

A CLT-Based 'The Fun of Children's Language in China' Thematic Teaching Design for Primary School English: Guided by the OBE Model

Qing Zhong ^a, Xiangning Zeng ^{*}

College of Foreign Studies, Guilin University of Technology, Guilin, Guangxi, China

^{*} Corresponding author: Xiangning Zeng (Email: 260791776@qq.com), ^a 393067484@qq.com

Abstract: This paper addresses the current situation in primary English teaching where linguistic form is prioritised over cultural output. Grounded in the instructional design of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and the methodology of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), it explores how to construct a 'Children's Language, China's Charm' cultural thematic teaching framework. By analysing CLT's authenticity principles, task-based activities, and children's cognitive characteristics, it proposes a three-dimensional cultural content framework (material, behavioural, and spiritual culture) alongside localised CLT activity templates, including role-play and information gap tasks. Using the 'Panda's Birthday Party' theme as an example, it demonstrates how cultural symbols such as longevity noodle customs can be integrated into language teaching objectives, while designing a multimodal assessment system to track pupils' cultural output capabilities. Findings indicate that OBE-guided top-down reverse instructional design effectively enhances children's resilience in cultural transmission with notable pedagogical outcomes, provided the principle of 'simplification without distortion' is upheld. The study concludes by elucidating the practical value of child-friendly cultural dissemination in strengthening cultural confidence.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT); Cultural Transmission; Primary School English Teaching.

1. Introduction

Education occupies a foundational, pioneering and overarching position within national strategy, being accorded priority status. It serves as both the cornerstone of national rejuvenation and the engine driving scientific innovation and social progress, while also constituting a vital avenue for enhancing the nation's cultural soft power. Educational efforts must commence at an early age. Children possess strong language acquisition abilities, and focusing on cultural education during childhood not only facilitates the dissemination of China's outstanding traditional culture but also serves as a showcase for contemporary Chinese development achievements. It is a vital vehicle for communicating contemporary Chinese values and effectively telling China's story.

However, current primary English education exhibits various deficiencies in cultivating pupils' cultural output capabilities. Firstly, both textbook units and classroom interactions disregard the authenticity principle of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Real-life cultural materials—such as Spring Festival greetings or traditional nursery rhymes—are absent, with lessons predominantly involving mechanical repetition of textbook dialogues. This creates a disconnect between classroom learning and post-lesson output, hindering the development of cross-cultural communication skills. Secondly, role-play activities are scarce, with minimal opportunities for pupils to simulate authentic social roles when conveying cultural content to foreign friends. This results in a lack of identity recognition. The third issue lies in the weakness of problem-solving oriented textbook content and task-based teaching approaches. Interactive tasks predominantly focus on aimless communication and discussion, neglecting students' ability to solve practical problems in English. There is a lack of

activities designed to explore cultural understanding, such as 'how to explain the concept of "Yasui Qian" to foreign friends in English,' resulting in weak motivation for inquiry and ambiguous task orientation.

Moreover, the influence of the internet environment significantly increases the likelihood of children, who have yet to form foundational values, being exposed to overseas online content. Both international society and domestic developments are undergoing unprecedented transformations. Therefore, adjusting teaching models to adapt to environmental changes has become imperative, starting with children to fortify the nation's spiritual foundation. To this end, this paper employs outcome-based education (OBE) as the overarching framework for primary English teaching design (abstract framework – goal setting + evaluation, macro level)[1]. This guides the methodological implementation of cultural teaching through CLT (Concrete Language Teaching, micro level) theory. Simultaneously, CLT serves as a concrete means to achieve OBE-defined outcomes, providing an operational pathway that seeks to avoid the stereotypical presentation of cultural symbols. Concurrently, it designs a trinity of 'language-culture-mindset' to forge pathways for language-culture integration. Keeping pace with the times, it organically weaves outstanding traditional culture into classroom activities, thereby cultivating children's capacity for cultural expression. This enhances their cultural confidence, connects everyday phenomena with cultural significance, deepens their appreciation of their own culture, and fosters natural acceptance of flourishing development across diverse cultural perspectives.

2. The Integration of OBE and CLT Theories

2.1. Adaptive Adjustments of CLT in Primary School English Classrooms

‘Children's Voices: Chinese Culture in English’ serves not merely as an English teaching methodology in primary school classrooms; its student works constitute a tangible, micro-scale cultural dissemination practice. These children's English creations represent both language acquisition outcomes and distinctive communicative texts. The teaching process involves mediating Chinese cultural symbols into English, reconstructing Chinese narrative frameworks through a child's perspective, and conducting cultural adaptation by conveying Chinese culture in English through cross-cultural symbol conversion. At the journalism level, it simulates the news production process—discovery, collection, narration, and audience orientation—cultivating foundational media literacy and information processing skills. At the communication studies level, it constitutes a vivid cross-cultural communication practice, engaging with core theories such as symbolic conversion, identity construction, communicative communities, and mediated communication. It represents the most fundamental act of international dissemination of ‘Chinese stories’. Simultaneously, it skilfully employs core principles from journalism and communication studies, enabling primary school pupils to become novice participants and practitioners in ‘telling China's stories well’ while learning the language. The child demographic can serve as soft power communication, supporting the principle of effectively conveying China's narratives.

Therefore, CLT implementation in classroom teaching should be tailored to the learner group, encouraging pupils to simulate real-world social roles in producing cultural content. For instance, pupils could be encouraged to adopt the perspective of young reporters, proactively observing and exploring ‘interesting Chinese stories’ in their surroundings—such as festival customs, local delicacies, traditional games, family narratives, community activities, or natural landscapes. They should utilise authentic cultural materials from daily life, proactively selecting content they deem interesting and representative. This process mirrors the cultural dissemination work that begins with cultural sensitivity and thematic planning.

During preparation, students engage in discussions with peers, teachers, and parents, while delivering presentations and Q&A sessions to their class or group. Students practise the complete communicative process of sending, receiving, and responding to information, developing oral expression, listening, and non-verbal communication skills. By consulting elders, researching materials, and participating firsthand, they uncover factual details about their chosen ‘Chinese curiosities’—including background, processes, and significance—to address authentic communicative needs. This ensures activities occur within concrete interpersonal and small-group communication contexts. Consistent with CLT's principle of ‘Communication for Meaning’, this approach avoids decontextualised sentence pattern drills, ensuring authentic language input and output. This facilitates the integration of CLT into primary English classroom teaching. Students must employ acquired vocabulary, sentence patterns, and expressions to organise their

discovered ‘Chinese curiosities’ into a simple story, description, or presentation. These core cultural narrative processes require pupils to consider how to present information clearly, coherently, and engagingly, utilising language and potential visual elements to captivate listeners or readers. This approach embodies the central dimensions of task-based activities within CLT, providing a practical pathway for cultural instruction.

2.2. The Application of Reverse Design Principles in Culture Education under the OBE Model

The OBE approach emphasises starting from the final learning outcomes to reverse-engineer teaching activities and assessment criteria[2]. The explicit outcome of the ‘Chinese Tales for Young Learners’ activity is that pupils can clearly and engagingly introduce one or more stories featuring Chinese elements in English. This approach integrates seamlessly with CLT's task-based activities and culturally-rich content, forming an integrated teaching design pathway of ‘objectives-activities-assessment’.

Firstly, activities are reverse-engineered from cultural output objectives to identify core cultural targets. For instance, in the Panda's Birthday Party lesson, students are required to describe Chinese birthday customs such as eating longevity noodles in English, thereby integrating cultural values through behavioural engagement.

Secondly, observable assessment criteria are designed. For instance, assessment criteria might evaluate whether students correctly employ sentence patterns like ‘I eat.../We give...’ to gauge activity effectiveness. Thus, instructional design centres on language knowledge (vocabulary, sentence patterns) while integrating cultural knowledge (material selection, comprehension), simultaneously honing students' communication skills (expression, presentation). Assessment then directly and clearly points to the outcomes of their work through the presentation results.

At the integration point, reverse-engineer CLT activities. Within the activity, students engage in role-play (Pair Work), taking on the roles of pandas and foreign friends to output target language and culture through dialogue. Simultaneously, assign information gap group tasks where students complete a comparative chart of Chinese and Western birthday customs by posing questions to each other. Finally, project-based output is achieved through creating works such as birthday party invitations incorporating Chinese customs.

When collaborating with CLT, OBE standardises teaching activities through three dimensions. Firstly, OBE mandates specific, measurable cultural output objectives, preventing CLT activities from devolving into superficial, formalised games[3]. Secondly, it enhances task authenticity by pre-designing genuine communicative scenarios—such as introducing festivals to foreign friends—ensuring CLT activities align with real-world cultural transmission needs. Finally, assessment is embedded within the teaching process. Peer reviews among students – evaluating whether festival symbols are included and whether expressions contain errors – provide immediate feedback on the effectiveness of cultural output.

Thematic English education programmes like ‘Chinese Tales for Young Learners’ serve multiple purposes: educationally, they integrate language learning with cultural identity; strategically, they advance China's storytelling objectives; and pedagogically, they brilliantly converge

cross-cultural communication, journalistic narrative techniques, and audience psychology. Thus, it successfully fulfils primary English education's language acquisition objectives while serving the cultural dissemination goal of 'telling China's stories well' through the dual approaches of 'childlike expression' (unique perspective) and 'engaging fun' (effective attraction). This achieves a unity of language's instrumental and humanistic dimensions, sowing seeds for cultivating future cultural ambassadors.

Consequently, in both research and practice, 'Children's Voices, China's Charm' may be regarded as a micro-cross-cultural communication project centred on primary school English classrooms and children as participants. Its value extends far beyond language learning itself, holding profound significance in communication studies and cultural strategy. It assists pupils in maintaining intellectual integrity when confronting the international discourse of 'Western dominance and Eastern weakness' and the persistent online rhetoric implying Western worship or implicitly disparaging China. Simultaneously, it reinforces principles for effective external communication and the art of telling China's stories well. In light of this, this study explores the principles of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) teaching design in primary English classrooms[4]. By integrating teaching examples, it examines practical pedagogical outcomes, aiming to provide valuable reference for related teaching practices.

2.3. Cognitive Characteristics of Children and Principles for Selecting Cultural Content

The cognitive development of primary school children is characterised by concrete thinking, short attention spans, and reliance on sensory experiences. Therefore, English cultural instruction must adhere to three principles—concreteness, multimodality, and high interactivity—to align with their cognitive patterns, thereby achieving effective language and cultural input and output.

Principle of Concreteness. Given children's immature cognition, teaching should rely on concrete imagery and avoid abstract concepts such as core values. Ensure teaching outcomes are primarily memorised through contextualised, narrative-based content. When selecting cultural material, transform abstract cultural concepts into tangible, observable concrete elements. For instance, when explaining the spiritual culture of family reunion, use the material culture of mooncake mould making as a medium, combined with role-playing a Mid-Autumn family banquet to complete the behavioural culture. Alternatively, directly convey cultural significance through micro-narratives explaining traditional customs, supplemented by themed animated shorts and key phrases (e.g., 'stay up late', 'scare away monsters') as guided outputs.

In the present teaching application, within the 'Panda's Birthday Party' theme, the longevity symbolism of long noodles is demonstrated by measuring physical noodle lengths, alongside the idiom 'Long noodles, long life!' to concretise this traditional cultural symbol, ensuring cultural content remains comprehensible.

Multimodal principle. Given children's cognitive characteristics, multi-sensory learning yields superior outcomes to monolingual input. Children generally exhibit heightened sensitivity to colour, sound, and movement; thus, cultural content selection strategies should prioritise sensory stimulation. For instance, visually introducing zodiac paper-cut art and festive costume imagery; aurally playing audio of

Spring Festival firecrackers or Dragon Boat Festival drum rhythms; kinesthetically deepening impressions through activities like practising calligraphic writing of the character '福' (blessing) or simulated zongzi-wrapping games. Building upon multimodality, non-verbal output support can also be provided, enabling cultural expression through painting, body language, and other means.

In pedagogical application, this paper enhances information-gap tasks by transforming simple holiday postcard exchanges into multimodal postcards. These postcards may incorporate elements such as illustrations (visual), recorded greetings (auditory), and three-dimensional origami (tactile). This ensures diverse input methods, thereby strengthening memory retention.

High-Interactivity Principle. Given children's passive cognitive tendencies, knowledge construction requires social interaction, though such learning is often inefficiently received. Gamifying tasks significantly boosts engagement, with cultural content selection prioritising socially oriented task design. Encourage collaborative exploration, such as group puzzle tasks like 'Assemble Spring Festival Customs Comics' followed by English discussions about the images, or competitive games like 'Cultural Wheel Quiz' where students swiftly describe zodiac/festival symbols pointed to by the wheel in English. Additionally, incorporate timely feedback mechanisms in content selection—particularly peer assessments with voting components and honour-based coloured stickers quantifying interactive performance[5].

In the educational application of the 'Panda's Birthday Party' theme, role-play was expanded into an 'interactive challenge', transforming sentence patterns into distinct levels. Students acted as visitors posing questions in English and as guides providing answers in English. This facilitates the internalisation of language and cultural understanding in real-world communication. The instructional model designed according to these three principles effectively addresses the issues of 'abstraction' and 'low engagement' in cultural teaching, achieving a unity of theory and practice in CLT activity formation.

3. Instruction Design Model

This study proposes a primary school English curriculum development philosophy centred on three-dimensional cultural content output projects to guide content construction, with teaching content driving instructional organisation. Integrating OBE teaching design principles, it implements outcome-based teaching through unit projects centred on customary culture and process-oriented teaching activities. This ensures teaching practice fully stimulates students' intrinsic motivation, cultivates cultural confidence, and enhances both English application skills and cultural output capabilities.

3.1. Three Dimensions of Cultural Content

1. Material Culture Dimension Design

With the core objective of enabling students to identify and describe five distinctive Chinese birthday items, the cultural content implementation strategy adheres to three principles: concretisation, multimodality, and high interactivity.

Firstly, concrete presentation involves establishing a Chinese cultural display corner:

- Physical exhibits: Stretchable longevity noodles (marked with length scales), bamboo toys with English labels, zodiac-

themed red envelopes; Interactive installations: tactile mystery boxes (containing mooncake moulds, tea sets, etc.).

Secondly, multimodal activities include the aforementioned multimodal postcard task, requiring each group to create a Chinese birthday culture postcard. This must integrate visual, auditory, and tactile elements. Teachers provide appropriate guidance during the process: visually, by suggesting patterns for longevity noodles or bamboo; aurally, by assisting with recording 30-second English explanations for NFC stickers; tactilely, by supplying laminated samples of real noodles or bamboo leaves.

Finally, a highly interactive birthday shopper challenge is designed:

Level 1: Touch mystery boxes to guess items and state their English names (Material cognition)

Second stage: Use a spring balance to 'weigh longevity noodles' and compete to form the longest sentence (language output)

Third stage: Assemble a birthday gift basket for a panda friend (cultural application)

2. Behavioural-Cultural Dimension Design The core objective is for students to demonstrate three Chinese birthday etiquette practices and explain their meanings. This is achieved through concrete decomposition: breaking down etiquette into step-by-step components, categorised as gift-receiving etiquette and noodle-eating customs. Students practise hand gestures to the beat during etiquette drills. Tearable paper strips simulate the custom of not biting noodles. Multimodal input includes scanning AR QR codes for interactive etiquette manuals: guests trigger 3D demonstrations of red envelope exchanges by scanning images, with clickable hotspots for bilingual explanations. Finally, highly interactive activities are designed. Students are invited to participate in a 'Etiquette Master' challenge:

Level 1: Mirror Game – Mimicking the teacher's etiquette movements (kinesthetic)

Level 2: Error Correction Game – Identifying incorrect etiquette in videos (visual)

Level 3: Situational Dialogue – Welcoming a 'foreign panda' (verbal)

3. Spiritual and Cultural Dimension Design: Centred on understanding the cultural symbolism of two birthday customs. First, implement a concretisation strategy to visually represent values. Materialise the abstract concept of 'longevity' using coloured paper strips representing different age brackets, with students stating family members' ages in English. Second, encourage 'filial piety' practice through an in-class task: creating thank-you cards for the panda mother. Next, multimodal exploration was introduced, combining a prize-wheel mechanism to encourage cultural output. The outer ring displayed images of eating longevity noodles and gifting bamboo, the middle ring featured English keyword prompts ('long life, family love'), and the inner ring depicted simplified emoticons. Finally, a highly interactive 'Cultural Detective' challenge was organised:

Task 1: Use an ultraviolet lamp to uncover hidden cultural keywords

Task 2: Reassemble scrambled fragments of the 'Panda and Bamboo' fable

Task 3: Create novel blessings using emoticons

The integration of these three dimensions of cultural content in the instructional design creates a comprehensive and immersive learning experience for students. By addressing material, behavioural, and spiritual aspects of

Chinese birthday culture, students gain a well - rounded understanding of the cultural significance behind the traditions.

In the material culture dimension, the hands - on nature of the activities not only helps students learn the physical objects related to Chinese birthdays but also enhances their English language skills as they describe and interact with these items. The interactive installations and challenges make the learning process engaging and memorable.

The behavioural - cultural dimension, with its focus on etiquette practices, trains students in real - world social skills. The step - by - step decomposition and multimodal input ensure that students understand the nuances of Chinese birthday etiquette and can perform them accurately. The challenges also add an element of fun and competition, motivating students to master these skills.

In the spiritual and cultural dimension, the concretisation of abstract values like longevity and filial piety makes these concepts more accessible to students. The multimodal exploration and the 'Cultural Detective' challenge encourage students to think deeply about the cultural symbolism and express their understanding in creative ways.

Overall, this instructional design that incorporates these three dimensions effectively promotes cultural learning, language acquisition, and the development of cultural confidence among students. It also aligns well with the OBE teaching design principles, as the outcomes are clearly defined in terms of students' ability to identify, describe, perform, and understand various aspects of Chinese birthday culture. As students progress through the different activities and challenges in each dimension, they are gradually building up their knowledge and skills, which will ultimately lead to a more profound appreciation of Chinese culture and improved English application capabilities.

3.2. CLT Activity Design Integrated Assessment

The outputs across the three cultural dimensions differ in form. For the material culture dimension, participants create a 'Cultural Treasure Blind Box' containing at least three physical items, each bearing an English label. During peer assessment, children demonstrating high learning efficiency are rewarded based on their accuracy in identifying objects through touch. The behavioural cultural dimension output involves recording a video commentary on the perfect birthday procedure, assisted by the teacher following the 'Etiquette Master Challenge'. This is assessed using a scoring sheet divided into 'Gestures', 'Language', and "Culture" sections to create an 'Etiquette Star' evaluation form. The spiritual cultural dimension output requires designing a birthday culture card featuring at least one illustration and one English sentence, with the card's content interpreted in English. Spinning Wheel Assessment: The 'Spinning Wheel Matching' game tests pupils' comprehension of classroom cultural content. By transforming abstract culture into tangible, multi-sensory, and socially interactive learning experiences, the three-dimensional cultural teaching objectives form an organic whole. For instance, 'longevity noodles' serve as both a physical teaching aid for material culture and a vehicle for etiquette practice within behavioural culture, culminating in spiritual cultural understanding through the creation of 'Cultural Code Cards'.

When describing Chinese elements, students must select appropriate symbols—be they linguistic symbols like English

words or sentences, visual symbols encountered in activities, or behavioural symbols in ‘etiquette competitions’. Cultural transmission fundamentally relies on conveying meaning through symbols. Choosing symbols to represent ‘Chinese quirks’ inherently involves selecting, transforming, and constructing cultural meanings. For instance, opting to draw a ‘panda’ rather than a ‘qilin’ inherently reflects considerations of symbol representativeness and recognisability.

Therefore, assessment must unify language learning objectives with content objectives, providing authentic, meaningful, and student-engaging language application contexts within the Panda Birthday Party activity. Enabling students to ‘learn by doing’ – acquiring relevant vocabulary (festivals, food, customs, traditions), sentence patterns (It’s about..., We eat..., People usually...), and expressions (describing processes, expressing preferences) – significantly enhances motivation and learning outcomes, aligning with CLT principles. From the perspective of cultural outreach in ‘telling China’s stories well,’ assessment should evaluate whether the language output clearly conveys Chinese cultural content. This transforms English learning from merely acquiring a tool into a vehicle for carrying and disseminating one’s own culture.

Secondly, assessment should leverage the unique perspective and strengths of ‘children’s voices.’ Children’s authenticity and approachability, Children’s perspectives are innocent, unadorned, and brimming with curiosity. Consequently, their accounts of ‘China’s charm’ often centre on concrete, vivid, and everyday minutiae. Devoid of the hollowness and didacticism of grand narratives, these narratives possess greater authenticity and approachability. They resonate more readily with audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly peers, thereby facilitating assessment.

Assessing ‘interestingness’ in teaching activities also falls under evaluating communication effectiveness, as “interestingness” is a core element in capturing attention. The activity emphasises selecting ‘interesting’ Chinese elements, aligning with the fundamental principle in communication studies of engaging audience interest. Stories that are joyful, novel, and vivid are more readily accepted, remembered, and shared. Consequently, assessment can begin with this “interesting” aspect, focusing on the most natural and effective points of cultural transmission—such as the culinary appeal of longevity noodles, the challenge-based and role-playing games, or the explanation of birthday customs. This approach proves more comprehensible and acceptable than directly imparting abstruse philosophy or history.

Furthermore, assessment should also take into account the degree of student participation and interaction. In the Panda Birthday Party activity, students are actively involved in various tasks, from touch - based object identification to creating birthday culture cards and participating in role - playing games. Measuring the level of their engagement, such as how actively they contribute to group discussions, how creatively they complete tasks, and how well they cooperate with their peers, can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the teaching.

For example, in group activities like the ‘Spinning Wheel Matching’ game, observing whether students are enthusiastic about participating, if they are able to share their knowledge with group members, and how they handle differences in opinions can all be part of the assessment. High levels of

participation and positive interaction often indicate that students are not only interested in the activity but also truly understand and internalize the cultural content.

In addition, the long - term impact of the teaching on students’ cultural awareness and cross - cultural communication skills should be considered. After the Panda Birthday Party activity, follow - up surveys or interviews can be conducted to see if students have a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, if they are more willing to explore other cultures, and if they are better equipped to communicate about Chinese culture in English in real - life situations.

This long - term assessment can help determine whether the three - dimensional cultural teaching approach has achieved its goal of cultivating students into cultural ambassadors who can effectively tell China’s stories to the world. It also allows teachers to make adjustments to their teaching methods and assessment criteria for future similar activities, ensuring continuous improvement in cultural teaching and language learning.

Finally, the assessment should also evaluate the adaptability and scalability of the teaching model. Can the Panda Birthday Party activity be replicated in different educational settings, with different age groups, or in combination with other teaching themes? Assessing its adaptability can help determine if this three - dimensional cultural teaching approach is a sustainable and widely applicable model. Scalability, on the other hand, refers to whether the activity can be expanded or modified to include more complex cultural elements or more advanced language skills as students progress in their learning. By assessing these aspects, educators can ensure that the teaching model remains relevant and effective in a constantly evolving educational environment.

4. Classroom Teaching Examples

Unit Theme: Happy Chinese Birthday—Panda’s Birthday Party (Year 5 English Extension Unit)

Project Output: Designing a bilingual ‘Chinese Birthday Cultural Experience Kit’

Overall Learning Objective: Students will be able to describe Chinese birthday customs using over 10 English sentences and create a physical artefact incorporating cultural elements across material, behavioural and spiritual dimensions.

Specific Unit: Episode 2: The Magic Long Noodles (Lesson 2/4)

Learning Objectives:

1. Language Proficiency: Master cultural explanatory phrases such as ‘It symbolises...’ and ‘We must...’
2. Cultural Awareness: Understand the filial piety and blessings embodied in the longevity noodles custom
3. Communication Skills: Achieve cross-cultural translation of customs through multimodal presentations

Teaching Process:

- 1) Output-Oriented Warm-up (5 minutes)

Teacher displays a damaged English birthday card (context setting):

‘Canadian pen-pal Amy received a birthday invitation from panda Jingjing, but rain has blurred the explanation about longevity noodles. Who can help her restore it?’

Students explore real noodles and measuring tools from the teaching kit to deduce cultural significance.

- 2) CLT Task Chain Implementation (25 minutes)

Task 1: Cultural Puzzle Jigsaw Reading (6 minutes)

Groups read differently coloured slips of paper (information gap design):

Red Group: Noodle History (Adapted Marco Polo legend)

Blue Group: Production Process (Display of physical noodles ≥ 1 metre in length)

Yellow Group: Eating Etiquette (Parent-child interaction video demonstrating unbroken noodles)

Groups teach each other to complete the information puzzle, using sentence pattern cards to assemble the full explanation: "Long noodles mean long life. We share them with family."

Task 2: Etiquette Bootcamp (10 minutes)

Kinesthetic: Simulate noodles with skipping ropes, chanting 'Longer! Longer!' whilst jumping (Physical Education integration)

Visual: AR scan of noodle bowl triggers 3D animation showing elderly person sharing meal with child (Technology-enabled)

Verbal: Role-play 'video call between Chinese and foreign children', using tablet filters to demonstrate noodle-eating motions in real-time

Task 3: Cultural Designer (9 minutes)

Group collaboration to create 'puzzle cards' for the experience pack:

Material layer: Affix real dried noodle samples

Behavioural layer: Illustrate 'comic strips of noodle-sharing steps'

Spiritual Layer: Design 'Filial Piety Code' using emojis

3) Embedded Assessment (5 minutes)

Language Output: Record group explanations with voice recorder to verify inclusion of 3 target sentence patterns

Cultural Comprehension: Observe 'long=good' symbolic association through noodle length competition

Communication Effect: Vote for the experience pack component 'most desired to gift to foreign friends'

The success of this classroom teaching example can be attributed to several key factors. Firstly, the combination of real - life materials and multimedia resources makes the learning process highly engaging. The use of actual noodles, measuring tools, and videos provides students with tangible and visual aids, which helps them better understand the abstract cultural concepts. For example, the real noodles allow students to physically interact and explore, while the videos offer real - life scenarios of cultural practices.

Secondly, the task - based approach with a clear output orientation keeps students actively involved. Each task is designed to build on the previous one, gradually leading students to achieve the learning objectives. The information gap design in Task 1 encourages group cooperation and knowledge sharing, as students from different groups have to teach each other to complete the puzzle. This not only enhances their understanding of the cultural content but also improves their communication and teamwork skills.

In addition, the integration of different subjects such as Physical Education and Technology adds a multi - dimensional aspect to the learning experience. The skipping rope activity in Task 2 not only makes the learning process fun but also reinforces the concept of long noodles symbolizing long life in a kinesthetic way. The AR scan and real - time role - play using tablet filters leverage modern technology to create an immersive learning environment.

Finally, the embedded assessment throughout the teaching process provides timely feedback to both students and teachers. By recording group explanations, observing symbolic associations, and conducting a vote, teachers can

accurately evaluate students' language proficiency, cultural comprehension, and communication effectiveness. This allows for targeted instruction and improvement in subsequent lessons.

Overall, this classroom teaching example of the 'Happy Chinese Birthday' unit serves as a great model for teaching cultural content in a cross - cultural context. It can be replicated and adapted in other language and cultural teaching scenarios, with appropriate modifications according to different age groups and cultural backgrounds. For instance, similar teaching methods could be applied when teaching other Chinese festivals like the Spring Festival or Mid - Autumn Festival, by designing relevant tasks and using suitable materials to convey the unique cultural connotations.

In practical teaching, educators constructed a multi-lingual activity framework, organically integrating classroom sub-tasks with language skills. By focusing on content that resonates emotionally, they fully stimulated students' intrinsic motivation for communication, facilitating the internalisation of English knowledge through interactive engagement. In simulated scenarios discussing the preservation of traditional Chinese architecture, students collaborated with teachers and peers to deeply explore the intricate connections between Chinese and Western cultures. This strengthened their confidence in China's outstanding traditional culture and enhanced their ability to accurately narrate stories of its inheritance and innovation in English.

5. Teaching effectiveness

The 'Children's Voices: Tales of China' thematic educational initiative serves as an excellent vehicle and effective pathway for primary English education to implement the national strategy of 'telling China's stories well'. Through analysis of 128 student works, classroom recordings and follow-up interviews, this teaching design has yielded significant outcomes across three dimensions:

(1) Tangible Transformation in Cultural Symbol Recognition

Pupils independently establish associative chains linking objects, customs, and values. For instance:

Student A juxtaposed noodles with their grandfather's white beard in a reflective diary illustration, annotating 'Both mean long happy life'

Post-lesson interviews revealed 83% of pupils could explain 'why noodles are gifted on birthdays' rather than merely repeating 'It's tradition'

Students have shown remarkable improvement in their English language proficiency. In classroom discussions and presentations, they are able to express their thoughts about Chinese culture more fluently and accurately. For example, when describing the significance of Chinese festivals or traditional customs, they can use a wider range of vocabulary and more complex sentence structures.

The task - based learning approach has also promoted students' communication skills. They are more willing to engage in conversations with their classmates and teachers, sharing their own cultural insights and listening to others' perspectives. In group projects, students can effectively divide tasks, cooperate with each other, and present their group's findings in an organized manner. Moreover, through real - time role - play and interactive activities, students have become more confident in using English in practical communication scenarios.

Specifically, their vocabulary related to cultural themes has

expanded by approximately 40% compared to pre-intervention assessments, with students now able to spontaneously use terms like "cultural inheritance," "symbolic meaning," and "traditional craftsmanship" in their oral presentations. Grammar accuracy has also improved noticeably, particularly in complex sentence structures for expressing cultural comparisons—such as "While Western birthdays emphasize individual celebration with cakes, Chinese longevity noodles highlight family blessings for longevity."

Notably, the project-based tasks have fostered more sophisticated communication abilities. In the "Cultural Storyteller" assignment, 91% of students successfully designed and delivered 3-minute English narratives integrating personal experiences with cultural knowledge, demonstrating improved discourse organization and logical coherence. Peer evaluation records show that students now provide more constructive feedback during group discussions, using phrases like "Could you clarify the connection between tea ceremony steps and Confucian values?" which indicates deeper critical thinking and interactive communication skills.

In conclusion, the teaching effectiveness of the 'Children's Voices: Tales of China' thematic educational initiative is multi-faceted. It has not only achieved great success in cultural symbol recognition but also significantly improved students' linguistic competence, communication skills, cross-cultural awareness, and global vision. This teaching design provides valuable experience and inspiration for primary English education in promoting cultural inheritance and cross-cultural communication.

(2) Structured enhancement of cross-cultural communicative behaviour

Language application: Sentence patterns shifted from mechanical repetition to contextual adaptation.

Case study: Student B actively demonstrated to foreign teachers during International Day: 'Look! My noodles are THIS long! (spreading arms wide) They're happier than birthday cake!'

Non-verbal communication: 95% of works incorporated non-textual symbols like drawings/objects, aligning with children's cognitive development.

(3) Endogenous development of cultural identity

Establishing a virtuous cycle of 'exploration-expression-dissemination':

Following Student C's spontaneous interview with her grandmother, the experience pack was enhanced with a photograph of grandmother and granddaughter kneading dough, accompanied by the English caption: 'Love makes noodles longer.'

Parental feedback indicates that 67% of pupils proactively introduced traditions of other Chinese festivals in English at home.

Follow-up research demonstrates that pupils from the experimental class exhibited greater fluency during the 'Little English Guides to Chinese Culture' activity six months later.

Furthermore, key improvements implemented during the teaching process are outlined below. Firstly, assessment tools were child-friendly adapted, replacing scales with a 'star sticker collection book' where pupils earn one star per cultural knowledge point mastered. Secondly, the dissemination context was made more authentic by enabling pupils to implement cultural blind box exchange schemes with peers, reinforcing audience awareness. Finally, cognitive scaffolding was made explicit by designing tools for

visualising abstract cultural concepts.

These improvements not only optimized the teaching process but also had a positive impact on the long-term development of students. In the long run, such teaching methods can help students build a more solid cultural foundation. As time goes on, students will gradually develop a more in-depth understanding of cross-cultural communication.

For example, in future cross-cultural communication scenarios, students are more likely to respect and understand different cultural norms. They will be able to draw on their experiences from the 'Children's Voices: Tales of China' initiative to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. They can introduce Chinese culture with confidence and enthusiasm, breaking down cultural barriers.

Moreover, the students' cultural identity will continue to be strengthened. They will take pride in China's rich cultural heritage and be more willing to actively participate in the dissemination of Chinese culture. This will contribute to the promotion of Chinese culture on a global scale.

In addition, the skills and knowledge students have acquired through this teaching design can be transferred to other subjects. For instance, in history or art classes, they can use their cross-cultural communication skills and cultural understanding to analyze and appreciate different historical and artistic works from around the world.

In conclusion, the teaching effectiveness of the 'Children's Voices: Tales of China' initiative is far-reaching. It not only achieves short-term teaching goals in terms of cultural symbol recognition, cross-cultural communicative behavior, and cultural identity development but also lays a solid foundation for students' future development in multiple aspects.

6. Conclusion

Children's worldviews are not yet fully formed, and their expressions carry relatively fewer adult political or ideological baggage. Stories told through "childlike speech" more readily bypass cultural barriers and stereotypes, facilitating purer cultural exchange. Education must therefore begin at an early age; participation in such activities enables students to become accustomed to and confident in expressing Chinese culture in English, laying the foundation for cultivating future talents with international perspectives and cross-cultural communication skills.

Simultaneously, in the process of discovering, understanding, and narrating "China's charm", students ponder questions such as "What constitutes China?" and "What Chinese elements do I find intriguing?". This journey deepens their awareness, comprehension, and identification with their own culture. Information dissemination in the classroom is not merely about conveying facts; it also shapes perceptions of social realities and group identities. By recounting Chinese stories in English, students engage not only in external communication but also reinforce their internal cultural identity.

Moreover, students employ English as a medium to introduce Chinese cultural elements. This process inherently involves encoding—translating Chinese cultural symbols into English—and implicit decoding, as it presupposes audiences with diverse cultural backgrounds. This perfectly aligns with the core issue of intercultural communication: how individuals/groups from different cultural backgrounds

exchange meaning through symbolic systems. The activity enables students to personally practise narrating Chinese stories in the global language, representing the most fundamental and vivid form of cultural outreach.

By having students teach contemporary Chinese narratives, this research implements the OBE teaching philosophy, guiding students to engage in foreign language learning with a proactive and practice-oriented attitude.

This approach not only enriches their language skills but also broadens their cultural horizons. As they continue to grow, these students will be better equipped to navigate the complex global landscape, acting as bridges between different cultures.

In the long - term, the impact of such educational practices can be far - reaching. It can contribute to a more harmonious global community, where cultural differences are respected and celebrated. The students, having developed a strong sense of cultural identity and cross - cultural communication skills, will be able to promote cultural diversity and mutual understanding on a larger scale.

Furthermore, this kind of educational innovation can inspire other schools and educators to adopt similar methods. By sharing the success stories and experiences from this teaching experiment, more teachers can be encouraged to design courses that integrate cultural education with language learning. This will lead to a more comprehensive and effective education system that nurtures well - rounded individuals capable of making positive contributions to the world.

In conclusion, the teaching model implemented in this research is a significant step forward in modern education. It not only meets the current needs of students in a globalized

world but also paves the way for a future where cultural exchange and understanding are at the forefront of educational goals. With continued efforts and improvements, this model can have a profound and lasting impact on the development of young people and the promotion of cultural harmony across the globe.

References

- [1] Hu, N. B., Hu, X. H., Zhang, Y. L., et al. (2025). Design of a syllabus based on the OBE approach: A case study of the 'Public Health Statistics' course in the preventive medicine programme. *Chinese Journal of Health Statistics*, 42(1), 129–131.
- [2] Zhu, W. H., & Xing, J. R. (2025). Practical teaching design for the course 'Introduction to the Chinese National Community' based on the OBE approach. *Journal of Ethnology*, 16(1), 72–79, 157.
- [3] Yang, F. (2025). A study on the training model for audit professionals based on the 'integration of industry, education and research'—Focusing on the OBE approach. *Finance and Accounting Bulletin*, (11), 173–176. <https://doi.org/10.16144/j.cnki.issn1002-8072.2025.11.021>.
- [4] Gu, P. H., Hu, W. L., Lin, P., et al. (2014). An outcomes-based education (OBE) model for engineering education: Practice and exploration at Shantou University. *Research on Higher Engineering Education*, (1), 27–37.
- [5] Chen, Y. T., & Sun, D. L. (2025). Promoting the substantive development of ideological and political education courses: A perspective on deepening supply-side reform in teaching based on the OBE approach. *Teaching of Ideological and Political Education*, (4), 9–12.