

# INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN MEDICAL ENGLISH TEACHING: PERSPECTIVES FROM HIGHER VOCATIONAL COLLEGES IN CHINA

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## Abstract

Intercultural communication plays a pivotal role in Medical English education, particularly in a diverse and dynamic context like that of higher vocational colleges in China. This research paper aims to investigate the perspectives, practices, and challenges associated with intercultural communication in Medical English teaching within these institutions. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and interviews to gather data from both instructors and students. Surveys are utilized to gauge the overall attitudes, beliefs, and perceived importance of intercultural communication in Medical English education. Interviews provide a deeper insight into specific experiences, challenges, and strategies employed by instructors and students in navigating intercultural interactions within the classroom.

Through the analysis of collected data, this paper offers insights into effective strategies for promoting intercultural communication competence in Medical English teaching within higher vocational colleges in China. Recommendations include the integration of culturally relevant content, the implementation of interactive and experiential learning activities, and the provision of professional development opportunities for instructors.

This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on intercultural communication in educational contexts, shedding light on its importance and implications for Medical English teaching in higher vocational colleges in China. It underscores the need for continued efforts to foster intercultural understanding and competence among both instructors and students to meet the challenges of an increasingly globalized healthcare environment.

**Keywords:** Intercultural Communication, Medical English Teaching, Higher Vocational Colleges in China.

## Introduction

The rapid inducement of information technology and globalization is observed in nearly every sphere of life. This internationalisation gives rise to a unique model known as interculturalism, and it wholly depends upon reciprocity, accommodation, and integration. It explains how societies accommodate people of different cultures and provide a mutually cohesive environment (Byram, M., 1997). In terms of academics, intercultural competence is postulated as a highly significant factor that enhances the current learning situation and is assistive in higher vocational medical colleges to high-quality education (Leung et al., 2014).

The impact of interculturalism has accelerated the need to learn a secondary language predominantly in higher vocational medical colleges. Learning and using languages are fundamental to peaceful intercultural systems; it is a means of transfer of information (Barrett, 2013; Mansouri, 2017; Olson & Peacock, 2012; Romijn et al., 2021; Semec, 2019).

Therefore, the significance of learning languages to improve learning in intercultural societies is the need of time. Some authors have regarded multilingualism and interculturalism as a model for teacher education ( Xu, H. & Fan, W., 2017). Several studies recently identified the problems related to speaking and learning a uniform language as a medium of communication in higher educational institutions. They targeted intercultural mobility and identified the issue of poor intercultural competence in the internationalized environment, thus postulating concerns about studying in a multicultural environment (Adler, 1983; Aida et al., 2020; Ombere, 2019).

With society's continuous progress and development, the communication between China and other countries is growing (Haidar & Fang, 2019; Liu & Fang, 2017). It cannot be ignored that the Chinese culture has now been assimilated with the addition of different cultures and societies, forming a multicultural society. Due to this, the existing teaching system has to be reshaped

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alongside the growing need to learn the English language (Gao, 2012; Yihong, 2009).

In the English teaching of medicine in higher vocational colleges, teachers should fully understand the importance of intercultural English knowledge and integrate it into English teaching effectively (Wei, 2021; Zhang, 2018). Teachers play a pivotal role in the nurturing and learning of students, regardless of society or culture, and teacher training is immensely significant to adapt teachers to multicultural environments (Antón-Solanas et al., 2020; Ovcharuk et al., 2020).

This is to instantly attract students, enhance their desire to study English culture, strengthen the impression on them so that they can better understand the artistic charm of English culture, consciously and actively devote to English learning, and further improve the students' application and expression in the English language.

## Data Analysis

**Research Question (1):** What is the current intercultural situation of Medical English teaching in higher vocational colleges in China?

From Table 1, the mean score for the intercultural situation of Medical English teaching in higher vocational colleges in China is 20.2266, which is higher than the criterion means of 15.00 ( $20.2266 > 15.00$ ), indicating that there is a high level of the intercultural situation of Medical English teaching in higher vocational colleges in China.

**Research Question (2):** How does Teacher training in interculturalism impact Medical English teaching in higher vocational colleges in China?

Table 2 revealed an F-value of 3.916, significant at (0.000) alpha level 0.05. There is a significant impact of teacher training in interculturalism on Medical English teaching in higher vocational colleges in China.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on the Current Intercultural Situation of Medical English Teaching in Higher Vocational Colleges in China**

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ITCS	428	18.00	25.00	20.2266	1.68824
Valid N (listwise)	428				

**Table 2: One-Way ANOVA on the Significant Impact of Teacher Training in Interculturalism on Medical English Teaching in Higher Vocational Colleges in China**

MET	ANOVA				
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	159.141	22	7.234	3.916	.000
Within Groups	748.175	405	1.847		
Total	907.315	427			

Analyzing the findings related to the intercultural situation of Medical English teaching in higher vocational colleges in China, we can derive significant insights from the data presented in Tables 1 and 2. From Table 1, the mean score for the intercultural situation of Medical English teaching in higher vocational colleges in China is recorded at 20.2266, on a scale where the maximum achievable score is 25. This mean score is substantially higher than the criterion mean of 15.00, which serves as a baseline for comparison. Such a result suggests a high level of intercultural awareness and integration within the context of Medical English teaching in these institutions. The standard deviation, a measure of variability or dispersion of scores, is relatively low at 1.68824, indicating that the responses were fairly consistent among the 428 valid participants.

This finding points towards a generally positive and widespread recognition of intercultural elements in Medical English teaching, suggesting that educators and curriculum designers have successfully incorporated intercultural considerations into their programs to a significant extent.

The analysis from Table 2, which examines the impact of teacher training in interculturalism on Medical English teaching through a One-Way ANOVA, reveals an F-value of 3.916, which is significant at the alpha level of 0.05 (Sig. = 0.000). This statistical significance indicates a strong evidence that teacher training in interculturalism has a meaningful impact on the effectiveness of Medical English teaching in higher vocational colleges in China. The F-value suggests that variations between

groups (i.e., teachers with different levels or types of intercultural training) are not due to chance, and there is a statistically significant difference in their teaching outcomes.

## Result and Discussion

The results and discussion based on the analysis of the current intercultural situation of Medical English teaching in higher vocational colleges in China, as well as the impact of teacher training in interculturalism on this teaching, can be organized into two main sections corresponding to the research questions posed. The ANOVA analysis, by comparing the variance in teaching outcomes between groups to the variance within groups, supports the conclusion that intercultural training for teachers plays a crucial role in enhancing Medical English teaching. The sum of squares between groups (159.141) compared to within groups (748.175) further underscores the variance attributable to the intercultural training of teachers, reaffirming its significance.

### Intercultural Situation in Medical English Teaching

The high mean score relating to the intercultural situation in Medical English teaching suggests that there is a substantial integration of intercultural elements within the teaching practices and curricula of higher vocational colleges. This is a positive indicator of the responsiveness of these institutions to the global nature of medical education and practice, which increasingly demands intercultural competence. The consistency of responses (as indicated by the low standard deviation) points towards a widespread acknowledgment of these intercultural aspects among educators and students alike, suggesting successful implementation at various levels of the educational process.

### Significance of Teacher Training in Interculturalism

The significant impact of teacher training in interculturalism, as revealed by the ANOVA analysis, highlights the critical role of such training in enhancing the effectiveness of Medical English teaching. It emphasizes the value of equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge to navigate and integrate intercultural dimensions into their teaching practices. This training not only enriches the teaching and learning experience but also prepares students more effectively for the interculturally diverse realities of the global medical field.

## Conclusion

The data from the tables clearly indicates that the current intercultural situation of Medical English teaching in higher vocational colleges in China is notably positive, with a high level of awareness and integration. Furthermore, the significant impact of teacher training in interculturalism on teaching

outcomes accentuates the importance of such training. It suggests that investing in teacher training focused on intercultural competencies can further enhance the quality and effectiveness of Medical English teaching in these educational settings. These findings advocate for continued and enhanced focus on intercultural training for educators, not only as a means of improving teaching methodologies but also for fostering a more inclusive and culturally aware educational environment.

## Implications and Future Directions

These findings advocate for the ongoing emphasis on and investment in intercultural training for teachers within the framework of Medical English education in higher vocational colleges. Future research could further explore the specific elements of intercultural training that are most effective in enhancing teaching outcomes and student learning experiences. Additionally, understanding the long-term impacts of such intercultural competence on students' professional readiness and efficacy in international medical environments would provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers.

In conclusion, the current intercultural situation of Medical English teaching in higher vocational colleges in China is positive, with a high level of integration and awareness. The significant impact of teacher training in interculturalism on this teaching underscores the importance of such training, suggesting a fruitful direction for further enhancing the quality and relevance of Medical English education in preparing students for the globalized medical workforce.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this manuscript.

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