

The Two-Way Interaction between Chinese Learning and Cultural Cognition among Central Asian International Students: An Analysis Based on Classroom Corpus from University X

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Abstract

This study focuses on the classroom written and spoken corpora of Central Asian international students at School X, and from a linguistic perspective, organizes them into five thematic corpus clusters: daily life, culture, language, entertainment, and social experiences. The corpora not only cover everyday communicative expressions and culturally loaded vocabulary but also reflect linguistic features unique to Chinese. On this basis, the study constructs a dual evaluation system of 'language output and cultural stance expression,' deeply analyzing the bidirectional interaction between language and culture: on one hand, Chinese phonetic perception, character morphology, and grammatical logic drive international students to reconstruct their understanding of Chinese culture; on the other hand, the Central Asian cultural background imposes constraints on students' comprehension of Chinese semantics, whereas the Central Asian cultural background constrains students' interpretation of Chinese meanings due to cultural differences. Finally, from the three aspects of cultivating teachers' linguistic literacy, improving students' cross-linguistic and cultural decoding ability, and the interactive mechanism of 'speaker's pragmatic appropriateness and listener's semantic resonance,' this study explores pathways for integrating values and language competence development, providing empirical linguistic references for the collaborative promotion of 'language form and cultural cognition' in international Chinese education.

Keywords

Central Asian international students; classroom corpus; intercultural communication

1.Introduction

Language is the carrier of culture and the bridge for communicating culture. Language is a symbolic system for recording culture, so the study of language can reveal the accumulated culture within it. Language is the carrier of culture, and at the same time, it is an important part of culture. Culture is the foundation for the formation and development of language, and the development of culture also promotes the development of language. In the new era of the vigorous development of international Chinese education, learning Chinese has gone beyond its single instrumental function and is increasingly becoming a way for people around the world to perceive Chinese culture and promote mutual understanding among civilizations. The Education Action Plan for the Belt and Road Initiative (2016) issued by the Ministry of Education proposed advancing educational cooperation, expanding cultural exchanges, and supporting Belt and Road

countries in increasing the number of international students studying in China, aiming to promote people-to-people connectivity and cultivate talents for the economic and social development of various countries. This aligns with the goal of telling China's stories well and spreading China's voice effectively. University X has set up Confucius Institutes targeting Central Asia, attracting large numbers of Central Asian students, whose cultural cognition and expression of positions are more representative and valuable for research. The integration of cultural elements into language teaching affects international students' depth of understanding of Chinese culture, and intercultural communication practice promotes the reconstruction of cultural cognition. The Chinese teaching for international students constitutes a dynamic, two-way process of cultural adaptation. Through Chinese teaching, it cultivates Central Asian students' intercultural cognitive abilities and cultural empathy, enabling them to view cultural differences objectively and rationally, and to become friendly ambassadors of Sino-foreign cultural exchange.

2. Research on the Current Situation of Corpus of Central Asian International Students

Although current research on Central Asian corpora involves multiple aspects, there are relatively few studies. Existing research mostly starts from the perspective of ontology, focusing on word classes, sentence pattern acquisition, and analyzing error reasons, with fewer studies on the impact of Chinese learning on cultural cognition. The construction of 'language output and cultural stance expression' is particularly important. This study is not merely about second language acquisition; it is also about constructing a 'language-culture-cognition' model, emphasizing the cultivation of international students' intercultural cognitive abilities and cultural empathy. It is also a practice of cultural interaction in the core area of the 'Belt and Road Initiative'. This paper starts from the interactive relationship among 'language learning-culture cognition-stance expression', emphasizing the cultivation of international students' experiences and insights in exploring Chinese teaching models aimed at Central Asian students.

3. Introduction to the Corpus of Central Asian International Students

International Chinese classroom teaching allows information to flow allows information to flow among students from different languages, cultures, and countries, enabling us to understand students and the world in a comprehensive and diverse way. Classroom corpora reveal the lifestyles, behavioral habits, and ideological concepts of people from different cultural backgrounds. By observing classroom corpora, we can see the interactions and clashes between different cultures. Analyzing the types, themes, and content of the corpora can provide valuable references for exploring the cross-cultural dissemination of international Chinese. This study takes the classroom corpora of international students at School X as the research object. Through the compilation of written and oral classroom corpora from the 2024-2025 academic year, it was found that the most common themes of the corpora were life, culture, entertainment, and social experiences. The themes are diverse and colorful, guiding international students to explore and understand Chinese culture, customs, and daily life. Classroom corpora not only allow international students to understand different cultures, but also help the collectors, namely Chinese students and teachers, to enhance their cognitive understanding of different cultures, thereby facilitating cross-cultural communication.

3.1 Life-related Corpus

Topics closely related to daily life are easier for most people to understand and accept, allowing teachers to easily communicate with respondents, and at the same time,

unconsciously bringing teachers and students closer psychologically. At the same time, discussing topics around daily life can not only showcase the details of different cultures but also provide more topics and directions for cross-cultural communication.

Table 1:Life-related Corpus

Corpus type	Theme	Content
final exam	Happy Family	Spring Festival, dumplings, eating, gathering for a meal, the whole family
final exam	The Four Seasons of My Hometown	Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter
Homework	Seeing a Doctor	Medical skills, hospital, seeing a doctor
Classroom corpus	Online Shopping	Returns, online shopping
After-school essay	Looking for a Job	Employment
Final assignment	My Dream	Work, life

Through daily life necessities such as seeing a doctor, shopping online, and finding a job, international students can quickly master the skills for survival. Having international students introduce their hometowns and families allows us to understand each other with the students. Choosing the daily life of international students in China as a starting point not only helps students understand the lifestyle in China but also discusses different ways of handling matters, values, and other aspects across various countries and regions. Topics about daily life cover different aspects of everyday living, and such topics can allow the audience to gain a more detailed understanding of the differences between their own culture and other cultures, helping to enhance cross-cultural communication awareness.

3.2 Cultural Corpus

Cultural topics are relatively broad and offer more options. 'If people can survive, spiritual needs are inevitable.' Cultural topics can help international students better understand Chinese culture, break stereotypes and preconceived notions, and increase international students' acceptance of foreign cultures; cultural topics can also effectively help international students understand the differences and similarities between different cultures, assist people in better understanding the background and connotations of other cultures, and promote cross-cultural communication, interaction, and collision between people.

Table 2: Cultural Corpus

Corpus type	Theme	Content
Classroom corpus	Peking Opera — Traditional Art	Sheng, Dan, Jing, Chou
Classroom corpus	Contrast of Red and White in Weddings	Wedding attire, red, white, solemn, sacred
After-school essay	Chinese Food Culture	Dumplings, meals

Peking Opera is a quintessential embodiment of traditional Chinese culture. It carries the core of traditional culture through artistic forms and in turn supports cultural inheritance and dissemination. The two form a symbiotic “carrier–core” relationship.

3.3 Language-related corpus

Every language reflects the characteristics and values of its associated culture. Language not only conveys cultural information but also reflects the differences between its culture and other cultures. When understanding the cultural differences of different countries and regions, language is one of our most direct ways of contact.

Table 3: Language-related corpus

Corpus type	Theme	Content
Classroom corpus	Rumor	Rumors and false information
Classroom corpus	Online Shopping	How to Shop Online and Online Shopping Terms

With the continuous development of social networks comes changes to life. Rumors and online shopping are closely related to modern life, and language use accompanies the process of engaging with them. Immersing oneself in these contexts allows for a deeper understanding of language use in different situations. For example, when exploring the theme of 'rumors,' international students' understanding of Chinese categorical expressions such as 'completely fabricated rumors' and 'quotes taken out of context' helps them break down language barriers and gain insight into Chinese society's standards for defining false information and its governance logic, further perceiving the importance Chinese society places on public order and trust systems, thereby providing precise linguistic entry points for cultural awareness. Regarding the theme of 'online shopping,' they not only grasp the logic of Chinese in consumer scenarios but also, through these linguistic carriers, gain a preliminary understanding of the operational models of contemporary Chinese e-commerce and characteristics of consumer culture, such as the credibility culture and efficiency concepts behind online shopping rules like 'review mechanisms' and '24-hour shipping.' Therefore, mastering the language of another culture provides the prerequisite for understanding that culture, which in turn

helps us effectively solve problems in cross-cultural communication and achieve deeper levels of interaction.

3.4 Entertainment and cultural corpus

Entertainment topics have a strong function of conveying cultural information. By introducing the forms and characteristics of art and entertainment in different countries and cultures, international students can deepen their understanding of these countries and other cultures, promoting cultural exchange.

Table 4:Entertainment and cultural corpus

Corpus type	Theme	Content
Homework	Blog	Internet, computer, podcast platforms
Homework	The Definition of Leisure	Consumption, mass leisure, employment
Classroom corpus	Chasing Stars	Lingling's Idol-Chasing Story

The popular nature of arts and entertainment belongs to the realm of the general public. It can transcend cultural backgrounds, be sufficiently accessible, vivid and lively, easily attract the audience's interest, and greatly shorten the psychological distance across cultures. For example, in 'Blogging,' the act of 'recording online and using podcasts in Chinese' combines the 'instrumental' aspect of the Chinese language with the 'Chinese digital cultural context.' When overseas students practice expressing themselves in Chinese, they need to understand the rules of podcast platforms, which also exposes them to cultural contexts through language practice. By understanding culture through language, cross-cultural communication is promoted.

3.5 Social experience corpus

The experiences and feelings that an individual gains while engaging in activities and interactions in society are social experiences.

Table 5:Social experience corpus

Corpus type	Theme	Content
Homework	How to Leave Your Phone	Smartphone, habit
Homework	What is White Noise	Sound
Homework	Where Judgment Comes From	Judgment, experience, shopping
Final essay	My Hometown	Introducing my hometown

The content of classroom materials is selected based on respecting cultural differences while demonstrating an understanding of different cultures, encouraging students to express themselves freely and showcase their respective countries' traditions and cultures. Through culture-related themes, students can understand the differences in culture and customs between countries; life-related themes allow the audience to learn about the different lifestyles and habits of people from various cultural backgrounds; popular entertainment themes meet the current needs of the student group.

4.The Dual Construction of Language Production and the Expression of Cultural Stance

4.1 Language Shapes Cultural Cognition and the World

4.1.1 Language Communication — The Impact of Speech on Perceiving the World, the Impact of Writing on Language Communication

Humans cannot live without identity. Language as a carrier of culture and cognitive framework Impact of phonetics on perception of the world Different language phonetic systems, such as the tonal system of Chinese, shape differences in users' sensitivity to sounds. In the classroom, international students, by imitating the four tones of Chinese, not only learn pronunciation but also unconsciously adopt a 'distinguishing meaning by sound' way of thinking, thereby aligning more closely with Chinese perceptions of language rhythm and emotional expression. The shaping of thinking by writing As a logographic script, Chinese characters, with their pictographic and ideographic traits, carry rich cultural metaphors, for example, the character “家” (home) with a “pig” under the roof reflects agrarian culture. The process of international students writing Chinese characters is essentially a process of decoding Chinese cultural symbols. Compared to alphabetic scripts, the visual complexity of Chinese characters requires learners to pay more attention to holistic perception, which aligns with the 'holistic first' cognitive style in Eastern cultures.

4.1.2 Language learning is a bridge to cultural understanding

Cultural connotations in vocabulary Certain words, such as 'ren' (benevolence) and 'xiao' (filial piety), directly reflect the core values of Chinese culture. In class, by analyzing the contextual use of such words, international students can understand the ethical concepts and social relationships behind them. For example, when learning the word 'guanxi' (relationships), it is necessary to consider the practice of personal networks in Chinese society, rather than simply equating it to the English word 'relationship.' Cultural logic in grammatical structures The 'cohesion by meaning' grammar of Chinese emphasizes context rather than formal connections, reflecting the implicit and meaning-focused communication style in Chinese culture. In sentence-making exercises, international students gradually adapt to this way of expression, thereby more naturally understanding the communication habits of Chinese people. Proficiently mastering a language helps in understanding the cultural spirit, cultural traditions, and subtle cultural differences expressed by that language, as well as the values pursued and approaches advocated for common issues. As Sapir stated in his book Using a language creates a habitual way of thinking. When international students express Chinese culture in the classroom through language, there is inevitably some loss, gain, and distortion of information in the process. Language is not a passive tool for expressing thoughts and culture; it is more like a 'prism' that actively shapes how we understand, remember, and experience the world through its vocabulary, grammar, and semantics. Every language has a way of observing the world, which profoundly influences the inheritance and development of culture.

4.2 Culture Shapes Language Forms and Usage

Language is a part of culture, and culture in turn determines how a person thinks and expresses their ideas. Some meanings of language may have different interpretations in different cultures and contexts. The main reason culture affects semantics is due to differences in values, customs, beliefs, and traditions among cultures, which leads to differences in people's understanding and use of language symbols. The way culture defines the meaning of language often determines how people understand and perceive certain things. Certain words have specific meanings in one culture, but in another culture, they may be understood as something completely different. Even if the same word or sentence has the same meaning in different cultures, people may still have different understandings or feelings due to the difference in cultural backgrounds.

Telling China's story well through international Chinese education means conveying the core values and thematic content of Chinese culture through language teaching, focusing through methodology, and deeply considering what China's story is about, how it should be told, who should tell it, and how to understand China. The Chinese path, Chinese propositions, Chinese solutions, and Chinese culture are the core content of China's story. 'We need to better promote the global spread of Chinese culture, convey values through literature, deliver messages through literature, educate people through culture, and introduce the world to more outstanding culture with Chinese characteristics, reflecting the Chinese spirit and containing Chinese wisdom.' Explanations of value adherence should also include vivid everyday narratives; we should pay attention not only to attitudes and image, being modest and confident, but also to methods and strategies, maintaining a balance of flexibility and restraint. Culture is the soil of language. The needs, values, social structures, and historical changes of culture fundamentally determine the content, usage, and even some forms of language (such as honorifics), and drive the continuous evolution of language. The relationship between language and culture is bidirectional, symbiotic, and dialectical. Culture is encoded, transmitted, and disseminated through language. Without language, the accumulation and continuity of culture would be extremely difficult. Language, in turn, influences the thinking patterns and worldviews of cultural members through its inherent structure.

5. Exploring Innovative Paths for the Integrated Cultivation of Values and Competencies

5.1 Teacher Dimension: Cultural Confidence, Cultural Awareness, Cultural Expression

5.1.1 Cultural Confidence:

Understand the core values of China's excellent tradition: benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness, and understand the cultural connotations of 'harmony,' including tolerance, moderation, balance, non-aggression, and harmony. Pay attention to a deep understanding of Chinese traditional culture in daily life; the traditional cultural values and ideas contained in everyday life are vivid and warm, and behind the conventions, there are profound thoughts and cultural connotations. Understand the cultural carriers in daily life, guiding students to pay attention to and interpret the ubiquitous cultural imprints in daily life and their underlying cultural connotations.

5.1.2 Teachers should pay attention when making cultural expressions

First, special attention should be given to preventing formalism in cultural expression. The teaching content needs to align with the development of the times. We should avoid focusing on 'form' over 'spirit', emphasizing grandiosity with little depth, and stressing presentation over core values. Second, special attention should be given to preventing absolutism in cultural expression. A respectful and open attitude should be maintained towards cultural exchange, rather than simply judging the merits of cultures in absolute terms. Third, special attention should be given to preventing nihilism in cultural expression, avoiding an emphasis on the 'external' over the 'internal'. We must not lack 'self-awareness' of Chinese traditional culture, and the expression of the core values of Chinese traditional culture should be accurate. Fourth, special attention should be given to avoiding overemphasizing cultural differences while ignoring shared values, focusing only on cultural differences while ignoring cultural universals.

5.2 Student dimension: Cultural expression has two intrinsic dimensions: one is consciously learning to express, and the other is having the ability to express

By collecting corpora, we can see how they produce output, understand their knowledge of Chinese cultural traditions and spirit, and analyze the results of cultural dissemination. Cultural competence is evaluated based on corpus output, as the corpus is the core medium for assessing international students' ability to express culture. By analyzing the content of their cultural output in the corpus, it is possible to clearly determine the actual level of 'conscious learning to express' versus 'ability to express,' specifically reflected in the following two situations: one type is corpus cases with relatively good cultural expression ability, where some international students demonstrate a deep understanding of Chinese culture and clear expressive ability in the corpus, reflecting a combination of 'conscious learning + ability to output.' The other type is corpus cases where cultural expression ability needs improvement; the corpus reflects problems such as 'unconscious learning' and 'incomplete expression' among international students, which require further guidance. For 'students consciously learning to express,' specific goals should be set, such as accuracy in using cultural keywords, representativeness and practicality of examples, and dialectical comparison between Chinese and foreign cultures. For the module 'how to express with ability,' it is necessary to further distinguish whether the issue lies in insufficient language skills, lack of cultural knowledge, or a biased cultural perception. Different types should be provided with differentiated support.

5.3 Integration of Effective Expression and Comprehension

First, the communicator or presenter must speak well; second, the recipient or listener must be interested and want to listen; third, the content must resonate and evoke shared emotions and a consensus of values. When these three elements come together and integrate, understanding and recognition are achieved, and the goal of cultural communication is effectively accomplished. The selection of teaching themes and content design directly affects the integration of 'speaking well' and 'understanding.' Only by meeting the three key elements of 'the communicator speaks well, the audience wants to listen, and the content triggers consensus' can effective cultural transmission be achieved. Specifically, this is reflected in: choosing themes that the audience 'wants to hear' lays the foundation for integration. Content related to entertainment and daily life naturally aligns with the lives of international students, meeting the audience's desire to listen and serving as a prerequisite for 'speaking well.' Intentionally connecting Chinese cultural characteristics with universal human values such as peace, development, fairness, justice,

democracy, and freedom. Designing content that 'triggers consensus' to achieve integration goals. When content focuses on 'commonalities between Chinese and foreign cultures' or 'points of emotional resonance,' it easily evokes shared emotions and value consensus between teachers and students, completing the loop of 'understanding and agreement.

6.Conclusion

This study focuses on classroom corpora of Central Asian students at University X during the 2024-2025 academic year. By organizing five major thematic corpus clusters—life, culture, language, entertainment, and social experience—it clearly presents the interactive picture of Central Asian students' Chinese learning and cultural cognition. Additionally, it establishes a dual evaluation system of 'language output and cultural stance expression,' deepening the understanding of the reciprocal construction relationship between language and culture. The study confirms that Chinese pronunciation, script, vocabulary, and grammar are not only carriers of language knowledge but also subtly promote Central Asian students to reconstruct their understanding of Chinese culture. At the same time, the native cultural backgrounds of Central Asian students also constrain their comprehension of Chinese semantics, highlighting the complexity of semantic interpretation in a cross-cultural context. Language teaching cannot be separated from cultural context, and cultural dissemination needs to be based on the patterns of language acquisition. Of course, this study still has certain limitations, such as the corpus collection being focused on School X. In the future, the sample coverage can be expanded to include corpora from students from more Central Asian countries, further verifying the universality of the interaction between language and culture.

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