Research on Pathways for Generative AI to Assist College English Courses in Telling China's Stories Well: A Cross-Cultural Transcreation Perspective

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Abstract

Telling China's stories well is an important task of cultural education and curriculum-based ideological and political education in college English teaching in the new era. Cross-cultural transcreation is more than simple word-for-word translation. Its goal is to keep the original culture true, adjust the way we tell the story, and help people from other cultures understand us. In this way, two sides can reach a shared understanding.Generative AI can help students tell Chinese stories in English. It can translate cultural terms, rewrite stories and give quick feedback, so students do not struggle so much with English words and sentences. Still, it brings problems too. It may simplify deep cultural meanings. It may follow Western ways of storytelling without us noticing. Students may stop thinking for themselves. Some teachers also lack the skills to check whether the AI's version tells the culture correctly.This study uses three theories: cross-cultural transcreation, cultural discount and human-machine collaboration. It talks about what AI can do and what risks it has. Then it builds a teaching plan: students create the stories, teachers guide and check, and AI only helps as a tool. This plan can be used in college English classes to teach students how to share Chinese culture with people abroad.

Keywords

Generative AI; College English; Cross-cultural Translation; China Stories; Cultural Communication.

1. Introduction

As China shares its culture with the world, college English is no longer just a tool for learning English. It also helps students learn how to express ideas across cultures, share our own culture, and build confidence in our culture.

The College English Teaching Guidelines (2020 Edition) clearly says English lessons should include both Chinese and foreign culture. Teachers should help students tell Chinese stories in English and communicate equally with people from other cultures.

Teachers often run into problems when doing this in class. Many students know the cultural stories but lack enough English words and sentence structures to describe rich cultural ideas. They usually translate word by word, which makes it hard for foreign readers to understand. Besides, classes are often big. [1]Teachers do not have enough time to give detailed feedback on every student's story. Generative AI offers a new way out. Teachers and students can use large language models to translate cultural content, rewrite stories and fix expressions.[2]

Still, AI also brings obvious problems. AI tends to simplify deep cultural meanings and distort culture. The texts used to train AI are mostly written in Western styles, so AI may tell stories from a biased angle. Some students just copy what AI writes. They skip the whole process of thinking and negotiating meaning across cultures.

That is why this study asks these questions: What good can generative AI do when students practise retelling Chinese stories across cultures? What problems will we meet? How can we build a classroom method that we can control and that puts students at the centre? This research uses literature review, theoretical analysis and classroom cases to explore these questions.

2. Core Concepts and Theoretical Foundations

Cross-cultural transcreation is not just regular translation. At its heart, it is about negotiating meaning. We need to keep the core of our own culture, while also thinking about how people from other cultures understand things. We can adjust how we tell the story and what images we use, so foreign audiences find it easier to follow. But we must not change the core values of the culture.

In this study, generative AI is only a helper for teaching. It can give sample stories, polish sentences, and warn us about possible cross-cultural misunderstandings. It should not take the place of students' own writing. The Chinese stories we use in college English class cover traditional culture, red culture, stories about China's modern development, and local folk traditions.

This paper uses three theories.

First, cross-cultural transcreation. It says cultural meanings get adjusted and discussed when they travel to other cultures. This is our main rule to judge whether a story is told well.

Second, cultural discount. People are less likely to accept a foreign culture if they cannot understand it. We can adjust the story to make it easier for them, but we cannot give up the true meaning of the culture.

Third, human-machine collaboration. AI is good at routine language work and making different versions of a text. But people make judgments about culture, check whether the values are right, and think carefully about these choices. AI and humans work together; one cannot replace the other.

3. The Empowering Potential of Generative AI

Here's the plain, easy-to-read version, great for your presentation:

When it comes to what AI can do to help, generative AI has four main strengths.

First, it helps students get past language problems. It gives standard translations for special cultural words and offers different sentence ideas for their rough writing. This lets students spend more time sorting out and arranging their cultural ideas, instead of getting stuck on basic grammar and word choices.[3]

Second, it retells stories to make them easier for foreign audiences to understand and cuts down on cultural misunderstanding. Following simple instructions, AI can create different versions of the same story. Some keep our local point of view, while others are written to connect better with readers overseas. Students can then compare these versions and see how different ways of telling a story change how well the message gets across.

Third, it gives cross-cultural feedback and points out risky phrasing. It marks sentences that might confuse people or strengthen unfair stereotypes, and adds needed background notes about our culture. This helps because teachers do not have enough time to give detailed one-on-one feedback to every student.

Fourth, it creates several versions to spark thoughtful group discussion. There is no one perfect way to tell a Chinese story. These different AI drafts work as discussion material. They help students learn that sharing culture across borders means making choices and balancing different concerns.

4. Real-World Obstacles from the Perspective of Cross-Cultural Transcreation

AI's involvement in cross-cultural transcreation practice also harbors multiple risk-related obstacles: large models tend to simplify complex historical and folkloric connotations, turning weighty cultural symbols into label-like descriptions; [4]the text, though fluent in style, easily causes a loss of cultural authenticity and the disappearance of a distinctive cultural spirit.[5] Because most of the texts used to train AI come from mainstream English sources, the AI may unconsciously use Western ways of storytelling when explaining Chinese stories. This creates old, fixed ways of talking and hidden bias.

Some students just copy the full texts written by AI. They skip the important steps: coming up with their own ideas, thinking about which cultural points to highlight, and working out how to share the meaning across cultures. As a result, students stop being the main creator, and they cannot really practise the skill of telling cultural stories to people from other countries.

Besides, some teachers do not have all the skills needed to judge these stories well. They mostly check whether sentences are grammatically right. They do not have a clear way to examine cross-cultural storytelling. So they cannot spot when the AI changes the original culture or carries biased views. This means they cannot give useful guidance to students.

5. Optimization Pathways from the Perspective of Human-Machine Collaboration

5.1. Clarify Human-Machine Responsibilities and Set the Roles

Make clear rules for using AI in class. AI can only be used to give ideas, polish sentences and warn about potential cultural problems. Students must come up with the story topic, decide which cultural points to stress and form the main ideas on their own. Students are the ones creating the story. Teachers check and protect the cultural meaning. AI only helps out. Students are not allowed to hand in stories fully written by AI.

5.2. Build Gradual Tasks for Step-by-Step Practice

We divide the practice into three levels for students with different English abilities.

The basic level works on simple cultural symbols. Students practise translating these cultural images correctly.

The middle level covers folk customs and local culture. Students learn to add background explanations so outsiders can understand.

The advanced level includes red culture and stories about modern development. Students focus on adjusting the storytelling style and avoiding unfair stereotypes.

5.3. Use Standard Prompts to Control What AI Produces

Teachers give fixed prompt templates for everyone. When AI writes something, it must keep the original cultural core. It can make small changes to fit what foreign audiences can understand. It should provide two different versions and explain how and why it rewrote them. This turns AI from a writer into someone that offers suggestions, so it is less likely to produce wrong or biased content.

5.4. Build a Closed-Loop Classroom Process

Adopt a teaching closed loop of "independent draft conception—AI generation of reference versions—group and teacher evaluation and analysis—student negotiation and revision." The core topics of classroom discussion: Which cultural details has AI deleted? Which expressions

easily cause misunderstanding? Distinguish the boundary between "adaptation for understanding" and "pandering to foreign discourse."

5.5. Cultivate Dual Literacy Among Teachers and Students

Conduct teaching-research training for teachers and establish evaluation criteria along two dimensions: cultural fidelity and dissemination adaptability; popularize digital ethics among students and guide them toward the understanding that linguistic fluency does not equal high-quality cross-cultural narrative—cultural authenticity and equal dialogue are the core goals.

6. Conclusion

Generative AI offers new opportunities for teaching Chinese stories in college English, with advantages in language conversion, narrative reference, and instant feedback. However, cross-cultural transcreation is a human activity of meaning negotiation; cultural judgment and value weighing cannot be delegated to algorithms.

Here is the plain version, easy for your presentation：

When we teach, we need to put people first and set up this teamwork model between humans and AI. Students create the stories, teachers make sure the culture is presented correctly, and AI is just a helper we can control.

With layered assignments, fixed prompt rules, and discussion-based class activities, we guide students to keep trying cross-cultural storytelling. They learn to strike a balance: keep the culture true to its roots, while making it easier for overseas audiences to understand. As they practise telling Chinese stories, they improve their English and learn to communicate across cultures with confidence and respect for equal dialogue.

This research is based on theoretical discussion. Later, we can run teaching experiments. We can collect students' writing and interview records, so we can measure whether this teaching method really works.

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