

Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices and Student Attitude Towards Learning the English Language in China

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Abstract: This study investigated the relationship between culturally responsive teaching practices and student attitudes towards learning English language among senior high school students in China. The study used a descriptive-comparative correlational design and a survey questionnaire to collect data from 491 students from five different schools. The study found that the level of culturally responsive teaching practices perceived by students was average and that there was no significant difference in the level of culturally responsive teaching practices based on the students' demographic factors. The study also found that the students had positive attitudes towards learning the English language and that there was a significant positive relationship between culturally responsive teaching practices and student attitudes. The study concluded that culturally responsive teaching practices can enhance student motivation and academic achievement in English language learning and recommended the development of professional development programs and curriculum materials that support culturally responsive teaching. The findings of culturally responsive teaching practices show that all measured dimensions-Diverse Teaching Practices, Cultural Engagement, Diverse Language Affirmation, Self-Efficacy, Outcome Expectations, and overall, Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices-are "evident". Among these, Diverse Teaching Practices and Diverse Language Affirmation have the highest values, indicating a strong presence in the educational setting. The findings of students' attitudes toward learning the English language reveal that all aspects measured are "very positive". The dimensions assessed include Attitude towards English Speakers, Integrative and Instrumental Orientation, Interest in English, Attitude towards English Class, and Attitude towards English Teacher. The highest mean score is observed for Attitude towards English Teacher, closely followed by Interest in English, indicating that students hold their teachers in high regard and have a strong interest in the language itself. Attitude towards English Speakers and Integrative and Instrumental Orientation both have the same level, reflecting very positive attitudes toward English-speaking individuals and the practical as well as intrinsic motivations for learning the language. Attitude towards English Class has a slightly lower but still very positive mean. Collectively, these findings suggest that students maintain a highly favorable attitude towards all aspects of learning English, which is crucial for fostering an effective and engaging learning environment.

Keywords: Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices, Student Attitudes, Learning English, Senior High School Students.

1. Introduction

English reading is a keyway to develop core literacy skills in the English subject, especially in the face of rapid urbanization, modernization, and globalization. Therefore, it is very important to have effective teaching methods for English reading. However, the current English reading curriculum pays too much attention to language knowledge and does not pay enough attention to cultural knowledge, both at home and abroad. This leads to a lack of practical exploration of how to cultivate cultural awareness at the theoretical level. Culturally responsive teaching can address this need, as it emphasizes the connection between students' learning and their own cultural background. Culturally responsive teaching not only encourages students from different cultural backgrounds to learn about Chinese and foreign cultural language and knowledge, but also helps them to change their thinking patterns in English learning through their own cultural strengths. However, the use of culturally responsive teaching is relatively limited in the current senior high school English reading curriculum. Teaching practices that are culturally responsive respect and incorporate the cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences of students into the learning environment (Taylor & Wendt, 2022). This

approach creates a classroom atmosphere that is inclusive and fair, as it values and recognizes the diverse backgrounds of students. By using culturally responsive teaching practices, teachers can create a supportive and engaging learning environment that boosts students' motivation and academic achievement (Stevenson & Reed, 2017). Culturally responsive teaching not only involves acknowledging the cultural backgrounds of students but also involves using instructional methods that are compatible with the cultural norms and values of the students being taught. These practices have the potential to foster deeper involvement in the learning process, increase the motivation of students, and ultimately improve academic achievement. As our knowledge of the impact of teachers on students' success continues to increase, it becomes more and more important for teachers to adopt teaching approaches that embrace cultural diversity and promote educational equity. By respecting and honoring students' cultural identities, teachers can create an inclusive and supportive space that enhances academic success. It is not surprising that teaching practices that are culturally responsive not only acknowledge the importance of cultural diversity but also try to integrate it into the learning experience. As teachers continue to adapt their practices to meet the specific educational needs of students from various

cultural backgrounds, it is very important to be aware of the effects that their beliefs and practices have on educational equity. Teaching that is culturally responsive goes beyond instructional strategies and into pedagogy, which ultimately leads to better learning and success for students of color. It is not enough to recognize that there are cultural differences, but it is also necessary to understand and appreciate these differences in a way that enriches the educational experience for each student.

Teaching English to senior students in China comes with many challenges due to the country's large cultural and linguistic diversity, which is a distinctive aspect of the Chinese education system. The attitudes of both teachers and students toward learning English language skills are very important to explore. This research is more significant because of the specific difficulties that teachers in China face. In China, where culture and language are key elements of effective teaching, this study is especially relevant. Teachers who teach English to secondary school students in China must deal with both language education and cultural integration, navigating a complex situation. To design appropriate interventions that match the particular challenges that teachers in this area face, it is important to understand how culture, teacher attitudes, and student attitudes interact within the Chinese education system. The results of this study are very valuable because they aim to help develop educational policies and practices that suit the culture and language of China. The benefit of this study is not only to help prevent burnout among teachers but also to guide strategies that improve the quality of English language teaching in China. This is a significant contribution to the field. Ultimately, the findings of this research have the potential to greatly improve the quality of English language teaching in China and the personal and professional growth of teachers. This is especially true in English classrooms, where students experience a mix of cultures from English-speaking countries, Chinese traditions, and their own personal cultural backgrounds. Therefore, how students understand, adapt, and respond to multiculturalism in English language learning is very important. However, it has been shown that there is a general lack of knowledge of native language and culture in foreign language teaching in Hunan (Yang Xu & Liu Jin, 2020). To solve this, culturally responsive teaching has been created to meet the needs of students with different cultural backgrounds and life experiences.

2. Statement of the Problem

This study sought answers to the following research questions:

(1) What is the profile of the respondents in terms of the following demographics:

- 1) Age;
- 2) Gender;
- 3) Year Level;
- 4) Academic Track;
- 5) School Category;
- 6) Family Income; and
- 7) And Place of residence?

(2) What is the assessment of culturally responsive teaching practices as perceived by the students in terms of:

- 1) CRT self-efficacy;
- 2) CRT outcome expectation;
- 3) Diverse teaching practice;
- 4) Cultural engagement; and

5) Diverse language affirmation?

(3) Is there significant difference in the factors of CRT when the respondents are grouped according to demographic profile?

(4) What is the assessment of student's attitude toward learning the English language in terms of the following factors?

- 1) Attitude towards English speakers;
- 2) Integrative and instrumental Orientation;
- 3) Interest in English language;
- 4) Attitude towards English class; and
- 5) Attitude towards English teachers?

(5) Is there significant difference in the level of student's attitude towards learning the English Language according to their profile?

(6) Is there significant relationship between CRT and students' attitude towards learning the English Language?

(7) Based on the findings of the study what teaching programs can be developed to enhance CTR for English teachers?

3. Hypothesis

HO1: There is no significant difference in the factors of CRT when the respondents are grouped according to their profile.

HO2: There is no significant difference in the students' attitude towards learning the English Language when group according to their Profile.

HO3: There is no significant relationship between CRT and students' attitude towards learning the English Language.

4. Significance of the study

The study on "Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices and Teacher and Student Attitudes towards Learning English Language is important because it can offer useful information and benefits to various groups involved in the education system. The following are some of the potential benefits of this study:

Educators and Teachers: Improved Teaching Practices: The study can give secondary English teachers evidence-based information on how culturally responsive teaching practices work. By learning how these practices relate to teacher and student attitudes and influence the attitudes of students and teachers towards learning the English language, educators can make better choices to enhance their teaching methods, creating a more positive and inclusive learning environment.

Professional Development Officers: The study's results may help design professional development programs for teachers that are focused on their needs. This can help educators develop their skills in culturally responsive teaching and self-efficacy and improve the instructional strategies for learning the English language.

School Administrators and Policymakers: Policy Implications: Policymakers can use the outcomes of the study to inform education policies. Knowing the connection between teaching practices and attitudes about learning the English language in China can guide the creation of supportive policies that encourage culturally responsive teaching and teacher well-being. **Resource Allocation:** School administrators can allocate resources more efficiently by focusing on interventions that address specific problems identified in the study. This may include allocating money for professional development, mentorship programs, or support

services to improve teacher well-being and effectiveness.

Student-Enhanced Learning Experiences: Students can benefit from a more culturally responsive and engaged teaching environment. Learning how teacher attitudes and practices affect student attitudes towards learning English can lead to improvements in the overall quality of education and student outcomes.

Inclusive Education Program Heads/Principals: The study's findings may show the importance of inclusivity in the classroom, contributing to a more positive and supportive learning environment for students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Researchers: The study can add to the existing knowledge on the link between culturally responsive teaching, attitudes, self-efficacy, and burnout among secondary English teachers. Researchers in the field of education can use these findings for future studies and theoretical development.

5. Scope and Delimitation

The study focused on the relationship between culturally responsive teaching practices and student attitudes towards learning English language among senior high school students in China. The study used a descriptive-comparative correlational design and a survey questionnaire to collect data from 514 students from five different schools. The study was limited to senior high school students in Hunan Province, China, and the results may not be generalizable to other populations or regions. The study was also limited by the self-reported nature of the data, which may be subject to response bias.

However, like any study, this research had its limitations. The study was conducted in a specific context with a specific sample of senior high school students in Hunan Province, China. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable to other populations or contexts. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Further research is needed to confirm and extend the findings of this study.

6. Research Design

This study used a descriptive-comparative correlational design as the research method. In a descriptive-comparative

correlational design, the researcher aims to describe the features of a group or phenomenon and compare and explore the differences and relationships between groups and variables without influencing them. This method was suitable for the study on "Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices and Student Attitude towards Learning English Language," as it allowed for the comparison and determination of the possible relationships in terms of their demographic features. The descriptive comparative correlational design was appropriate for gaining a thorough understanding of the current situation of culturally responsive teaching practices as perceived by the students and their attitudes towards learning the English language among senior high school students. Through survey questionnaires, the researcher quantitatively depicted the occurrence of these variables within the study sample and population. The correlational component of the design was crucial for investigating the connections between CRT variables and students' attitudes towards learning the English language. By using statistical analyses such as correlation coefficients, the researcher discovered and evaluated the strength and direction of relationships, providing insights into how culturally responsive teaching practices relate to attitudes and learning of the English language in China.

7. Results, Analysis, and Interpretation

This chapter provides a tabular representation of the collected data, as well as its analysis and interpretation. The conclusions in this section are based on a statistical analysis carried out with Jamovi 2.3.19.

A normality test, known as the Shapiro-Wilk test, was utilized to establish whether the parametric test was employed to achieve the research goals. When the p-value surpasses 0.05, parametric testing is performed. Nonparametric tests were applied if the p-values were less than .05, indicating that the data was not normally distributed.

The research topics discussed in this article are revisited. As a result, the findings are provided with their interpretations and analyses.

Table 1. Normality Test

				Shapiro-Wilk			
				W		p	
		N					
Diverse Teaching Practices		491		0.52		< .001	
Cultural Engagement		491		0.56		< .001	
Diverse Language Affirmation		491		0.63		< .001	
Self-Efficacy		491		0.48		< .001	
Outcome Expectations		491		0.50		< .001	
Attitude towards English Speakers		491		0.76		< .001	
Integrative and instrumental Orientation		491		0.75		< .001	
Interest in English		491		0.74		< .001	
Attitude towards English Class		491		0.79		< .001	
Attitude towards English Teacher		491		0.75		< .001	
Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices		491		0.69		< .001	
Attitude toward Learning the English Language		491		0.74		< .001	

All p-values for the Shapiro-Wilk test are less than 0.05, and the histogram shows that the scores are skewed; hence, it can be inferred that the data does not follow a normal distribution. To answer the posted research questions, non-parametric tests such as the Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis,

and Spearman's rho correlation were used.

Profile of the respondents in terms of the following demographics: gender, grade level, academic track, school category, family income, and place of residence:

Table 2. Frequencies and Percentage of Demographic Factors

Gender		Counts		% of Total	
Female		239		49 %	
Male		252		51 %	
Grade Level		Counts		% of Total	
Grade 11		257		52 %	
Grade 12		234		48 %	
Academic Track		Counts		% of Total	
Arts and Humanities		230		47 %	
Science, Technology, and Engineering		261		53 %	
School Category		Counts		% of Total	
Private		223		45 %	
Public		268		55 %	
Family Income		Counts		% of Total	
1-5w		51		10 %	
11-15w		197		40 %	
16-20w		44		9 %	
6-10w		199		41 %	
Level of Family Income		Counts		% of Total	
Average Income		233		47 %	
High Income		175		36 %	
Low Income		83		17 %	
Place of Residence		Counts		% of Total	
Rural		242		49 %	
Urban		249		51 %	

Table 2 displays the frequencies and percentages of demographic variables such as gender, age, highest educational attainment, area of teaching, and teaching experience among senior high school students. According to the study, 49% of the students were female and 51% were male. This suggests that the majority of the senior high school students are male. In terms of grade level, 52% were in Grade 11, while 48% were in Grade 12, indicating that the majority of the students were in Grade 11.

In terms of academic track, 47% were in the arts and humanities strand, while 53% were in science, technology, and engineering. This suggests that the majority of respondents are studying in the science, technology, and

engineering fields.

When it comes to school, 45% of the pupils are from private schools and 55% from public schools, suggesting that the majority of them attend public schools.

In terms of household income, 10% had a monthly income of 1-5, 40% had 11-15, 9% had 16-20, and 41% had 6-10. The majority of senior high school pupils had a monthly household income ranging from 6 to 10 thousand.

Then, in terms of monthly income, 47% had an average income, 36% had a high income, and 17% had a low income. As a result, it can be concluded that the vast majority of senior high school pupils had an average monthly household income.

Finally, when it comes to place of residence, 49% were

from rural areas and 51% from urban areas, indicating that the majority of them live in metropolitan areas.

8. Conclusion

The study aimed to explore culturally responsive teaching (CRT) practices and student attitudes toward learning the English language among senior high school students in Hunan Province, China. The research yielded several key conclusions:

1) Demographic Profile:

The majority of respondents were male, in Grade 11, pursuing science, technology, and engineering fields, attending public schools, with an average monthly household income, and residing in urban areas.

2) Level of Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices:

Students perceived the level of CRT practices as average. They agreed with the use of diverse teaching methods, such as incorporating movies, images, and guest speakers, as well as the involvement of parents and the inclusive treatment of all students.

3) Demographic Differences in CRT Perception:

Significant differences were found in the perception of CRT practices based on students' demographic profiles, indicating that factors such as gender, grade level, academic track, school category, family income, and place of residence influence students' experiences of CRT.

4) Student Attitudes Toward Learning English:

The attitudes of students towards learning English, including their views on English speakers, their integrative and instrumental orientation, their interest in English, and their attitudes towards English classes and teachers, were also found to be average.

5) Demographic Differences in Attitudes Towards English:

There were significant differences in students' attitudes towards learning English based on their demographic profiles. This suggests that demographic factors play a role in shaping students' attitudes towards the English language.

6) Relationship Between CRT and Attitudes Towards English:

A significant relationship was found between CRT practices and students' attitudes towards learning English. This implies that effective CRT practices can positively influence students' attitudes towards learning English.

7) Development of Teaching Programs:

Based on the findings, teaching programs were developed to enhance culturally responsive teaching practices for English teachers. These programs aim to better address the diverse needs of students and improve their engagement and attitudes towards learning English.

These conclusions highlight the importance of culturally responsive teaching in shaping positive student attitudes towards learning English and underscore the need for targeted professional development programs to equip teachers with the skills to implement effective CRT practices.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are offered for teachers who want to implement culturally responsive teaching (CRT) in their English classes:

Teachers should select texts and materials that reflect the cultural backgrounds, experiences, and interests of their students, as well as expose them to diverse perspectives and

worldviews. This can help students connect their prior knowledge and personal identities to the academic content and develop critical thinking skills.

Teachers should involve parents and families in the English learning process by inviting them to share their stories, values, and traditions with the class or by assigning students to conduct family interviews or projects. This can help students appreciate their own and others' cultures and foster a positive home-school relationship.

Teachers should create a caring and inclusive classroom environment where students feel respected, valued, and supported by their peers and teacher. This can help students develop a sense of belonging and community, as well as enhance their social and emotional skills. Teachers can use various strategies, such as cooperative learning, group discussions, praise and feedback, and classroom rituals, to promote a positive classroom climate.

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