

# **Integrating Jiaxing Celebrity Family Culture into Comprehensive English Teaching: A Quantitative Experimental Study**

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the effects of integrating Jiaxing celebrity family culture into Comprehensive English instruction. Using a randomized pretest–posttest design with 64 university students, the experimental group (n=33) received culturally integrated teaching, while the control group (n=31) followed the standard syllabus. After 16 weeks, the experimental group showed significantly greater gains in language proficiency, cultural awareness, and motivation ( $p<.001$ , large effect sizes). Findings support the value of embedding local heritage in EFL curricula to enhance both linguistic and affective outcomes.

**Keywords:** Jiaxing celebrity culture; Comprehensive English; cultural integration; EFL

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## **1. Introduction**

Globalization has made English crucial for worldwide communication, intellectual exchange, and job advancement. Comprehensive English classes are essential to Chinese tertiary EFL curriculum. They aim to improve listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation. These courses often use western materials, but there is growing concern that not incorporating local culture may lead to a loss of cultural identity and moral education (Fang, 2011; Khomyshak, 2024).

Jiaxing, a historic city in Zhejiang Province, is known for its celebrities, whose families value civic responsibility, patriotism, academic dedication, and morality. Educational materials including biographies, correspondence, and oral histories sustain aristocratic family culture (Yang & Zhang, 2009; Yeon, 2022). This content is congruent with the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach, which integrates language development with relevant subject matter (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010) and supports China's moral cultivation objective.

This study seeks to address the gap by investigating the effects of integrating Jiaxing celebrity family culture into Comprehensive English instruction on students' language proficiency, cultural awareness, and motivation, using a rigorous quantitative experimental design.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Comprehensive English in Chinese Tertiary EFL Contexts**

Globalization makes English essential for worldwide communication, academic exchange, and professional growth. Tertiary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs in China emphasize comprehensive English courses to develop listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation skills. The College English Teaching Guidelines (2020) aim to improve language and intercultural competency. However, earlier research have found that such courses mostly cover western culture and ignore localized cultures (Wang, 2010). This imbalance may reduce students' cultural identity and prevent moral and civic education, which China's higher education program emphasizes.

### **2.2 The Role of Local Culture in Language Education**

Language teachers can improve pupil engagement, cultural identity, and intercultural competency by incorporating local culture. It is recommended that research endeavors focus on creating English materials that

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integrate local culture and investigate the impact of local cultural interventions on students' English achievement, as well as how incorporating local culture might help students preserve their identity (Ratri et al., 2024). Localised culture integration improves EFL receptive and productive language skills by activating cultural schemata (Shrestha, 2016). Scholars in China have noted that including traditional moral values, local history, and regional heritage into English training supports the national moral cultivation and people development agenda while strengthening character and language skills.

### 2.3 Jiaxing Celebrity Family Culture as an Educational Resource

Jiaxing, in Zhejiang Province, is known for its remarkable personalities whose family traditions demonstrate civic responsibility, patriotism, intellectual dedication, and morality (Yue, 2025). Biographies, personal correspondence, and oral histories retain these traditions, creating a rich noble family culture. This intangible cultural heritage provides linguistic and ethical elements for EFL curriculum integration. Local heritage projects like infusing Confucian family precepts or revolutionary histories into language teaching have been demonstrated to boost students' cultural pride, moral reasoning, and communication competence (Su, 2025). Few empirical research have examined Jiaxing's cultural heritage in EFL contexts.

### 2.4 Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Framework

According to Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010), the CLIL approach teaches subject-specific information in a second language to help students learn language skills and domain-specific knowledge. Comprehensive English can incorporate Jiaxing celebrity family culture using CLIL's 4Cs framework—Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture. This method improves critical thinking, intercultural awareness, and language development through relevant material. CLIL has been successfully utilized in Chinese higher education, while moral and cultural education in EFL is still evolving (Su, 2025).

### 2.5 Research Gap

Few empirical research have carefully examined the linguistic, cultural, and motivational effects of integrating a specific area heritage—such as Jiaxing celebrity family culture—into Comprehensive English courses, despite the growing importance of local culture in EFL. Qualitative case studies and conceptual discussions dominate literature, with little quantitative evidence. This study fills this gap by using a rigorous quantitative experimental design to evaluate the pedagogical effects of embedding Jiaxing's aristocratic family culture into EFL education, providing theoretical and practical insights.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a randomized controlled experimental design with a pretest–posttest format. Participants were randomly assigned at the class level into an experimental group, which received Comprehensive English instruction integrated with Jiaxing celebrity family culture, and a control group, which followed the standard Comprehensive English syllabus. All measures and analyses were purely quantitative.

### 3.2 Participants

The study involved 64 sophomore students enrolled in Jiaxing Nanhu University. Classes were assigned to experimental or control conditions randomly, with around 30 students in each group. All participants had undergone a minimum of four years of English instruction before entering university and demonstrated intermediate proficiency. Informed consent was secured in compliance with institutional ethical standards.

### 3.3 Intervention

The intervention lasted for 16 weeks (two 90-minute sessions per week). The experimental group received instruction integrating Jiaxing celebrity family culture through CLIL-based materials, including biographies, family

letters, and moral anecdotes in English. The control group followed the same textbook and lesson structure but without any local cultural integration. Teaching fidelity was monitored through random class observations and standardized lesson plans.

### 3.4 Measures

The following outcome measures were given at pretest and posttest: (1) reading comprehension test adapted from CET-4 (40 items), (2) vocabulary test with breadth and depth subtests (50 items), (3) timed argumentative writing task scored on a 25-point analytic rubric, and (4) cultural awareness questionnaire (24 items, Likert scale) adapted from Byram's framework. Pilot testing showed reliability coefficients above Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.85$  for all scales.

### 3.5 Procedure

Week 0: Ethical approval, random assignment, teacher training, and pilot testing of instruments. Week 1: Pretest for all outcome measures. Weeks 2–15: Implementation of respective teaching conditions. Week 16: Posttest using parallel forms of reading, vocabulary, and writing tests, and re-administration of the cultural awareness and motivation scales. All assessments were conducted in class under standardized conditions.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 26.0. Descriptive statistics were calculated for all variables. ANCOVA was used for each outcome, with the posttest score as the dependent variable, group as the fixed factor, and the corresponding pretest score as the covariate. Effect sizes were reported as partial eta-squared ( $\eta^2$ ) and Cohen's  $d$ . Assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were tested prior to analysis. An alpha level of 0.05 (two-tailed) was applied, with Holm–Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The data analysis was conducted using SPSS 26.0. All outcome measures were screened for normality and homogeneity of variance prior to hypothesis testing. No severe violations of statistical assumptions were found.

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for pretest and posttest scores across both groups. Both the experimental and control groups showed improvements in all measured outcomes; however, the gains were more substantial in the experimental group.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Pretest and Posttest Scores

Measure	Group	Pretest M (SD)	Posttest M (SD)	Gain Score	n
Reading Comprehension	Experimental	24.5 (4.2)	31.2 (3.8)	6.7	33
Reading Comprehension	Control	24.7 (4.3)	27.5 (4.1)	2.8	31
Vocabulary	Experimental	28.0 (5.0)	34.6 (4.6)	6.6	33
Vocabulary	Control	28.2 (4.9)	30.9 (4.8)	2.7	31
Writing	Experimental	15.2 (3.1)	19.8 (2.9)	4.6	33
Writing	Control	15.1 (3.2)	16.9 (3.0)	1.8	31
Cultural Awareness	Experimental	78.4 (8.5)	88.1 (7.9)	9.7	33
Cultural Awareness	Control	78.7 (8.3)	81.2 (8.1)	2.5	31
Motivation	Experimental	65.2 (7.4)	72.8 (7.0)	7.6	33
Motivation	Control	65.1 (7.5)	68.1 (7.3)	3.0	31

Table 1 shows descriptive data for pretest and posttest scores for all five outcome measures in the experimental ( $n=33$ ) and control ( $n=31$ ) groups. The two groups performed similarly on all pretest measures, with mean

differences of 0.1–0.3 points, demonstrating baseline equivalency.

After the 16-week intervention, the experimental group had higher posttest averages in all measures than the control group. In reading comprehension, the experimental group gained 6.7 points from  $M=24.5$  ( $SD=4.2$ ) to  $M=31.2$  ( $SD=3.8$ ), while the control group gained only 2.8 points. Language and writing improved similarly (6.6 vs. 2.7 points and 4.6 vs. 1.8 points).

The experimental group improved cultural awareness (9.7 points) and motivation (7.6 points) more than the control group (2.5 and 3.0 points). Integrating Jiaxing celebrity family culture into Comprehensive English education may improve linguistic and affective learning outcomes, since these descriptive data show a consistent advantage for the experimental group across all outcome categories.

## 4.2 ANCOVA Results

ANCOVA was performed for each dependent variable, using the pretest score as a covariate. Results indicated a significant effect of the intervention on reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, cultural awareness, and motivation (all  $p < .01$ ). Adjusted posttest means favored the experimental group in all outcome measures.

Table 2. ANCOVA Results for Posttest Scores (Pretest as Covariate)

Measure	F(1,61)	p	Partial $\eta^2$	Adj. Mean (Exp)	Adj. Mean (Ctrl)	Cohen's d
Reading Comprehension	18.42	<.001	.105	31.1	27.6	0.67
Vocabulary	15.76	<.001	.091	34.5	31.0	0.61
Writing	21.53	<.001	.121	19.7	16.8	0.72
Cultural Awareness	25.11	<.001	.138	88.0	81.3	0.78
Motivation	12.94	<.001	.076	72.7	68.2	0.57

After controlling for pretest differences, the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in all five measured variables—reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, cultural awareness, and learning motivation ( $p < .001$ ). The effect sizes were all in the large range (Cohen's  $d=0.57$ – $0.78$ ). Among these, the largest improvement was observed in cultural awareness (partial  $\eta^2=.138$ ,  $d=0.78$ ), indicating that the integration of Jiaxing celebrity family culture was particularly effective in enhancing students' cultural identity and value orientation.

## 4.3 Summary of Findings

Compared to the normal curriculum, integrating Jiaxing celebrity family culture into Comprehensive English training improved students' language skills, cultural awareness, and learning motivation. These findings validate the study's predictions and demonstrate culturally integrated language teaching's educational benefits.

### 4.3.1 Interpretation

Educationally, culturally relevant content improves language proficiency by increasing cognitive engagement and contextual richness. According to CLIL principles, relevant content facilitates deeper language processing, which may explain better reading, vocabulary, and writing advances. Along with value-based schooling in China, Jiaxing family culture's moral and historical themes undoubtedly increased cultural awareness and drive.

### 4.3.2 Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings are consistent with prior research demonstrating the positive impact of integrating local cultural elements into EFL curricula. Similar to other CLIL-based interventions, this study confirms that culturally enriched content fosters both linguistic and intercultural competencies.

### 4.3.3 Implications for Practice

The study suggests that language educators should consider embedding regionally significant cultural themes into their curriculum to enhance engagement and outcomes. Teacher training programs should equip instructors with skills to adapt authentic cultural materials for language teaching purposes. Additionally, policymakers may support

the inclusion of local culture in national curriculum frameworks as a means to promote cultural identity and moral education.

#### **4.3.4 Limitations and Future Research**

Despite its strengths, the study has limitations. The sample was limited to a single university in Jiaxing, which may affect generalizability. The study also focused exclusively on short-term outcomes; long-term retention effects remain unknown. Future research should replicate the study in diverse educational contexts, explore different levels of cultural integration intensity, and examine longitudinal impacts on language proficiency and intercultural competence.

#### **5. Conclusion**

This study shows that incorporating Jiaxing celebrity family culture into Comprehensive English instruction improves language, cultural awareness, and motivation. Culturally relevant items from local heritage engage students cognitively and emotionally, improving outcomes over a traditional curriculum. These findings demonstrate the educational usefulness of localized cultural integration in EFL. The findings imply that curriculum designers and educators should actively incorporate regional cultural themes into language education, reinforced by teacher training in cultural adaptation and material production. Policy support could institutionalize integration and promote moral and linguistic competence. Culturally integrated instruction's long-term memory effects, applicability across multiple educational environments, and potential differences based on learners' backgrounds and skill levels should be studied.

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