

# *Strategies for Teaching Yangzhou Culture*

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**Abstract:** Teaching Chinese as a foreign language is a mode of teaching to cultivate students' communicative competence such as language application, discourse competence and strategic competence. As an important part of Chinese culture, regional culture not only promotes the development of dialects, but also helps to strengthen the deeper understanding of Chinese culture in the neighbouring countries, so dialect teaching occupies a certain position in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language. However, dialect teaching has a long way to go. At present, there are problems such as limited audience and difficult-to-understand content, which urgently require government agencies to expand the number of dialect teachers, develop teaching materials with strong regional characteristics, and further promote the development of graded teaching, so as to add colour to the spread of Chinese culture.

## 1. Introduction

Regional culture belongs to the category of culture, while dialect is a regional variant of language, and regional culture can be reflected through specific dialect words. Therefore, when exploring the relationship between language and culture, we can start from the relationship between dialect and regional culture. Dialect teaching in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language is still in the early stage of development, although some dialect words, such as "ah", "beng", are included in the Chinese Vocabulary Level Syllabus<sup>[1]</sup>, which are clearly labelled as dialect words in the Modern Chinese Dictionary, only a few of them have been included. Dialect teaching helps teachers to break the classroom limitation and expand students' communicative ability. For some students whose Chinese language learning has reached a higher stage, incorporating regional culture and dialects into classroom teaching and practical lessons not only enlarges the space for second language learners to learn, but also strengthens their sense of participation and widens the scope of communication, so that the natural environment, social environment and cultural resources of the locality become their "second classroom". The local natural environment, social environment and cultural resources become their "second classroom".

Therefore, we should add dialect content such as "dialect" and "about dialects" to the teaching objectives of Yangzhou regional culture, so as to facilitate learners' in-depth understanding and study of Chinese culture. The former should focus on the language of the dialect itself, such as commonly used dialect words, while the latter should focus on some basic knowledge about the Chinese dialect, such as customs and culture, clothing culture, food culture and so on.

## 2. The Significance of Teaching Yangzhou Dialect

The teaching of Yangzhou dialect is of great significance to the teaching of Chinese language. Yangzhou, located on the north of the Yangtze River and at the southern part of the Jianghuai Plain, has been known as Jiangnan since ancient time. Although its geographical location is north of the Yangtze River. As a representative of the Jianghuai official dialect, Yangzhou dialect has a long history, and it has a non-negligible auxiliary role in Chinese language teaching.

### 2.1. Overview of the Yangzhou dialect

The Chinese language is known for its divergent dialects. China is a multi-ethnic country, and due to unbalanced regional economic development and historical differences experienced by various regions, different cultures exist in different regions, as well as different dialects. Currently, there are seven major dialect areas of the Chinese language, which are the Official Dialect, Wu Dialect, Gan Dialect, Xiang Dialect, Min Dialect, Cantonese Dialect, and Hakka Dialect.

Jiangsu, which is situated across the river and near the sea, is at the transition and contact point between the two Chinese dialects, the Northern dialect and the Wu dialect. Roughly speaking, the area north of the Yangtze River (except Xuzhou and Bengbu, which belong to the North China-North East China dialect), Zhenjiang and the area along the south bank of the Yangtze River to the west of Zhenjiang and to the east of Jiujiang in Jiangsu are official dialects, and the area south of the Yangtze River to the north of Zhenjiang (excluding Zhenjiang), and a small portion of Nantong, are all Wu dialects. Therefore, geographically Yangzhou dialect belongs to the Jianghuai dialect area of the northern dialect region. At present, there are five main monographs that introduce the dialects of Jiangsu Province in a more complete and systematic way. Overview of *the Dialects of Jiangsu Province and Shanghai Municipality* (1960), *Atlas of the Chinese Language* (1987), *General Compendium of the Dialects of Jiangsu Province* (1998), *Jiangsu Provincial Records-Dialect Records* (1998), and *Atlas of the Chinese Language* (2012). In *Jiangsu Province and Shanghai Municipality Dialect Profile*, Yangzhou dialect belongs to the first district. In *Jiangsu Dialect General Compendium* and *Jiangsu Province Zhi-Dialect Zhi*, Yangzhou dialect belongs to the second district of Jianghuai Dialect Area, Yanghuai Section; and in *Chinese Language Atlas of 1987* and 2012, Yangzhou dialect belongs to Jianghuai Official Dialect. The Yangzhou dialect belongs to the second region of the Jianghuai dialect area, Yanghuai slice in *Jiangsu Province and Shanghai Municipality Dialect Profile*, the second region of the Jianghuai dialect area in *Jiangsu Dialect Compendium*, and the Nanjing slice and Yanghuai slice of the Jianghuai dialect area in *Jiangsu Provincial Records - Dialect Records*, which are equivalent to the Jianghuai official language Hongchao slice in *the Atlas of Chinese Languages* (1987) and 2012, so there is no controversy about the dialect area to which the Yangzhou dialect belongs. Therefore, there is no dispute about the dialect area to which Yangzhou dialect belongs, and it is now generally believed that Yangzhou dialect belongs to the Hongchao section of Jianghuai Official Dialect.

Yangzhou dialect is divided into broad and narrow sense. The narrow Yangzhou dialect is what Chinese dialect researchers and people in general usually call "Yangzhou dialect". "Street dialect", which is limited to the urban area of present-day Yangzhou, Guangling District, and its adjoining suburbs (Shuangqiao and Chengdong Townships and a few villages in Chengbei Township in the outskirts of the district) dialect. There are no regional differences within this narrow Yangzhou dialect. The Yangzhou dialect in the broad sense includes not only the urban area of Yangzhou and the suburbs adjacent to it, but also the suburbs of Yangzhou and the eastern parts of Ganjiang District, Jiangdu District and Yizheng City. There are regional differences within the broad Yangzhou dialect. The Yangzhou dialect is divided into the new school and the old school according to the age and education level of the speakers, with schoolteachers and students and younger

Yangzhou people using the new school dialect, while middle-aged and old-aged people who have lived in Yangzhou since they were children tend to use the old school dialect. The research object of this paper is the new school of Yangzhou dialect in the narrow sense.

## **2.2. Dialect Teaching in Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) Teaching**

Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) teaching is generally aimed at international students coming to China to study, so CFL teaching focuses on teaching common language, and there are few courses involving dialect teaching. However, Chinese culture is profound and regional culture is also included in it. Regional culture generally refers to the cultural traditions of a specific region that have a long history and unique characteristics, and are still functioning today. It is also the civilised expression of the ecology, folklore, traditions and habits of a specific region. <sup>[2]</sup>Therefore, it is impossible to understand the colourful Chinese culture only by learning common language, and it is of great significance to set up dialect teaching in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language.

Firstly, dialect teaching is an important part of cultural teaching. Language and culture are inseparable, culture is embedded in language, and the richness and development of culture are benefited from language. Therefore, in Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) teaching, in addition to the teaching of culture, there is also the teaching of language and culture, and dialect is an optimal teaching carrier. The teaching of Chinese as a foreign language in China generally regards the training and improvement of students' basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating as the basic purpose of second language teaching, and regards culture as the teaching content of non-language majors such as history and geography. This concept and mode of pure language teaching has, to a certain extent, caused second language learners to focus only on the improvement of book skills and ignore the learning of real-life communication skills, resulting in the superficiality and superficiality of the teaching, which makes the teaching of culture more and more superficial. This has resulted in the superficiality and formulaicity of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. With some scholars putting forward the idea of teaching cultural background knowledge, the concept of teaching regional culture has gradually been accepted by everyone. As we all know, in order to learn a language well, the study of culture is the booster for mastering the language ability. Only by understanding the culture, can we understand, master and use the language from the perspective of culture's chronological and co-temporal perspectives. In other words, successful language teaching is often accompanied by successful cultural teaching, and if cultural teaching is not in place, the effect of language teaching will be directly affected. Because culture teaching involves a wide range of aspects, including communicative culture, living culture, art culture and so on, language culture is only one of its subordinate concepts. Yangzhou culture is profound, including salt merchant culture, garden culture, commentary culture, etc. Among them, collapsing the stage (a bad performance), playing the pie (showing off), and heeling the bug (heeling well) are Yangzhou dialects in commentary culture, which are precise and evocative, reflecting the unique regional culture of Yangzhou.

Secondly, dialect teaching plays a benign supplementary role to the teaching system of Chinese as a foreign language. As a standard language, common language has never been an isolated and unchanging language system; it is inextricably linked with other Chinese dialects and has always influenced and penetrated each other. On the one hand, the teaching of the second Chinese language is usually carried out in the classroom, but the daily communication is not limited to the classroom, but should be deep in the daily life. Chinese language learning is a simultaneous process of input and output, so in order to have effective language output, second language learners should consciously go out of the classroom to have effective communication in environments outside the classroom. On the other hand, Chinese dialects are not just a means of communication for local

people, but a precious cultural heritage given to the world by history. Daily communication is not always carried out in common language. Take Yangzhou dialect as an example, in Yangzhou dialect, “ah<sup>1</sup>”“oh”“ah<sup>2</sup>”“ah<sup>3</sup>”“[ɣ w42]”“[mæ42]”“[tsa42]”“[liæ55]”“na”“a”“ga. They are found in the daily communication of Yangzhou people. For example, when Yangzhou people urge their friends to leave for a certain place, they tend to use the characteristic sentence pattern "qu [ɣw<sup>42</sup>] qu [ɣw<sup>42</sup> ]". If the L2 learner has no knowledge of the Yangzhou dialect, he/she will not be able to respond correctly when he/she hears "qu [ɣw<sup>42</sup>] qu [ɣw<sup>42</sup> ]" for the first time, which will lead to ineffective communication problems. "The language allows one to see the basic aspects of the historical changes, cultural psychology, customs, social morals, and so on, of the people who use the language."<sup>[3]</sup> Therefore, in order to successfully communicate effectively with Yangzhou residents and understand the history, culture and customs of the system, international students studying in Yangzhou need to have a certain understanding of these modal inflections to speed up the input and output of Yangzhou dialect.

Thirdly, dialect teaching is beneficial to stimulate second language learners' interest in learning. L2 language researchers believe that in the process of second language learning, the relationship between the learner's original language system and the new language system, the learner's curiosity, motivation and learning methods, the classroom atmosphere and the teacher's mode of teaching all have an important influence. Among them, students' motivation is the basic factor that ensures the smooth learning of a second language. From a psychological point of view, motivation is the internal force that drives people's activities, including personal wishes, intentions, psychological impulses or goals that they try to achieve. As a broader social motivation, learning motivation is the intrinsic power that drives students to learn. When students learn out of their own needs rather than out of instinct or external pressure, they are able to gain a more sustained interest in learning. With the increase of learning tasks, international students may experience a decrease in motivation to learn, and they may feel boring when they repeatedly learn words, phrases and sentences in books. At this time, if teachers add some dialectal vocabulary into the teaching process, such as using the Yangzhou commentary "Pi Wu Zhi Zi" as a text, and telling students the cultural stories behind the dialectal vocabulary, it can help international students to maintain their interest in Chinese language learning and improve their understanding of Chinese language as a whole.

### 3. Teaching Strategies of Yangzhou Dialect in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

In recent years, although the introduction of dialects into the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language has not yet become a hot topic, many scholars have been actively practising and exploring it, and have achieved certain results. However, in order to do a good job of teaching Yangzhou dialect in Chinese as a foreign language, it is necessary to carry out an all-round, deeper and more comprehensive exploration in the three aspects of teachers, teaching materials and curricula.

#### 3.1 Expansion of the teaching force and improvement of teachers' teaching standards

Teachers play a leading role in teaching Chinese as a foreign language, and good classroom teaching cannot be achieved without teachers' teaching skills, which are reflected in how they show their leading roles of organising, motivating, demonstrating and guiding in the classroom. Therefore, the successful implementation of dialect teaching requires teachers to play a leading role.

Teachers should change their teaching strategies in time and flexibly switch their teaching methods according to the needs of their students, taking into account the HSK level of the second language learners. Specifically, teachers can use bias correction exercises when teaching dialects, mainly by using questioning method and dictation method. Through the teacher proposing sentences with typical Yangzhou language and culture usage errors in the questioning, and asking

students to point out the errors and correct the sentences in their answers, the purpose of making students understand the correct way of using specific cultural contents is realised. In order to deepen students' understanding of the Yangzhou dialect, the teacher can create situations, move the daily communicative contexts into the classroom, and encourage students to imitate the sentence-making connections according to the correct sentences with typical representations, and then make sentences freely. When second language learners practice in the classroom, teachers should keep a complete record and give timely feedback at the end of the practice to help learners correct their mistakes. As the learners' Chinese language proficiency is not high, teachers should make use of familiar dialect literature, such as Zhu Ziqing's *Spring*, or traditional art methods such as Yangzhou commentary for cultural output when teaching dialects. Teaching for fun is also a key measure for effective dialect teaching. In order to regulate the classroom atmosphere, deepen students' impression and optimise the teaching effect, game teaching can be used to achieve the purpose of correcting the bias in the use of the Wu dialect language and culture with appropriate games. In the game practice, it is necessary to pay attention to the design of the game according to the actual situation, to ensure the relevance and feasibility of the game. Strengthen the grasp and control of the game to ensure the effect of correcting the cultural content. In the actual practice of correcting some cultural errors in the Wu dialect, we can play the game of "Finding the Same Kind" with the students, in which the teacher speaks out a Yangzhou dialect word and the students find out the cultural contents with similar meanings, and at the same time, the students speak out the common errors in the composition of these two cultural contents, so as to deepen the impression of the students. The game practice is somewhat selective for the cultural content and requires more time and effort from the teacher to prepare.

To sum up, only when teachers are proficient in the linguistic, lexical, grammatical and pragmatic knowledge of dialects and common language can dialect teaching develop with high quality and second language learners have a more comprehensive understanding and mastery of Chinese culture.

### **3.2. Development of teaching materials featuring Huaiyang culture**

As one of the three main elements in the teaching structure, Chinese language teaching materials play a crucial role in teaching Chinese as a foreign language in the classroom, and have an extremely close relationship with students and teachers.

On the one hand, textbooks serve students with the ultimate goal of meeting their learning needs. On the other hand, materials serve the teacher. In language teaching, the goals and objectives of both teachers and teaching materials are directed towards students' learning, so the relationship between the two should be mutually co-operative and complementary. The intrinsic value and function of teaching materials can only be realised to the fullest extent by the teacher's in-depth exploration and perfect interpretation. The goal of dialect teaching is to help second language learners acquire different regional cultures, which is not a general concept but has specific directions. The introduction of regional culture in Chinese as a foreign language classroom teaching must be highly targeted. Therefore, the principle of relevance should be carried out in the preparation of teaching materials, starting from the historical heritage, local customs and scenic spots of Yangzhou, so as to see the big picture in a small way. The body of the textbook should be set up in line with the learning needs of learners, and should involve three parts: pre-course preparation, answers to important and difficult questions, and post-course consolidation, which can help students to make a small summary after class while urging them to carry out pre-course preparation, thus consolidating their classroom knowledge. When setting up pre-course study, textbook publishers should pay attention to the integration with real life and the connection with the

texts they have learnt. For example, a specific topic is set up for each unit, and once the topic is determined, the content is deepened from shallow to deep, from easy to difficult, and the layout is optimised. Pre-reading content not only asks questions about what is to be learnt, but also reinforces what has already been learnt, so that the second language learners can match their familiar knowledge with the new lessons, thus deepening their memories and facilitating the development of the new lessons. The end of a lesson does not end with the end of a lesson, dialect teaching needs to end up in daily life. Therefore, dialect teaching can increase the strength of the experiential links set up to create a variety of situations, providing learners with a variety of types of communicative contexts, so that they can really appreciate the charm of Yangzhou dialect, understand the regional culture of Chinese culture in the niche, and promote Chinese culture out of the country, to the world, and in the world's cultural forest to establish a footing.

### 3.3. Establishment of graded courses

The language input hypothesis proposed by Krashen<sup>[2]</sup>, a famous American applied linguist, is one of the most important concepts in the theory of second language acquisition today and provides a theoretical basis for setting up a graded programme.

Krashen argues that the only way people acquire language is through the acquisition of comprehensible linguistic input. The so-called comprehensible linguistic input is represented by the formula  $i+1$ , where  $i$  represents the current level of the language learner and 1 represents linguistic knowledge slightly above the current level of the language learner. If the language input is far beyond the learner's current level, i.e.,  $i+2$ , or close to or even below the learner's current level,  $i+0$ , the learner will not be able to obtain comprehensible input. Therefore, it is necessary to set up the curriculum according to the learners' existing Chinese proficiency level, so as to tailor the curriculum to the learners' needs, and HSK, as an international standardised Chinese proficiency test for non-native speakers, should be the standard principle for determining the Chinese proficiency level of international students. In other words, teachers should use the international students' HSK level to teach them in a graded manner. As the foundation of beginners is relatively weak, it would be counterproductive to let beginners learn vocabulary in Yangzhou dialect at the beginning, therefore, the learning of beginners should still focus on common language. However, focusing on common language is not the same as abandoning the teaching of Yangzhou dialect. On the contrary, teachers can use the comparative analysis method when explaining common language phonology, and moderately introduce the features of Yangzhou dialect phonology and make comparisons, for example, Yangzhou special modal inflectional morphemes "[ɣ w<sup>42</sup>]" "[mæ<sup>42</sup>]" pronunciation. As the listening and speaking skills of the intermediate level Chinese students have been greatly improved and they have learnt about the dialectal phonological features of the region at the primary level, the teaching task at this time can be set to introduce dialectal words appropriately. Not all dialect words can be introduced into the teaching, the selection of dialect words should follow the principles of normality, universality and necessity, that is to say, we should choose Yangzhou dialect words that are used frequently, widely and positively civilised, for example, common words such as Da Da (Uncle), Bang Tou (Corn), Tian Ji (Frog) and so on. When students are at an advanced level, schools can offer corresponding cultural elective courses, which can include such things as: introduction of local places of interest, i.e., geographic culture; unique food culture; folklore; and watching radio and television programmes dubbed in the dialect, films, sketches, and other literary and artistic works.

In conclusion, for different situations, dialect teachers should introduce the hierarchical teaching method in the teaching session, take into account the differences between students, and teach in different categories to achieve better teaching results.

## 4. Conclusion

China has a long history and a vast expanse of rivers, and different ethnic groups and regions produce different dialects. Yangzhou dialect is a sub-dialect of the northern dialect and a representative of the Jianghuai official dialect, which contains an extremely rich regional culture and is a splendid part of Chinese culture. Introducing Yangzhou dialect teaching in teaching Chinese as a foreign language can help foreign students studying in Yangzhou to better learn and master Chinese language, better understand Yangzhou culture and Chinese culture, and enable them to carry out cross-cultural communication more easily. Therefore, the successful teaching of dialects cannot be carried out without the integration of the teaching team, the regionalisation of the teaching materials and the grading of the curricula, so as to add glory to the dissemination of Chinese culture, the telling of Chinese stories and the bringing of Chinese culture to the world.

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