The Problems and Solutions in the Vocal Music Teaching of the Universities for the Aged

Dongni Chen

Changchun University of Senior Citizen, Changchun 130000, China

Abstract: *Founded in 1980s, universities for the aged in our country only have a history of over 30 years which is not only emerging but also immature against the whole history of education. Because of the particularity of the students, there are lots of aspects worthy of researching and considering in education and teaching of the universities for the aged. In terms of the vocal music teaching of the universities for the aged, there are lots of problems which need to be solved in many aspects such as the student conditions, teaching management, etc. This essay aims to put forward the effective strategies to solve the above problems in the current elderly universities and promote the vocal music teaching of the universities for the aged to move forward to standardization and specialization.*

Keywords: elderly universities, vocal music teaching, solutions

1. Preface

Our country has entered the stage of population aging, so the issue of supporting the elderly has drawn much attention. As one of the important manifestations of the pattern of culturally supporting the aged, universities for the aged have been popular among the old. More and more old people choose to enter the universities for the aged and enrich their later life through learning their favorite specialized knowledge[1].

However, for the vocal music teaching of the universities for the aged, the particularity of the situation needs special consideration. Neither can teachers totally copy the traditional academic teaching patterns and methods, nor can they completely abandon the inheritance of classical traditions. Therefore, it is necessary to make an in-depth analysis to the problems in vocal music teaching of the universities for the aged so as to find effective methods to make the teaching of vocal music in the universities for the aged develop in a scientific and sustainable way[2].

2. The Problems in the Vocal Teaching of the Universities for the Aged

2.1 The Discrepant Basic Conditions of Students

2.1.1 The Imbalance of the Students' Age Structure

Most universities for the aged in our country stipulate that all the aged over 50 can apply for admission. Thus, the large age span is the universal current situation of universities for the aged in China, which poses a new challenge to the teaching of vocal music. In the education background teaching such as primary and secondary school, teachers pay great attention to age-group teaching[3]. So they can set the course that suits their understanding ability and disposing capability according to the different age groups. Whereas in the universities for the aged, it is obviously impossible to achieve this kind of age-group teaching, for each class consists of 50-75 years old and even elder students. In fact, physiological and psychological conditions will change following the change of age and physical conditions. With such a large age span, it is difficult for teachers to make their own teaching method and teaching plan for each student like they do in the teaching of traditional vocal music. Thus, the teaching effect and efficiency will be affected to a certain degree.

2.1.2 The Instability of Students' Vocal Cords Functions

With age, the decline of hearing, vision, memory, attention and exercise ability is the main manifestation of the physical aging of the elderly, which is also one of the most important reasons why the elderly are not suitable for learning vocal music. The function of the vocal cords of the elderly is

weakened, and the stretch and elasticity of the vocal cords begin to deteriorate, which leads to instability of the vocal cords. In the process of vocal music learning for the elderly, this issue needs to be paid close attention to. In teachers' teaching and students' practice, they need to use scientific methods. Otherwise, it may cause greater damage to the vocal cords.

2.1.3 Peculiarity of the Students' Psychological States

In addition to the physical state changes, the changes of mental state cannot be ignored. Old people are insensitive to new things; their imaginations begin to decline; their moods are volatile; and they begin to miss the past. The decline of the cerebral cortex in the elderly can cause changes in personalities and behaviors. The relevant data showed, "57% of the old lose interest in life, 40% have a sense of aging, and 55% have changes in personality." Some will transfer from extroversion to introversion, some will behave like children, and some are sensitive in personality. They also become stubborn, nagging and so on. These psychological statuses are the problems cannot be neglected during the vocal music teaching for the elderly[4].

2.2 The School Teaching Management Are Incomplete

2.2.1 The Instability of the Faculties

In recent years, the growing enthusiasm of the elderly for learning has driven the rapid development of universities for the aged, which has resulted in the extreme shortage of the universities. But the number of teachers in universities for the aged in each region cannot satisfy the growing thirst for learning among the elderly, and in universities for the aged in most regions, external teachers are more than in-service ones. For universities, teachers are the core force of school development. A stable teaching staff is the basic guarantee for teaching, and vocal music course is no exception. The lack of a stable teaching staff is the most serious problem that the vocal music teaching of the universities for the aged will face.

2.2.2 The Ambiguity of the Teaching Objectives

The teaching goal is the reference standard for teaching evaluation. If the teaching goal is not clear, it is difficult to evaluate the rationality and accuracy of the teaching content and the teaching and learning behavior of teachers and students. Teachers should pay attention to students' acquisition. There are no judgment methods such as examinations. The only way to ensure students' acquisition is to clarify the teaching goals. Therefore, the author believes that to improve the quality of vocal music teaching in colleges and universities, it is necessary to solve the problem of unclear teaching goals.

2.2.3 Over-capacity and Unbalanced Load of the Teaching Class

According to the overall survey of vocal music teaching and enrollment in Chinese colleges and universities, their classrooms are basically conducted in the form of collective vocal music teaching. Classes are usually 60 to 80 students. The huge class and unbalanced students make it difficult to guarantee the quality of vocal music teaching. Vocal music teaching is mostly one-to-one teaching mode, which is convenient for teachers to teach students better. Vocal music emphasizes that each singer is an independent individual, and the teaching plan should be formulated according to the actual situation of the students, and adjusted in time according to the performance of the students to achieve high-quality vocal music lessons.

3. Analysis of the causes of problems in vocal music teaching in universities for the aged

3.1 Objective factors lying in natural conditions of the teaching object

In traditional vocal music teaching, students with good singing conditions are the prerequisite for effective vocal teaching. Teachers generally believe that effective vocal music teaching cannot be carried out without good "saplings". Therefore, in vocal music teaching, teachers generally select students. Teachers select students who are suitable for learning vocal music by investigating students' vocal conditions and innate qualities. That is, there are good "saplings" before teaching and training. However, the teaching targets of universities for the aged are the elderly. They are psychologically and physically different from the teenagers. This is objective. Teachers cannot make changes and can only accept passively. Therefore, vocal teachers in universities for the aged are required to be in a "dilemma" and actively find the most suitable method for vocal music teaching in senior colleges.

3.2 Subjective factor lying in imperfect development of vocal music teaching in elderly universities

The development of universities for the aged in our country has only been more than 30 years, and it is an immature stage for vocal music teaching in universities for the aged. At the same time, the imperfect reserve of teachers also shackles the development of vocal music teaching in universities for the aged. The instability of the teaching staff will also cause the related teaching theory research to lag, which is a "chain reaction". Today, when the elderly have such a strong desire for vocal music learning, we need to work together as soon as possible from various aspects such as system construction, talent training, school building construction, etc., to fundamentally solve the problems of instability of teachers, unclear teaching goals and unbalanced class sizes in the development of vocal music teaching in universities for the aged so as to lay a solid foundation for the sound development of vocal music teaching in universities for the aged.

3.3 Social factor lying in rapid development of an aging society

The aging of our country's population is becoming more and more serious (see Figure 1 for details). At present, there are more than 200 million people over 60 years old in our country. According to data from the "China Report Hall"[1] website, our country will transform from an "aging trend" society to an "aging society" in 2027. The rapid development of an aging society is a social factor that universities for the aged need to face. In the future, more elderly people will enter universities for the aged. Facing such a situation, it will be both pressure and opportunity. As a vocal teaching worker in universities for the aged, he should have foresight, actively carry out scientific research, and strive to broaden his teaching thinking, and must not stick to stereotypes. According to the special situation and development trend of vocal music teaching for the elderly, teachers must seek reasonable and effective solutions to improve the quality of teaching and meet the learning needs and enthusiasm of the elderly, and fully prepare for the scientific, standardized and sustainable development of vocal music teaching in universities for the aged in the future.
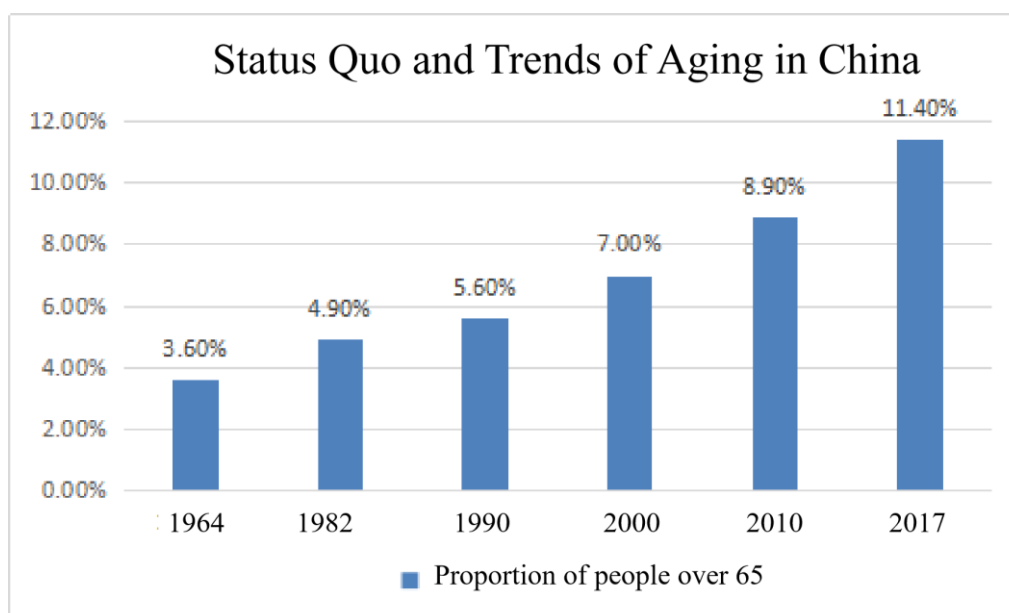

Figure 1

4. Solutions to existing problems in vocal music teaching in elderly universities

4.1 Make scientific enrollment plan based on objective factors

4.1.1 Multi-level teaching to improve teaching efficiency

In view of the objective situation of the unbalanced abilities and voice conditions of students in

---

[1] China Report Hall. Status Quo and Trends of Aging in China[OB/OL]./www.chinabgao.com,2019.9.30/2020.7.26.

universities for the aged, enrollment and teaching should be carried out at different levels. The basic learning stage of the teaching class is divided into three levels: elementary, middle and advanced levels, and each level has a one-year academic system. Although the students have different levels of basic learning, in the three-year basic learning process, there is enough time for the teacher to understand the situation of the students so as to adjust the teaching plan more rationally and timely, so that the students can learn vocal knowledge more systematically within three years and consolidate basic skills.

4.1.2 Teaching in small classes to ensure teaching quality

Due to the uneven age of the students, the class load which is too large will affect the teaching quality and effect, but one-to-one vocal music teaching cannot be fully realized in universities for the aged. Therefore, it is ideal to control the enrollment of each class at about 50 students. 50 people should be the ideal number of choirs, so it is necessary to use large classes. The author believes that the class size of 50 students, on the one hand, teachers can understand the situation of the students as soon as possible. On the other hand, it is conducive to communication between students and self-learning, and it is more conducive to classify the students in the class as soon as possible, find common and individual problems, carry out effective teaching, and ensure the quality of teaching.

4.1.3 Elite teaching to enhance teaching effect

Although the physical and psychological objective conditions of the elderly when learning vocal music have an impact on their learning effect, it is undeniable that there will be some students with excellent congenital conditions who acquired abilities in different individual situations. In order to enhance the effect of vocal music teaching in universities for the aged, set an example of learning, and cultivate senior vocal talents, advanced and elite classes should also be added to the enrollment level. More targeted training of elderly vocal talents with plasticity will enable them to reach a better level of ability, thereby increasing their interest in learning and giving elderly students a stronger sense of acquisition. At the same time, the power of a role model should not be underestimated. Role models can also better stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning and enable them to form a good style of study.

4.2 Improve teaching management ability against subjective factors

4.2.1 Strengthen the construction of teaching staff

In his speech to encourage teachers and students when inspecting Beijing Normal University, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that a good teacher should have ideals and beliefs, moral sentiments, solid knowledge, and a benevolent heart. The "four standards" of a good teacher are also applicable to universities for the aged. For the long-term development of vocal music teaching in universities for the aged, it is necessary to establish and improve a team of high-quality professional teachers with noble ethics, exquisite professionalism, reasonable structure and full of vitality. This is also a requirement in the "Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening the Construction of the Teaching Team". Although most universities for the aged belong to the veteran cadre system, the teachers of universities for the aged are also teachers, and there is no doubt that the colleges for the elderly are also engaged in education. Following the theory of education and teaching as well as the teacher's standards is a must and a guarantee for the development of vocal music teaching in elderly universities so as to meet the need of the elders' need of learning and satisfy their earing for learning.

4.2.2 Develop school-based teaching materials more actively

In traditional vocal music teaching, there are generally no fixed teaching materials, and vocal teachers should adjust the teaching songs at any time according to the situation of the students. There are so many vocal songs at home and abroad, and no single textbook can cover all vocal teaching songs. However, collective teaching is generally adopted in universities for the aged, and the level of abilities of the students is uneven. Most students who do not have any musical foundation need to master the simple knowledge of notation music theory and the vocal method of singing as soon as possible in 28 lessons per year. The traditional one-on-one vocal music teaching model with strong pertinence cannot be realized in universities for the aged, and can only be based on popular teaching methods. This requires a systematic syllabus and unified teaching goals. Therefore, a vocal music textbook suitable for the learning of the elderly is the best carrier to realize effective vocal teaching in universities for the aged. It can also help vocal music teachers in universities for the aged to calmly deal with a series of problems that may be encountered in "passive" teaching.

4.3 Broaden teaching methods in view of social factors

4.3.1 Develop in-depth resource sharing model and establish a "sunken" elderly education base network

So far, the capacity of the colleges for the elderly has basically reached saturation, and it always happens that the elderly find it difficult to find a seat in college. The reason why the elderly are willing to study in universities is that senior universities are not only "pioneers" but also "leaders" in the field of senior education and its standardized development. However, it is a pity that the limited resources cannot meet the rapidly increased need of senior citizens especially under the pressure caused by the rapid development of the "aging" problem. The author believes that the solution to this problem can be achieved through resource sharing and the establishment of a "sinking" network of education bases for the elderly. For example, universities for the elderly can share their existing faculty, syllabus, school-based textbooks, etc. with communities, towns, neighborhoods, and other units that can provide long-term activities for the elderly so that existing resources can truly flow and be used more effectively. The "sinking" of colleges for the elderly will be built into villages, towns, streets, and communities to form a network operation and management of teaching bases for the elderly. In this way, more senior citizens can accept scientific and standardized courses in senior colleges at home.

4.3.2 Leverage modern teaching equipment to create high-quality vocal music classrooms

With the development of technology, multimedia equipment is gradually used in classroom teaching. Traditional vocal music classrooms do not have the opportunity to use multimedia teaching equipment. In order to meet the needs of the elderly to learn vocal music, large-class teaching is adopted in senior universities, which is more conducive to the use of multimedia equipment. It can enable students to understand the theory and performance of vocal music in a more direct way from the aural and visual sense, thus greatly promoting our teaching practice.

4.3.3 Use the distance education model to meet the learning needs of the elderly

Distance education is a mode of teaching using TV or Internet platforms. It breaks the limitations of time and space. It has low cost but high utilization rate. The most important thing is that it can provide more learning opportunities for the elderly. Vocal music teaching is also a popular subject in colleges and universities. The development of remote vocal music teaching can better meet the needs of the elderly to learn vocal music.

5. Conclusion

This time, I put forward the problems and countermeasures in the vocal music teaching in colleges for the elderly. Firstly, they analyzed the existing problems from the inconsistency of students' basic conditions and the imperfect teaching management of the school, and analyzed the occurrence of these problems based on subjective factors, objective factors, and social factors. Finally, a countermeasure is proposed to solve the problems in vocal music teaching in senior colleges and improve the effect of vocal music teaching.

References

[1] Zha hua.The Aesthetic Value of Tea Culture and Art in Vocal Music Performance and Teaching[J]. Tea In Fujian, 2018, 040(011):425.
[2] Pension Industry Consulting. The mental state and needs of the elderly [EB/OL]. Geriatric care, 2017.12.12/2020.7.26.
[3] China Report Hall. Status Quo Trends of Aging in China [OB/OL]. www.Chinabgao.com, 2019.9.30/ 2020.7.26
[4] Xiao biyun. Practice and Exploration of Vocal Music Teaching in Senior College[J]. Shen Hua, 2019, 000(009):P.68-68.