

Research on the Practical Path of Local Intangible Cultural Heritage in International Chinese Education for International Students

Liao Danlu

Faculty of Foreign Languages and International Trade, Chongqing Vocational Institute of Tourism, Chongqing, China

Abstract: *Intangible cultural heritage carries rich national wisdom and historical heritage, and is the essence of traditional Chinese culture. It is an important carrier for international students to understand and identify with Chinese culture, and the intangible cultural heritage of different places has different characteristics. At present, there are problems in the teaching of intangible cultural heritage in higher education institutions for international students, such as language ability, the development of characteristic teaching materials, the innovation of teaching methods, and the background of teachers in intangible heritage. Therefore, the following suggestions are proposed: First, establish a comprehensive local intangible cultural heritage curriculum to help international students build cultural knowledge; Second, develop diversified intangible cultural teaching models to expand international students' local cultural cognitive experience; Third, compile teaching materials with local characteristics to promote the integration of language learning and local culture; Fourth, strengthen teachers' cultural literacy in intangible heritage to play the role of cultural exchange and mutual learning.*

Keywords: *Local Intangible Heritage, International Chinese Education, International Students*

1. Introduction

General secretary of the Communist Party of China (2022) pointed out that in the new era, it is important to value the inheritance and development of Chinese culture, to better showcase China's image to other countries, tell China's stories, expand the influence of Chinese culture internationally, and enhance our cultural confidence. Vice Premier Sun(2022) emphasized that intangible heritage is a typical representative of the essence and spiritual symbol of Chinese civilization culture, and a historical sediment that reflects the appeal of Chinese culture. According to statistics, as of December 2022, China has a total of 43 intangible cultural heritage projects listed by UNESCO, ranking first in the world.^[1]From the implementation of the "Law of the People's Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage" to the promotion of various intangible cultural heritage projects, the vitality, inheritance, and regional characteristics of intangible heritage provide abundant resources for international students' learning.^[2] Therefore, the integration of intangible cultural heritage into international Chinese teaching can not only play the function of cultural education but also carry historical and cultural information and cultural communication functions, which is of great significance for telling Chinese stories well, showcasing the Chinese image, and has important strategic implications.

2. Literature Review

Intangible heritage is the cultural expression formed by various ethnic groups and communities in the course of historical development, covering oral traditions, performing arts, social customs, festive activities, traditional crafts, etc.^[3] It not only reflects the history, beliefs, and lifestyle of ethnic groups but is also an important part of the spiritual and cultural life of contemporary people.^[4]In international Chinese education, intangible cultural heritage, as a unique cultural resource, can provide international students with a more intuitive and vivid learning experience.

Foreign scholars' research on the teaching of intangible cultural heritage focuses on interdisciplinary collaboration, the application of technological support, and cognitive and

psychological mechanisms. Dagnino et al. (2018) explored the use of 3D sensors and virtual reality technology to capture and transmit the tacit knowledge of intangible heritage in the i-Treasures project, enhancing students' cultural identity and understanding.^[5] Ott et al. (2014) proposed that through the collaborative design of educational interventions, the sharing of intangible heritage educational resources and systematic support for teachers' teaching can be achieved.^[6] Jiang (2022) revealed cognitive psychological mechanisms, believing that students associate the concept of intangible heritage with language knowledge through metonymy mechanisms, forming a deeper cultural understanding^[7]. Ryan (2018) found that heritage language learners (HL) have advantages in cultural background and cognitive frameworks, while non-heritage language learners (L2) need more cultural guidance.^[8] In recent years, domestic scholars' research on the teaching of intangible cultural heritage for international students has gradually increased. Ruan Jing (2021) believes that intangible heritage teaching can inject valuable and tasteful Chinese content into teaching, helping students better understand China's history, cultural background, and language learning, and helping to improve cultural sensitivity and intercultural communication skills^[9]. Chang Jun, Huang Jingchun (2015) believe that international Chinese education can promote the inheritance of intangible heritage, enhance China's cultural soft power and international influence^[10]. Mao Qiaohui (2020) believes that through participating in intangible heritage activities, international students can use Chinese in real-life scenarios, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of language learning^[11]. Wu Yongyi (2024) believes that the purpose of learning language is not only to communicate with others but also to cultivate thinking ability and improve cognitive level^[12]. However, Li Ping (2017) pointed out that there are still many deficiencies in the current intangible heritage courses, such as unclear course positioning, unclear course characteristics, single teaching method, and lack of practical links, there is still a considerable gap from the educational goals of recognizing culture, loving culture, spreading culture, and innovating culture.^[13]

3. Problems in the Integration of Intangible Heritage into International Chinese Education and Cultural Teaching

The "Teaching Reference Framework for Chinese Culture and National Conditions in International Chinese Education" (2023) introduces that China has a long history and culture, and the development of Chinese and foreign cultures has promoted the diversification and innovation of culture^[14]. However, there are still many challenges in integrating intangible cultural heritage into the cultural teaching of international students at present.

3.1 Insufficient Language Ability of International Students

Learning is an active process of information processing, where students not only receive information but also relate it to existing knowledge systems. Cognitive functions such as perception, memory, and thinking are influenced by existing knowledge. Due to different language levels and cultural backgrounds, international students with lower Chinese proficiency generally stay at the primary stage of understanding and appreciation in intangible heritage teaching, not understanding the intrinsic meaning and value of intangible heritage. At the same time, in second language learning, understanding and identification with the second language culture are very important. The self-identity established during first language acquisition affects attitudes and acceptance towards second language learning. When the second language culture is similar or compatible with the first language culture, it will promote the understanding and mastery of the second language, but if there is a conflict between the first language and the second language culture, learners will face difficulties in understanding and psychological resistance, affecting the effectiveness of second language learning. Therefore, through in-depth cultural education, second language learners can not only master the structure and usage of the language, improve language application ability, but also understand the deep background of culture, eliminate obstacles caused by cultural differences, enhance identification and belonging to the second language, achieve deeper empathy and identification, and ultimately achieve more ideal Chinese learning results.

3.2 Lack of Pertinence in Teaching Content

Regional characteristics are an important feature of intangible heritage, and intangible heritage from different regions has different characteristics. Intangible heritage generally relies on the unique lifestyle and production methods of a nation to generate, is the product of people's subjective initiative,

expressed through sound, image, and skill, and is passed down through word of mouth. Intangible cultural heritage mainly includes ten different categories. However, for international Chinese teachers, there is the problem of how to choose appropriate intangible heritage content for Chinese teaching among the many intangible heritage resources. For international students with different levels and cultural backgrounds, Chinese teachers need to think about how to choose appropriate teaching content, not only to stimulate learning enthusiasm but also to fit the course theme, integrating cultural and language knowledge learning into teaching. At the same time, in the face of international students with different majors, different needs, and different levels, the focus of intangible heritage teaching content is different. By actively creating a good intangible heritage culture dissemination atmosphere, professional teaching improves the cultural literacy of international students, prompting them to actively participate in the inheritance learning of intangible heritage culture.

3.3 Lack of Flexibility in Teaching Forms

Intangible heritage is characterized by its vitality, as it is still existing and vibrant today, such as epics or ballads that are still sung, and skills or customs that are still inherited and observed, developing and varying in the process of inheritance. The integration of intangible heritage cannot rely solely on theoretical teaching but should be closely integrated with practical activities, allowing learners to come into contact with people and things with a rich historical and cultural heritage, gaining a better learning experience and more insights, thereby forming good emotional attitudes. At present, due to subjective and objective factors, international Chinese education cannot achieve the desired teaching effects, and it is difficult for international students to have the opportunity to participate in intangible heritage projects, and the forms are relatively single. In the classroom, international students' understanding of intangible heritage is only through pictures, videos, etc., and it is difficult to understand the deep cultural connotations contained therein, unable to obtain a good perceptual experience. In specific teaching activities, the teaching methods adopted by Chinese teachers cannot stimulate the learning enthusiasm of international students, and students are in a passive learning state, unable to deeply understand the deep meaning of intangible heritage culture. In addition, this teaching method also limits international students' in-depth understanding of the relationship between intangible heritage and language learning, historical background.

3.4 Lack of Intangible Heritage Background among Teachers

Teachers are the primary guides in classroom teaching activities and are key elements in the teaching process. However, in traditional intangible cultural heritage (ICH) education, Chinese language teachers are the sole leaders of the classes, often lacking a background in ICH, which results in a lack of professionalism in their teaching. Meanwhile, ICH inheritors and experts are rarely incorporated into language classrooms to expand and explain ICH. Moreover, ICH inheritors, influenced by various factors such as teaching methods and language, are unable to achieve the desired effective teaching outcomes. The presentations of ICH experts tend to be academic research and discussions. Therefore, higher requirements are placed on Chinese language teachers to have a background in ICH. Additionally, ICH is characterized by its diversity and regional nature. Due to differences in cultural backgrounds and language habits among international students, it is necessary to consider the compatibility between Chinese ICH culture and foreign cultures. Chinese language teachers, with their limited capabilities, often lack the strong ability to integrate ICH teaching resources, which directly affects the teaching outcomes and fails to meet the actual learning needs of international students, ultimately leading to the inability to achieve the classroom teaching objectives.

4. Specific Practice Paths for Integrating Local Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) into Education

4.1 ICH Course Design

Language and culture are inseparable, and language teaching often involves multiple aspects, such as phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, and cultural background knowledge.^[15]In course design, it is essential to incorporate local characteristics and introduce various ICH elements. For beginners, whose Chinese proficiency is relatively weak, the teaching of ICH knowledge should focus on local ICH. By integrating ethnic features, dance forms, musical elements, and linguistic culture, students can gain a comprehensive understanding of the traditional culture. At higher levels, systematic teaching of local

ICH can be conducted. Additionally, diverse teaching methods can be employed to enhance students' awareness of ICH, integrating it into language teaching and specialized cultural courses. A "Chinese + ICH Skills" approach can be adopted, such as Chinese + Xilan Kapu, Shi Jituo Pottery, Xiushan Bamboo Weaving, or Miao Embroidery. It is also important to proceed gradually and tailor the teaching to the students' language proficiency. For students with lower Chinese levels, the focus should be on experiencing ICH, while those with higher levels should delve deeper into the cultural connotations of ICH. Furthermore, integrating ICH into daily life, such as tasting ICH specialty teas like "Pearl Orchid" and "Pengjiang," and incorporating the spiritual culture of tea through tea ceremonies and tea art, can have a subtle yet profound impact. Tea has permeated Chinese courts and society and is deeply embedded in Chinese poetry, painting, calligraphy, religion, and medicine. Therefore, using vivid, multi-modal scenarios can help stimulate students' motivation and interest in cultural learning. Teachers should integrate theory with practice and design courses effectively to facilitate students' understanding, acceptance, and application of the ICH knowledge they have learned.

4.2 Innovative Approaches to Teaching Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

Based on the language proficiency of international students, innovative teaching methods should be developed, with tiered instruction and group learning being important forms of international Chinese education. Firstly, as a language teaching discipline, international Chinese education primarily focuses on the cultivation of language skills, followed by the transmission of cultural knowledge. In the process of cultural teaching, it is essential to select teaching methods that are appropriate for the students' language levels to ensure effective learning and to incorporate ICH into the curriculum in a structured and gradual manner. Additionally, group learning can be implemented in the classroom, allowing students to choose their learning path at appropriate times. Emphasis should be placed on experiential methods, encouraging students to participate in ICH-related activities such as handicraft making and traditional festival celebrations, which can deepen their understanding of ICH and enhance their Chinese expression skills^[16]. When explaining local ICH, it is important to create an atmosphere and relevant scenarios that match the content. Through these experiences, students can practice their Chinese language use and expression skills, and achieve teaching objectives through collaborative efforts within the group. This approach not only allows for a deeper understanding of cultural traditions, values, and spirit, but also fosters respect for cultural diversity and traditional culture. It also helps in developing comprehensive qualities such as creativity, teamwork, and aesthetic literacy.

Furthermore, leveraging multimedia and virtual reality technologies such as AR and VR can facilitate two-way interaction between online and offline learning environments. A comprehensive classroom teaching model should be constructed, fully utilizing the advantages of modern information technologies like artificial intelligence and big data. By selecting more engaging teaching methods, students' enthusiasm for learning can be stimulated, enabling them to perceive the deeper connotations of ICH more profoundly and better meet their needs for in-depth learning. This also enhances the interaction between teachers and students more efficiently. Additionally, focusing on the real-time and interactive nature of new media, teaching resources can be optimized, and ICH cultural knowledge can be disseminated through online platforms, allowing students to gain a deeper understanding of the charm of China's ICH.

4.3 Textbook Development

Textbooks should be developed based on the characteristics of local ICH to cater to the Chinese language learning needs of international students. Incorporating local folktales and traditional customs into Chinese language textbooks allows students to understand the cultural background while learning the language^[17]. Textbooks are core tools in teaching, and integrating ICH elements into language learning materials provides students with richer learning resources. This not only helps them to master Chinese more comprehensively but also deepens their understanding and recognition of Chinese culture. The curriculum for international students should include cultural courses, which enable them to acquire more knowledge of Chinese traditional culture, gradually improve their cultural literacy and intercultural communication skills, and thus better master the Chinese language and deeply understand the essence of Chinese culture.

The development of ICH cultural textbooks for international students should be organized under official guidance, integrating resources from various parties such as Chinese language teachers, educational departments, and social organizations. These groups should actively participate in the exploration of local ICH cultural resources, actively promote and publicize the unique traditional

culture of the area, and provide more opportunities for students to engage in hands-on practice. This allows them to deeply learn and understand Chinese traditional culture. Textbooks from different regions should reflect distinct regional characteristics, being recognizable and typical. They should also be dynamic and lively, not rigid and unchanging. They should be international, diverse, and distinctive, written from the perspective of international students, and positioned from an international viewpoint of Chinese culture. The textbooks should be developed based on the focus and interests of international students, to create materials on Chinese ICH culture.

4.4 Enhancing Chinese Teachers' Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Competence

The "Professional Competency Standards for International Chinese Teachers" (2022) clearly outlines the assessment criteria for teachers: it is not only about evaluating the mastery of professional cultural knowledge but also involves requirements for cultural skills and the utilization of teaching resources.^[18] Teachers must first possess a professional knowledge base and teaching ability to understand the profound connotations of ICH. Secondly, they need to be able to organically integrate Chinese culture and ICH knowledge into their teaching, providing international students with a better learning experience and helping them deepen their understanding of Chinese culture. Thirdly, based on the principle of audience priority, teachers should selectively choose ICH content for teaching to promote mutual understanding and conceptual recognition among students from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, regularly inviting experts in the field of ICH to hold cultural lectures can enhance teachers' identification with Chinese culture and their global perspective. At the same time, Chinese teachers should actively participate in local ICH activities, and schools can invite external ICH masters to teach on campus or conduct online training or virtual classes. Schools can establish a teaching team composed of Chinese teachers, ICH inheritors, and ICH experts. The "1+1" model can be adopted, where one Chinese teacher and one ICH inheritor co-teach, with the Chinese teacher responsible for explaining the language aspects and the ICH inheritor guiding the practical activities. In addition, it is important to mobilize social forces to create favorable conditions for the development of Chinese ICH projects, forming a strong social synergy. Establishing practice bases for ICH projects can continuously improve the quality of Chinese language teaching and promote positive and constructive interactions between international students and society.

5. Conclusion

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) holds significant application value in international Chinese language teaching for international students. Integrating ICH into Chinese language education can effectively enhance students' language skills and cultural identification. ICH is a testament to China's cultural development from ancient times to the present, showcasing and embodying excellent cultural elements, and it is also a shared and essential part of world culture. Promoting the integration of ICH into international Chinese education enriches the content of cultural teaching and facilitates a deeper understanding of China among international students. This approach enables students to become ambassadors of Chinese ICH, amplifying China's voice on the global stage.

Acknowledgement

Funded by: Ministry of Education Education Category Teaching Steering Committee -Beijing Language and Culture Work Association 2024 Annual Education Teaching Reform Project (Project Approval Number: 2024JGYB034).

References

- [1] *China Intangible Cultural Heritage Network 2022 China was included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List (List) [EB/OL]. (2022-11-30).<https://www.ihchina.cn/chinadirectory.html>.*
- [2] Liu Xun. *Introduction to Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language[M]. Beijing: Beijing Language and Culture University Press.2000*
- [3] UNESCO. *Compilation of the basic documents of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2016 edition)[M].Beijing: China Digital Culture Group Co., Ltd.,2019*
- [4] Wang Wenzhang. *Introduction to intangible cultural heritage[M]. Beijing: Culture and Art Publishing House, 2006.*

- [5] Dagnino M F ,Pozzi F ,Ceregini A, et al. *Information and Communication Technologies and Intangible Cultural Heritage education: opportunities and challenges*[J]. *Italian Journal of Educational Technology*,2018,26(2):1
- [6] Ott M , Dagnino M F , Pozzi F . *Intangible Cultural Heritage: Towards collaborative planning of educational interventions*[J]. *Computers in Human Behavior*,2015,511314-1319.
- [7] Jiang L, Al-Shaibani GKS, Yang F, Cheng M, Huang M. *The metonymic mechanism of English translation of Chinese intangible cultural heritage terms from the perspective of cognitive psychology* [J]. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2022; 13:957485. Published 2022 Jul 22.
- [8] Ryan M J . *Spanish Composition Errors from a Combined Classroom of Heritage (L1) and Non-heritage (L2) Learners: A Comparative Case Study*[J]. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2018,9(3):439-452.
- [9] Ruan Jing. *China's "World Cultural Heritage" and the Teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language* [J]. *China Higher Education Research*, 2021, 40(01): 51-55.
- [10] Chang Jun, Huang Jingchun. *The Dissemination and Application of the Concept of "Intangible Cultural Heritage" Protection in Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages*[J]. *Journal of Zhejiang Normal University(Social Sciences)*, 2015, 40(01): 51-55.
- [11] Mao Qiaohui. *Intangible Cultural Heritage: Display, Protection and Practice of Cultural Memory* [J]. *Journal of Northwest Minzu University (Philosophy and Social Science)*, 2020, (04): 116-121.
- [12] Wu Yongyi. *The construction of the international Chinese education standard system and the implementation of the Grading Standards*[J].*Studies on Chinese as a Foreign Language* . 2023 (01):104-110.
- [13] Li Ping, Xu Liujun, Lin Yuangao. *Research on the practice of social work service in community and social education in heritage sites of local universities*[R].*Wenshan University*,2018.
- [14] Zu Xiaomei. *New Concepts and Ideas of Cultural Teaching: Interpretation of the Reference Framework for Teaching Chinese Culture and National Conditions in International Chinese Education* [J]. *Language Teaching and Research*,2023(3):26-35.
- [15] Jin Lu. *Introducing cultural factors into language teaching: advocating the teaching of combining language and culture*[J]. *Fudan Education*,1991,(01):31-33.
- [16] Han Jiantang. *Chinese Culture—Beiyu Chinese as a Foreign Language Textbook*[M].*Beijing Language and Culture University Press*,1999.
- [17] Chen Hui. *A Study on the Chinese Talent Curriculum System for Undergraduate Majors in Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages*[J]. *Journal of Hubei University of Technology*, 2020, 28(06): 72-75.
- [18] *World Chinese Language Teaching Association. International Standards for Professional Competence of Chinese Teachers*[Z].2022-08-26.