



The Underlying Mechanisms of Rural Students' Lack of Motivation in English Learning and the Localized Teaching Intervention Path with AIGC

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Abstract. The lack of motivation among rural students to learn English has become a crucial barrier, limiting the empowerment of rural revitalization through educational digitalization. Existing studies mostly attribute this issue to hardware shortages and weak teaching faculties, yet neglect the root of cultural disconnection. The disconnection between teaching content and local culture, as well as students' life experiences, makes it difficult for students to establish a meaningful connection with learning, ultimately leading to motivational exhaustion. Based on China's Education Informatization 2.0 Action Plan and guided by the rural talent revitalization policy, this study takes "culture-technology symbiosis" as the core framework, integrates sociocultural theory, constructivist learning theory, and cross-cultural communication theory. It systematically analyzes the four-dimensional underlying mechanisms of rural students' lack of motivation in English learning, which is "culture-cognition-emotion-behavior". Furthermore, this study proposes a mechanism for developing localized teaching resources supported by Artificial Intelligence Generated Content (AIGC) to address the dilemma of cultural disconnection and activate students' learning motivation.

Keywords: Rural English Education, Lack of Learning Motivation, Cultural Disconnection, AIGC, Localized Teaching.

1 Introduction

Under the core concept of "deep integration of information technology with education and teaching" in the Education Informatization 2.0 Action Plan and the policy guidance of the Opinions on Accelerating the Promotion of Rural Talent Revitalization, educational digitalization is regarded as an important approach to solving the predicaments of rural English education. Domestic and foreign studies have found that rural English education is still faced with practical challenges such as weak infrastructure, teaching resources divorced from local contexts, and insufficient integration of technology and teaching. Studies have pointed out that English education in rural areas has long been at a low level due to factors such as inadequate facilities, insufficient teachers, and social language barriers (Qureshi et al., 2025). The configuration of informatization

equipment in some rural schools in China is still insufficient, and teachers' abilities to apply information technology are limited, which seriously restricts the regular development of digital teaching (Zheng, 2022).

However, current research mostly focuses on technology access and teacher training, overlooking the disconnection between teaching content and local culture. It also lacks an in-depth exploration of the key process of using technology as a medium to activate and transform local culture into teaching resources. This leads to students being unable to find their cultural identity in learning, thus forming the cognition that "English is an external burden". A prevalent lack of motivation in English learning exists among rural students, manifested in low classroom participation and weak willingness to speak English. Given this context, this paper will explore the underlying mechanisms behind rural students' lack of motivation in English learning and propose developing localized teaching resources through AIGC to break the predicament of cultural disconnection. It will activate students' learning motivation, and provide theoretical support and practical solutions for the high-quality development of rural English education.

2 In-depth Analysis of Rural Students' Lack of Motivation in English Learning

Motivation occupies a central position in second language acquisition research. Directed Motivational Currents (DMC), described as intense and sustained motivational surges triggered by personalized and emotionally resonant goals, enable learners to pursue goals with extreme concentration and effort (Dörnyei et al., 2014). Relevant studies have indicated that situational and contextual factors are of great significance in enhancing students' learning motivation, and both external factors (e.g., parental encouragement and teachers' innovative teaching methods) and internal factors (e.g., students' intrinsic interest) are important correlates for initiating DMC (Huo et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, in rural English teaching, teaching content is disconnected from local culture and students' life experiences. Urban and Western cultures dominate textbooks; for example, the first unit of the first volume of the People's Education Press English Compulsory Course 1 mentions "clubs" and other elements unfamiliar to rural students, while the elements rural students are familiar with (e.g., terraced fields, folk customs, and local handicrafts) are absent. This disconnection makes it difficult for students to establish a link between learning and life, resulting in insufficient interest in English learning. On the contrary, integrating local culture into the classroom can make learning more meaningful and improve students' classroom participation and learning motivation. For instance, in rural Colombia, the implementation of "Place- Based Education," which encourages students to write poems and record their local experiences, has achieved remarkable positive effects (Vargas et al., 2024).

Meanwhile, knowledge points such as vocabulary and grammar are divorced from specific cultural contexts and become isolated memory tasks, which increases the difficulty of learning and reduces learning efficiency for students. Due to unfamiliar content and inappropriate difficulty levels, students are prone to encountering challenges in English learning, which leads to repeated experiences of failure and diminished self-

efficacy. This, in turn, creates a vicious circle where poor academic performance further erodes students' willingness to engage with English learning. In addition, most students view English as a "foreign language" and believe that it is only related to exam scores. Restricted by the development of rural areas and living scenarios, there is almost no practical demand for using English in daily labor, neighborhood interactions, or local folk activities. Students have neither the opportunity to have access to real English application scenarios nor the ability to fully understand the practical value of English in cross-cultural communication. This leads to students' difficulty in comprehending the significance of learning English and the emergence of a sense of alienation that English has nothing to do with me.

Cultural disconnection, distorted cognition, and emotional resistance ultimately manifest as students' behavioral withdrawal, forming the external characteristics of motivational deficiency, which are the reluctance to speak, low classroom activity, and a passive learning state of students. A series of these problems cannot be fundamentally solved merely by supplementing hardware or training teachers; it is necessary to redesign the class in combination with the actual life, students' cognitive characteristics, and development needs of rural students.

3 AIGC-based Localized Teaching Motivation Activation Mechanism: A Trinitarian Research Path of Culture-Technology-Education

In response to the above in-depth analysis of students' motivational deficiency, this paper proposes an AIGC-based localized teaching motivation activation mechanism. It accurately addresses the dilemma of motivational deficiency through the trinitarian research path of cultural regression, technological empowerment, and localized teaching, and further supports the empowerment of rural revitalization via educational digitalization.

Existing studies have shown that AIGC demonstrates highly efficient adaptability in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural contexts (Fang and Shao, 2025). In addition, compared with traditional Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the interactive and personalized characteristics of AIGC can make up for the shortage of rural educational resources. By constructing real language environments, AIGC enables rural students to obtain high-quality learning experiences that are close to those in urban areas, thus promoting educational equity in rural areas (Feng, 2023). Considering the large number and wide distribution of rural schools across the country, it is quite difficult to compile and issue exclusive textbooks adapted to rural schools in various regions. Therefore, using artificial intelligence technology to accurately explore and develop local cultural resources and organically integrate them into English classroom teaching has become the most feasible and adaptable optimal solution at present.

To ensure that AIGC-based localized teaching resources can accurately activate rural students' motivation in English learning, the simplistic practice of digital transplantation of urban resources must be resolutely abandoned. Relevant teams should take rural local culture as the core anchor to develop teaching resources, integrating the folk

traditions, living scenarios, and local elements familiar to students. This ensures the learning content is closely aligned with students' life experiences, fundamentally addressing the dilemma of cultural disconnection. At the same time, efforts should be made to adapt to the actual conditions of technical facilities in rural schools. Lightweight AIGC application tools with low computing power requirements need to be developed, and targeted digital literacy training should be provided for rural teachers, with a focus on enhancing their proficiency in operating AIGC tools and their prompt engineering capabilities. These measures can effectively bridge the digital gap in the application of educational technology. Finally, continuous optimization and iteration of local corpus collection and prompt design should be carried out. The practical experience and real needs of teachers and students should be fully absorbed in order to ensure that the generated resources not only meet the normative requirements of English teaching but also accurately adapt to the real rural classroom teaching and students' learning characteristics.

3.1 Cultural Regression Path: Solving Cultural Disconnection

To address the problem of cultural disconnection, the first step is to construct a localized corpus. By collecting rural local cultural materials (e.g., folk traditions, characteristic landscapes, and descriptions of living scenarios) and sorting out the characteristics of dialect code-switching, AIGC can effectively identify pronunciation deviations (Qureshi et al., 2025) and students' daily expressions, thus forming an exclusive corpus. On this basis, prompt engineering is used to guide AIGC to carry out situational transformation, generating English teaching contents that contain local elements, such as introducing the Tujia Hand-Waving Dance in English and designing dialogues for rural tourism scenarios. This enables students to deeply understand the living style of their hometown and their own lives in learning, thereby generating cultural identity. At the same time, a collaborative review mechanism involving teachers and cultural experts should be established. This mechanism will conduct strict evaluations of teaching resources in terms of teaching adaptability and cultural authenticity, ensuring the resources align with English teaching norms, respect the connotations of local culture, and prevent cultural misinterpretation.

3.2 Meaning Reconstruction Path: Breaking Distorted Cognition

AIGC-generated English teaching content infused with local cultural elements serves as a foundational tool for instruction. It cultivates students' ability to narrate their hometown stories in English. For instance, by having them write promotional copy for rural specialties and design English introductions to local folk customs. In doing so, students can genuinely perceive the practical value of English in real-life contexts. At the same time, teachers can integrate knowledge points such as vocabulary and grammar into local cultural scenarios; to illustrate, naturally integrating the learning of prepositions of place into the dialogue practice of introducing hometown terraced fields, so that knowledge learning and meaning construction proceed simultaneously. In addition, AIGC is used to generate cross-cultural communication scenarios to guide students to

establish connections between local culture and the global context, helping them understand the value of English as a tool for cultural communication.

3.3 Emotional Empowerment Path: Alleviating Emotional Resistance

AIGC is used to create a low-pressure interactive environment, providing personalized dialogue practice and immediate feedback, so that students can speak boldly without the pressure of evaluation and alleviate the anxiety of speaking a foreign language. In teaching, teachers can generate differentiated learning content at different levels according to students' English proficiency. Students with a weak foundation start with simple collocations and short sentence expressions, while students with stronger abilities can attempt argumentative writing on cultural themes and cross-cultural debates. This ensures that each student can gain successful experiences at an adaptive difficulty level and gradually improve their self-efficacy.

3.4 Behavioral Activation Path: Breaking Behavioral Withdrawal

Immersive and interactive learning resources are developed through AIGC, including simulation games for rural tourism reception and cross-cultural communication check-in activities centered on local culture, to boost students' willingness to participate in classroom activities. Teachers can use the visualization function of the technology to transform students' learning achievements (e.g., English compositions and dialogue recordings) into intuitive works such as electronic posters and bilingual short videos, making learning effects displayable and communicable. This further enhances students' sense of accomplishment and learning motivation, forming a complete motivation improvement cycle of cultural identity - practical perception - emotional empowerment - behavioral activation.

4 Conclusion

The insufficient motivation of rural students in English learning is not a simple problem of individual attitude, but a chain reaction gradually triggered by cultural disconnection. The disconnection between teaching content and local culture, as well as life experiences, makes students feel that English learning lacks practical significance, thus generating resistance and ultimately manifesting as passive classroom participation and reluctance to take the initiative to explore.

The value of AIGC technology in rural English education is far more than providing high-quality teaching resources. More crucially, it acts as a transformative medium that bridges local culture and English teaching. It converts rural areas' unique cultural resources, such as folk traditions and daily living scenarios, into situational, personalized learning materials tailored to students' lives. In this way, this technology achieves the genuine in-depth integration of culture, technology, and education. Through the practical path of cultural regression, meaning reconstruction, emotional empowerment, and behavioral activation, AIGC-based localized teaching directly addresses the deep-

seated causes of motivational deficiency in rural English learning. It effectively activates students' interest in English, helps them recognize the practical value of the language, and encourages active participation in learning activities. Ultimately, this approach achieves the dual enhancement of learning motivation and educational quality in rural English education. This study not only opens up a new direction for the digital transformation of rural English education but also provides a practical idea for educational equity. The true empowerment of educational digitalization should be to make technology actively adapt to local culture and students' needs, rather than making local culture cater to the inherent logic of technology.

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