International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation
ISSN: 2617-0299 (Online); ISSN: 2708-0099 (Print)
DOI: 10.32996/ijllt
Journal Homepage: www.al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/ijllt

IJLLT
AL-KINDI CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

| RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Study on Cultural Representation in the "Reading Plus" Section of the 2025 PEP Junior High School English Textbooks

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| ABSTRACT

Focusing on the "Reading Plus" section of the 2025 autumn edition of the People's Education Press (PEP) Grade 7 English textbooks, this study investigates cultural representation through both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. Drawing upon the Analytical Framework for Cultural Representation in Foreign Language Textbooks developed by Zhang and Li (2022a), the research examines cultural content and presentation modes using the formula "Intensity = Weight × Frequency." The finding reveals clear trends of internationalization and localization in terms of cultural regions. Specifically, international culture demonstrates the highest presentation intensity, highlighting the instrumental function of English as a global lingua franca. Meanwhile, the intensity of Chinese culture surpasses that of target-language cultures, reflecting the textbooks' emphasis on Chinese culture and contributing to the cultivation of students' cultural confidence. In terms of cultural forms, the textbooks prioritize cultural practices to deepen students' interpretive understanding. Regarding presentation modes, although single-cultural texts remain dominant, multimodal forms such as images and pedagogical activities are widely integrated. These findings suggest that textbook cultural learning should move beyond superficial knowledge acquisition. Accordingly, pedagogical implications are provided for secondary EFL teachers to exploit textbooks and enhance student-led cultural expression in daily instruction.

| KEYWORDS

cultural representation; cultural intensity; cultural confidence; the Junior High School English Textbooks of PEP

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 02 October 2026 **PUBLISHED:** 03 November 2026 **DOI:** 10.32996/ijllt.2026.9.11.6

1. Introduction

The contemporary world is undergoing profound transformations amid deepening globalization. Despite diverse stances and perspectives across nations, mutual exchange, interaction, and intercultural learning have become inevitable, wherein culture plays a pivotal role in shaping national identity and enhancing cultural soft power. As underscored in the Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, efforts must be made to "enhance the civilizing power and influence of Chinese culture, firmly maintain the stance of Chinese culture, and refine and showcase the spiritual symbols and cultural essence of Chinese civilization." This strategic perspective highlights the paramount significance of culture in national development.

In this context, the English language serves not merely as an instrument for global communication, but inherently as a vital carrier of diverse cultural values. Against this backdrop, China's basic foreign language education has embarked on unprecedented systemic curriculum reforms. The Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) (hereinafter referred to as the Standards) explicitly defines the four core competencies of English subject literacy: linguistic competency, thinking quality, cultural awareness, and learning capacity. Consequently, the Standards (2022) emphasizes that foreign language pedagogy should shift from purely imparting linguistic forms to cultivating learners' intercultural communicative competence. Students are encouraged to explore diverse world cultures through the medium of English, guided by the premise that "the cultivation of cultural awareness helps students strengthen their sense of national identity, foster a shared awareness of a community with a

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shared future for mankind, refine personal character, and elevate cultural sophistication and social responsibility." (Ministry of Education, 2022)

As the core artifact in classroom instruction and the primary source of cultural input for learners, textbooks play an irreplaceable role in nurturing students' cultural awareness. The underlying cultural representations, implicit ideologies, and value orientations embedded within textbooks exert a subtle yet profound influence on students' worldview construction. Therefore, critically examining the cultural content and modes of presentation in newly developed English textbooks provides invaluable insights. It enables front-line educators to maximize the role of pedagogical materials in cultural education, deliver targeted intercultural teaching in daily classrooms, facilitate students' intercultural comprehension, and systematically promote their cultural awareness.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Analytical Frameworks for Textbook Cultural Representation

In recent years, language education has shifted from merely developing linguistic competence to enhancing intercultural communicative competence. Consequently, the representation of culture in textbooks has increasingly become a research hotspot. Early investigations into textbook culture primarily centered on thematic categorizations, whereas more recent inquiries have focused on establishing systematic and rigorous analytical frameworks.

Regarding cultural content, Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) tripartite taxonomy remains the most seminal model, classifying textbook culture geographically into target culture, native culture, and international culture. From a sociological vantage point, Risager (2014) advanced the Transnational Paradigm, advocating for the deconstruction of national boundaries to encapsulate the fluidity and complexity of culture in global contexts. In addition, Moran's (2009) cultural dimensions, comprising cultural products, cultural practices, cultural perspectives, cultural communities, and cultural persons, have been extensively utilized as a robust baseline for categorizing cultural components.

Nevertheless, the majority of prior studies predominantly calculated the frequency of cultural occurrences while overlooking the intensity of cultural representation. To address this methodological gap, Zhang and Li (2022a) constructed the Analytical Framework for Cultural Representation in Foreign Language Textbooks. This framework encompasses two primary dimensions: presentation content and presentation mode, innovatively formulating the metric equation "Intensity = Weight × Frequency" to quantify cultural intensity. Furthermore, Yang and Wang (2022) and Guo (2020) elevated the theoretical discourse of textbook evaluation to the national strategic level. Their studies indicate that textbook development must actively serve to cultivate students' cultural confidence, underscoring that analytical frameworks should integrate both Big 'C' culture and little 'c' culture to achieve balanced cultural cultivation.

2.2 Content of Cultural Representation

Historically, target-language cultures have consistently maintained an overwhelming dominance in domestic English textbooks. Analyzing the New Concept English series, Song (2019) demonstrated that target-language cultures occupied a central position, whereas Chinese cultural elements were markedly marginalized. However, driven by the national advocacy for cultural confidence, newly developed textbooks have increasingly shifted attention toward indigenous culture. By comparing the newly revised People's Education Press (PEP) junior high school English textbooks with their previous editions, Yu and Yu (2025) identified a significant increase in the proportion of Chinese culture, with the majority presented in the form of reading passages. Similarly, Roohani and Hosseini (2021) observed that Iranian senior high school English textbooks thoroughly marginalized Anglo-American cultures in favor of robustly promoting Iranian indigenous culture. Furthermore, in a comparative study of Chinese and German senior high school English textbooks, Zhang et al. (2024) revealed that while Chinese textbooks focused substantially on expanding Chinese cultural elements to address the issue of Chinese cultural aphasia, German textbooks opted to incorporate extensive representations of third-party international cultures, thereby exhibiting a broader and more globalized cultural horizon.

2.3 Modes of Cultural Presentation

The modes of presenting cultural content in textbooks have likewise evolved over time. Guo (2020) pointed out that the paramount mission of foreign language textbooks in the new era is to cultivate learners' capacity to tell China's stories effectively in English. However, an empirical inquiry by Zhang and Li (2022b) revealed that cultural representation in Chinese English textbooks has historically been concentrated in single-cultural reading passages, displaying an overwhelming emphasis on cultural input while offering minimal space for cultural output. In other words, while existing textbooks may broaden students' global horizons, they remain comparatively inadequate in fostering active cultural expression. Ouyang and Zhou (2016) identified an analogous issue in their comparative analysis of Chinese language textbooks developed in China and the United States. American-developed Chinese textbooks excel at stimulating students' critical reflection through direct cross-cultural comparisons and cultural conflicts; conversely, textbooks compiled in China tend to lean heavily toward celebratory presentations of Chinese culture, lacking structural scaffolds that encourage critical contemplation and in-depth intercultural contrast.

In summary, contemporary scholarship on textbook cultural evaluation has advanced theoretically from basic frequency counts toward quantifying the intensity of cultural representation. In terms of content, research demonstrates a dynamic shift from a reliance on target-language cultures to a more balanced inclusion of native culture and broader international cultures. Methodologically, instructional materials are expected to balance both cultural input and active expressive output. Given these developmental trajectories, this study adopts the Analytical Framework for Cultural Representation in Foreign Language Textbooks established by Zhang and Li (2022a). By extending beyond conventional reading passages to incorporate multifaceted pedagogical dimensions, such as post-reading activities, accompanying illustrations, and epigraphs, this framework facilitates a comprehensive, objective, and empirical evaluation of cultural representation in the target textbooks.

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Questions

To comprehensively investigate the cultural representation within the designated pedagogical materials, this study addresses the following two overarching research questions:

1) What regions and categories of cultural content are represented in the textbooks?
2) What are the salient characteristics of the cultural presentation modes employed in the textbooks?

3.2 Research Materials

The research materials of this study are selected from the "Reading Plus" section of the 2025 autumn edition of the People's Education Press (PEP) Grade 7 English textbooks. "Reading Plus" represents a newly integrated component in this curriculum reform, serving as a concrete pedagogical embodiment of fulfilling the "Level 3+" benchmark stipulated in the Standards (2022). Functioning primarily as extensive reading materials, this section is designed to cultivate learners' reading fluency and reading comprehension while conveying rich cultural connotations. Consequently, this study directs its empirical focus toward the selection of cultural content and its presentation modes within this specific section. Furthermore, while extant research has predominantly centered on core textbook units, insufficient empirical attention has been devoted to such newly developed supplementary materials targeted at advanced learners.

3.3 Analytical Framework

To statistically and qualitatively analyze the cultural content and presentation modes in the selected textbooks in a comprehensive and scientific manner, this study primarily adopts the Analytical Framework for Cultural Representation in Foreign Language Textbooks developed by Zhang and Li (2022a).

Regarding the categorization of cultural content, this framework delineates two sub-dimensions: cultural regions and cultural forms. In terms of cultural regions (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999), cultural content is classified into four categories:

1) Native culture: refers to the learners' own culture, specifically Chinese culture in this study;
2) Target-language culture: refers to the cultures of English-speaking countries where English serves as the primary native language;
3) International culture: refers to shared, global cultural phenomena without distinct regional or national affiliations;
4) Other countries' cultures: refers to the cultures of third-party nations where English is not the dominant native language.

According to Moran's (2009) framework, cultural forms are operationalized into five distinct dimensions:

1) Cultural products: tangible and visible explicit elements of culture;
2) Cultural practices: behavioral patterns and social interactions within specific cultural contexts;
3) Cultural perspectives: underlying values, beliefs, attitudes, and philosophical worldviews embedded within a culture;
4) Cultural persons: prominent, well-known cultural figures and individuals;
5) Cultural communities: cultural representations at the national, societal, or specific community levels.

Regarding the modes of cultural presentation, the framework encompasses five primary typologies: cultural reading passages, cultural knowledge sections, images and epigraphs, background cultural notes, and communicative activities/exercises.

3.4 Data Analysis

This study primarily adopts content analysis. First, a comprehensive reading of the "Reading Plus" sections across both volumes of the 2025 autumn PEP Grade 7 English textbooks was conducted to identify all sections involving cultural content. Subsequently, each identified cultural element was coded in accordance with the aforementioned analytical framework (Table 1 for details). Concurrently, corresponding weights were assigned to different modes of cultural presentation, with specific scoring criteria

adapted from the Analytical Framework for Cultural Representation in Foreign Language Textbooks established by Zhang and Li (2022a).

To overcome the methodological limitations of prior studies that focused exclusively on presentation frequency, this study incorporates the dimension of cultural presentation intensity. Specifically, the intensity of each cultural representation was quantified using the formula: Intensity = Weight × Frequency

Following the completion of data coding, Microsoft Excel was employed to conduct descriptive frequency statistics and intensity calculations, generating corresponding charts and tables to visually illustrate the distribution patterns of cultural content and presentation modes in the textbooks.

Cultural Content	Cultural Region	Country	Cultural Form	Location	Textbook	Page	Presentation Mode	Weight	Frequency	Intensity
Ways of making friends at school	International culture	-	Cultural practice	Unit 1	Grade 7 (Vol. 1)	p. 75	Single-cultural reading passage	10	1	10
Adolescent school social scenes	International culture	-	Cultural practice	Unit 1	Grade 7 (Vol. 1)	p. 75	Image / Epigraph	2	1	2
Social principles for building friendship	International culture	-	Cultural practice	Unit 1 Exercises	Grade 7 (Vol. 1)	p. 75	Cultural comprehension exercise	2	1	2
Expression of individualized friendship strategies	International culture	-	Cultural practice	Unit 1 Exercises	Grade 7 (Vol. 1)	p. 75	Single-cultural expression	4	1	4
English name composition and naming traditions	Target-language culture	UK	Cultural practice	Unit 2	Grade 7 (Vol. 1)	p. 76	Single-cultural reading passage	10	1	10
British family structure and intergenerational relations	International culture	-	Cultural community	Unit 2	Grade 7 (Vol. 1)	p. 76	Image / Epigraph	2	1	2
Identification and analysis of English names	Target-language culture	UK	Cultural practice	Unit 2 Exercises	Grade 7 (Vol. 1)	p. 76	Cultural comprehension exercise	2	1	2
Cultural characteristics of English names	Target-language culture	UK	Cultural practice	Unit 2 Exercises	Grade 7 (Vol. 1)	p. 76	Multicultural expression	3	1	3
Cultural characteristics of Chinese names	Chinese culture	China	Cultural practice	Unit 2 Exercises	Grade 7 (Vol. 1)	p. 76	Multicultural expression	3	1	3
Connotations of names and identity recognition	International culture	-	Cultural perspective	Unit 2 Exercises	Grade 7 (Vol. 1)	p. 76	Single-cultural expression	4	1	4

Table 1 Textbook Coding Scheme (Excerpt)

4. Results

Following the systematic analysis of cultural representations in the "Reading Plus" sections across both volumes of the PEP Grade 7 English textbooks, the principal findings addressing the two central research questions are presented below.

4.1 Regional Distribution of Cultural Content

In terms of cultural regions, the textbooks demonstrate a pronounced trend toward internationalization and localization.

Cultural Region	Country	Intensity	Intensity Percentage
International culture	-	167	54.05%
Other countries' cultures	Bangladesh	16	5.18%
	Canada	13	4.21%
	France	13	4.21%
	Thailand	13	4.21%
	Russia	16	5.18%
Subtotal	-	71	22.98%
Target-language culture	UK	30	9.71%
Chinese culture	China	41	13.27%
Total	-	309	100.00%

Table 2 Regional Distribution of Culture

As demonstrated in Table 2, the presentation intensity of international culture reaches 167, accounting for 54.05% of the total intensity and occupying an absolute dominance across all cultural regions. This distribution indicates that textbook compilers foreground the instrumental attribute of English as a global lingua franca rather than an appendage to any specific national culture, thereby striving to expose learners to diverse world cultures. For instance, the text Making New Friends at School in Unit 1 of Grade 7 (Volume 1) offers universal social advice that transcends national boundaries, while Family Ties in Names in Unit 2 examines the connection between naming traditions and family relationships. Devoid of overt national-specific markers, such content aims to cultivate learners' universal communicative strategies applicable across diverse cultural contexts.

Furthermore, the aggregate intensity of other countries' cultures substantially exceeds that of traditional target-language cultures. Within the textbooks, traditional Inner Circle countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, do not occupy central positions; only the United Kingdom appears as a representative, comprising merely 9.71% of the total intensity. This deliberate arrangement signals that learning English does not equate to assimilating Anglo-American culture, but rather serves as a vehicle for global communication. As reflected in Table 2, non-traditional English-speaking nations are juxtaposed with France and Canada. For example, The Fisherman and the Golden Fish in Grade 7 (Volume 2), adapted from Alexander Pushkin's fairy tale, introduces Russian culture through classic literature. This pluralistic selection strategy not only broadens students' international perspectives but also reflects the curricular goal of building a community with a shared future for mankind advocated by the Standards.

Concurrently, the textbooks firmly establish the subjectivity of Chinese culture. As shown in Table 2, the intensity of Chinese culture reaches 41 (accounting for 13.27%), ranking highest among all individual countries and surpassing that of the United Kingdom. This shift signifies that Chinese culture has progressively transitioned from the periphery to the center in domestic English textbooks. This empirical result strongly corroborates the curricular requirements of "telling China's stories effectively in English" stipulated in the Standards, illustrating the textbooks' dedicated efforts to enhance learners' capacity to express Chinese culture in English and foster their cultural confidence.

4.2 Presentation Forms of Cultural Content

In terms of presentation forms, the textbooks demonstrate an orientation toward cultural practices, aligning with the cognitive development levels of Grade 7 junior high school students.

Cultural Form	**Cultural Region**				**Intensity**	**Intensity Percentage**
	International culture	**Other countries' cultures**	**Target-language culture**	**Chinese culture**		
Cultural practice	92	20	30	18	160	51.78%
Cultural product	26	43	-	23	92	29.77%
Cultural perspective	47	6	-	-	53	17.15%
Cultural community	2	-	-	-	2	0.65%
Cultural person	-	2	-	-	2	0.65%

Table 3 Distribution of Cultural Forms

Cultural practices account for the largest proportion among all presentation forms, reaching 51.78% and serving as the focal core across all cultural regions. Denoting behavioral patterns and social interactions within specific cultural milieus, cultural practices readily resonate with secondary school learners, thereby fostering in-depth cultural comprehension. Taking Happy Birthday to You in Grade 7 (Volume 1) as an example, the passage does not linger excessively on material cultural products such as birthday cakes or presents; instead, it presents three birthday greeting cards composed from distinct perspectives. This pedagogical design

effectively illustrates how to articulate affection and blessings. Likewise, the interpersonal advice on establishing friendships presented in Unit 1 provides practical guidance for social interactions. This pattern reveals that the textbooks prioritize what students can do with English rather than merely what declarative cultural facts they know, which directly cultivates learners' intercultural communicative competence.

Cultural products constitute 29.77% of the presentation forms, predominantly clustering within other countries' cultures and Chinese culture. For regions relatively unfamiliar to Chinese learners, such as Bangladesh and Thailand, the textbooks tend to construct preliminary cultural schema through tangible material artifacts, including indigenous specialties, landmark architectures, and classical literary works. Conversely, in the representation of Chinese culture, cultural products frequently serve as communicative discourse for external introduction. The explicit objective is to equip students with the linguistic means to articulate their own cultural heritage, thereby laying a solid foundation for future intercultural interactions.

Cultural perspectives comprise 17.15%, predominantly identified within international culture. Since cultural perspectives entail abstract dimensions such as deep-seated values, beliefs, and philosophical worldviews, they present significant cognitive challenges for seventh graders to comprehend directly. Consequently, the textbooks favor an implicit infiltration approach, embedding these values within universally applicable texts to convey shared human values rather than indulging in abstract philosophical expositions. For instance, Unit 3 of Grade 7 (Volume 2) introduces the proverb "Health is wealth," prompting students to reflect on the relationship between healthy living habits and life values. In Unit 8, an adapted fable is utilized to examine the philosophical themes of "greed versus contentment". Such pedagogical arrangements guide learners to engage in self-reflection through reading, ultimately cultivating a positive, constructive outlook on life and well-rounded values.

4.3 Characteristics of Cultural Presentation Modes

Regarding modes of cultural presentation, the textbooks are predominantly characterized by single-cultural reading passages. However, the instructional materials transcend unidimensional cultural indoctrination by incorporating productive tasks on Chinese culture and cross-cultural comparison activities, thereby enabling learners not only to comprehend English texts but also to express cultural perspectives in English.

Presentation Mode		**Cultural Region**				**Intensity**	**Intensity Percentage**
		International culture	Other countries' cultures	Target-language culture	Chinese culture		
Single-cultural reading passage		80	20	10	10	120	38.83%
Multicultural reading passage	Dominant culture	9	-	-	-	9	2.91%
	Subordinate culture	-	-	-	7	7	2.27%
	Equal proportion	-	24	8	8	40	12.94%
Activity / Exercise	Single-cultural expression	36	-	-	-	36	11.65%
	Multicultural expression	-	9	6	6	21	6.80%
	Cultural comprehension exercise	22	8	4	4	38	12.30%
	Linguistic exercise	2	-	-	-	2	0.65%
Image / Epigraph		18	10	2	6	36	11.65%

Table 4 Distribution of Cultural Presentation Modes

As shown in Table 4, high-weight single-cultural reading passages serve as the primary source of cultural input, delivering a rich and multifaceted array of cultural knowledge to learners. In contrast, low-weight images and epigraphs function as implicit thematic cues scattered across the openings and margins of various units, exerting a subtle, subliminal pedagogical influence. This

well-calibrated layout guarantees the acquisition of core cultural concepts while cultivating an immersive cultural ambiance for students' subsequent learning.

Importantly, Chinese culture is frequently embedded within multicultural reading passages on an equal footing with foreign counterparts. In Unit 6 of Grade 7 (Volume 1), for instance, the text presents a direct parallel between the daily routines of Wenwen's mother and Colin's father, accompanied by the reflective question: *"How are Wenwen's and Colin's parents' routines different from your parents'*?" Rather than presenting culture unilaterally, this pedagogical design constructs an explicit cross-cultural contrast. Crucially, it encourages students to bridge textual contrasts with their personal daily experiences, thereby reinforcing their identity with indigenous lifestyles while simultaneously deepening their comprehension of foreign cultural practices.

Furthermore, while target-language and other foreign cultures are primarily mediated through comprehension exercises, Chinese culture is predominantly presented via expressive and productive tasks. For example, the concluding section of Unit 1 in Grade 7 (Volume 1) prompts learners: *"Can you think of another piece of advice? Write it below."* Such open-ended inquiry prompts students to produce language output grounded in their personal cultural backgrounds and social schemas. Consequently, cultural pedagogy evolves from passive rote transmission into bidirectional, active interaction. The cognitive processing required to accomplish these tasks fosters the meaningful internalization of cultural knowledge. This indicates that when addressing Chinese culture, textbook compilers focus on empowering students not only to interpret Western narratives, but more importantly, to articulate Chinese culture in English.

5. Conclusion

Grounded in the *Analytical Framework for Cultural Representation in Foreign Language Textbooks* proposed by Zhang and Li (2022a), this study conducted quantitative and qualitative analyses of cultural representation within the "Reading Plus" section of the 2025 autumn PEP Grade 7 English textbooks. The findings corroborate that the newly revised pedagogical materials are evolving in tandem with the educational demands of the new era.

Empirical data reveal that international culture constitutes the largest proportion within the textbooks, accompanied by the substantial integration of cultures from non-traditional English-speaking countries such as Bangladesh and Russia. This aligns closely with Risager's (2014) Transnational Paradigm, which posits that foreign language pedagogy should foster a global perspective rather than binding the target language exclusively to a specific nation or ethnicity. By constructing such a multifaceted cultural landscape, the textbooks circumvent the extreme localization observed by Roohani and Hosseini (2021) in Iranian textbooks, where foreign cultures were excessively marginalized, thereby fostering a genuinely pluralistic, inclusive, and globally minded cultural milieu.

Regarding the representation of Chinese culture, the textbooks directly resonate with contemporary national and curricular calls. This study demonstrates that the presentation intensity of Chinese culture not only surpasses that of British culture, but more crucially, its presentation modes predominantly cluster around single or multicultural expressive tasks. This finding extends Yu and Yu's (2025) conclusion concerning the quantitative increase of Chinese culture in new textbooks. Beyond this numerical increase, the substantive transformation lies in the pedagogical shift: Chinese culture is no longer confined to passive receptive input, but is increasingly operationalized as active expressive tasks.

Furthermore, when contrasting Chinese and foreign cultures, the "Reading Plus" section predominantly adopts an "equal proportion in multicultural reading passages" comparative design. This pedagogical arrangement not only illustrates the cultural practices conceptualized by Moran (2009), but also scaffolds students' critical reflection through explicit cultural juxtaposition. Consequently, the newly developed textbooks transcend the rudimentary curricular-ideological insertion identified by Yang and Wang (2022). Instead, they successfully internalize the overarching fundamental task of cultivating virtue through education into the substantive development of students' intercultural critical thinking competence.

6. Implications

Based on the empirical findings of the textbook analysis, this study proposes several instructional recommendations for front-line educators to more effectively develop students' core competencies:

First, teachers should facilitate students' deep comprehension of implicit cultural perspectives through guided inquiry. While the textbooks incorporate elements at the conceptual and philosophical levels, such cultural perspectives are frequently embedded deep within the texts, making it challenging for junior high school students to discern them autonomously. Therefore, educators should assume the role of pedagogical facilitators, leveraging implicit cues embedded in illustrations, background notes, and post-reading activities to formulate layered classroom questions. For example, when instructing the fable in Unit 8, teachers should not restrict their instruction to lexical and grammatical explanations. Instead, they should organize guided discussions exploring the

contemporary relevance of "greed versus contentment," guiding students to critically examine the underlying cultural perspectives and moral values.

Second, educators need to capitalize on existing cross-cultural comparison tasks to cultivate learners' intercultural critical thinking. Instructors are encouraged to exploit the comparative modules embedded within the curriculum, such as the contrast between Chinese and Western parental daily routines, and extend them into deeper learning inquiries. In instructional practice, visual scaffolds such as Venn diagrams and mind maps can be utilized to help students systematically identify similarities and differences across cultures. Crucially, teachers should prompt inquiry into the root causes behind these cultural divergences. Such intercultural critical thinking tasks prevent learners from forming cultural stereotypes and cultivate an objective, rational mindset.

Third, teachers should dynamically integrate authentic, real-time cultural phenomena to complement textbook latency. Although the newly compiled textbooks strive to represent modern Chinese culture, such as the solar eclipse observation in Wuhan, the inherent publication and revision cycles of print materials inevitably entail a degree of informational latency. Educators should therefore exercise instructional agency by supplementing timely, authentic cultural phenomena both inside and outside the classroom. For instance, when addressing science and technology topics, teachers can introduce China's latest aerospace achievements or artificial intelligence breakthroughs; when exploring international culture, they can incorporate current global events and news. This real-time enrichment ensures pedagogical content remains up-to-date and injects dynamic vitality into classroom cultural instruction.

Funding: This research received no external funding.
Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.
Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

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