

From Integration to Innovation: A Practice and Application Study on the Empowerment of Bai Opera in Western Guangdong to University Language Education

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Abstract: Bai Opera of Western Guangdong is a provincial intangible cultural heritage of Guangdong Province, China. It serves as a comprehensive embodiment of local dialect systems, folk customs and folk aesthetic wisdom, as well as a treasure trove of local linguistic and cultural resources. The fundamental goals of university language education in the new era are to consolidate students' linguistic foundation, improve their language application ability and cultivate their cultural literacy. Traditional one-sided, theoretical teaching methods can hardly meet the demands of fostering virtue through education and cultural inheritance in the education sector. Focusing on the in-depth integration of Bai Opera in Western Guangdong and university language education, this paper sorts out the current development status of integrating local opera culture into university language education, and thoroughly analyzes the teaching value, cultural value and educational value of Bai Opera empowering language education. It hopes to promote the transformation of university language education from shallow cultural integration to in-depth teaching innovation, further enrich teaching resources for university language courses, and provide new ideas for the dual advancement of local intangible cultural heritage inheritance and the reform of university language education.

Keywords: Bai Opera in Western Guangdong; University language education; Practice and application

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1. Introduction

University language education is an important way to cultivate students' language expression, text interpretation, cultural understanding and comprehensive humanistic literacy, covering modern Chinese, dialect culture, oral expression, literary appreciation, applied writing and other fields. It undertakes the task of consolidating students' basic language skills as well as the educational mission of inheriting fine traditional Chinese culture and fostering students' humanistic background and cultural confidence. Originating in the late Qing Dynasty and having evolved for hundreds of years, Bai Opera of Western Guangdong forms an artistic

system dominated by Western Guangdong vernacular singing, seven-character verses, distinctive tunes and accompaniment, and folk-themed plays. Rooted deeply in the folk life of Western Guangdong, it features plain language, regular sentence structures and sincere emotions, containing abundant dialect vocabulary, folk expressions and folk narrative materials. It is an excellent local teaching material suitable for university language education. Therefore, universities should rely on language teaching to deeply explore the core of linguistic teaching embedded in Bai Opera, and transform intangible cultural heritage resources into teaching resources, so as to comprehensively improve the quality of university language teaching.

2. Current development status of integrating Western Guangdong Bai Opera into university language education

At present, the teaching reform of language education in Chinese universities is constantly advancing, and greater emphasis is placed on integrating and infiltrating fine traditional culture into classroom teaching. Breaking away from the shackles of purely theoretical teaching, universities tap into traditional cultural resources such as operas and folk customs to empower language teaching, laying a solid teaching foundation for integrating intangible cultural heritage operas into language education. However, in practice, the integration of Western Guangdong Bai Opera and language education is still in the shallow exploration stage, without forming systematic, regular and curriculum-based teaching systems, and the overall integration quality and educational effects remain to be improved ^[1].

Specifically, in terms of teaching cognition, most university teachers of language courses hold a one-sided understanding of Bai Opera in Western Guangdong, merely regarding it as a local folk opera art. They ignore its teaching value in language standardization, dialect teaching, oral expression and text interpretation and writing training, and fail to fully excavate linguistic educational elements contained in its librettos, tunes and narrative texts. As a result, high-quality local linguistic and cultural resources remain idle for a long time and cannot be converted into classroom teaching resources ^[2]. In terms of teaching practice, existing integration methods are relatively single. Teachers mostly adopt simple activities such as cultural appreciation lectures on intangible cultural heritage and campus performances, which only stay at the level of cultural popularization. The linguistic system, text structure and discourse logic of Bai Opera are not integrated into daily courses, after-class training and assessment systems. In terms of curriculum construction, almost no universities have set up special teaching modules for Bai Opera language and culture, nor developed corresponding school-based textbooks, courseware and training cases. Teaching contents are fragmented, lacking systematic teaching design and long-term teaching mechanisms ^[3].

3. Core value of Western Guangdong Bai Opera empowering university language education

3.1. Enrich teaching resources and optimize the content system of university language education

Traditional university language teaching mostly relies on universal textbooks, dominated by classic written texts, standardized grammar knowledge and general rhetorical cases. Such content is universal but lacks regional characteristics and life texture, and some teaching content is disconnected from students' living and local cultural environments, easily leading to low learning enthusiasm and weak knowledge application ability

among students ^[4]. As a folk opera native to Western Guangdong that has developed for hundreds of years, Bai Opera has formed a standardized, life-like and distinctive linguistic system, which can well make up for the deficiencies of traditional language teaching and enrich materials and contents for language education ^[5]. Most plays of Bai Opera take folk stories, historical legends and folk life as themes, featuring complete narrative structures, clear plot lines and vivid character dialogues with both popularity and literariness, which can be applied to text interpretation, narrative analysis, writing conception and oral expression. Integrating Western Guangdong Bai Opera resources into university language education helps teachers break the constraints of traditional textbooks and build a three-dimensional teaching content system of “general linguistic knowledge + local cultural materials”. It transforms dull theoretical lectures into vivid cultural practices, enriches teaching content, optimizes teaching structures, and enhances the interest and pertinence of language courses.

3.2. Innovate teaching modes and improve the practical effect of language classes

With the triple attributes of auditory art, visual art and linguistic art, Western Guangdong Bai Opera includes singing, puppet performance, text narration and folk interpretation, providing new carriers for the innovation of university language teaching and transforming language classes from static theoretical teaching to dynamic practical teaching. Meanwhile, teachers can organize activities such as Bai Opera performances, script adaptation and line creation to build a teaching environment featuring teacher-student interaction and student collaboration. Students can deepen their understanding of linguistic knowledge while appreciating, adapting and performing Bai Opera works, and eventually master language expression methods and skills proficiently ^[6]. This immersive, experiential and practical teaching mode can effectively mobilize students’ learning enthusiasm and solve the problems of dullness, low efficiency and disconnection from practice in traditional language classes, thus comprehensively improving the vitality and educational effect of language teaching and promoting the all-round development of students’ core linguistic literacy.

4. Practical application paths of Western Guangdong Bai Opera empowering university language education

4.1. Excavate and integrate intangible cultural heritage resources to build a systematic curriculum teaching system

The first step to realize in-depth integration of Western Guangdong Bai Opera and university language education is to eliminate fragmented resources and random teaching arrangements. Teachers shall systematically excavate, sort out and refine linguistic teaching resources embedded in Bai Opera, and build a systematic content system matching various language teaching modules in accordance with the teaching objectives, key and difficult points of university language courses, so as to realize standardized transformation of intangible cultural heritage into curriculum resources ^[7]. Meanwhile, universities can set up special language teaching teams to sort out classic plays, core librettos, distinctive tunes, dialect vocabulary and narrative paradigms of Western Guangdong Bai Opera. Teachers select teaching contents suitable for university language teaching and remove obscure contents inconsistent with teaching environments to build standardized teaching resource libraries.

In modern Chinese courses, teachers extract regular seven-character sentence patterns, rhythms and rhetorical techniques from Bai Opera for sentence analysis, rhetoric training and phonetic teaching. In oral expression classes, teachers tap life-like folk dialogues and character lines from Bai Opera to carry out training

in oral communication, situational expression, recitation, and speech. In literary appreciation and writing courses, teachers rely on complete narrative structures, vivid characters and life-like plots of Bai Opera to conduct teaching of text interpretation, narrative conception and applied writing as well as script adaptation. In dialect culture courses, teachers systematically sort out distinctive vocabulary and sentence structures of Western Guangdong dialect in Bai Opera to build a material system for regional dialect teaching. On this basis, relevant teachers shall compile school-based handouts, courseware, case banks and training task lists based on sorted resources, incorporate Bai linguistic and cultural teaching into daily curriculum outlines, clarify key integration contents for each semester and each chapter, and turn scattered supplementary classroom contents into systematic, regular curriculum teaching, so as to continuously consolidate the content foundation of integrated teaching ^[8].

4.2. Innovate diversified teaching modes to build immersive language practice classes

Relying on diversified artistic forms of Western Guangdong Bai Opera, teachers need to innovate teaching modes suitable for university language education and break the time and space limits of traditional classrooms, forming a three-dimensional teaching framework of “classroom lecture — immersive appreciation — practical training — innovative creation” to enhance the practicality and interest of language teaching fully.

In theoretical teaching sessions, teachers can abandon single knowledge indoctrination and adopt classic play clips and core librettos of Bai Opera as cases to explain grammar rules, rhetorical skills, linguistic rhythms and narrative logic, converting abstract linguistic theories into specific opera texts. This effectively lowers students’ learning difficulty and enables them to gain a deeper understanding of the connection between Bai Opera and their knowledge ^[9]. In classroom sessions, teachers set diversified interactive training tasks for students to participate in activities including Bai Opera libretto recitation, tune imitation, line analysis and opera clip dubbing as well as script adaptation, improving their ability of language expression, text interpretation and language application. In after-school expansion, universities rely on campus cultural platforms to build Bai Opera language practice positions and hold competitions such as Bai Opera classic text appreciation, dialect recitation, opera script adaptation and Bai Opera situational drama creation to expand classroom scenarios and allow students to continue language practice after class. In addition, school-enterprise and school-local cooperation modes can be introduced. Invite inheritors of Western Guangdong Bai Opera intangible cultural heritage to campus for special lectures and hands-on guidance, enabling students to experience the unique charm of Bai Opera language and master core skills of line expression and tune rhythm in activities, thus breaking the barrier between theoretical teaching and cultural practice. The innovation of diversified immersive teaching modes allows students to fully participate in language learning and cultural experience, realizing learning and ability improvement through opera and comprehensively enhancing their comprehensive linguistic literacy.

4.3. Improve teaching guarantee mechanisms to promote long-term development of integrated teaching

To solve the problem that the integration of Western Guangdong Bai Opera and university language education remains superficial and unsustainable, universities shall build complete teaching guarantee and evaluation systems to advance integrated teaching from shallow to deep and realize long-term high-quality development.

First, universities shall improve teacher training systems. In view of the lack of intangible cultural heritage literacy among preschool education major teachers, regular training sessions on intangible cultural

heritage and opera language teaching research activities shall be held. Teachers are required to conduct comprehensive research on the cultural connotation, artistic features and linguistic core of Western Guangdong Bai Opera to improve their ability to excavate and apply intangible cultural heritage teaching resources as well as their integrated teaching capacity, forming a compound teaching team equipped with both language teaching competence and intangible cultural heritage literacy^[10].

Second, optimize curriculum construction mechanisms. Take integrated teaching of Bai Opera language and culture as a key reform project for preschool education major courses, gradually develop characteristic elective courses, special lectures and school-based curriculum modules, and build an all-round curriculum system with compulsory courses as penetration, elective courses as expansion and extracurricular activities as extension, so as to standardize and institutionalize integrated teaching.

Third, reform teaching evaluation mechanisms. Break the single evaluation dominated by written examination scores and build a diversified evaluation system combining process assessment, practical assessment and literacy assessment. Students' practical achievements, including Bai Opera text appreciation, script adaptation, language performance, cultural research, and innovative creation, shall be included in assessment indicators to comprehensively evaluate students' language application ability and cultural literacy and encourage their active participation in teaching practice.

Fourth, build innovative inheritance platforms. Relying on university scientific research resources, teachers carry out special research projects on the integration of Bai Opera linguistic culture and language teaching to continuously explore new teaching approaches and stimulate students' enthusiasm. For example, organize students to set up intangible cultural heritage associations and carry out activities including innovative creation of Bai Opera, campus performances and cultural publicity. While inheriting intangible cultural heritage, students' language innovation and application ability are improved. This mode realizes mutually beneficial outcomes of improved language teaching quality, living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage and enhanced students' comprehensive literacy, and promotes the in-depth transformation of language education from resource embedding to teaching innovation.

5. Conclusion

As a core representative of regional intangible cultural heritage in Western Guangdong, Bai Opera of Western Guangdong contains abundant linguistic teaching resources and profound humanistic educational value. Its regular sentence patterns, vivid discourse systems, complete narrative structures, and positive cultural connotations are consistent with the teaching objectives, contents, and educational demands of university language education, making it a high-quality local resource for the innovation and quality improvement of university language education. Against the dual background of new-era university education reform and living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, integrating Western Guangdong Bai Opera into university language education can effectively enrich the system of language teaching resources and innovate classroom teaching modes. It helps consolidate students' linguistic foundation and improve their comprehensive abilities, including language expression, text interpretation, and innovative creation. Meanwhile, it guides students to gain an in-depth understanding of local intangible cultural heritage, cultivate cultural confidence and awareness of cultural inheritance, and realize two-way empowerment of language teaching and cultural education.

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Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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