Application of New Media in International Chinese Education

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Abstract: As a novel teaching method, new media short videos have become one of the teaching methods of international Chinese education. By analyzing the advantages and feasibility of this teaching method, this paper demonstrates that teaching using short videos is a more suitable teaching method for teaching Chinese as a foreign language. At the same time, the material selection and problems in the process of using this method are also analyzed.

Keywords: New media; Short video; International Chinese education

1. Introduction

The development of various short video applications is currently in trend with the advancement of smart phones. People are exposed to a large number of short video resources on a daily basis. These audio and video resources will not only enrich one's spiritual life, but also provide a vast and diverse range of resources for teaching Chinese as a foreign language [1]. Short videos, as the term suggests, are usually short in duration. Viewers are much more focused when watching short videos than long ones. Traditional teaching methods, on the other hand, largely rely on textbooks, which often result in a dull and inflexible environment. If the teaching methods are not flexible enough, foreign students may feel bored [2]. The emergence of video teaching methods represented by new media can make up for the dull and inflexible traditional teaching method.

2. Advantages of short videos

Before the emergence of short video applications, many teachers of Chinese to speakers of other languages (TCSOL) prefer using online videos as auxiliary means of teaching [3]. There are documentaries, movies, and television shows that run from 30 minutes to 90 minutes. The duration of traditional videos is a disadvantage in Chinese classroom teaching. Without good video clips, the lesson will be a film appreciation class instead. As a result, it will be difficult to achieve the goals of classroom teaching, students will gain less from the lesson, and the efficiency of classroom teaching will be low. Compared with short videos and new media, traditional documentary films and film sites have complete narrative structures and narrative backgrounds. Moreover, comparing the language used in a standard documentary, the formal written language is uncommon and relatively difficult to understand for foreign students [4].

The use of movies as a means of teaching Chinese as a foreign language does not meet the requirements of Chinese language teaching to a certain extent. A movie expresses various contents, and the parts that meet the teaching requirements and knowledge points are often scattered throughout the movie. If these clips are shown to students alone, the integrity of the film will be compromised, and students will feel that there is no continuity in the film; thus, it will be difficult for students to understand the language content in the film [5]. Such a teaching method is ineffective; it will also leave cultural and language impact on foreign students. Moreover, the lines used in movies often incorporate dialects. If it is an ancient film, it will also include classical Chinese and other now-uncommon terms. In the process of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, there will be ambiguity in students' understanding; hence, teachers have to re-explain these allusions to the students. The use of films in teaching poses a challenge by raising the bar for students in understanding the language, and to some extent, deviating from the nature of standard, modern Chinese teaching.

Compared with the teaching methods of movies, documentaries, and television shows, new media and we-media short videos can effectively make up for the disadvantages of these multimedia teaching methods, thus establishing a new way of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. New media short videos have several advantages. First, the theme is usually focused, with a strong cultural theme [6]. The content is explained and repeatedly narrated around the theme. Various means of expressions are used in these videos, which is conducive to aggrandizing cultural features in cultural-related teaching activities. Second, short videos have a strong sense of experience and immersion. This is because the producers are often ordinary people, who have a better understanding of an ordinary person's life. Such videos are more conducive to international students' barrier-free viewing, thus being more convenient for them to accept information about the Chinese culture [7]. Third, the duration of new media short videos is usually restricted to 5 minutes. They are short, concise, comprehensive, and self-contained. Short videos are more flexible than documentaries, movies, and television shows, and they can be repeatedly played during class. They are suitable as the both the main and auxiliary means for teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

3. Feasibility analysis of the use of short videos in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language
The advantages of new media short videos are discussed in this section.

3.1. Diversity
In terms of short video producers, they come from all parts of China, so the content and form of short videos may vary, which lays a foundation for the diversity of short videos [8]. Chinese teachers often select various mixed videos to share with their students the different aspects of Chinese people's lives and the richness and profoundness of the Chinese language. Having great diversity, these videos provide a novel teaching method.

3.2. Fun
New media short videos cover many aspects of life, and the contents are not only easily understood, but also very interesting. Some are recorded by Chinese college students or students studying in China themselves [9]. Some of the videos are even shot in universities, which reflect every corner of campus life in China, giving a sense of familiarity to international students. They are not like movies or documentaries, which are relatively distant and strange to foreign students [10]. Therefore, the use of new media short videos aids in removing the barrier between foreign students and video producers. It is then easier to pique the interest of foreign students in learning Chinese.

3.3. Interactive

At present, China's mainstream short video platforms are equipped with real-time interactive comment functions [11]. Short video applications such as Kuaishou and Douyin have comment functions, while Bilibili.com has bullet screen functions [12]. After viewing a video, viewers can discuss about the video online and interact with the producer(s) in the comment section. This kind of interaction can enhance students' learning enthusiasm and encourage them to use written language in verbal expression, especially among foreign students in China.

3.4 Instantaneity

We-media short videos are shot and edited by the producers and then uploaded to the respective platforms. In that way, there is a sense of timeliness to these videos [13]. It is more convenient for language learners to discuss with each other, and it is easier to stimulate their interest in language through current events. The timeliness to these videos is a huge advantage compared to films made years or decades ago.

4. Material selection

The use of short videos in teaching Chinese as a foreign language should be individualized, and these videos should be selected in consideration of individual students.

In today's rapid development of network technology, the number of registered users of new media short videos is increasing. Since most of the short videos are recorded and edited by the producers themselves, who have varying levels of education and understanding, the video quality may vary. Poor quality videos are futile for Chinese cultural teaching [14]. They may even hinder foreign students' understanding of the Chinese culture. Therefore, when selecting short videos as teaching materials, they must be screened in a strict manner. Short videos are not only tools for language learning, but also means to promote the Chinese culture and "tell Chinese stories." Therefore, Chinese teachers should take into consideration various factors when selecting short videos, so as to select suitable, high-quality videos as teaching materials.

In terms of their content, short videos that incorporate standard Mandarin should be selected as teaching materials. The language used in many of these short videos are mixed with or dominated by dialects [15]. Such videos will be very misleading to foreign students in their language learning process. If foreign students learn by using materials that incorporate dialects, the language they use will contain a high variety of dialects [16]. Therefore, in the selection of videos, it is necessary to select video materials that use standard Mandarin. In addition, the selection of video materials should also be based on the level of students, which tend to vary from person to person and between classes. The teaching field generally divides foreign students' Chinese proficiency into three stages: primary stage, intermediate stage, and advanced stage.

For students at a primary stage, video materials with slow speech should be selected. The purpose of selecting English-based Chinese culture teaching materials is to help students understand the Chinese culture, rather than the language itself, in order to stimulate their interest in learning the culture.

Students at an intermediate stage should be encouraged to watch short videos with faster speech and more challenging vocabulary. However, teachers must be careful to avoid incorporating dialects and advanced words. This will be ideal for intermediate international students to improve their language level. Students at an advanced stage have a solid foundation and can communicate with people in a barrier-free manner. Therefore, for these students, teachers should select videos with relatively fast speech and rich vocabulary, so that these students can transition from language learners to language users and masters.

The content of short videos should be adjusted according to the course content. In the course of material selection, especially for oral lessons, the focus should be on selecting contents that incorporate standard Mandarin dialogues suitable for communication [17]. As for the selection of materials related to Chinese

culture, the most important thing is that the content should leave a deep impression on students. Materials such as human geography, food art, and natural scenery can be selected to attract students' attention. In recent years, with the increasing number of Chinese food documentaries, many TCSOL prefer using these documentaries when teaching Chinese culture [18]. These documentaries include not only sounds and texts, but also cuisines that can pique the interest of students [19]. However, when selecting documentaries, some contents that are opposed to the religious beliefs and eating habits of Chinese students must be excluded.

5. Existing problems of new media short video education
5.1. Lack of self-consciousness
Although using mobile phones as a multimedia means of language learning is an effective method, for students who are less self-conscious, mobile phones are simply tools used to play games and watch dramas [20]. Since learning tools are now used for entertainment, this has become a significant issue in new media education.

5.2. Heavy workload
In view of the flexibility of short video platforms for the large number of videos and producers, information overload has become an issue. As mentioned above, teachers need to screen the content of short videos prior to use. As a result, teachers need to screen a considerable number of videos before each lesson, thus increasing their workload.

6. Conclusion
Nowadays, diversification is a trend in international Chinese education. Many TCSOL are using new teaching methods based on multimedia, so as to ease the learning of foreign students and help them master the grammar structure of the language as well as its culture. The new media short video teaching method has penetrated the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language with its unique nature. This paper discusses the advantages, existing problems, and the selection of new media short videos as teaching resources for international Chinese education, with the goal of incorporating new media short videos into the teaching of Chinese culture as well as bringing vigor and vitality to the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language.

Disclosure statement
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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