

New Media Perspective in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

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Abstract: The rise of China's national strength has sparked a global "Chinese language fever," particularly with the vigorous advancement of the "Belt and Road" initiative, which has led to a surge in demand for Chinese language learning in countries along the route. This paper focuses on teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL) from the perspective of new media, exploring the role of new media platforms in TCFL and proposing strategies to optimize the integration of new media into TCFL. The aim is to enhance the quality and efficiency of TCFL. New media, with its characteristics of interactivity, immediacy, and broad reach, provides diverse and rich learning channels and resources for TCFL. Therefore, innovating new media teaching methods and integrating traditional teaching with new media approaches are key to aligning TCFL with contemporary trends.

Keywords: New Media; Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language; Education

1. Introduction

Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) is a specialized educational discipline designed for non-native learners, delivering instruction in both the Chinese language and culture. As China's global influence grows, the TCFL market continues to expand, accompanied by increasingly diverse learning demands. The rise of online educational technology has established digital TCFL as a mainstream model, where new media—an emerging pedagogical medium—plays a pivotal role. "New media represents an innovative evolution from traditional media formats." [1] Its multifaceted advantages significantly enrich TCFL content, enable teaching model

innovation, facilitate interactive learning, and expand educational channels. However, current applications of new media in TCFL face multiple challenges, including inadequate scientific rigor, content fragmentation and homogenization, underutilized resources, and inconsistent information review standards. These issues compromise TCFL quality while limiting new media's potential efficacy in the field.

This paper examines the current state of new media-enabled TCFL through in-depth research, identifies existing problems, and proposes targeted strategies to address learners' diverse needs, enhance instructional quality and efficiency, and foster the discipline's sustainable development.

2. Current State of New Media-Enabled TCFL

New media, with its notable advantages of immediacy, interactivity, and diversity, has been widely applied across various fields including TCFL. However, its application in teaching Chinese as a foreign language presents unique challenges.

2.1 Lack of a Scientific, Rigorous, and Multidimensional Knowledge Service System

From a content perspective, many new media platforms lack scientific and systematic Chinese language knowledge systems. Due to the complexity of Chinese characters—such as the diversity of ideographic forms, the pronunciation distinctions of polyphonic characters, and the linguistic functions of tonal variations—new media teaching demands higher standards. Platforms must establish rigorous mechanisms for presenting knowledge. Research reveals that some platforms exhibit issues like incomplete phonetic annotations (e.g., providing only one

pronunciation for polyphonic characters) and fragmented tone instruction. These fundamental shortcomings can lead to cognitive biases among learners who lack a strong foundation in Chinese, making corrections difficult later and negatively impacting teaching. Additionally, content tends to be homogenized and superficial. Most new media platforms offer teaching materials that are strikingly similar, characterized by repetitive grammar explanations using single example sentences, oral training devoid of real-life communicative contexts, and cultural teaching that remains superficial without deeper exploration. Survey data (Questionnaire 1) shows that 82% of learners explicitly demand "graded grammar explanation videos," "real-life scenario dialogue simulations," and "dynamic demonstrations of Chinese character evolution". The fragmented content currently available fails to construct a complete cognitive framework for learners of Chinese as a second language, particularly for intermediate and advanced learners who seek both linguistic precision and cultural depth.

2.2 Lack of a Robust New Media Literacy Ecosystem

Teachers and learners of Chinese are the primary users of TCFL platforms. Currently, there is a noticeable gap in new media skills among TCFL teachers, with varying levels of competency. Some teachers lack sufficient understanding and proficiency in new media. Analysis of responses to "10. What suggestions do you have for current new media tools used in Chinese language teaching?" (Questionnaire 2) reveals that teachers generally find new media teaching challenging, especially older, experienced teachers who desire simplified operational methods and AI-assisted teaching support.

"Many teachers employ monotonous teaching techniques, resulting in dull classrooms with little teacher-student interaction and an inability to capture students' attention, leading to poor teaching outcomes." [2] Clearly, the benefits of applying new media to TCFL are undeniable. However, current teacher evaluation mechanisms overly emphasize teaching and research achievements while neglecting assessments of new media application skills. This directly discourages

teachers from improving their new media proficiency, despite its potential to significantly enhance teaching. Moreover, universities and educational institutions fail to provide advanced new media training, and even when such training is offered, it often becomes perfunctory. Most individuals remain unaware of the importance of new media, leading to training programs that are disconnected from actual needs and overly simplistic in approach.

For Chinese language learners, while numerous new media platforms offer Chinese learning resources, their limited proficiency restricts their ability to understand and utilize these resources effectively. Additionally, learners come from diverse cultural backgrounds worldwide, with varying learning habits, cognitive patterns, thought processes, and language teaching methods. These differences can cause confusion or discomfort when using new media platforms for learning Chinese, yet solutions are rarely available on these platforms.

2.3 Lack of Strict Entry and Review Mechanisms

Current new media platforms for TCFL face three regulatory challenges. First, there is a lack of standardized entry criteria and ineffective review mechanisms. Some platforms, in pursuit of user growth, simplify registration processes and implement only superficial reviews, resulting in uneven creator qualifications and problematic teaching content. Consequently, learners receive incorrect or incomplete knowledge. Second, the absence of professional review systems leads to uncontrolled content quality. Due to technological limitations, insufficient platform moderators, and vague review standards, low-quality teaching materials proliferate. Most platforms lack oversight by authoritative expert teams, further exacerbating the issue. Compared to other fields, TCFL content on new media platforms lags behind disciplinary developments, failing to meet the dynamic needs of international students. Third, platform fragmentation undermines resource integration. While many platforms feature TCFL content, survey results (Questionnaire 1) indicate that students primarily use entertainment platforms like WeChat, TikTok, and Twitter for learning

Chinese, with only a few utilizing dedicated platforms like Train Chinese, Chinese Writer, or Online Textbook. The lack of a unified, authoritative platform for TCFL resources leaves international students overwhelmed by choices. The insufficient professionalism and authority of some platforms also increase the risk of misinformation, creating a paradox of "resource redundancy" and "insufficient effective supply." These three issues constrain the potential of new media in education and highlight the need for standardized entry systems, professional review mechanisms, and consolidated platform ecosystems.

3. New Media-Enabled TCFL

Today, new media has become a vital platform for information dissemination, social interaction, and commercial operations. In education, the application of new media to teaching and learning processes-with its high efficiency, rapid dissemination, and multifaceted approaches-has not only innovated and enriched TCFL methods but also made teaching more convenient and engaging. It enhances teacher-student interaction and enables students to learn Chinese anytime, anywhere. The significance of new media-enabled TCFL lies in its ability to diversify teaching methods, broaden learning channels, increase interactivity, and improve teaching efficiency.

3.1 Enriching Teaching Resources

New media platforms provide vast teaching resources for TCFL, including videos, audio, and multimedia content. These resources cover all aspects of language learning, such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence structure. Students can access dedicated sections for each linguistic feature, enabling targeted learning. They can also engage in real-life context simulations, which facilitate the acquisition of authentic Chinese. Traditional teaching models often offer limited and slow-to-update resources, struggling to meet the fast-paced learning demands of today's students.

Furthermore, compared to dominant languages like English or Spanish, Chinese teaching resources are scarcer, with lower regional acceptance and demand. Many areas lack qualified Chinese teachers, making cross-border teaching difficult. However, new

media platforms break these spatiotemporal constraints by providing abundant, high-quality resources, greatly enriching TCFL content and allowing students to choose materials that suit their needs. Platforms like TikTok and YouTube use innovative approaches, such as situational skits, to explain complex grammar points (e.g., the construction through scenarios like "throwing a sandbag" or "erasing a blackboard"). These methods make abstract rules tangible, aiding comprehension. Han notes that new media platforms offer diverse resources and real-time interaction, enhancing engagement.[3] Teachers can use WeChat public accounts to publish cultural articles, pronunciation exercises, or live class announcements, while students ask questions or participate in discussions via comments. Virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) technologies further simulate real-life language scenarios, improving oral expression.

3.2 Broadening Learning Channels

Traditional TCFL is often confined to classrooms and textbooks. New media overcomes these limitations by allowing students to access online courses, learning communities, and language exchange platforms via smartphones or computers. This flexibility accommodates diverse learning habits and schedules, boosting motivation and participation. New media applications in TCFL include WeChat public platforms, online teaching platforms, and language-learning apps. Survey results (Questionnaire 1) show that learners use both entertainment apps (WeChat, TikTok, YouTube) and dedicated platforms (Train Chinese, Chinese Writer). These tools make learning fun and professional, while interactive sections encourage discussions with teachers or peers, fostering interest. Platforms also promote resource sharing. Teachers upload materials like courseware or videos, which students access based on their needs.

3.3 Enhancing Interactivity

New media platforms feature robust interactive functions, such as online discussions, real-time Q&A, and collaborative learning. TCFL shifts from one-way knowledge delivery to multi-directional exchanges among teachers and students.

Interactivity manifests in teacher-student and peer interactions, instant feedback, and personalized learning. Platforms like WeChat enable real-time communication via voice, video, or text. Teachers provide feedback on assignments, and students correct mistakes promptly. Wang emphasizes that new media's interactivity "strengthens teaching contexts and ensures contemporaneity" [4], breaking spatiotemporal barriers and increasing classroom engagement. Multimedia formats (text, audio, video, live streams) enrich interaction. For example, live-streamed classes or cultural activities allow students to ask questions via bullet comments, with teachers responding instantly. Wang notes this "extends the classroom" [4]. Online collaboration tools let learners from different regions work together on projects or form study groups via social media. Zhou [5] focuses on the enhancing role of new media in language communication and cultural exchange. New media can provide a platform for communication and learning, deepening students' understanding of the Chinese language. Personalized learning is another benefit. Big data and AI analyze student behavior to offer tailored recommendations. Apps provide customized exercises or pronunciation corrections via speech recognition. Li identifies this as crucial for improving outcomes [6].

3.4 Improving Teaching Efficiency

New media technologies make TCFL more efficient. Intelligent teaching systems allow personalized instruction based on student progress. Platforms automatically record and analyze learning data, providing teachers with real-time feedback to refine methods.

Wang & Li [7] highlight tools like online quizzes (Kahoot!, Quizlet) that generate instant reports, helping teachers adjust strategies. Speech recognition corrects pronunciation errors, enhancing accuracy. In summary, new media offers flexible, efficient, and personalized solutions for TCFL, transcending traditional limits, boosting interactivity, and optimizing teaching through data-driven insights.

4. Strategies for New Media-Enabled TCFL

To address the above issues-ensuring scientific rigor, avoiding content

homogenization, and improving teachers' new media proficiency-the following strategies are proposed.

4.1 Strengthening Content Scientificity and Rigor

Professional teams should develop high-quality new media resources to ensure accuracy and authority. Traditional teaching teams alone are insufficient; dedicated teams must create resources that align with pedagogical needs. Hu [8] cites Krashen's "Input Hypothesis," advocating for comprehensible, leveled materials (e.g., HSK Standard Course animations) to reduce learner anxiety.

Constructivist theory Gong [9] encourages teacher-student collaboration in resource creation, provided content undergoes rigorous review. Involving end-users ensures practicality and scientificity.

4.2 Promoting Diversity and Integration

To counter homogenization, diversify resources and integrate them into systematic learning pathways. Multimodal discourse (text, images, audio, video) enriches content. Yu [10] suggests using multimodal teaching (e.g., animated Chinese character evolution) to enhance engagement. Platforms like WeChat, with its broad reach, can consolidate learning materials and facilitate teacher exchanges.

Regular online/offline activities (e.g., Q&A sessions, discussions) foster interaction and practical application, deepening learners' understanding.

4.3 Enhancing Teachers' New Media Proficiency

Current issues include monotonous input, limited interaction, and outdated resources. New media can transform TCFL from "knowledge delivery" to "cultural immersion and practice." Specific measures:

-Structured Training: Tiered courses (basic: interactive PPTs; advanced: VR cultural classes; innovative: AI tools). Post-training tasks require multimedia lesson designs.

Community-Shared Case Libraries: Platforms like "HanJiao New Media Resource Hub" collect exemplary materials (e.g., H5 cultural comparisons, TikTok character tutorials).

Incentivized Competitions: Awards for "New

Media Teaching Innovations" (e.g., AR-based "Virtual Forbidden City" classes).

These strategies aim to optimize new media's role in TCFL, elevating teaching quality, diversifying learning avenues, and advancing Chinese language dissemination.

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