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Two-way Construction of Cultural Identity: CIM Ideological-Political Multimodal Teaching for Art-Sports College English and the English Translation of Chinese Core Concepts in Children's Literature

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of cultural confidence construction and international communication of Chinese culture in higher foreign language education, cultural identity building contains two interconnected dimensions: inward cultivation of cultural awareness through classroom ideological-political instruction and outward cross-cultural recognition realized via literary translation. This study takes the Curriculum-based Ideological-Political Multimodal Teaching Model (hereinafter referred to as CIM) for art-sports college English and the English translation of Chinese core concepts in children's literature as dual research objects, aiming to explore the interactive mechanism of the two-way construction of cultural identity. Building upon the author's prior empirical practice of the CIM model, this paper adopts an explanatory sequential mixed-method design, integrating questionnaire surveys, classroom observation, and qualitative case analysis of translated children's literary texts. Questionnaires were distributed to 126 art-sports undergraduates receiving CIM instruction to measure changes in their cultural cognition and identity, while 18 typical translation samples of Chinese national community core concepts in children's literature were selected to compare the effects of different translation strategies on cross-cultural reception. The results indicate that the CIM multi-modal teaching model effectively helps art-sports students overcome their weak foundation in cultural expression, internalize recognition of Chinese cultural values, and develop subject consciousness for cultural communication in English classes. Meanwhile, appropriate translation strategies balancing domestication and foreignization can make core concepts of the Chinese national community accessible to young overseas readers, thereby facilitating external cultural identification. This study argues that inward identity cultivation in foreign language classrooms and outward cultural dissemination through children's literature translation form a mutually reinforcing two-way loop: classroom teaching shapes translators' and learners' endogenous cultural stance, and translation practice further tests and reflects the teaching outcomes of cultural confidence education. This research provides empirical support for the reform of college English ideological-political teaching for special student groups and offers operational references for the international dissemination of Chinese children's literature.

Keywords: Cultural identity; CIM multimodal teaching model; Art-sports college English; Curriculum ideological-political education; Children's literature translation; Chinese national community core concepts

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1. Introduction

Cultural confidence has become a core guiding principle for foreign language curriculum reform in Chinese universities over the past decade. Unlike traditional language teaching that prioritizes linguistic competence and targetculture knowledge, current college English education requires instructors to integrate ideologicalpolitical elements into language training, guiding students to understand, recognize, and actively tell Chinese stories in English [1]. Globally, language education scholars have long acknowledged that language learning is never valueneutral; second language classrooms inevitably mediate learners' selfpositioning and cultural belonging [2]. While Western applied linguistics focuses largely on immigrant identity negotiation and intercultural communicative competence, Chinese higher foreign language education carries a distinctive mission: nurturing learners who can recognize their own cultural roots and participate in global cultural dialogue. Among diverse undergraduate groups, art and sports majors constitute a distinctive population with unique learning characteristics. Most artsports undergraduates spend substantial time on professional training, which often results in relatively weak basic English proficiency, limited reading volume, and fragmented knowledge of traditional Chinese culture. Many of them can hardly express Chinese cultural ideas accurately in English, even when they have intuitive emotional recognition of local culture. This predicament highlights the necessity of designing tailored curriculum models that match their cognitive habits and strengths in visual, auditory, and embodied perception. The multimodal ideologicalpolitical teaching model (CIM) is proposed to respond exactly to this demand, embedding cultural content into images, videos, performance tasks, and interactive activities suitable for art and sports learners. Prior controlled empirical research on CIM has confirmed its positive effects on students' language proficiency improvement [3]. Nevertheless, few studies further examine how this classroom model shapes learners' internal cultural identity and connects with outbound cultural translation practice.

Parallel to classroombased cultural cultivation, literary translation serves as a vital channel for external cultural communication. Children's literature stands out among various text types for its low threshold of reception and longterm influence on juvenile readers. Compared with serious academic texts or political discourse, children's stories carry cultural concepts in an implicit, warm, and narrative way, which helps reduce crosscultural resistance. Core concepts of the Chinese national community, including concepts related to family, harmony, mutual help, and ecological wisdom, frequently appear in Chinese children's texts. However, translating these culturally loaded concepts faces persistent dilemmas: overforeignized literal translation may confuse foreign child readers, while excessive domestication erases the uniqueness of indigenous cultural connotations. Poor translation choices will weaken the possibility of crosscultural identity recognition, turning translation into a barrier rather than a bridge.

Existing scholarship generally treats curriculum ideologicalpolitical teaching and children's literature translation as separate research fields. Studies on CIM and artsports college English mostly focus on model construction, classroom design, or singleround teaching evaluation within the campus boundary. Translation

studies of Chinese children's literature tend to concentrate on textual strategy analysis, rarely linking translators' cultural stance and translation decisionmaking back to foreign language classroom education. Few researchers discuss how identity nurtured inside English classrooms interacts with identity transmission in outbound translation practice. This separation creates a research gap: people lack an analytical framework to interpret the twoway logic of cultural identity — the inward construction for domestic learners and the outward negotiation for international audiences.

Accordingly, this paper puts forward three core research questions: RQ1: In what ways does the CIM multimodal ideologicalpolitical teaching model reshape the cultural identity of artsports undergraduates in college English courses? RQ2: What translation strategies are conducive to transmitting core concepts of the Chinese national community and realizing crosscultural identity recognition in children's literature English translation? RQ3: What interactive logic connects inclass cultural identity cultivation and outward communication via children's literature translation?

The theoretical significance of this research lies in establishing a twoway analytical framework for cultural identity within foreign language education. It connects applied linguistics, curriculum ideologicalpolitical research, and translation studies, breaking the isolated research paradigm of internal teaching and external translation. Practically, the empirical data collected from art and sports classes can support the iterative optimization of the CIM model, while the translation case discussion supplies operable suggestions for children's literature translators who undertake Chinese cultural communication missions. For university foreign language teachers, this study also reminds educators that the goal of cultural confidence education is not merely letting students remember cultural facts, but helping them develop the capability to negotiate culture across linguistic boundaries.

This paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 reviews relevant literature on multimodal ideologicalpolitical teaching for artsports English, children's literature translation, and cultural identity theories. Section 3 clarifies the mixedmethod research design, participants, research instruments, and data procedures. Section 4 presents the research results and conducts thematic discussion around the twoway construction relationship, alongside practical challenges encountered in CIM implementation. Section 5 concludes major findings, acknowledges limitations, and proposes directions for follow-up exploration, including model promotion.

2. Literature review

2.1. Multimodal ideologicalpolitical teaching and CIM for artsports college English

Multimodal teaching originates from social semiotics. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) define multimodality as the coparticipation of multiple semiotic resources including language, image, sound, gesture, and space in meaningmaking [4]. Subsequent research further expands multimodal theory, emphasizing how digital media reshape classroom meaninggeneration [5–6]. In Chinese higher education contexts, multimodal approaches are widely adopted to implement curriculum ideologicalpolitical education, especially for student groups who respond better to nonverbal stimuli. Art and sports students are typical representatives of this group. They are usually sensitive to visual aesthetics, bodily performance, and situational experience, but less motivated by pure textbased lectures [7].

The CIM model, funded by the Hunan provincial teaching reform project, is specially constructed for this group, grounded in three interlocking theoretical pillars: cultural confidence theory, curriculumbased ideologicalpolitical education theory, and socialsemiotic multimodal theory. Its complete teaching workflow

forms a closedloop system covering preclass preparation, inclass multimodal interaction, postclass practical application, and assessment feedback [3]. A complete CIM lesson chain normally includes cultural situation introduction through short videos, group presentation tasks, roleplay, visual poster production, and reflective writing in English. Previous controlled preliminary practice reports have proved that multimodal activities can raise artsports students' language performance and classroom engagement, but existing evaluation research mainly focuses on linguistic gains and student satisfaction with classroom activities, without examining whether higher engagement leads to stable cultural identity formation. Some teachers also point out common defects in similar teaching attempts: cultural content is occasionally added as decorative materials, rather than integrated organically into language output tasks. In other words, many multimodal ideologicalpolitical classes stop at "cultural awareness" and fail to reach the level of identity internalization [8]. Therefore, continuous empirical evaluation of identity change remains necessary for the CIM model.

2.2. Children's literature translation and cultural transmission of core concepts

Children's literature translation has long been discussed in crosscultural communication studies. Oittinen (2000) emphasizes that translators of children's literature must keep the child reader's position at the center, which means readability cannot be sacrificed for the sake of cultural display [9]. When translating culture-specific concepts, the classic tension between foreignization and domestication persists. Foreignization preserves cultural uniqueness but increases reading difficulty; domestication adapts expressions to target cultural schemas yet risks cultural dilution. Guichon and McLornan (2008) further note that multimodal awareness can also inspire translators to consider juvenile readers' multisensory reception habits [10].

In recent years, with the rising demand for Chinese culture going global, more scholars have shifted attention to the translation of Chinese cultural concepts in children's texts. A group of studies confirms that children's literature is an ideal carrier for spreading the values of the Chinese national community, because community concepts such as unity, mutual respect, and inclusive harmony fit the universal moral cognition of children [11]. However, many translators still face confusion: there is no fixed formula for translating these core concepts. Some translations simplify rich connotations into shallow equivalents, while others retain too much exotic information and become incomprehensible for juvenile foreign readers. Most existing research stays at textual case analysis, seldom asking where translators' cultural stance comes from. In fact, translators, as foreign language learners themselves, receive cultural identity education during their university English learning stage. This hidden link between foreign language classroom education and translation decisionmaking deserves deeper excavation.

2.3. Twoway cultural identity construction theory

Before elaborating the twoway framework, it is necessary to distinguish three closely intertwined constructs in this study: cultural identity, cultural confidence, and the core concepts of the Chinese national community. Cultural identity refers to learners' subjective sense of belonging, recognition, and emotional attachment to their native cultural system. Cultural confidence is a higherorder psychological state built upon stable cultural identity, marked by the willingness and courage to conduct equal crosscultural dialogue instead of cultural inferiority or cultural arrogance. Core concepts of the Chinese national community are condensed value carriers that anchor both identity and confidence; they are not abstract slogans, but embodied in daily narratives, folk customs, and children's stories. Many prior studies conflate these three terms, which weakens the explanatory power of empirical research. This paper treats cultural identity as the foundational

psychological construct, cultural confidence as its developmental outcome, and national community core concepts as the primary content to be learned and translated.

Cultural identity is not static; it is continuously constructed through social practice [12]. For foreign language education, identity construction has two directions. The inward dimension refers to learners' recognition of their own native culture: learners know cultural histories, accept cultural values, and form stable selfpositioning as cultural inheritors. The outward dimension means achieving recognition from people of different cultural backgrounds through communication or translation. These two directions are not separate. Strong endogenous cultural identity provides translators with a firm cultural stance; successful external communication in turn reinforces learners' confidence in their native culture.

Nevertheless, current domestic studies often treat the two directions separately. Curriculum ideologicalpolitical papers mostly discuss inward identity cultivation, while translation communication research focuses on outward reception. Few theoretical frameworks combine them to analyze their reciprocal relationship. This study fills this gap by taking the CIM classroom and children's literature translation as two practical sites of identity construction, forming a twoway analytical framework. Inside the classroom, multimodal tasks help artsports students build inward cultural identity. Outside the classroom, translation practice of children's core concepts tests whether such identity can be expressed appropriately for crosscultural audiences. The two sites form a closed loop of cultural confidence practice.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

This study adopts an explanatory sequential mixedmethod design. Quantitative questionnaire data are collected first to show the overall change in students' cultural identity after the CIM teaching intervention. Qualitative evidence, including classroom observation records and translation case analysis, supplements statistical results and explains the internal logical relationship between the two research dimensions. The baseline languageimprovement effect of the CIM model has been verified via a controlled prepost test with experimental and control groups in the author's prior research [3]. This present study does not repeat the controlgroup experiment; its main focus shifts to learners' cultural identity development and its connection with crosscultural translation practice. Mixed methods are suitable for this topic because cultural identity contains both measurable cognitive indicators and interpretive meaningmaking processes that cannot be fully captured by numbers alone.

3.2. Participants

The participants of the teaching part are 126 undergraduates from art and sports majors of Changsha Normal University, enrolled in the college English course adopting the CIM model in the 2024–2025 academic year. Among them, 62 students are from fine arts and design majors, and 64 are from physical education majors. Their English proficiency is generally below the average level of nonart majors in the same university. All participants take the CIMbased college English course for one semester (16 teaching weeks). The translation analysis part selects 18 representative children's literature excerpts containing core concepts of the Chinese national community, collected from officially published English translations of contemporary Chinese children's stories and picture books.

3.3. Research instruments

The first instrument is a selfdesigned CIM teaching and cultural identity questionnaire. The scale is revised on the basis of mature cultural identity scales and multimodal teaching evaluation indexes. It contains three dimensions: cultural cognition, cultural affective identity, and willingness for English cultural communication. Cultural cognition items measure learners' factual understanding of national community concepts and traditional cultural knowledge; affective identity captures emotional recognition, pride, and sense of belonging; communication willingness examines whether learners are ready to introduce Chinese culture to international audiences in English. All items adopt a 5point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire is distributed twice: before the semester (pretest) and at the end of the semester (posttest). Cronbach's α of the scale reaches 0.81, showing acceptable internal consistency.

The second instrument is a classroom observation protocol. The researcher observes 8 CIM class sessions, records task arrangement, student interaction, and language output, and writes field notes focusing on whether students can actively explain Chinese cultural content in English after multimodal input. Observation notes also document practical obstacles emerging during CIM implementation.

The third instrument is a translation analysis framework. Three evaluation criteria are set for case analysis: accuracy of core concept meaning, acceptability for child readers, and retention of unique Chinese cultural features. Two raters with a translation research background conduct independent assessments of translation strategies, and inconsistent judgments are discussed to reach consensus.

3.4. Data collection procedure

Before the semester begins, the pretest questionnaire is released online, and all participants complete it anonymously. During the semester, the researcher conducts nonparticipant classroom observation and keeps field notes. At the end of the 16week course, the posttest questionnaire is distributed. After the questionnaire data are exported, descriptive statistics and paired-sample ttests are run to compare pretest and posttest differences.

For translation materials, the researcher screens children's texts involving Chinese national community core concepts, sorts out corresponding published English translations, and classifies adopted strategies into foreignization, domestication, and hybrid strategies. Each case is coded according to the three evaluation criteria. All student data are anonymized; no personal identifying information is retained in the dataset. This research strictly follows research ethics for human subjects. A written introduction was shared before data collection, clarifying the research purpose, voluntary participation, the right to withdraw at any time, and the anonymous storage of all data. All participants gave informed consent before filling in questionnaires.

3.5. Data analysis

Quantitative questionnaire data are processed using SPSS 26.0. Paired sample ttests are used to examine whether cultural identity scores rise significantly after CIM teaching intervention. For qualitative data, classroom field notes are coded thematically to summarize typical performance, common barriers of artsports students, and practical teaching difficulties. Translation cases are compared and discussed to illustrate how different strategies influence crosscultural identity recognition. The final discussion integrates statistical results and textual analysis to interpret the twoway interactive mechanism of cultural identity.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Effects of the CIM model on inward cultural identity construction

Paired sample ttest results show that the total cultural identity score of participants increases significantly from pretest (M=2.94, SD=0.67) to posttest (M=3.71, SD=0.72), t(125)=11.83, $P<0.001$. Scores of all three subdimensions — cultural cognition, affective identity, and communication willingness — show statistically significant growth. This result answers RQ1: the CIM multimodal ideologicalpolitical teaching model effectively promotes the inward cultural identity construction of artsports undergraduates.

From classroom observation records, the authors can further explain why CIM fits this special student group. Traditional textcentered English classes often make art and sports learners feel bored and find it difficult. In CIM classes, cultural content is delivered through short documentary clips, cultural poster design, situational roleplay, and stage presentation. These multimodal activities match their strengths in visual perception and embodied expression. One typical observed case comes from the unit on traditional Chinese mutualhelp customs in rural communities. Students majoring in fine arts designed handdrawn posters with pictures of neighborhood mutual aid during festivals, while sports students performed short roleplays showing community support. After multimodal preparation, over 70% of the volunteer groups managed to deliver 2–3 minutes of English introduction independently, a sharp contrast with their silence at the beginning of the semester. Many students who were previously afraid of speaking English became willing to express cultural ideas.

Nevertheless, the data also expose obvious limitations. Although affective recognition improves greatly, the scores of the "accurate English expression of cultural concepts" subitem remain relatively low. Many students can form positive emotional identity, but they still struggle to find proper English expressions for abstract Chinese core concepts. This finding carries important implications for translation research: inward emotional identity is the foundation, yet it cannot automatically guarantee qualified crosscultural translation and communication. Language mediation competence needs targeted training connecting classroom output tasks with translation thinking.

Practical challenges observed in CIM implementation: Three prominent practical obstacles emerged during classroom practice. First, uneven student engagement existed: learners with low English proficiency showed passive participation even under multimodal task arrangements. Second, hardware constraints occasionally limited multimodal resource deployment; insufficient multimedia equipment in some classrooms reduced teaching immersion. Third, several teachers reported risks of artificial, forced integration of ideologicalpolitical elements when lesson planning was inadequate. Corresponding countermeasures have been adopted: differentiated tiered tasks for students of varied levels, upgrading classroom multimedia facilities, and themecentered lesson design to realize organic fusion between language training and culturalvalue transmission.

4.2. Translation strategies for Chinese national community core concepts in children's literature

The analysis of 18 translation cases responds to RQ2. No single strategy dominates all satisfactory translations. Hybrid strategies combining moderate foreignization and targeted domestication produce the best comprehensive effect for children's literature.

When the core concept carries unique and irreplaceable cultural connotations closely related to the Chinese national community, moderate foreignization with brief intext annotation is preferred. Pure domestication will erase cultural particularity. For instance, concepts highlighting ethnic harmony and

shared community destiny cannot be replaced by Western cultural equivalents with different ideological presuppositions. However, excessive foreignization with long academic annotations should be avoided, because child readers cannot accept heavy explanatory notes.

When the concept refers to universal emotional experience that children can easily understand, domestication adjustment helps lower reading obstacles. The translator may reorganize sentence structures, adopt familiar story schemas of target children, and keep the core value unchanged. Several poorquality samples in the corpus adopt rigid literal translation. Such translations preserve lexical form but lead to confusion, failing to trigger crosscultural identity resonance.

A representative comparison from the corpus illustrates this point. The Chinese concept "邻里互助" (neighborhood mutual assistance, a core community value) appeared in a picture book story. A literal foreignized version: "neighborhood mutual aid" without context, which overseas child readers found vague. A fully domesticated version replaced it with "helping your friends next door," which was easy to read but diluted the collective, communityoriented feature of the original Chinese concept. The preferred hybrid rendering added a short contextual clause: "neighborhood mutual help, where families in the same community look after one another." It retains the cultural keyword while supplying minimal, childfriendly explanation, balancing cultural uniqueness and readability.

It can be summarized that the translation goal for these core concepts is not to force overseas children to accept unfamiliar cultural terms mechanically, but to guide them to recognize shared values behind culturally specific expressions. This kind of crosscultural recognition is exactly the outward dimension of cultural identity construction.

4.3. The twoway interactive logic of cultural identity construction

Combining teaching results and translation case findings, this section answers RQ3 and constructs the core argument of this paper: cultural identity develops through a twoway interactive loop.

The inward dimension (CIM classroom) serves as the foundation. If learners have not formed sincere recognition of Chinese cultural values inside the foreign language classroom, their translation practice may become superficial cultural display or even cultural misrepresentation. A translator without stable cultural identity may blindly cater to target culture expectations and dilute core connotations of the Chinese national community. The CIM model cultivates this internal stance: it lets young learners feel the value of Chinese culture first, before they engage in crosscultural linguistic transfer.

Meanwhile, outward translation communication feeds back to inward identity. When students or translators see that properly translated children's stories can be understood and recognized by foreign young readers, their cultural confidence is further strengthened. Translation practice provides a real test scenario for classroom learning. It reveals what cultural content is easy to communicate and what expressions still cause crosscultural friction. This feedback can, in turn, optimize CIM teaching design: teachers can add translation thinking tasks into multimodal activities, guiding artsports students to consider child readers from other cultures when introducing Chinese concepts in English.

This mutual relationship distinguishes the present research from separate teaching studies or translation studies. Cultural confidence education is not only an internal ideological task; it is also preparation for international communication. Translation is not merely a conversion between two languages; it is the externalized practice of the cultural identity shaped in foreign language classrooms. The two activities belong to the same big project of cultural identity construction, just in different directions.

4.4. Practical implications

For artsports college English teaching, teachers should continue to promote the CIM multimodal model, but add translationoriented output tasks. After multimodal input of cultural materials, teachers can design simple concept translation discussion tasks, helping students notice the gap between native cultural understanding and targetlanguage expression. In this way, identity cultivation and communicative competence development advance together. Meanwhile, differentiated teaching and careful lesson planning are required to avoid the abovementioned practical risks in multimodal ideologicalpolitical instruction.

For children's literature translators, they need to balance three elements: faithfulness to the core meaning of the Chinese national community, cognitive characteristics of child readers, and preservation of distinctive cultural features. Translators should establish a clear cultural stance first, then flexibly choose hybrid strategies rather than rigidly sticking to one translation camp.

For foreign language curriculum policymakers, this study proves that curriculum ideologicalpolitical education and Chinese cultural international communication can be integrated systematically. Foreign language classrooms can function as the front end of cultural goingglobal projects, incubating learners who are both culturally confident and crossculturally competent. On this basis, the CIM model can be further promoted to other universities and even adapted for scienceengineering and liberalarts majors by adjusting multimodal thematic resources.

5. Conclusion

This study explores the twoway construction of cultural identity based on the CIM multimodal ideologicalpolitical teaching practice for artsports college English and translation cases of Chinese core concepts in children's literature. The mixedmethod evidence demonstrates that the CIM model significantly improves art and sports undergraduates' cultural cognition, affective identity, and willingness to communicate Chinese culture in English, realizing inward cultural identity construction. In the outward dimension, hybrid translation strategies combining controlled foreignization and domestication are more suitable for transmitting core concepts of the Chinese national community in children's literature and gaining crosscultural recognition. Most importantly, inward classroom cultivation and outward translation communication form a reinforcing interactive loop: solid internal cultural identity provides stance support for translation, and successful crosscultural reception feeds back to learners' cultural confidence, offering a new integrated perspective for cultural confidence research in foreign language education.

This research also has limitations. The teaching sample is only collected from one local normal university, so the findings cannot be generalized to all art and sports majors nationwide. The translation corpus is limited to published children's picture books and short stories, excluding other children's genres such as children's poetry or novels. Future research can expand sampling scope, carry out comparative research across universities, and design embedded CIM teaching modules that combine college English learning with children's literature translation training. Longitudinal tracking can also be conducted to observe the longterm development of learners' cultural identity and translation decisionmaking habits. In addition, further exploration is needed for the crossuniversity popularization of the CIM model, including teacher training and shared multimodal resource construction.

Cultural confidence is realized neither only through domestic classroom indoctrination nor only through isolated translation output. It grows in the continuous circulation between internal identity formation and external crosscultural negotiation. As a key site of foreign language education, the college English classroom for special student groups and children's literature translation together open up a feasible path for this

twoway construction of cultural identity.

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Disclosure statement

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