

Research on the Generation Mechanism of English Learning Motivation from the Perspective of Philosophical Cultural Identity

Tianzhu Liang¹, Xiang Cheng², Taowen He², Guangxia Qi^{2*}

¹School of Foreign Studies, Lingnan Normal University, Zhanjiang 524048, Guangdong, China

²Zhanjiang No.8 Primary school, Zhanjiang 524000, Guangdong, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Copyright: © 2025 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: In the context of increasingly globalization and cross-cultural communication, the sustainable stimulation of English learning motivation has become a core issue in the field of second language acquisition. Philosophical cultural identity, as the unified entity of an individual's cognition, emotions, and value judgments towards their own culture and that of others, has a profound impact on the generation and maintenance of English learning motivation. This paper, based on the Self-Determination Theory and the Cultural Adaptation Theory, starts from the dual dimensions of philosophical cultural identity, namely, native language cultural identity and English cultural identity, and systematically analyzes the intrinsic driving logic of these two aspects on English learning motivation. Then, it constructs a motivation generation mechanism model of "cognitive construction - emotional resonance - value empowerment", and finally proposes a motivation optimization path of "dual-culture collaborative immersion", aiming to provide practical theoretical support and practical references for achieving the organic unity of instrumental and humanistic aspects in English teaching.

Keywords: Philosophical cultural identity; English learning motivation; Generation mechanism; Dual culture synergy

Online publication: November 26, 2025

1. Introduction

English learning motivation is the core factor determining the effectiveness of second language acquisition. However, current academic research on motivation stimulation mostly focuses on teaching methods and external intervention levels, while generally neglecting the deep psychological factor of philosophical cultural identity. In fact, in the context of increasingly frequent cross-cultural communication and the continuous strengthening of the educational goal of "cultivating moral character and fostering individuals", English learning has gone beyond simple language skill training and has become an important process for individuals to acquire cultural cognition and construct their identities. The dual attributes of philosophical cultural identity, including the identification with one's native culture and the acceptance of English culture, and the integration and conflict at the cognitive level directly affect the generation logic of English learning motivation. Existing research has limitations such as simplification of cultural identity dimensions and lack of mechanism

construction.

Based on this, this paper focuses on the dual dimensions of philosophical cultural identity and combines the Self-Determination Theory to explore the generation mechanism of English learning motivation, with the aim of providing a new research perspective and practical ideas for stimulating students' sustainable learning motivation.

2. Core concept definition and theoretical foundation

2.1. Definition of philosophical cultural identity

Philosophical cultural identity differs from general cultural identity. Its core lies in being guided by philosophical thinking, conducting critical examination and constructive integration of the values, ways of thinking, and survival wisdom of different cultural systems. Structurally, it encompasses two dimensions: one is the mother tongue cultural identity, which is the individual's cognitive acceptance and emotional attachment to the historical traditions, value concepts, and spiritual core of their own culture, and is also the foundation for the construction of the individual's cultural identity. The other is the English cultural identity, which is the understanding and acceptance of the value system, thinking mode, and lifestyle of English-speaking countries, and is an important prerequisite for cross-cultural communication. These two are not in an opposing relationship but are a dialectical unity formed in philosophical reflection. The mother tongue cultural identity can provide a stable value anchor for English learning, while the English cultural identity can expand the cognitive boundaries for cross-cultural understanding.

From a philosophical perspective, philosophical cultural identity also has three characteristics: the first is the rational reflection at the cognitive level, requiring learners to go beyond the surface of culture and deeply explore the value logic behind the language; the second is the emotional level of empathy acceptance, that is, actively eliminating biases in cultural comparisons and gradually forming cultural empathy; the third is the value level of integration empowerment, that is, transforming the reasonable core of the two cultures into the spiritual resources for one's own development. These three characteristics are interrelated and progressive, jointly constituting the psychological foundation for the generation of English learning motivation ^[1].

2.2. Theoretical foundation: self-determination theory and cultural adaptation theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a core framework for analyzing the generation logic of learning motivation. This theory holds that an individual's motivation level depends on the degree to which their basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and belonging are met, and motivation itself shows a continuous state of change from no motivation, external motivation to internal motivation. At the same time, philosophical cultural identity can effectively promote the transformation of external motivation to internal motivation by influencing the degree of satisfaction of these three psychological needs. Among them, mother tongue cultural identity can enhance the learners' sense of belonging and self-efficacy, while English cultural identity can provide clear cognitive goals and lasting emotional motivation for autonomous learning.

The Cultural Adaptation Theory reveals the motivational change patterns in cross-cultural learning from another dimension. This theory states that learners, when exposed to the target language culture, usually go through three stages: cultural shock, cultural adaptation, and cultural integration. The cultural identity status at different stages will directly affect the intensity of learning motivation. Specifically, philosophical cultural identity can help learners view cultural differences from a more rational perspective, thereby reducing the motivation decline caused by cultural shock and ultimately forming sustainable internal learning motivation in the cultural integration stage ^[2].

3. The generation mechanism of English learning motivation from the perspective of philosophical cultural identity

3.1. cognitive construction stage: motivation awakening in cultural comparison

The cognitive reflection characteristics of philosophical cultural identity can effectively stimulate learners' motivation in the process of comparing their native culture with the English culture. Language, as an important carrier of culture, its grammatical rules, vocabulary system, and pragmatic habits all contain specific cultural logic. When learners examine these cultural differences with philosophical thinking, they will naturally generate strong cognitive curiosity and the desire to explore. This internal cognitive need is the initial driving force for the generation of learning motivation.

From the perspective of the cognitive process, native cultural identity provides an important cognitive reference system for English learning. When learners analyze English language phenomena, they often unconsciously associate the corresponding concepts in their native culture. This cross-cultural comparison process can effectively activate their internal cognitive drive. For example, when they discover the individualistic tendency highlighted in English expressions and find a sharp contrast with the collectivist characteristics emphasized in the Chinese context, learners will naturally have the exploration needs such as "Why is there this difference?" and "How to accurately convey the semantics in different cultural backgrounds?" These needs will directly transform into the initial motivation to drive English learning. At the same time, the cognitive construction process of English cultural identity can further expand the cognitive boundaries of learners, making them gradually realize that English learning is not just the simple acquisition of language skills, but a comprehensive expansion of cognitive horizons, thereby enhancing the autonomy demand for learning and promoting the transformation of learning motivation from passive acceptance to active exploration^[3].

3.2. Emotional sympathy stage: motivation enhancement in cultural acceptance

The learning motivation of learners in the process of cross-cultural understanding. Emotional factors are the core driving force for maintaining learning motivation. When learners have positive emotional experiences in English learning, their learning motivation can be effectively enhanced; if negative emotions arise due to cultural prejudice or cultural conflicts, their learning motivation will subsequently decline.

On the one hand, the cultural identity of the native language strengthens the learning motivation through emotional attachment. When elements of the native culture are integrated into English teaching (such as explaining Chinese traditional cultural concepts in English), it can make learners feel a strong sense of cultural closeness and belonging. This positive emotional experience not only reduces the anxiety of language learning but also enhances the learners' sense of self-competence.

For example, in English writing teaching, if the teacher guides students to express the cultural connotations of traditional Chinese festivals in English, it will enable students to apply language skills in a familiar cultural context, thereby achieving a sense of great accomplishment. This sense of accomplishment will, in turn, further strengthen the learning motivation. On the other hand, the emotional acceptance process of English cultural identity can gradually cultivate the learners' cultural empathy. When learners deeply understand the values and concepts of English culture such as equality and inclusiveness and have emotional resonance, they will actively explore the cultural connotations through English learning, transforming the external drive of "for the exam" into an internal need of "for cultural understanding". This emotionally-driven motivation has greater persistence and can help learners maintain a resilient attitude when facing learning difficulties^[4].

3.3. Value empowerment stage: motivation enhancement in cultural integration

The value integration characteristic of philosophical cultural identification can effectively promote the elevation of learning motivation. From the perspective of the motivation level, the highest state of learning motivation is to closely combine an individual's learning behavior with their long-term development and the overall value of society, forming a long-term and significant long-term motivational goal. And philosophical cultural identification can precisely achieve this by integrating the value cores of the native language culture and the English culture, endowing English learning with profound value

significance, and allowing learning motivation to gradually elevate from the simple “skill acquisition” to a higher level of “identity construction” and “value realization”^[5].

During the process of value integration, the native language cultural identity provides a value anchor for English learning. Through English learning, learners not only can examine the core values of the native language culture from a broader perspective and enhance their cultural confidence, but also can use English to disseminate the native language culture to the world. This recognition of the identity as a “cultural ambassador” can stimulate learners’ noble and long-lasting learning motivation. For example, when learners aim to explain the “harmony between heaven and humanity” concept in traditional Chinese philosophy to the international community, they will actively improve their English expression ability. This motivation stems from the value demand of cultural dissemination and thus has strong persistence and initiative. At the same time, the reasonable recognition and value absorption of English culture can further enrich the learners’ value system and help them form an inclusive and open cultural mindset in cross-cultural communication. Under this mindset, learners will regard English learning as an important way to achieve personal all-round development and participate in cross-cultural collaboration, thereby forming a stable internal learning motivation. This value-enriched learning motivation can push learners to go beyond short-term utilitarian learning goals and truly achieve sustainable development of English learning^[6].

4. Optimization path for English learning motivation based on philosophical cultural identity

4.1. Reconstructing teaching content: constructing a knowledge system integrating dual cultures

The reconstruction of teaching content should first break the imbalance of “emphasizing the target language culture and neglecting the mother language culture”.

A knowledge system that presents both the mother language culture and the English culture together should be constructed. On the one hand, the English cultural connotations in the textbooks should be deeply explored to guide learners to analyze the value logic behind the language from a philosophical perspective. For example, by analyzing the humanistic spirit in English literary works, students can understand the thinking mode of Western culture. At the same time, the core elements of the mother language culture should be actively integrated, and themes such as “cross-cultural comparison” should be designed. For instance, comparing the “view of happiness” and “view of justice” in Chinese and Western philosophy, learners can better understand English culture under the reference of the mother language culture and also learn to express the essence of the mother language culture in English.

Furthermore, the reconfiguration of teaching content should be closely aligned with the demands of the times and appropriately supplemented with culturally compelling materials. For instance, selecting cross-cultural collaboration cases in a globalized context can guide learners to recognize the significant value of English learning in cultural exchanges, thereby enhancing their sense of learning responsibility. Through this dual-cultural integration of teaching content reconfiguration, it can not only provide rich cognitive materials for the formation of students’ philosophical cultural identity, but also further awaken and strengthen their motivation for English learning^[7].

4.2. Innovative teaching methods: creating interactive scenarios of cultural empathy

The innovation of teaching methods should focus on the cultivation of cultural empathy skills. This can be achieved through various approaches such as creating scenarios and project-based learning, to create immersive interactive cultural experience scenarios. Firstly, establish cross-cultural simulation classrooms, carefully setting up concrete scenarios like “cultural interviews” and “international forums”, allowing learners to experience the communication logic of different cultures through role-playing, thereby effectively enhancing cultural empathy; Secondly, carry out dual-culture themed project-based learning, such as organizing “comparison studies of Chinese and foreign cultural festivals” and “cross-cultural dissemination of traditional philosophical wisdom” and other practical projects, guiding learners to deepen their

understanding of the two cultures in the process of cooperative exploration, while meeting their needs for autonomy and competence in learning; Finally, digital tools can be utilized to build cross-cultural communication platforms, helping learners have real-time online communication with native English speakers, allowing them to enhance their cultural adaptability in the real cross-cultural interaction scenarios, and thereby strengthening their intrinsic learning motivation.

At the same time, teachers should also fully leverage their key role in cultural guidance. In daily teaching, they should appropriately guide learners to conduct philosophical-level cultural reflection, helping them avoid cultural biases and gradually form a dialectical cultural identity perspective. This will provide a solid emotional guarantee for the sustainable generation of learning motivation^[8].

4.3. Optimizing the evaluation system: establishing a multi-dimensional evaluation standard based on cultural empowerment

The optimization of the evaluation system should break away from the single language skill evaluation model and establish a multi-dimensional evaluation standard that takes into account both language proficiency and cultural literacy. In terms of evaluation content, more emphasis should be placed on assessing their cross-cultural comprehension ability, cultural expression ability, and the ability to reflect on philosophical culture; in terms of evaluation methods, process-based evaluation and end-of-term evaluation should be combined to comprehensively record the changes in students' learning motivation and the improvement of their comprehensive abilities through various forms such as learning portfolios, cultural reflection reports, and cross-cultural project outcomes; in terms of evaluation subjects, multiple subjects such as teacher evaluation, peer evaluation, and self-reflection should be introduced to guide students to actively examine their cultural identity status and clearly understand the dynamic changes in their learning motivation.

By constructing such a multi-dimensional evaluation system, it not only strengthens students' cultural identity recognition but also enables them to truly feel the value and significance of English learning, thereby promoting the transformation of learning motivation from external drive to internal generation^[9].

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, philosophical cultural identity, through the progressive process of "cognitive construction - emotional resonance - value empowerment", profoundly influences the generation of English learning motivation. The dialectical unity of the identification of one's native culture and English culture is the core logic for the sustainability of learning motivation. Based on this logic, by constructing dual-culture integrated teaching content, empathetic teaching methods, and a diversified evaluation system, the motivational driving effect can be effectively exerted, thereby achieving the transformation of motivation from external passivity to internal initiative. In the future development process, these optimized paths can be verified through empirical research, and the research scope can be expanded to cover more different groups, providing more precise support for personalized English teaching, and ultimately helping to cultivate new era individuals with both cross-cultural literacy and cultural confidence.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

[1] Chen ZJ, 2025, Paths for Enhancing College Students' English Learning Motivation Based on Self-Determination Theory. English Square, (29): 106-111.

- [2] Chen JY, 2024, Investigation on the Current Situation of College Students' English Learning Motivation and Autonomous Learning Ability. *Modern English*, (8): 79-82.
- [3] Qiao YH, Li JL, 2022, Investigation on English Learning Motivation and Autonomous Learning Ability. *Overseas English (Lower Volume)*, (6): 115-117.
- [4] Yang YR, Chen Z, 2025, Research on the Cultivation of English Learning Motivation and Communicative Willingness of College English Learners in the Context of Artificial Intelligence. *Educational Materials*, (16): 177-179.
- [5] Ma QY, 2024, Research on College Students' English Learning Motivation and Its Influencing Factors from the Perspective of Positive Psychology. *Heilongjiang Science*, 15(13): 93-95.
- [6] Li Q, Deng LY, Luo L, 2025, Cultural Philosophy Reflection on Integrating Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture into College English Teaching. *Contemporary Teaching Research Collection*, 11(7): 100-103.
- [7] Liang Y, Fu KQ, 2023, Research on the Reform of English Professional Reading Teaching from the Perspective of Cultural Philosophy. *English Teacher*, 23(5): 13-15.
- [8] Nairai Y, 2023, Adaptability of English Translation Thinking in the Context of Linguistic Philosophy. *Journal of Heihe University*, 14(10): 125-127.
- [9] Zhang M, 2021, The Changes in the History of Chinese Philosophy Written in the English World: An Investigation Centered on Ronnie Littlejohn's "Introduction to Chinese Philosophy". *Journal of Baicheng University (Social Sciences Edition)*, 41(3): 104-111.

Publisher's note

Whioce Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.