# Research on the Development Path of Middle School Students' English Speaking Skills from the Perspective of Intercultural Communication

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***Abstract:*** *With the continuous advancement of globalization, intercultural communicative competence has become increasingly important in foreign language learning. As a primary tool for international communication, English speaking skills require not only the enhancement of basic language abilities but also the development of intercultural competence. This study, from the perspective of intercultural communication, explores the developmental path of middle school students' English speaking skills. It focuses on strategies for improvement, including the interaction between language input and cultural background, the cultivation of communication strategies and cultural awareness, and the cultural adaptability of classroom activities and teaching methods. In addition, the article proposes evaluation standards and methods for intercultural competence, and discusses effective feedback mechanisms as well as the interactive promotion of teaching assessment and student self-reflection. Research findings indicate that intercultural communicative competence not only enhances students' English speaking proficiency but also strengthens their intercultural adaptability and global vision, thereby laying a more solid foundation for future international communication and cooperation.*

***Keywords:*** *intercultural communication, English speaking skills, middle school students, teaching strategies, evaluation and feedback*

## Introduction

In the context of globalization, English functions not only as a tool for international communication but also as a vehicle for cultural transmission. As educational reform deepens, cultivating English learners with intercultural communicative competence has become a key educational objective. For middle school students, a critical period in language acquisition, the development of English speaking skills should emphasize not only mastery of linguistic knowledge but also the enhancement of cultural awareness. From the intercultural communication perspective, the cultivation of English speaking skills highlights the integration of language and culture, focusing on students' adaptability and communicative competence in multicultural contexts. This study aims to analyze and explore the developmental path of middle school students' English speaking skills within an intercultural framework. It proposes practical teaching strategies concerning language input, communication strategies, and classroom activities, while integrating evaluation and feedback mechanisms to promote students' comprehensive development in intercultural communication. The significance of this research lies not only in enriching the theoretical foundation of English speaking instruction but also in providing innovative and practical guidance for teaching practice.

## 1. The Relationship Between Intercultural Communication Theory and Middle School Students' English Speaking Skills

### 1.1 Basic Concepts and Core Elements of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication, as a distinctive form of language exchange, refers to verbal and non-verbal communication between individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds. Its essence lies in recognizing and understanding cultural differences, emphasizing how communicators establish effective communication across diverse cultural dimensions, including language, behavior, and values. With the advancement of globalization, the scope of intercultural communication has

expanded from mere language exchange to cultural understanding and adaptive interaction. Communication behaviors often differ significantly across cultures, requiring participants to possess heightened cultural sensitivity and adaptability in intercultural contexts to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts. In this process, language functions not only as a tool for transmitting information but also as a carrier of cultural connotations, values, and behavioral norms specific to social groups. Therefore, intercultural communication places emphasis not only on linguistic expression skills but also on cultural influence and contextual comprehension [1].

Core elements of intercultural communication include cultural cognitive differences, language adaptability, non-verbal communication modes, and cultural sensitivity. Cultural cognitive differences refer to divergent interpretations and understandings of the same phenomenon across cultures. Language adaptability denotes the ability to modify linguistic expressions in response to the interlocutor's cultural background. Non-verbal communication—including gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice—also plays a crucial role in intercultural contexts. Cultural sensitivity refers to one's awareness of cultural differences and the ability to self-regulate during communication, which is essential for successful intercultural interaction. In English speaking instruction, an understanding of intercultural communication enables students to acquire not only basic language skills but also cultural insights, thereby allowing more confident and effective language use in real-life communication.

### 1.2 Components and Developmental Characteristics of Middle School Students' English Speaking Skills

The development of middle school students' English speaking skills depends not only on the accumulation of vocabulary and grammar but also on cognitive, emotional, and sociocultural factors. Speaking competence generally includes pronunciation, lexical selection, grammatical accuracy, fluency, and interactive ability. During the middle school stage, students' linguistic capabilities gradually progress from basic grammatical usage and vocabulary application to higher-level communication and critical thinking skills. At this stage, spoken language output is no longer limited to simple expression but involves articulating complex ideas, opinions, and emotions. The development of students' speaking abilities demonstrates a phased nature, transitioning from syntactic accuracy to communicative fluency and adaptability, in parallel with cognitive and linguistic growth.

Moreover, as intercultural awareness increases, students gradually learn to integrate cultural context into their spoken English. Speaking is not merely the reproduction of language forms; it also reflects cultural understanding and adaptability. Accurate and fluent speech must be complemented by the ability to convey meaning effectively within intercultural settings, minimizing communication barriers caused by cultural misunderstandings. Consequently, fostering students' intercultural awareness is essential in the development of their speaking competence. Students must be guided to recognize cultural elements embedded in language and apply such knowledge flexibly during communication. While fluency and accuracy are foundational, cultural adaptability remains the key to cultivating intercultural communicative competence.

### 1.3 The Role and Significance of Intercultural Communication in English Speaking Skills

Intercultural communication plays a vital role in enhancing English speaking skills. It not only improves students' practical language abilities but also broadens their global perspective and fosters intercultural competence. In the context of globalization, English serves not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for cultural integration and understanding. Students who comprehend and appreciate diverse cultural values are more likely to fully grasp the deeper meanings conveyed through language. The cultivation of intercultural communicative competence helps students focus on cultural adaptability in their spoken English, enabling them to use language appropriately across various social contexts. Through systematic intercultural training, students learn not only how to articulate their own ideas accurately but also how to interpret others' expressions effectively—skills that are critical for spoken language interaction [2].

In addition, developing intercultural competence is integral to the overall personal development of middle school students. Language learning should not be seen as a mere accumulation of knowledge but as a holistic developmental process encompassing thinking patterns, cultural cognition, and emotional expression. In speaking activities, students must not only master linguistic techniques but also demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively with interlocutors from diverse cultural backgrounds. Enhancing this competence enables students to respond flexibly in multicultural

environments, strengthens their intercultural understanding and emotional resonance, and lays a solid foundation for future international communication and collaboration. Therefore, the role of intercultural communication in English speaking instruction extends beyond linguistic enhancement—it serves as a crucial driver of students' holistic development and the cultivation of comprehensive competencies.

## 2. Strategies for Enhancing English Speaking Skills from an Intercultural Communication Perspective

### 2.1 The Interactive Role of Language Input and Cultural Background

From the perspective of intercultural communication, language input involves more than the transmission of grammar, vocabulary, and linguistic forms—it also entails the dissemination and integration of cultural information. Effective language input should incorporate multidimensional representations of cultural context, enabling students to understand the social customs, historical background, and value systems embedded within the target language. As a crucial channel for second language acquisition, language input—delivered through carefully selected listening and reading materials—guides learners in exploring diverse cultural expressions and communication conventions. For example, acquiring knowledge of everyday expressions, idiomatic phrases, and cultural symbols used in English-speaking countries not only enhances students' fluency but also strengthens their cultural adaptability, enabling them to communicate effectively in real-life intercultural situations.

The interplay between language input and cultural background is particularly important in oral expression training, where language does not function in isolation but is closely tied to cultural context. Teachers should select input materials based on varied cultural backgrounds and design activities that compare linguistic practices across cultures, thereby deepening students' understanding of communicative norms and language diversity. Through this process, students develop both structural language knowledge and cultural sensitivity, improving their ability to navigate intercultural exchanges. Effective language input offers multiple cultural perspectives, equipping learners to respond flexibly to various contexts and enhancing the accuracy and fluency of their spoken English [3].

### 2.2 Development of Communicative Strategies and Cultural Awareness

Communicative strategies are essential components of intercultural interaction. In English speaking activities, students must not only master linguistic forms but also develop adaptive skills to handle diverse communicative situations and cultural contexts. The cultivation of communicative strategies should focus on integrating linguistic competence with cultural awareness, emphasizing how to avoid misunderstandings, resolve conflicts, and foster effective communication in intercultural encounters. For instance, by learning polite expressions, adjusting tone, and employing non-verbal cues appropriately, students can communicate more naturally with people from different cultural backgrounds and minimize misunderstandings arising from cultural differences.

The development of cultural awareness serves as a foundation for effective communicative strategies. By understanding the customs, values, and social norms of other cultures, students can exhibit greater cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness during interaction. This not only extends their language capabilities but also reflects their intercultural adaptability. Strengthening cultural awareness enables students to better interpret the emotions, attitudes, and perspectives of their interlocutors, helping to avoid potential misunderstandings or conflicts. Furthermore, heightened cultural awareness fosters broader worldviews and enhances students' ability to express themselves and communicate effectively across various cultural contexts.

### 2.3 Cultural Adaptability of Classroom Activities and Teaching Methods

The design of classroom activities must fully account for cultural adaptability in order to create an environment that mirrors real-world intercultural communication scenarios. English speaking instruction should go beyond structural language training and incorporate simulated intercultural contexts that allow students to practice communication within different cultural frameworks. Interactive methods such as role-playing, scenario simulations, and intercultural discussions provide opportunities for students to engage with diverse cultures and develop strategies for navigating cultural differences. These activities increase cultural awareness and encourage students to adjust their language and communication strategies in real-time interactions. For example, when simulating social settings in

different countries, students must choose appropriate expressions and communicative behaviors according to specific cultural backgrounds, thereby improving their intercultural communication skills. In this way, students acquire not only linguistic proficiency but also the ability to express themselves confidently in multicultural environments [4].

Culturally adaptive teaching methods are equally vital in English speaking instruction. Teachers should develop strategies that enhance both language proficiency and intercultural understanding. In this context, culturally oriented teaching approaches—such as contrastive cultural analysis and task-based learning—are particularly effective. Cultural contrast methods help students identify and analyze linguistic conventions across cultural backgrounds, thereby increasing their cultural sensitivity. Task-based learning allows students to complete practical tasks, strengthening their language use while fostering intercultural adaptability. Through these approaches, students improve not only their linguistic competence but also their awareness of how cultural differences affect communication. As a result, they become more confident, flexible, and precise in real-life oral interactions. By integrating cultural adaptability with innovative teaching methods, educators can offer students a more diversified and practical learning experience, supporting effective English speaking communication in a globalized context.

## 3. Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms for Developing Middle School Students' English Speaking Skills

### 3.1 Assessment Criteria and Methods for Intercultural Communicative Competence

From the perspective of intercultural communication, the evaluation of middle school students' English speaking skills should go beyond language accuracy and fluency, placing greater emphasis on adaptability in diverse cultural contexts and communicative effectiveness. Assessment criteria for intercultural communicative competence should cover multiple dimensions, including fluency of language expression, flexibility in using communication strategies, demonstration of cultural adaptability, and sensitivity to cultural differences. In terms of assessment methods, teachers can create specific intercultural scenarios in which students participate in role-plays or situational simulations to evaluate their practical language performance. These activities require students to demonstrate not only linguistic proficiency but also an understanding and respect for cultural differences. The importance of assessing cultural adaptability should not be overlooked, as it reflects students' ability to communicate effectively across cultural backgrounds—an aspect that traditional language tests often fail to capture [5].

Assessment methods for intercultural communicative competence should be diversified and integrate both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative assessments can measure the accuracy and fluency of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary use, while qualitative assessments focus more on students' cultural understanding, sensitivity, and non-verbal communication skills during interaction. Teachers may observe students' performance in simulated intercultural contexts and conduct a comprehensive evaluation of their cultural awareness. Additionally, peer assessment and self-assessment serve as effective tools, enabling students to reflect on their intercultural communication performance during interactions and motivating them to continuously improve their integrated language and cultural adaptability skills.

### 3.2 Construction and Effectiveness of Feedback Mechanisms

Feedback mechanisms are essential in cultivating English speaking skills, especially in intercultural contexts. Feedback should address not only linguistic accuracy and fluency but also students' cultural adaptability and the effectiveness of their communication strategies. Effective feedback must be specific, timely, and interactive. In intercultural communication instruction, teachers should employ diversified feedback methods to help students identify cultural misunderstandings, weaknesses in communication strategies, and deviations in language use. In addition to verbal feedback, written comments are equally important; detailed suggestions and remarks can guide students in refining their language learning and draw their attention to cultural adaptation and adjustment.

Constructing an effective feedback mechanism requires consideration of students' needs and individual differences. Teachers should formulate personalized feedback strategies based on each student's language level, cultural awareness, and communication competence. The effectiveness of feedback depends not only on its depth and breadth but also on the appropriateness of its delivery. In

intercultural communication training, feedback should help students understand the norms of interaction and linguistic features of different cultures while encouraging them to actively engage in cultural adaptation. Timely feedback allows students to clearly recognize their strengths and weaknesses in communication, thereby continuously enhancing their intercultural communicative competence.

### *3.3 Interactive Promotion Between Instructional Evaluation and Student Self-Reflection*

The integration of instructional evaluation and student self-reflection plays a vital role in promoting continuous improvement in English speaking skills. Instructional evaluation is not merely a measure of students' language proficiency but also a process of self-awareness and cognitive development. From an intercultural communication perspective, evaluation should emphasize formative assessment, which provides ongoing feedback to help students monitor their progress in language skills and cultural adaptability. Teachers should design challenging tasks that encourage students to reflect on their performance in real communicative contexts and assess how effectively they interact in specific cultural situations. Through ongoing self-evaluation, students become more aware of their strengths and areas for improvement in intercultural communication and can make adjustments based on feedback to enhance their skills [6].

Self-reflection serves as an internal driving force for language learning, helping students realize that learning a language is not merely about acquiring knowledge but also about adapting to different cultures. Through reflection, students can examine their communicative behaviors and improve based on teachers' feedback. Intercultural communication training requires not only linguistic skills but also cultural adaptability and cross-cultural understanding. In this process, self-reflection becomes a crucial means for enhancing intercultural competence. Teachers can facilitate self-reflection by organizing activities such as playback of recorded speaking tasks or reflective discussions after role-play exercises, encouraging students to evaluate their language output and cultural understanding from multiple perspectives. By summarizing their experiences after each interaction, students can achieve dual progress in both language proficiency and cultural competence.

### Conclusion

This study, by examining the development path of middle school students' English speaking skills from an intercultural communication perspective, highlights the importance of integrating intercultural elements into language instruction and proposes several effective teaching strategies and methods. The findings suggest that in English speaking instruction, incorporating culturally contextualized language input, focusing on communicative strategies and cultural awareness, and ensuring cultural adaptability in classroom activities can effectively enhance students' speaking proficiency and intercultural communicative competence. Future research should further refine assessment criteria for intercultural competence and incorporate more empirical data to improve evaluation and feedback mechanisms in middle school English speaking instruction. Additionally, with the advancement of information technology, intercultural communication practices based on multimedia and online platforms are expected to provide students with more authentic language learning experiences, thereby promoting the deep integration and development of intercultural communication competence and English speaking skills.

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