teachers' knowledge reserves are increased can they more effectively cultivate students' ability to tell Chinese stories well. In College English classes, English teachers should keep up with the pace of social development, encourage college students to learn English actively, and encourage them to tell Chinese stories well in English. By integrating "telling Chinese stories well" into College English teaching, English teachers should assist college students sort out Chinese excellent traditional culture, review the growth and development process of New China, and help them use English to tell the great achievements of the Communist Party of China. They should also encourage students to fluently explain national policies and guidelines in English for the cultivation of talents for international communication.

#### ***4.3 Establish the Second Classroom and Provide Students with more Platforms to Tell Chinese Stories Well in English***

Improving students' ability to tell Chinese stories in English should not be confined to classroom alone. Teachers should guide students to enhance their English listening, speaking skills and oral expression abilities by extracurricular language practice activities. As an extension of formal classroom teaching, extracurricular language practice activities are an effective means to enhance students' English listening and speaking abilities. English teachers should creatively design and effectively utilize the second classroom, organize students to carry out and participate in extracurricular language activities, thereby offering a platform for students to practice telling Chinese stories in English. Teachers can also use information technology to provide students with targeted language practice opportunities. For example, dedicated sections on English-learning websites can be established for telling Chinese stories, enabling students to engage in self-directed English expression practice. Or set up a daily check-in teaching task on the WeChat to stimulate students' enthusiasm for telling Chinese stories in English.

Teachers can utilize a variety of English-themed activities, such as "Talking about China," "English Speech Contests," and "English Drama Performances," to guide students in integrating China's excellent traditional culture, promoting national spirit, and narrating the stories of representative Chinese figures. Additionally, teachers can assign the "Promotion of Chinese Culture Practice" project, encouraging students to visit and investigate cultural sites that reflect Chinese heritage or narratives during their spare time. Students can collect significant cultural information, translate it into English, and produce videos to serve as English-language resources for foreign tourists. In addition, schools should organize diverse opportunities for students to practice telling Chinese stories in English. Culture-related events such as translation competitions and drama contests should be held, and students should be encouraged to participate in the "Understanding Contemporary China" series of competitions and English-related volunteer activities. These initiatives offer valuable opportunities for developing and reinforcing students' competence in telling Chinese stories in English.

### **5. Conclusion**

With the rapid development of China, "telling good Chinese stories" has become an important task for young students in the new era. Integrating "telling good Chinese stories in English" into the cultivation of college students' English listening and speaking can not only foster a deeper cultural identification and confidence, as well as a stronger sense of patriotism, but also improve their critical thinking and cross-cultural communication abilities. During the process of learning how to tell Chinese stories in English, students will consciously focus on English vocabulary related to Chinese culture, constantly correct their oral English expressions, and their English listening and speaking abilities can be effectively enhanced. However, there are still a series of problems in cultivating students' ability to tell good Chinese stories in English. Therefore, English teachers should continue to invest effort in guiding students to engage positively with Chinese culture, raise awareness of the importance of mastering this skill, and at the same time focus on improving cross-cultural communication competence so as to continuously strengthen students' storytelling capabilities in English and serve as competent mentors in guiding them to accomplish this task.

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