

# THE APPLICATION OF CHINESE PAPER-CUTTING TEACHING IN TEACHING CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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**Abstract:** In the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, there is often an emphasis on language teaching while cultural teaching is easily overlooked. However, from the perspective of language communication functions, language and culture are inseparable, and understanding certain Chinese cultures plays an important role in helping foreign students learn the language better. Among Chinese cultures, paper-cutting contains rich cultural connotations and is an indispensable part of Chinese cultural teaching in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Applying paper-cutting to the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language explores how it can achieve language teaching, cultural teaching, and experiential creation.

**Keywords:** Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language; Chinese Culture; Paper-cutting; Language; Culture; Experience

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Culture plays an important role in language teaching. In 1880, the French reformer and educator Gouin·F first pointed out the important position of cultural teaching in language teaching in his book "The Art of Teaching and Learning Languages". In the early 1980s, scholars such as Hu Wenzhong first introduced foreign cultural teaching theories into China. Starting from the perspective of language communication functions, he emphasized the inseparability of language and culture. From the 1990s to the present, most scholars have reached a consensus: "Teaching Chinese as a foreign language should focus on language teaching while closely integrating related cultural teaching." [1]

Most foreign students come to China to understand China and learn about Chinese culture. The opening of cultural courses is one of the important ways for them to come into contact with and understand Chinese culture. Chinese culture uses language as a carrier, and understanding certain Chinese cultures plays an important role in helping foreign students learn Chinese and enhance cross-cultural communication. Therefore, opening cultural courses in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language and carrying out the study of Chinese culture can not only meet the needs of foreign students but also conform to the objective laws of language teaching.

The opening of Chinese culture courses allows foreign students to systematically experience a variety of Chinese traditional cultures. [2] Among them, Tai Chi, tea art, paper-cutting, calligraphy, and other cultural courses are very popular with foreign students. Because the materials for cultural paper-cutting courses are simple, it is possible to create a good work in a short time, which gives foreign students a sense of achievement and makes them more confident in learning Chinese language and culture. Therefore, this paper selects paper-cutting as the research object of Chinese cultural courses in teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

## 2 PAPER-CUTTING CULTURE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING OF CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Teaching Chinese as a foreign language includes teaching of phonetics, characters, and vocabulary. Paper-cutting is good at using homophonic meanings, such as happiness on the eyebrows (plum), year after year (lotus) surplus (fish), immediately sealed marquis (monkey), auspicious (chicken) auspicious (sheep) as you wish, etc. Teachers can explain the auspicious meanings of paper-cutting through pictures of paper-cutting, and show pictures of homophonic characters, such as plum (ei) flower, lotus (ian) flower, goldfish (u), monkey (ou), chicken (i) sheep (ang), etc., to use culture to remember phonetics, thus achieving the purpose of teaching in a fun way.

Symmetric paper-cutting is the most common method of paper-cutting. In the paper-cutting culture course, while explaining the symmetric cutting method, teachers can cut symmetrical Chinese characters such as Wang, Da, Chun, Feng, Ji, Shuang, etc., allowing foreign students to learn Chinese characters while understanding the paper-cutting techniques.

In the paper-cutting culture course, there are paper-cuts that reflect the culture of the zodiac, such as rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, etc.; there are paper-cuts that reflect the style of a gentleman, such as plum, orchid, bamboo, chrysanthemum; there are paper-cuts that reflect the culture of celebrating longevity, such as pine and cypress evergreen, crane and peach, turtle year crane longevity, five bats holding a peach, etc. By displaying paper-cut works and explaining their meanings, vocabulary teaching in paper-cutting can be completed. [3]

## 3 PAPER-CUTTING CULTURE IN CULTURAL TEACHING OF CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Chinese folk paper-cutting culture has a long history and has permeated into the lives of the public during its long development process. Paper-cutting culture is closely related to people's lives, and paper-cutting elements can be found

everywhere in the stage's facial makeup, shadow puppetry, clothing, tea sets, ceramics, accessories, etc.

### **3.1 Festival Culture**

Chinese festival culture is an important part of the long history and culture of the Chinese nation, and paper-cutting is closely related to many festival cultures. On the eve of the Spring Festival, every household will paste paper-cuts on the windows, door lintels, and rooms to welcome the arrival of the New Year. During the Lantern Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival, lanterns with paper-cut elements will be hung. During the Dragon Boat Festival, in addition to hanging wormwood, people will also paste paper-cut patterns of the five seasons and the five season flowers. On the Qixi Festival, skillful women will sing and cut out the patterns of the girl weaving and the magpies building a bridge.

### **3.2 Marriage Customs Culture**

Double happiness paper-cutting is indispensable in marriage customs decoration. In addition, people in Yangquan, Shanxi, like to decorate the bridal chamber with a disc; some rural areas in Linqing, Shandong, use round moon patterns to decorate the windows of the marriage room; some rural areas in Northern Shaanxi use the sitting curtain flower for decoration. In the old days, before Ruichang proposed marriage, the matchmaker would find an opportunity to let the woman show the man's talent in embroidery and paper-cutting. The red daughter's carving with paper-cutting elements in Shaoxing will be used as a dowry when the daughter gets married.

### **3.3 Birthday Celebration Culture**

Since the Han Dynasty, there has been a custom of celebrating the longevity of the elderly among the people. When celebrating longevity, the long-shaped longevity and the round-shaped longevity are essential paper-cut patterns, in addition to which patterns with the meaning of longevity, such as pine trees, cranes, peaches, etc., will also be matched. To reflect the joy of having children and grandchildren, patterns of children holding peaches will also appear in the longevity paper-cut.

### **3.4 Sacrificial and Religious Culture**

The paper-cutting theme includes sacrificial and religious customs. Common paper-cut offerings include paper money, paper horses, paper houses, etc. Paper-cutting is also used to make various paper decorations to decorate cemeteries and sacrificial places. When the Grain Rain comes, people will paste the Grain Rain paste, which is engraved with the image of the divine chicken catching scorpions, the heavenly master removing the five poisons, or Taoist talismans, expressing people's desire to kill pests, hope for a good harvest, and peace. Paper-cutting art is also an important carrier for spreading religious culture. The creation of paper-cutting art with different styles is influenced by religious culture at different times. Paper-cutting is mainly reflected in religious culture in the form of paper-cutting of religious buildings and paper-cutting of religious activities.[4]

## **4 TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS OF PAPER-CUTTING CULTURE IN CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

### **4.1 Simple and Easy-To-Understand, Popular and Straightforward Language Expression**

In the process of explaining Chinese cultural paper-cutting courses, some professional terms will be involved, such as hollowing out, dropping the knife, scooping, Yin and Yang cutting, etc. Difficult-to-understand professional terms will make foreign students difficult to understand the course content, leading to dull and boring classes, and students will be tired of learning. Therefore, teachers should insist on using simple and easy-to-understand, popular and straightforward language to express themselves.

### **4.2 Teaching and Learning from Each Other's Student-Centered Consciousness**

In the teaching process, teachers should adhere to the student-centered approach and oppose the full-class teaching model. The Chinese level of foreign students is uneven, and teachers should adopt the principle of combining unified teaching with individual tutoring. Teachers and students should maintain communication at all times during teaching, and guide students to learn to cooperate, so that teachers and students can complete the teaching tasks in interaction, and each has its own gains.

### **4.3 Experience-Based, Culture-Assisted Teaching Methods**

Chinese cultural paper-cutting courses are divided into two parts: culture and experience. Teachers should follow the principle of culture as an auxiliary and experience as the main principle in teaching. Foreign students only need to understand the cultural part of the paper-cutting course, and mainly through experience, let students learn to think and innovate in paper-cutting. In the process of enjoying the fun of paper-cutting, they accept and identify with Chinese culture, thus playing a role in spreading Chinese culture.

#### 4.4 Diverse Teaching Methods

In addition to the lecture method, Chinese cultural paper-cutting courses can also be completed through audio, video, pictures, and practical experience teaching methods. Diverse teaching methods can greatly mobilize the enthusiasm of foreign students to learn, thus ensuring the smooth progress of the course.

#### 4.5 Scientific and Reasonable Assessment Methods

Chinese culture courses are different from language courses and cannot adopt a single assessment method. At present, some colleges and universities set cultural experience courses as elective courses, with fewer class hours, fewer opportunities for students to operate, and lower attention from teachers and students to cultural courses, resulting in a single assessment method.[5] Taking the Chinese cultural paper-cutting course as an example, teachers can assess the course from whether students understand the connotation of Chinese cultural paper-cutting, the growth and progress of each homework, and the innovation of the exam, to ensure the scientific rationality of the final score.

### 5 SUGGESTIONS AND THOUGHTS ON PAPER-CUTTING CULTURE COURSES

#### 5.1 Setting of Cultural Courses

Due to the lack of attention from schools and teachers, the Chinese cultural paper-cutting course has fewer class hours, students attend classes casually, and the assessment mechanism is unreasonable. In view of this, the Chinese cultural paper-cutting course can be set according to language, culture, and experience for teaching, and the course content can be divided into seven parts: phonetics, characters, vocabulary, festival culture, marriage customs culture, birthday celebration culture, and sacrificial and religious culture for systematic teaching.

#### 5.2 Compilation of Teaching Materials

Teachers who teach Chinese cultural courses mostly use textbooks for Chinese students in their teaching. Profound textbooks will not only make foreign students feel fear, thus affecting their interest and confidence in learning Chinese culture, but also cause cultural misunderstandings due to cross-cultural differences. Therefore, it is very necessary to compile applicable Chinese cultural paper-cutting textbooks to help students systematically understand Chinese culture.[6]

#### 5.3 Teacher's Personal Quality

Teachers of Chinese as a foreign language play an important role in the dissemination of Chinese as a foreign language, so the personal quality of teachers is extremely important. Teachers of Chinese as a foreign language should not only have strong cross-cultural communication skills but also be able to use advanced teaching methods to achieve diversified teaching. For the teaching of cultural practice courses, teachers must have certain practical abilities, such as the paper-cutting culture course, which requires teachers to be proficient in paper-cutting skills.

Incorporating Chinese cultural paper-cutting courses into the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language can not only let foreign students understand the cultural connotations behind Chinese, enhance their interest in learning Chinese, but also generate a sense of identity with Chinese culture in the experiential operation, thus becoming a disseminator of Chinese culture. However, incorporating Chinese cultural paper-cutting as a systematic course in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language requires the attention of schools and teachers, as well as a series of supporting measures. Systematically applying Chinese cultural courses to the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language will be a long process.

### COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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