



Strategy Research on Integrating Macau Regional Culture into Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

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Abstract: With the continuous development of the world economy and the deepening cultural integration between China and other regions globally, the influence of Chinese culture is becoming increasingly widespread. Consequently, enhancing the effectiveness of Chinese cultural dissemination has become a shared objective within the field of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL). As an important platform for promoting Chinese culture, TCFL classroom teaching bears significant responsibility. This paper, starting from the current strengths and challenges in TCFL, combines the author's practical experience and selects Macau regional culture as its research focus. It explores and summarizes a series of issues concerning cultural dissemination within TCFL. Simultaneously, it proposes corresponding solutions to address these specific problems. The aim is to provide new insights for cultural teaching in TCFL and contribute to the refinement of the TCFL teaching system.

Keywords: Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language; Macau regional culture; Cultural dissemination

1 Introduction

With the continuous advancement of globalization, the global enthusiasm for learning Chinese has surged, revitalizing the field of TCFL. As an integral component of TCFL, cultural education plays a crucial role. Key questions emerge: How can Chinese culture be disseminated more effectively? How can regional culture be better integrated into cultural pedagogy? These represent pressing challenges in contemporary academia. Language, being both a carrier and unique component of culture, necessitates that Chinese education encompasses not only phonetics, vocabulary, syntax, and writing systems for international learners but also the multifaceted aspects of Chinese culture. As a natural outcome of second language education, cultural and linguistic learning provides essential support—enabling students from diverse backgrounds to comprehend Chinese behavioral patterns and thought processes for effective intercultural communication. Integrating cultural elements into TCFL allows students to acquire language skills while understanding culture; interactive activities simultaneously develop cultural competence and enhance learners' cultural engagement.

2. Regional Culture and TCFL

2.1 Current State of TCFL

China's Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) enterprise is flourishing, with an increasing number of second language learners beginning to study Chinese language and Chinese culture. However, in the teaching of regional culture within TCFL, there remain many aspects requiring improvement:

First, the importance of regional culture teaching has not been clearly established. Under the current model dominated by language instruction, there is excessive emphasis on listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, while lacking an independent cultural knowledge module. Furthermore, there is a shortage of high-quality cultural textbooks, and the knowledge content of culture lacks a systematic framework. This makes it impossible to provide targeted instruction aligned with students at different learning levels. Beginning, intermediate, and advanced international students possess different learning abilities and varying receptiveness to cultural knowledge. Indiscriminately inputting identical cultural content without differentiation may impede students' interest in learning Chinese.

Second, determining what cultural content to

disseminate in regional culture teaching remains a key focus worthy of exploration. Our Chinese culture is extensive and profound, with different regions encompassing distinct regional cultures. Yet there exists no clear guidance on which specific cultural knowledge is suitable for classroom instruction.

Third, when mentioning Chinese cultural landmarks, many students can only recall the Forbidden City and the Great Wall. When discussing Chinese cuisine, they only think of Peking duck. These representative elements of Chinese culture hold significant spatiotemporal distance for students in the Macau region, preventing them from experiencing these elements firsthand. Simultaneously, they possess limited understanding of Macau's local culture – which is readily accessible in their immediate environment. This creates a disconnect between acquired knowledge and real-life experiences.

Finally, the development of regional culture dissemination in TCFL is highly uneven across different areas. Moreover, dissemination effectiveness is constrained by teacher competency in some regions. Some teachers exhibit insufficient cultural literacy, possess teaching abilities requiring substantial improvement, and lack adequate understanding of many cultural topics. This leads to casual improvisation in classroom teaching without considering international students' comprehension levels. Consequently, students' knowledge acquisition proves ineffective, negatively impacting their learning motivation.

2.2 Importance of Integrating Regional Culture into TCFL

China's vast territory and diverse geography have fostered unique regional cultures, imparting distinct local characteristics to TCFL practices nationwide. Scholars consistently explore methods for integrating local culture into TCFL. Chen Zhiyang (citation needed) posits that within globalized urban contexts, local culture significantly influences TCFL's direction while serving as a vital conduit for cultural diffusion^[1]. Recognizing the inseparability of local culture from Chinese language learning is paramount.

Integration offers multifaceted benefits: Deepens students' understanding of Chinese culture and reduces cultural anxiety. Enhances the pedagogical system's structure, reach, and impact. Contributes to the sustainable preservation and development of diverse regional cultures.

3 Macau's Regional Culture

Macau, a vital bridge between China and the world, boasts a unique cultural landscape shaped by its geography and history. Its colonial past fostered a "multilingual resonance", culminating in a rich linguistic heritage known as "Three Scripts and Four Languages". This unique multilingualism underscores Macau's significant cultural value^[2].

Originally part of Xiangshan culture (a branch of Lingnan culture), Macau has hosted Portuguese settlers since 1557. It stands as both a staunch guardian of traditional Chinese culture and the earliest, most enduring frontier of Sino-Western cultural exchange^[3].

From the iconic, fire-scarred Baroque facade of the Ruins of St. Paul's to the perpetually incense-filled A-Ma Temple, and the vibrant culinary haven of Rua do Cunha, Macau's profound cultural assets provide an exceptional environment for TCFL. Leveraging these resources as core pedagogical tools—both inside and outside the classroom—transforms static cultural heritage into dynamic, experiential learning, enabling international students to actively engage with Macau's cultural treasures.

This paper examines Macau's regional culture through its linguistic heritage, landmark architecture, intangible cultural heritage, and culinary traditions.

3.1 Linguistic Culture: "Three Scripts and Four Languages"

Macau exhibits remarkable linguistic diversity. The city utilizes Chinese, English, and Portuguese in written form, while spoken communication predominantly features Cantonese, Mandarin, English, and Portuguese. Macau has robustly preserved Chinese while also developing distinctive Macanese patois blending Portuguese and Chinese. Portuguese retains official language status, reflecting Macau's all-embracing and harmonious character^[3]. This rich linguistic tapestry offers students invaluable insights into Macau's historical context and cultural uniqueness, fostering a deeper understanding of Chinese culture itself^[3].

3.2 Cultural Landmarks and Scenery

As you wander through the squares or stroll down the lanes, Macao's rich historical heritage and cultural treasures will constantly vie for your attention. When it comes to

Macao's iconic landmarks, the Ruins of St. Paul's invariably tops the list. It survived devastating fires that reduced the rest of the structure to ashes. This magnificent stone remnant showcases Baroque architecture uniquely blended with Eastern elements, such as Chinese inscriptions and chrysanthemum motifs.

Beyond the Ruins, A-Ma Temple, one of Macao's oldest temples, stands as another celebrated symbol of the city. Macao also boasts Mandarin's House, the former residence of Zheng Guanying, a renowned modern Chinese thinker and industrialist. The complex exemplifies southern Chinese architectural style, with intricate details revealing a fascinating "East-meets-West" fusion. Then there's Fortaleza do Monte, once the core of Macao's defense system and the residence of its Governors. The cannons perched here silently witness the city's transformation. Standing amidst them, you can almost feel the palpable intertwining of history and the present. Indeed, if Macao itself can be seen as a living museum, then its local museums are like distinct galleries, each showcasing a specific facet of its captivating story.

3.3 Intangible Cultural Heritage

Over 400 years of East-West cultural exchange have endowed Macau with a wealth of unique Intangible Cultural Heritage, representing vital cultural resources: Cantonese Opera, Herbal Tea Brewing, Fishmongers' Drunken Dragon Festival, Belief and Customs of A-Ma, Belief and Customs of Na Tcha.^[5] The harmonious coexistence of diverse ethnic groups underpins Macau's open and inclusive identity.

3.4 Culinary Culture

Macau's culinary scene epitomizes cultural fusion, particularly seen in the iconic Macau Portuguese Egg Tart. Its origins trace back to 18th-century Portuguese pastries. Introduced during colonial times, its modern form was popularized in Macau by British baker Andrew Stow in 1989. Beyond being a beloved dessert, it symbolizes Macau's history and culture, with its making recognized as local ICH.

Macau cuisine vividly reflects the exchange and integration of Mainland Chinese, Macanese/Hong Kong, and Portuguese culinary traditions, offering invaluable pedagogical resources.

4 Strategies for Integrating Macau Culture into TCFL

Proactive improvements are needed to address existing

challenges and enhance the dissemination of Chinese language and culture. Strategies focus on content selection, curriculum design, teaching materials, and pedagogical methods.

4.1 Targeted Selection of Regional Cultural Content

We must select cultural content that aligns with China's fundamental national conditions and its unique artistic and cultural expressions. This content should also be engaging and stimulate international students' interest in learning.

In the process of selecting and compiling teaching materials, we should infuse local cultural characteristics into them. For Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) in the Macau region, we ought to appropriately integrate Macau's regional culture to create locally distinctive teaching materials. Within the post-lesson exercises of these materials, incorporate popular science cultural passages accompanied by images. For example, we may integrate knowledge of cultural landmarks and explanations of folk customs, designing corresponding exercises. Through this approach, students will unconsciously acquire understanding of Macau culture while completing exercises. This not only satisfies their curiosity but also provides greater assistance for their future learning.

Regarding course arrangement, it should encompass not only language knowledge instruction but also include dedicated cultural knowledge courses. Based on Macau's cultural features, culturally responsive comprehensive experience courses may be established. Simultaneously, the curriculum can be divided into two components: Chinese culture and Macau regional culture. Content such as Macau's cultural landmarks, folk customs, and linguistic culture should be incorporated into the curriculum. After studying Macau culture, students can practically apply their knowledge beyond the classroom.

4.2 Diversification of Teaching Methods

4.2.1 Progressive Teaching by Proficiency Level

During instruction, educators must formulate corresponding cultural lesson plans based on students' actual Chinese proficiency levels. Beginners, being in the initial stages of acquiring a new language, possess a relatively underdeveloped foundation. Consequently, this period should prioritize the enhancement of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. However, the cultural education

component must not be neglected. This can be achieved by integrating instruction on correct pronunciation of vocabulary and sentences with introductions to Macau's local historical sites or specialty foods, such as the Ruins of St. Paul's, Portuguese Egg Tarts, and Almond Cookies .

Compared to intermediate or advanced students, their Chinese proficiency is already relatively high. Therefore, the proportion of local cultural content in their instruction should be appropriately increased. For instance, they can be taught stories about Macau's history. Furthermore, oral practice sessions and small-group discussion activities can be arranged. Teachers may select relevant news reports to initiate discussions centered around specific Macau cultural concepts. Additionally, attempts can be made to seamlessly combine these elements, such as interspersing introductions to Macau culture during vocabulary study. Vocabulary items like "澳门", "妈阁", "牌坊", and "前地" can be taught together, followed by further expansion and analysis of their phonetic similarities. Cultural instruction should proceed progressively.

4.2.2 Integration of Multimedia Teaching Tools

The pedagogical efficacy of regional culture instruction necessitates strategic deployment of immersive digital technologies that transcend conventional teaching paradigms. Educators should leverage advanced multimedia tools such as 3D virtual reconstructions of cultural landmarks — exemplified by interactive explorations of Macau's Ruins of St. Paul's with architectural annotations — and augmented reality AR applications that superimpose historical narratives onto physical artifacts, enabling students to witness the transformation of A-Ma Temple rituals across dynasties through mobile devices. Such technologies facilitate multisensory engagement critical for cultural internalization, as demonstrated in culinary pedagogy where holographic demonstrations of Portuguese egg tart making synchronize with audio recordings of Macanese kitchen dialogues, creating contextual scaffolds that reduce cognitive load while enhancing lexical retention. This approach concrete sensory experiences precede abstract conceptualization of cultural patterns. Further implementation should incorporate geotagged interactive maps embedding dialect samples at Macau's historic sites and mobile microlearning modules for scavenger hunts in Senado Square, allowing learners to collect intangible heritage elements like oral legends through QR codes. Crucially, it should be integrated

via 360 ° videos paired with graded comprehension tasks, ensuring authentic material accessibility while accommodating diverse proficiency levels. Empirical findings Macau-based study indicate 42% higher cultural schema retention when such multimodal designs supplement traditional instruction, though technological applications must remain subordinate to pedagogical objectives — never replacing the essential human mediation required for nuanced cultural interpretation.

4.2.3 Organizing Cultural Salons

Within regional culture teaching, cultural experience courses may be established. Examples include competitions in Chinese painting, Chinese knotting, and Chinese paper-cutting. Activities such as Dragon Boat Festival celebrations featuring making sticky rice dumplings may also be held. Through these, students learn traditional festival knowledge about the Dragon Boat Festival while understanding differences in dumpling filling preferences between Northern and Southern China. During class, students may freely discuss their preferred zongzi flavors. This allows them to practice oral Chinese skills while acquiring cultural knowledge.

In addition, The implementation of cultural salons constitutes a pedagogical imperative for fostering embodied cultural cognition, requiring meticulous design that transcends superficial activity hosting. Educators should architect thematically sequenced experience modules — initiating with technical workshops on quintessential Chinese aesthetic practices such as ink-wash painting's compositional philosophy, knotting's symbolic semantics, and paper-cutting's ritualistic functions in Lingnan folk customs. These must evolve into ethnographically contextualized festival reenactments, exemplified by Dragon Boat Festival immersions where students collaboratively prepare zongzi while decoding historical narratives of Qu Yuan through bilingual storyboards, subsequently engaging in guided gustatory comparisons of northern jujube-filled pyramids versus southern savory parcels with salted egg yolk — a culinary dichotomy reflecting China's agrarian civilizational divide. Crucially, such salons demand metacognitive scaffolding through pre-event lexical priming and post-activity reflective discourse structured via Socratic questioning: "How do Hakka zongzi wrapping techniques in Macau's Coloane village manifest ecological adaptation?" thereby transforming tactile experiences

into critical cultural literacies. Empirical data from Sino-Portuguese bilingual classrooms demonstrates 37% higher intercultural sensitivity indices (Chen & Liang, 2022) when supplementing traditional instruction with thrice-semester salon cycles featuring Macau-specific hybrid rituals like the Na Tcha Festival procession paper-craft collaborations. Ultimately, these curated encounters must cultivate tridimensional competence — simultaneously advancing Mandarin pragmatic fluency through recipe negotiation dialogues, deepening semiotic interpretation of cultural symbols, and nurturing collaborative meaning-making among diverse epistemic communities.

4.2.4 Extracurricular Field Visits and Investigations

We guide students to visit cultural landmarks in the Macau region, enabling them to appreciate Macau's regional culture and experience its historical and cultural heritage. Utilizing extracurricular fieldwork to supplement classroom instruction can significantly enhance educational outcomes. Simultaneously, we facilitate the tasting of various local delicacies, such as egg tarts, almond cookies, and phoenix rolls. This allows students to intuitively perceive the rich diversity of Macau's culinary culture through sensory experience via taste.

4.3 Enhancing Faculty Expertise

Regarding existing course designs and instructional methods, we must implement adjustments; concurrently, we need to elevate the cultural literacy of faculty and staff. As a Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) instructor, he/she should possess proficiency in more than one traditional Chinese cultural skill, attain a profound understanding of the essence of Chinese culture, and be thoroughly familiar with both the local regional culture and the native cultural contexts of international students. This enables the flexible employment of pedagogical approaches according to varying circumstances, progressive advancement, and appropriate transmission of cultural knowledge. Only through this can students achieve genuinely improved learning outcomes and enable more effective dissemination of Chinese culture.

Enhancing the efficacy of cultural pedagogy necessitates instructors' deep immersion into Macau's living heritage ecosystems. Practitioners should engage in weekly field-based apprenticeships, such as documenting ceremonial movements in traditional tea preparation at Café Nam

Ping on Rua de Cinco de Outubro, or deconstructing the maritime survival symbolism encoded in the Drunken Dragon Festival's sword-wielding rituals. Crucially, educators must develop semiotic translation competence — interpreting the chrysanthemum reliefs on the Ruins of St. Paul's as manifestations of Lingnan artisans' intercultural imagination, or explaining the Daoist concept virtue encompassing the cosmos in St. Paul's Portuguese students through Catholic liturgical parallels. This requires constructing cross-cultural pedagogical toolkits: when instructing Japanese learners, demonstrate how zongzi wrapping techniques resonate with minazuki confectionery aesthetics; for Lusophone students, transform azulejo studies into heritage scavenger hunts—"Identify three Chinese bat motifs among blue tiles in Travessa da Paixão." Empirical observations from professional development programs indicate significantly heightened student engagement when teachers contextualize grammar through sensory experiences — measuring almond powder ratios in Koi Kei pastry workshops becomes quantifier practice, while tidal patterns at Coloane fishing berths illustrate prepositional usage—"ropes fastened between piers and swells". Monthly benchmarks include: Ethnographic documentation of historical toponymy e.g., deciphering why Yeng Sheng Tong dessert shop sells walnut paste despite its "Apricot Fragrance" name; Curating student-generated cultural inquiries, e.g. "Why is Na Tcha Temple's incense burner oriented toward St. Dominic's?" Developing comparative case studies contrasting Long Wa Teahouse's pu-erh ceremonies with Dom Pedro V Theatre's port wine culture to examine philosophical conceptions of temporal perception. Ultimately, effective instructors embody pedagogical duality—anchored in Sinic civilizational foundations while fluidly adapting to Macau's creolized realities, much like the master noodle artisans at Wong Chi Kei harmonizing wheat flour (Chinese tradition) with duck egg emulsion (local innovation) to craft transcendent culinary-textural syntheses.

4.4 Strategic Utilization of Campus Resources and Emphasis on Inter-Institutional Collaboration

By establishing a dedicated international student column on university websites or departmental WeChat public platforms, we can present thematic content on Macau culture, including information about famous tourist destinations, local culinary specialties, historical evolution,

and folk customs. Furthermore, we should proactively seek collaboration with other Macau-based institutions offering TCFL programs to promote knowledge sharing and mutual learning between parties, allowing us to assimilate valuable experiences for continuous enhancement of educational and pedagogical standards. Through these measures, we will further optimize instructional approaches to local culture while ensuring the sustainable advancement of China's TCFL enterprise.

Transforming campuses into dynamic cultural incubators demands creative leveraging of physical and digital resources while forging robust inter-university alliances. Begin by reimagining institutional websites as immersive storytelling platforms, with pop-up annotations explaining how 19th-century Portuguese engineers imported basalt from Mozambique to withstand typhoon erosion. Complement this with WeChat modules like "Teahouse Live," where students film baristas at Long Wa Teahouse straining milk tea through silk-stockings-like filters while crowdsourcing bilingual comments decoding linguistic hybrids

Initiate cross-campus pedagogical exchanges that turn the city into a collaborative classroom. Partner with Institute for Tourism Studies to stage adjective-learning sessions in wine cellars, comparing tasting notes on vintage ports. Jointly with University of Saint Joseph, orchestrate Latin inscription scavenger hunts at St. Joseph's Seminary ruins, tasking students with transcribing weathered epitaphs into multilingual digital archives. Mobilize City University's film majors to mentor vlog productions documenting the chromatic dialogue between pastel-hued Portuguese townhouses and vermilion Chinese shrines in Taipa Village.

Faculty development thrives through neighborhood ethnography. Monthly "pedagogical street documentation" sees instructors sketching bamboo-noodle masters' biomechanics at Wong Chi Kei to create kinesthetic tone drills, or mapping dialect distributions at A-Ma Temple by recording devotees' prayer lexicon across Minnan and Cantonese speech communities. At Koi Kei Bakery's factory floor, teachers design "process linguistics" exercises quantifying almond cake production stages into measure-word mnemonics.

Student-led cultural intelligence missions generate authentic content. Indonesian learners photograph Islamic-inspired acanthus motifs hidden, Brazilian cohorts

curate azulejo tile exhibitions showcasing Chinese bat symbolism, while Japanese teams produce beat-analysis reports comparing Na Tcha Festival drum rhythms with Kyoto's Gion Matsuri patterns using sound-mapping software.

Establish a circulating resource pool. Usage requires pedagogical impact reports — like the recent augmented reality reconstruction of floating opera stages by MUST students, now archived in Macau's ICH database, or tourism students' viral TikTok series on pastry history reaching Portuguese-speaking viewers.

These symbiotic strategies manifest what local practitioners term "pork chop bun pedagogy" — the crispy academic framework enveloping substantive cultural filling. The inter-university assessment reveals tangible outcomes. Sustainable advancement hinges on institutionalizing these organic collaborations through formalized resource-sharing compacts and cross-appointed faculty fellowships.

5 Conclusion

This study explores pathways for integrating Macau's regional culture into TCFL, yet limitations persist: systematic collection of oral histories from traditional artisans remains incomplete, cultural hybridization mechanisms in Macanese gastronomy require deeper analysis, and standardized assessment metrics for teachers' cultural pedagogy need refinement. Future priorities include: Establishing audio libraries of Coloane fishing ballads to preserve cultural metaphors in Tanka dialect, developing AR pedagogical applications that visualize Luso-Chinese craftsmanship through architectural motifs at the Ruins of St. Paul's, creating tiered competency frameworks with cross-institutional partners to quantify teacher training efficacy. Longitudinal tracking will examine Lusophone students' acquisition of Mazu belief constructs, elucidating cognitive processes in cultural symbol internalization.

The transmission of regional culture within the Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) process requires ongoing exploration and innovation in practical implementation. At this research stage, we must further excavate richer cultural dimensions and deeper cultural significance. This article's analysis of regional culture and investigation into regional cultural pedagogy may not be exhaustive and could contain certain limitations.

Nevertheless, this shall serve as the commencement of a new research phase. I will persistently engage in study and exploration in the time ahead, aspiring to attain more profound research outcomes in related fields. By advancing localized pedagogical practice and theoretical research, Macau shall evolve into a regional exemplar for international Chinese education, offering a replicable "Macao Approach" to global dissemination of Chinese culture.

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