

Integrating Zhuang Culture Into College English Audio-Visual Speaking Course: A Multicultural Perspective^{*}

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Zhuang culture, a representative of the native ethnic culture of Guangxi, China, is of great significance to Chinese culture. In order to promote traditional culture, enrich the teaching content of College English Audio-Visual Speaking Course, and enhance the intercultural communication ability of college students, this paper, from a multicultural perspective, explores the classroom practices of integrating indigenous Zhuang cultural elements in College English Audio-Visual Speaking Course, providing new perspectives and reference for multicultural education in foreign languages.

Keywords: Zhuang culture, College English Audio-Visual Speaking Course, classroom practice, multicultural perspective

In the context of globalization and multiculturalism, higher education is entrusted with the mission of disseminating and preserving multiculturalism. One of the missions that UNESCO has proposed for higher education is to help students understand, interpret, preserve, enhance, promote, and disseminate the cultural heritage that is national, regional, and international (UNESCO, 2005).

The theory of pluralism in education advocates that education should reflect the diversity of society and that educators should provide students with knowledge structures that incorporate different cultural perspectives to challenge and expand their cognitive frameworks so that they can understand and appreciate the intellectual contributions of different cultures (Banks, 2008).

Cultural knowledge is regarded as an important part of communicative competence, as well as the goal and means of language learning (Kramsch, 1993). The integration of native culture in foreign language teaching is crucial, as it can stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning foreign languages and cultures by regulating their psychological identification with their own cultures, thus enhancing their motivation to learn (Shu & Zhuang, 2008). Cultural education in foreign language education should take into account both the culture of the target language and the culture of the native language to better cultivate foreign language learners' intercultural communication skills (Liu, 2003). In the construction of the teaching system, a teaching system that includes multicultural elements should be created to meet the needs of globalized education (Zhu, 2023). The construction of such a system not only requires teachers to introduce multicultural perspectives into their

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teaching, but also requires educators to dig deep into local cultural resources and integrate them into the teaching content.

In terms of classroom practice, especially the specific methods of integrating local culture into foreign language teaching, there is still a lack of relevant research. In this paper, we will combine the teaching practice of College English at Guangxi University of Chinese Medicine (hereinafter referred to as “our university”) to show the classroom case of integrating Zhuang culture into College English Audio-Visual Speaking Course, which will provide new perspectives and practice cases of multicultural education in foreign languages.

Background of the Study

Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (hereinafter referred to as “Guangxi”) is one of the provinces with the largest population of ethnic minorities in China, and is rich in ethnic cultural resources, especially Zhuang culture. The Zhuang, the largest ethnic minority in Guangxi, has deep historical roots and has created a rich and colorful cultural heritage throughout its long history of civilization, including unique art forms such as folk songs, bronze drum, and Tianqin (a string musical instrument), as well as traditional festivals and customs such as the March 3 Festival, also called “San Yue San” in mandarin. These cultural elements also form an important part of the treasure trove of ethnic cultures in Guangxi and even in the world.

Located in Guangxi, our university is a university characterized by medicine and has a diversified student group mainly consisting of Zhuang students. Relying on the characteristics of the university, our College English Audio-Visual Speaking Program actively explores the Zhuang medicine culture and local cultural resources, integrating the Zhuang culture into the teaching of College English Audio-Visual Speaking Course, and creates a teaching system that integrates multiple cultures.

Teaching Design and Practice

The following part takes the teaching of the video in the unit of “Music” in the textbook, *New Progressive College English, Inspire 2*, as an example, and introduces the classroom practice of integrating and innovating the College English Audio-Visual Speaking Course with the Zhuang culture.

Teaching Objective Setting

The video “The Zawoses of Tanzania” is about the efforts of the Zawoses family to preserve and pass on their traditional music, Wagogo music. Based on this theme, we have set the following three goals for teaching and learning to integrate knowledge transfer and cultural education:

Language knowledge objective: Through an in-depth analysis of the Zawoses’ journey to preserve and pass on their traditional music, students will acquire specialized music-related vocabulary and expressions, be able to retell the video content logically and clearly, and improve their accuracy and flexibility in language use.

Intercultural competence objective: By comparing the traditional music of the Wagogo tribe in Tanzania with the music of the indigenous Zhuang people, students will improve their understanding of musical expressions in different cultural contexts and learn to respect and tolerate cultural differences.

Cultural literacy objective: Through in-depth discussion of the inheritance and dissemination of Zhuang music, students will deeply understand its cultural significance and value, thus cultivating a sense of identity and pride in Zhuang culture and actively participating in the inheritance of local culture.

Teaching Task Design

In view of the above teaching objectives, we design the core task of this session as follows: to deliver a theme-based speech on the culture of Zhuang music, *Shange* in mandarin. Under this task, the teacher will guide the students to adopt the framework of “What + Why + How” to introduce the history and cultural characteristics of Zhuang music in English, discuss the significance of cultural inheritance, and think about global promotion strategies.

Implementation of Classroom Teaching

Output-driven learning. Before the class, students are supposed to preview the video “The Zawoses of Tanzania” and related background information on the instructional platform, and complete the related quiz. At the same time, they learn more about the Zhuang People’s Folk Song Festival and the culture of Zhuang music through the micro-lesson “San Yue San”, and the drama movie *Third Sister Liu* featured by Zhuang folk songs. Students took the initiative to explore related materials, try to introduce the songs in English, and interpret the classic songs in order to prepare for classroom activities, thus enhancing their learning effectiveness.

Teachers use the instructional platform to track students’ prep progress and customize and provide supplementary resources based on student completion. This helps to drive students to engage in deeper learning activities and ensures that they reach pre-determined instructional goals.

Facilitating learning inputs. In order to ensure the effective achievement of the teaching objectives, the classroom teaching is carried out in parts, and the specific implementation steps are as follows:

Lead-in: The teacher takes the clip of the English version of *Folk Song Flows Like Spring River* as an introduction and asks the question “What is the message of the song?” This question not only connects with the theme of “Music with a message” in the previous lesson, but also guides students to think deeply about how music can be used as a carrier of culture for communication and expression.

Quiz: The teacher tests students’ understanding and use of music-related vocabulary by reading aloud and making sentences orally to prepare the vocabulary for the next classroom tasks.

Task 1: Understand the video content. Based on students’ English proficiency and the key learning points of the course, the teacher uses the “5W + H” framework to design a variety of classroom exercises such as multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks, matching questions, and so on, with a special emphasis on the motives and strategies of the Zawoses in preserving and passing on the traditional music of the Wagogo tribe. The “5W + H” approach helps students accurately capture key information, organize it more logically, and express their thoughts clearly when retelling the video content, and at the same time builds the necessary framework of linguistic and cultural understanding to deliver a speech as the core task.

Task 2: Compare and analyze the traditional Wagogo music and the native Zhuang folk songs. In this task, the teacher will play the classic clip from the movie *Third Sister Liu* which shows the cultural charm of the Zhuang folk songs, and guide the students to discuss the characteristics of the two kinds of music, the use of musical instruments, the rhythm and melody, the cultural background, etc., based on the information they have looked up before the lesson, as well as comparing their similarities and differences, and sharing their understanding and feelings of the two kinds of music and cultures. Through such comparative analysis, students will not only be able to gain a deeper understanding of the uniqueness of the Zhuang folk songs, but also learn to appreciate and respect the unique value of the Wagogo musical culture, thus promoting respect and understanding of musical diversity in different cultural contexts.

Demonstration of learning outcomes. In this session, students are required to synthesize their knowledge and skills to complete the core task of delivering a theme-based speech on the culture of Zhuang music. To enhance the interactivity and fun of the class, a simulated international exchange of Zhuang musical culture was designed. Students worked in groups to explore in-depth various aspects of Zhuang music, including its history, cultural background, instruments, rhythms, melodies, and performance styles. Each group chose a representative to play the role of a cultural ambassador and introduce the Zhuang music to “international friends” at a simulated international exchange meeting. Other students played the roles of representatives from different countries and participated in an interactive Q&A session to enhance their understanding of Zhuang music.

After the class, students were encouraged to create short videos promoting Zhuang folk songs and share them on social media platforms to attract wider attention and raise the awareness of the outside world about Zhuang music and culture. This kind of practical activity combines language learning with cultural promotion. Students not only practiced their practical skills, but also deepened their understanding and recognition of local culture, laying a solid foundation for becoming citizens with a global perspective and local sentiments.

Effectiveness of Culturally Integrated Teaching

In the fall semester of 2023, we initiated an innovative teaching project of integrating Zhuang culture into College English Audio-Visual Speaking Course. At the end of the semester, a questionnaire survey was conducted through the Questionnaire Star platform to collect students’ feedback. The survey showed that 75.21% of the students said they liked the cultural activities in the classroom, and 69.33% felt that the course enhanced their willingness to contact and learn English. It is worth noting that in the survey of “my favorite classroom activities”, cultural activities became the most popular option with a percentage of 48.32%, which is significantly more than other activities in the textbook. In addition, 68.07% of the students reported that their cultural self-confidence was significantly improved through the audiovisual speaking program.

These positive feedbacks show that integrating local culture into English teaching not only enriches the course content, but also effectively enhances students’ learning motivation and cultural identity.

Concluding Remarks

In the context of globalization, foreign language teaching in colleges and universities carries the important mission of spreading and protecting diversified cultures. The practice of Guangxi University of Chinese Medicine verifies the positive effect of integrating Zhuang culture into College English Audio-Visual Speaking Course. This teaching mode not only enriches students’ cultural knowledge structures, but also significantly enhances their interest in English learning and their sense of identification with local culture. Through the cultural expansion activities, students deepened their understanding of Zhuang culture and enhanced their cross-cultural communication skills while improving their language skills.

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