

Research on International Talent Development Models in College English Education

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Abstract: With the acceleration of globalization and the growing emphasis on the internationalization of higher education, cultivating international talent has become a key focus of college English teaching reform. Drawing on theories of intercultural communicative competence and global competence, this study employs questionnaires, case studies, and comparative analysis to examine current challenges in English teaching. It proposes an optimized model featuring internationalized curricula, diversified pedagogy, and globally competent faculty development. The findings indicate that integrating approaches such as CLIL and POA significantly enhances students' intercultural understanding and international communication skills. This research provides valuable insights for reforming English education and guiding international talent cultivation in Chinese universities.

Keywords: College English Teaching; International Talent; Teaching Model; Intercultural Competence; Educational Reform

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of accelerating globalization and regional cooperation^[1], the internationalization of higher education has become a key strategic goal for Chinese universities^[2]. As a global lingua franca, English plays a critical role in shaping the effectiveness of international talent cultivation. However, current college English teaching in China still faces issues such as overly localized course content, limited teaching methods^[3], and inadequate training in intercultural competence, all of which hinder the development of high-quality international talent^[4]. Meanwhile, the

rise of “New Liberal Arts”, the digital transformation of education, and the national “going global” strategy present both new challenges and opportunities for English education. This study^[5], grounded in both international educational theories and domestic pedagogical practices, explores how college English instruction can more effectively support international talent development. Through theoretical inquiry and empirical research^[6], it aims to build a new English teaching model with City characteristics and global vision, providing both theoretical guidance and practical solutions for advancing the internationalization of Chinese higher education.

2. Theoretical Foundations and Conceptual Definitions

With the rapid development of internationalized education^[7], college English teaching has evolved from a tool for language acquisition to a strategic platform for cultivating talents with global vision, intercultural competence, and international competitiveness. This study is grounded in the following three theoretical foundations^[8].

The concept of international talent lies at the core of this research. According to OECD, UNESCO, and related global institutions, international talent is defined as individuals who not only possess solid academic knowledge and language proficiency but also demonstrate intercultural awareness^[9], global-mindedness, and collaborative skills in diverse environments. Chinese education authorities have repeatedly emphasized the need for universities to nurture high-caliber, interdisciplinary talents with a strong national identity and an international outlook^[10].

The theory of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), proposed by Byram, provides a vital theoretical lens for reorienting the objectives of English education. The ICC

model identifies key components-attitudes, knowledge, skills, and critical cultural awareness-stating that effective language learning must involve an understanding of the cultural contexts in which the language operates. Learners should be able not only to use the language but to engage meaningfully in multicultural settings.

Two prominent pedagogical frameworks inform the construction of the proposed teaching model: Production-Oriented Approach (POA) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). POA emphasizes output-driven, input-facilitated instruction that mirrors real-world communication tasks, fostering students' functional language use. CLIL, meanwhile, integrates academic content with language instruction, thereby developing students' subject knowledge and academic English skills in tandem.

Furthermore, the study draws upon the notion of curriculum internationalization and the Global Competence framework. These approaches stress that English instruction should not merely train students in linguistic techniques but should serve as a means of broadening global perspectives and fostering cosmopolitan identities.

In summary, the theoretical framework of this research consists of international talent development, intercultural competence theory, and innovative instructional methodologies. These foundations not only offer a theoretical rationale for reforming college English education but also serve as a guide for designing effective and context-appropriate instructional strategies.

3. Current Landscape of Internationalization in College English Teaching

At present, college English teaching in China is undergoing a critical transformation from exam-oriented instruction to competency-based and internationally-aligned education. However, this transition faces several structural and practical barriers across institutions nationwide. This section analyzes the current situation from four key dimensions: curriculum design, teaching materials, faculty development, and student preparedness.

In terms of curriculum design, most universities continue to offer general English courses focused on fundamental language skills-listening, speaking, reading, and writing-

without adequate integration with students' academic disciplines or international engagement needs. While some universities have introduced courses such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), or intercultural communication, these offerings remain fragmented and lack systemic coherence, making it difficult to establish a coordinated model of talent development.

Teaching materials often lack global perspective. The mainstream textbooks are exam-oriented and culturally biased toward Anglo-American contexts, neglecting diverse global cultures, particularly from Asia, Africa, or Latin America. While some institutions experiment with using authentic foreign materials or international open resources, their widespread application is hindered by high language thresholds and insufficient teacher readiness.

There is a noticeable lag in faculty development. Many English instructors lack international academic experience or professional training in intercultural pedagogy. As a result, course content still revolves around linguistic knowledge delivery, with little attention to real-world issues or global themes that foster critical thinking and expressive capacity.

Students often exhibit low motivation for English learning, largely due to a lack of international goals or awareness. Survey results indicate that, except for those planning to study abroad or participate in exchange programs, most students perceive English as merely an examination tool, failing to internalize it as a medium for global interaction or career advancement.

The current state of internationalization in college English teaching can be described as being at a "preliminary integration" stage. There is a pressing need for systemic reform from both top-down policy design and bottom-up pedagogical practice. A coordinated effort must be made to innovate educational philosophy, allocate international resources, reform teaching evaluation, and establish sustainable mechanisms for international talent development.

4. Identifying the Problems and Challenges

Although progress has been made in promoting the internationalization of college English teaching in China, several persistent challenges

continue to hinder its effectiveness in developing globally competent graduates. This section identifies key issues at the macro, meso, and micro levels.

At the macro level, there is a disconnect between national policy goals and institutional practices. While the government has issued numerous policy directives to promote the internationalization of higher education, many universities still regard English teaching as a basic language course rather than a strategic vehicle for cultivating international talent. Consequently, there is a lack of systemic top-down design, and policies fail to be translated into concrete action plans at the university level. At the meso level, the institutional mechanisms and resource allocation for internationalized English teaching are insufficient. Most universities lack centralized platforms to support curriculum internationalization. The adoption of international textbooks, coordination of joint teaching projects, employment of foreign instructors, and access to bilingual resources are often fragmented and inefficient. Evaluation mechanisms remain heavily focused on language proficiency and test scores, neglecting essential indicators such as intercultural awareness and international communication competence.

At the micro level, teachers' international competence is a major bottleneck. Many instructors lack international teaching experience or exposure to global contexts, limiting their understanding of international issues and cross-cultural content. Their teaching practices remain largely didactic, with little integration of inquiry-based learning, project-based approaches, or task-based methodologies common in global classrooms, thereby failing to stimulate students' global thinking and real-world language application.

In addition, there is a lack of international awareness and motivation among students. Many students do not have a clear understanding of the purpose of learning English beyond passing exams. This weak sense of direction leads to low engagement and reluctance to engage in intercultural communication, ultimately impeding the development of their international competencies.

In conclusion, the challenges facing college English education in the internationalization process are multifaceted and systemic. They

involve shortcomings in top-level strategy, institutional support, faculty capacity, and student agency. These must be addressed through integrated, forward-thinking reforms.

5. Constructing a Teaching Model for International Talent Development

In response to the challenges identified, it is imperative to construct a new teaching model for college English that aligns with the goals of international talent cultivation. This model should be centered on global competence, driven by integrated innovation, and coordinated across curricula, pedagogy, assessment, resources, and governance. The following five strategies are proposed:

Establishing an internationalized curriculum structure. On top of general English, universities should introduce modular courses such as ESP (English for Specific Purposes), EAP (English for Academic Purposes), and intercultural communication. These courses should follow a tiered structure—foundation, extension, and advancement—and center around global themes like sustainability, cultural diversity, and international affairs to enhance students' analytical and problem-solving skills in English. Innovating pedagogical approaches and classroom organization. The widespread adoption of task-based, project-based, and blended learning approaches is recommended to simulate authentic international communication scenarios. Interdisciplinary team-teaching, bilingual delivery, small-group discussions, and case-based learning should be promoted to foster students' language fluency and global communication skills. Developing a diversified international teaching resource platform. High-quality foreign textbooks, MOOCs, and open educational resources should be integrated into course content. A digital platform should be developed to provide learning materials on academic English, global challenges, and international career readiness. Virtual exchange programs can help local students engage in meaningful intercultural dialogue without going abroad.

Enhancing faculty international competence. Universities should support teacher development through overseas study programs, international training workshops, and teaching contests. Faculty should be encouraged to participate in developing and delivering joint international courses, thereby aligning their

teaching philosophy and methods with global standards. Establishing diversified and holistic assessment mechanisms. Evaluations should go beyond traditional language tests and include project presentations, intercultural case analyses, and group reports. These can better reflect students' linguistic proficiency, global vision, critical thinking, and collaboration abilities.

This proposed model not only aligns with national strategies for higher education reform and talent internationalization, but also offers a practical and scalable approach for institutions to enhance the global competence of their students.

Nevertheless, the research is not without limitations. The sample scope is geographically concentrated, and the empirical component focuses primarily on a limited number of institutional case studies. Future research should expand the sample base, conduct longitudinal and comparative studies across different regions and institutional types, and explore the deeper mechanisms by which stakeholder participation-particularly from industry and community partners-can be institutionalized within governance and teaching systems.

In conclusion, the pursuit of high-quality development in private art colleges is a long-term, strategic, and systemic undertaking. It entails not only a redefinition of educational goals but also a profound reconfiguration of how these institutions position themselves within the broader cultural and educational landscape. Only through the synergy of national strategic alignment, sound policy frameworks, and the endogenous vitality of institutions themselves can private art colleges evolve from peripheral actors to value-driven engines of artistic innovation and cultural education-charting a development trajectory marked by City characteristics, global vision, and artistic integrity.

6. Case Study or Empirical Investigation

To evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed internationalized English teaching model, this study presents a comprehensive case analysis of University A's English education reform initiative, enriched by empirical data gathered over multiple semesters. Since the academic year of 2022, University A has strategically implemented a blended

pedagogical approach that combines Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) with the Production-Oriented Approach (POA). This hybrid model aims to bridge the gap between language learning and professional/global competencies by embedding meaningful content and communicative tasks into the English teaching process. In alignment with the university's broader internationalization agenda, this reform project has focused on expanding academic English instruction, promoting intercultural communication, and creating immersive global learning scenarios.

One of the most notable components of this reform was the establishment of the "International English Experimental Class", which recruited 80 undergraduate students from various disciplines, including business, engineering, the humanities, and the social sciences. The objective was to test a new curriculum model that integrated real-world global themes with structured language development activities. Key courses offered within this program included Global Issues in English Expression, Intercultural Text Analysis, and Academic Writing in English and Chinese. These courses were designed not merely to teach English as a language, but to use English as a medium to cultivate global competence, critical reasoning, and intercultural sensitivity among students from different academic and cultural backgrounds.

The teaching team represented a deliberate mix of domestic instructors with overseas study or teaching experience and international faculty recruited through collaborative partnerships with overseas institutions. This combination created a multilingual, multicultural instructional environment that exposed students to varied worldviews and communicative norms. Rather than limiting the classroom to textbook-based instruction, instructors were encouraged to co-develop materials, assign real-world tasks, and facilitate collaborative projects with international dimensions. Course content focused on relevant and timely global topics, such as environmental sustainability, artificial intelligence and ethics, digital globalization, cultural identity, and global health. These themes were not only relevant to the students' academic disciplines but also highly applicable to global citizenship and career development. Students were engaged in a range of interactive and task-driven learning activities. These

included group research projects, bilingual debates, reflective intercultural journals, online forums with international students, and simulated United Nations-style conferences. In each activity, students were required to use English not only to express themselves but to think critically, negotiate meaning, and collaborate across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Assignments were scaffolded to ensure that students of varying proficiency levels could gradually develop the necessary skills to participate meaningfully, with feedback loops and peer assessment embedded into each module. The instruction emphasized the use of English as a tool for problem-solving, analysis, and global communication, rather than as an end in itself.

To rigorously assess the impact of this teaching reform, the project adopted a quasi-experimental research design using a “pre-test-intervention-post-test” framework. This approach allowed for a clear comparison between the experimental class and a control group of students receiving traditional English instruction. The assessment instruments included standardized intercultural competence scales, academic English writing rubrics, and collaborative project performance metrics. Additionally, data were collected through classroom observations, student learning portfolios, and semi-structured interviews with both students and teachers. The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data ensured the reliability and validity of the findings.

The results of the study were both statistically significant and pedagogically encouraging. Quantitative data revealed that students in the experimental class demonstrated notable improvement in three core areas: intercultural awareness, academic English proficiency, and project collaboration skills. Their average post-test scores in intercultural sensitivity and communication were substantially higher than those of the control group, indicating that the curriculum had a measurable effect on their ability to understand and navigate cultural differences. In academic writing, students exhibited more precise vocabulary usage, logical organization, and a greater ability to engage with complex source material in both English and Chinese. Moreover, their group projects were assessed as being more coherent, innovative, and globally informed.

Among the most compelling outcomes was the

significant increase in student self-efficacy and critical thinking ability. Survey responses and interviews suggested that students felt more confident in their ability to use English in academic and intercultural contexts, and many reported that they had begun to shift their personal goals to include international graduate study, internships, or cross-border collaboration. They described the classes as “challenging but fulfilling,” “refreshingly different,” and “eye-opening in terms of how English can be used beyond passing exams.” According to the course satisfaction survey, 92% of students rated the program as either “very effective” or “excellent,” with many citing the practical relevance and intellectual depth of the content as its greatest strengths.

Teacher feedback further supported the efficacy of the new model. Faculty members highlighted the increased flexibility and engagement of the classroom atmosphere, noting that the CLIL + POA combination allowed for a more fluid shift between language development and content exploration. The model also encouraged teachers to act as facilitators and co-learners rather than authoritative knowledge dispensers, promoting a more democratic and participatory classroom culture. Instructors observed that students became more proactive in discussions, asked deeper questions, and were more willing to explore controversial or complex topics when given the freedom to construct knowledge collaboratively.

The reform initiative, however, was not without its challenges. One of the primary issues encountered was the diversity in student English proficiency levels. While some students quickly adapted to the increased linguistic demands of the new curriculum, others struggled to keep pace, particularly in courses that included substantial academic reading or involved direct interaction with foreign instructors. For these students, the initial language barrier became a source of anxiety, and without sufficient scaffolding, there was a risk of disengagement. To address this, the teaching team gradually introduced tiered assignments, optional tutorials, and bilingual scaffolds, though it was acknowledged that more comprehensive support mechanisms—including pre-course diagnostic tools and differentiated instruction strategies—would be needed in the future.

Another challenge related to faculty workload

and coordination. The integration of CLIL and POA required substantial time and effort in lesson planning, co-teaching, and cross-cultural coordination among faculty. Some instructors expressed concern about the sustainability of such a labor-intensive model without institutional recognition or incentives. It became clear that for this reform to be scaled up successfully, universities would need to revise their administrative frameworks to reward interdisciplinary and internationalized teaching efforts, provide faculty development funding, and streamline collaborative teaching processes. Despite these limitations, the overall success of University A's initiative highlights the potential of reengineering English instruction through the integration of global content, interactive methods, and intercultural learning outcomes. By embedding international issues directly into language education and by aligning pedagogy with real-world communication practices, the reform demonstrated that English classrooms can serve as dynamic spaces for both language acquisition and the cultivation of global mindsets. The students not only improved their functional English abilities but also grew in self-awareness, empathy, and international understanding—qualities increasingly essential in the 21st-century knowledge economy.

The implications of this case study extend beyond the immediate context of University A. For universities across China and other non-English-speaking regions aiming to internationalize their English instruction, this reform provides a replicable model grounded in empirical evidence and pedagogical innovation. Key elements such as interdisciplinary course design, integration of global themes, bilingual resource development, and cross-border faculty collaboration are all adaptable components that can be tailored to different institutional contexts. Furthermore, the use of blended instructional models like CLIL and POA ensures that language instruction remains communicative, contextualized, and cognitively demanding.

In conclusion, this case study affirms that the transformation of college English education into a platform for global competence development is both feasible and beneficial. It demonstrates that with intentional design, institutional support, and reflective practice, English instruction can evolve into a catalyst for international talent development. University A's experience serves as both a successful pilot

and a conceptual blueprint for a more globally engaged model of language education—one that equips students not only with the tools to speak English but also with the capacity to understand and shape the global world in which they will live and lead.

7. Research Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the theoretical framework and case study presented in this research, it is evident that the current paradigm of college English education in China must undergo a fundamental shift. Moving beyond traditional grammar-translation methods and test-oriented approaches, English instruction in Chinese higher education must be reimagined as a strategic component of the broader mission to cultivate internationally competent graduates. The findings from both conceptual analysis and empirical practice confirm the viability and necessity of implementing an internationalized teaching model centered on the development of global competence. Such a model aligns with global educational trends and responds directly to the needs of China's national strategy for internationalization in the realm of higher education.

This study has revealed several critical insights that point to the imperative transformation of English education within Chinese universities. First and foremost, English teaching must be repositioned from a marginal language skill course to a core platform for developing students' global awareness, cultural sensitivity, and cross-border communication abilities. In the past, English instruction has often been narrowly defined as the acquisition of vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension, primarily to prepare students for national exams or standardized English proficiency tests. However, this instrumental view fails to address the broader functions of English as a medium of intercultural dialogue, academic discourse, and international engagement. As such, the curriculum must be expanded and restructured to include content that fosters knowledge application, value education, and intercultural literacy. Courses that integrate contemporary global issues—such as climate change, digital globalization, cultural hybridization, and international ethics—should be embedded in English programs, encouraging students to think critically and communicate

effectively across cultures.

In parallel, the development and implementation of a new teaching model must involve an integrated transformation across three fundamental domains: instructional content, pedagogical practice, and institutional governance. Course design should be driven by thematic content that reflects international concerns and real-world applications. Teaching strategies should prioritize active learning, with methods such as project-based learning, problem-solving tasks, collaborative inquiry, and interdisciplinary integration becoming standard practices in the English classroom. Such approaches not only enhance language proficiency but also cultivate key competencies such as teamwork, innovation, and adaptability—traits essential for international success. Furthermore, this transformation cannot be limited to the classroom; institutional policies and management systems must provide the necessary infrastructure and support mechanisms to sustain reform. Universities should develop centralized platforms that facilitate the sharing of international resources, create channels for foreign faculty collaboration, and promote the co-development of joint courses with global partners. A comprehensive and multilayered evaluation system should be established, moving beyond rote memorization and standardized testing to assess students' intercultural understanding, critical thinking, global outlook, and real-world communicative competence.

Moreover, the enhancement of students' global competence is not a linear outcome of curriculum innovation alone—it is deeply contingent upon the coordinated development of faculty, institutional support, and the learning environment. Faculty members, as key agents of educational change, must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and mindset to facilitate globally oriented instruction. This entails not only training in bilingual or English-medium instruction but also sustained professional development in cross-cultural pedagogy, global curriculum design, and the integration of digital technologies for global learning. Teachers must themselves be engaged participants in international academic networks, capable of bringing global perspectives into the classroom. Simultaneously, institutions must provide robust support for teacher development through funding, policy incentives, exchange

opportunities, and recognition of international teaching excellence.

Another equally important dimension lies in shaping students' internal motivation and sense of international responsibility. Many Chinese college students still view English primarily as a requirement for graduation or a tool for test performance, rather than as a channel for cultural connection, professional development, or social transformation. To shift this perception, universities need to cultivate a campus culture that emphasizes global citizenship and provides students with meaningful opportunities to apply their English skills in international contexts. This includes promoting participation in overseas exchange programs, virtual international collaboration projects, bilingual academic competitions, and global public speaking events such as Model United Nations. These platforms allow students to not only practice language in authentic settings but also develop the mindset, confidence, and competence to engage with global issues in meaningful ways.

In light of the conclusions drawn from this study, several practical recommendations can be articulated to guide the future direction of English education reform within the internationalization framework. At the policy level, it is critical for national education authorities to recognize English education as a strategic enabler of higher education internationalization. Accordingly, targeted policies and dedicated financial resources must be allocated to support the construction of internationalized curricula, capacity building for English faculty, and institutional partnerships with overseas universities. A national framework that sets clear goals, quality benchmarks, and long-term evaluation indicators for English education internationalization would provide consistent guidance and foster systemic innovation.

At the institutional level, universities should take active steps to embed internationalization into their English teaching policies and operational frameworks. This may include forming specialized committees or task forces responsible for guiding the internationalization of English curricula, overseeing the selection of teaching materials with global relevance, facilitating teacher development, and integrating English instruction with broader global learning initiatives on campus. English

education should no longer operate in isolation from professional disciplines; rather, it should become a partner in interdisciplinary collaboration and a bridge to international engagement for students across all majors.

At the faculty level, instructors must assume a more dynamic and globally conscious role in their teaching. Professional development opportunities should be aligned with the demands of international pedagogy, focusing not only on language instruction but also on the design of globally informed courses, the use of intercultural learning frameworks, and the application of educational technologies that support global connectivity. Teachers should be encouraged to co-teach with foreign colleagues, publish internationally, and engage in cross-border educational projects that can enrich both their own perspectives and those of their students.

Finally, at the student level, it is essential to cultivate an internalized sense of global responsibility and engagement. Educational institutions must help students understand how their English proficiency can serve as a tool for intercultural understanding, academic mobility, and global problem-solving. Advisors and instructors should guide students in setting long-term international learning goals and encourage them to leverage available resources—both online and offline—to participate in global learning communities. Embedding international benchmarks and reflective practices into English learning can help students align their efforts with tangible global outcomes, thereby increasing their motivation and sense of purpose.

In conclusion, the reform of college English education in China cannot be achieved through isolated innovations or short-term interventions. It requires a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder strategy that is aligned with the nation's broader goals for educational and economic globalization. This strategy must be pedagogically innovative, strategically coordinated, and institutionally embedded, ensuring that English instruction is not merely a linguistic exercise, but a critical pathway for cultivating the international talent needed for China's future. Only through such deep and sustained reform can English education truly fulfill its potential as both a cultural bridge and an academic catalyst for the next generation of

globally competent Chinese graduates.

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