

# A Study on the Integration Approaches of Pingju Opera Culture into College English Teaching

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## Abstract

Integrating Pingju Opera culture into college English teaching serves as an effective pathway to fulfill the fundamental task of moral education and to promote the inheritance and international dissemination of traditional Chinese culture. This paper, based on the curriculum philosophy outlined in the Guidelines on College English Teaching (2020), constructs a systematic teaching approach that incorporates biographical storytelling of opera artists, English translation of classic lyrics, multimodal resource integration, and instructional feedback and assessment. This model not only enriches the teaching content and expands the resource system of college English courses but also enhances students' comprehensive language proficiency and intercultural communicative competence, while deepening their understanding and identification with local culture. Furthermore, the study contributes to the ideological and political dimension of college curricula, the development of indigenous cultural resources, and the global dissemination of regional opera, offering a practical paradigm for cultural education and pedagogical innovation in college English teaching in the new era.

## Keywords

Pingju Opera culture  
college English teaching  
intercultural communication  
curriculum-based Ideological and  
Political Education  
cultural literacy

**Online publication:** May 26, 2025

## 1. Introduction

Language and culture are inextricably intertwined. Language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a vehicle and embodiment of culture. As Clark (1996) notes, language is deeply embedded in culture, reflecting a nation's unique historical memory, value systems, and modes of thinking<sup>[1]</sup>. With the deepening of globalization and informatization, foreign language education has shifted from a focus solely on linguistic

competence to a balanced emphasis on both language and culture, becoming a vital channel for intercultural understanding and cultural communication. As the most widely used international language, English plays a crucial role in promoting Chinese culture globally.

Against this backdrop, college English courses in China are undergoing a transformation—from utilitarian language instruction toward an integrated model that emphasizes both cultural literacy and value guidance<sup>[2]</sup>.

The effective integration of local cultural elements into classroom teaching is not only essential for enhancing students' comprehensive language skills but also plays a vital role in fostering cultural confidence and cross-cultural communicative competence.

Among the rich resources of traditional Chinese culture, Chinese opera embodies profound national memory and values through its unique artistic forms. As one of China's five major opera genres, Pingju Opera originated in Tangshan, Hebei Province. Known for its vivid language, life-oriented narratives, and distinctive characters, it has enjoyed great popularity among northern audiences and was included in the first batch of China's National Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2006<sup>[3]</sup>. With its narrative power and aesthetic appeal, Pingju Opera vividly conveys traditional Chinese ethical values and emotional expressions, offering both pedagogical potential for English language teaching and opportunities for international dissemination.

In this context, the present study explores the integration of Pingju Opera culture into college English education. By examining instructional design and classroom application, the paper aims to provide a localized reference for enhancing cultural literacy and promoting innovation in English teaching at the tertiary level.

## 2. The Necessity of Integrating Pingju Opera Culture into College English Education

### 2.1. Responding to the Strategic Demand of Promoting Chinese Culture Globally

In recent years, increasing emphasis has been placed on the protection, inheritance, and international dissemination of traditional Chinese culture. The *Guiding Opinions on Implementing the Project for the Inheritance and Development of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture* explicitly advocate for the active promotion of traditional cultural forms such as opera, folk music, calligraphy, and traditional painting, aiming to offer global audiences an aesthetic experience of Chinese cultural charm. The document highlights the importance of creatively transforming and innovatively developing traditional culture to revitalize it in the new era<sup>[4]</sup>. Moreover, the

Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China further emphasizes the need to “enhance the communication and influence of Chinese civilization” and “tell China's stories well and spread China's voice,” underscoring the strategic importance of expanding the global reach of Chinese culture<sup>[5]</sup>.

As a core component of foreign language education, college English courses in China bear not only the task of language skill development but also serve as an important platform for cultural outreach. Integrating Pingju Opera culture into college English instruction aligns with the national agenda of enhancing cultural soft power and promoting cultural exports. More importantly, it provides students with an authentic context in which language acquisition is closely linked to cultural expression. By presenting the artistic characteristics and core values of Pingju Opera in English classes, students can develop both cultural confidence and international communicative competence, offering a feasible approach for strengthening the educational function of foreign language curricula in Chinese higher education under the new era.

### 2.2. Alignment with the Curriculum Guidelines and Teaching Objectives of the Guidelines on College English Teaching

*The Guidelines on College English Teaching* (2020 Edition) clearly state that college English should serve national strategies and emphasize the development of students' ability to understand and articulate Chinese culture. The guidelines also highlight that, beyond improving linguistic competence, the course should foster students' humanistic literacy, global vision, and critical thinking. This indicates a pedagogical shift in college English education—from a sole focus on language skills to an integrated approach combining language learning, cultural awareness, and holistic personal development.

Under this curriculum guideline, the integration of Chinese cultural content into classroom instruction becomes increasingly necessary to enhance both linguistic and cultural expression competencies. As a regional opera form rich in aesthetic value, Pingju Opera features vivid and accessible language, compact storylines, and strong emotional resonance, making it highly readable and translatable. It provides authentic and diverse discourse

materials for college English classrooms. Through selected excerpts of lyrics, dialogues, or dramatic scenes, teachers can guide students not only to comprehend linguistic content, but also to experience the characters' emotions and embedded cultural meanings. This process enables students to re-articulate Chinese cultural values in English, thereby enriching classroom discourse and genre variety.

From a practical perspective, incorporating Pingju culture into English instruction can effectively address the current lack of Chinese cultural content in college English curricula. When students engage in tasks such as text analysis, contextual retelling, dramatic role-playing, and translation between Chinese and English, they receive comprehensive training in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Simultaneously, they cultivate an implicit understanding of native cultural elements and develop their ability to interpret and convey them. This pedagogical process organically integrates language acquisition, cultural experience, and cognitive development, making the classroom both contemporary and practice-oriented. It also aligns closely with the Guidelines' overall requirement, that is, language as the foundation and culture as the core. Through such an instructional model, college English courses can not only improve students' integrated language proficiency but also foster cultural confidence and cross-cultural communicative competence, thus offering a practical pathway for curriculum innovation and cultural education in China's higher education system.

### **2.3. Advancing Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education through Cultural Integration**

With the deepening implementation of "curriculum-based ideological and political education" (CIP), college English, as a core component of general education, is tasked not only with developing students' language skills but also with guiding moral values and character building. Integrating Pingju Opera culture into English teaching aligns with the fundamental philosophy of CIP, offering a path of cultural depth and aesthetic influence in foreign language instruction. As a prominent representative of traditional Chinese culture, Pingju Opera contains narratives that convey values such as honesty, diligence,

kindness, and respect for elders, which closely resonate with the core socialist values, giving it a natural advantage in value-oriented teaching. By engaging with the plots, character development, and emotional expressions of Pingju Opera, students can directly experience these traditional virtues while subconsciously receiving moral guidance.

The unique aesthetic system of Pingju Opera also provides abundant resources for embedding value education in college English. The melodic structures, rhythmic patterns, and character portrayals presents an expressive power that helps students develop a perception and appreciation of Chinese aesthetics in multimodal contexts. When classroom activities include tasks such as rewriting scripts in English, translating opera excerpts, or discussing the spirit of the characters, students deepen their understanding and reflection on traditional culture while practicing language skills, thus achieving an organic integration of linguistic competence and value education.

Moreover, the professional ethos of Pingju artists offers vivid educational material for CIP. For instance, the artistic career of Xin Fengxia exemplifies the principle of "cultivating art through virtue and conveying the Way through art"<sup>[6]</sup>. She demonstrated self-discipline and a pursuit of excellence on stage, enriching her performance through life experience and extensive learning. Her approach highlights qualities such as integrity, lifelong learning, and teamwork. Incorporating these artistic experiences into English instruction—through activities like "English biography translation" or "discussions on artistic spirit"—broadens the scope of language output and fosters cultural identification and communication awareness among students. In this way, college English can subtly achieve the goals of cultural inheritance, value shaping, and language development, thereby enhancing the comprehensive educational function of curriculum-based ideological and political initiatives.

## **3. Pedagogical Approaches for Integrating Pingju Opera Culture into College English Instruction**

The integration of Pingju Opera culture into college English instruction should be guided by a three-part

objective framework that includes language proficiency development, cultural literacy enhancement, and value-oriented education. Considering the nature of college English as a general education course and the cognitive and linguistic characteristics of university learners, this study proposes a progressive teaching framework centered on four interrelated modules: narrative construction based on artist biographies, translation of classic opera excerpts, multimodal resource integration, and feedback-based instructional evaluation. This framework aims to build a coherent system that organically fuses language learning, cultural engagement, and value formation within the context of college English education.

### 3.1. Presenting Pingju Artist Biographies in English Narrative Contexts

Using biographical narratives as an entry point can effectively stimulate student motivation and lay the foundation for deep integration of language and culture. In the instructional process, representative and pedagogically meaningful Pingju artists such as Xin Fengxia are selected as focal figures. Through multimodal materials—including documentary clips, historical photographs, and concise textual introductions—teachers create immersive learning contexts that help students develop an initial understanding of the artist's life and inspire independent inquiry.

Students are then guided to explore biographical texts, review essays, and interview transcripts, extracting key information about the artist's achievements and personal virtues under the teacher's facilitation. Following this, students produce English-language outputs in both written and spoken forms. These may include brief biographies, multimedia presentations, or classroom-based oral reports and storytelling tasks.

To deepen the impact, value-oriented discussions are conducted around themes such as “artistic ideals and moral character” or “the contemporary relevance of traditional culture.” This process enables students to develop communicative competence while fostering cultural insight and value alignment, thereby achieving a multidimensional learning outcome that integrates linguistic practice, cultural appreciation, and ideological engagement.

### 3.2. English Translation of Classic Pingju Songs and Cross-Cultural Expression

The lyrics of Pingju opera are known for their conciseness, vivid imagery, rhetorical elegance, and deep cultural connotations, making them valuable resources for English translation instruction and cross-cultural communication training. In instructional design, a complete learning cycle is established through model analysis, practical translation, and reflective evaluation.

Teachers begin by selecting representative excerpts from classic plays, such as the “Naming the Flowers” segment from *Hua Wei Mei (A Floral Matchmaker)*, and provide students with English translations of different styles. Students are guided to analyze the contextual appropriateness and effects of various strategies, including literal translation, free translation, and conceptual restructuring. Based on this understanding, students work in groups to carry out English translations of selected lyrics, focusing on how to handle culturally loaded terms, traditional references, and poetic rhythm.

Once translation drafts are completed, classroom presentations and peer reviews are conducted to encourage knowledge sharing and strategy comparison. Teachers then offer targeted feedback on typical issues, helping students recognize that translation is not merely a linguistic transfer, but a process of cultural reconstruction.

To further enhance learning outcomes, artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted translation tools can be introduced into the classroom. Comparative analysis between human and machine-generated translations helps students better understand the strengths and limitations of different approaches and fosters critical awareness of AI tools. This blended method significantly strengthens students' competence in cross-cultural expression and reflective translation practice.

### 3.3. Integration of Multimodal Pingju Resources into English Teaching

Pingju opera offers a wealth of cultural resources across diverse media forms. Integrating multimodal resources into English teaching can significantly enhance classroom immersion and interactivity. During instruction, teachers utilize a combination of videos, audio clips, images, and texts to present the linguistic style, performance

techniques, and historical context of Pingju, thus offering students a vivid and authentic cultural experience.

Building on this foundation, a progressive learning process is designed to span both in-class and after-class activities. In the classroom, core tasks such as post-viewing oral descriptions, script interpretation, and character-based discussions guide students to synthesize information from multiple modes. Outside of class, digital platforms are used to deliver supplementary materials—such as micro-videos, bilingual appreciation texts, and interactive quizzes—to extend the learning space and reinforce continuity between language input and output<sup>[7]</sup>.

Where resources permit, virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR) technologies may be incorporated to simulate immersive theatre-watching scenarios, further intensifying students' sensory and emotional engagement. This multimodal integration not only expands instructional approaches but also lays a solid foundation for project-based learning and cross-cultural communication training in subsequent phases.

### 3.4. Teaching Feedback and Outcome Assessment Based on Pingju Culture

Incorporating Pingju opera culture into college English teaching necessitates a well-structured feedback and assessment system to ensure that teaching objectives are effectively achieved. The evaluation framework should address improvements in language proficiency, cultural understanding, and intercultural communicative competence, combining both formative and summative approaches.

Formative assessment focuses on students' learning processes and depth of cultural engagement. It can be conducted through classroom performance, task completion, and reflective learning journals, which reveal students' development in data integration, discourse expression, and value interpretation. For instance, after completing English narratives of Xinfengxia's life or translating excerpts from *The Matchmaker*, teachers and peers can provide timely feedback to help students identify weaknesses in linguistic expression or cultural interpretation. Instructional strategies can then be adjusted accordingly to meet learners' needs.

Summative assessment emphasizes students' comprehensive application abilities and the effectiveness

of cultural dissemination. Group presentations, translation showcases, or multimodal dissemination projects may be adopted as final tasks. Evaluation criteria should include the completeness of cultural content, intercultural intelligibility, and the expressive power of communication.

To ensure consistency and objectivity in assessment, supplementary methods such as questionnaires and interviews can be employed to gather insights into students' learning interests and perceived outcomes. In addition, experts in traditional opera and foreign language education may be invited to observe teaching practices and evaluate their effectiveness. This approach fosters a virtuous cycle of “teaching–feedback–refinement”, contributing to sustained pedagogical improvement<sup>[8]</sup>.

## 4. Significance of Implementation

Integrating Pingju opera culture systematically into college English teaching is not only an innovative attempt at reforming foreign language curricula in higher education but also a strategic move to fulfill the dual missions of cultural education and supporting the global dissemination of Chinese culture. This pedagogical practice holds profound significance for multiple aspects of college English education: it enriches teaching resources, enhances the achievement of instructional goals, and contributes to the preservation and international promotion of local traditional opera. By aligning language learning with cultural inheritance and global communication, this approach offers a sustainable model for both educational innovation and cultural outreach in the context of national strategies.

### 4.1. Expanding Teaching Resources in College English Education

For a long time, college English curricula have predominantly relied on cultural materials from English-speaking countries, particularly those of the UK and the US, resulting in relatively homogeneous and limited resource pools. The integration of Pingju opera culture into English classrooms helps overcome this limitation by introducing culturally diverse and regionally distinctive content. The character stories, classic arias, stage performances, and cultural allusions of Pingju opera



can be transformed into high-quality language learning materials, enabling instructors to build a comprehensive classroom resource bank that incorporates core textbook texts, extended reading materials, and digitized multimodal resources. These culturally rich materials not only enhance students' linguistic input but also facilitate cultural cognition, fostering an English classroom context filled with Chinese cultural heritage and local characteristics. This enrichment of teaching resources not only optimizes the content structure of college English courses but also offers sustainable experience for universities aiming to build localized and diversified databases of teaching examples<sup>[9]</sup>.

## 4.2. Synergizing Language Proficiency and Cultural Literacy

The integration of Pingju opera culture into college English teaching helps address the long-standing disconnection between linguistic skill training and cultural literacy development. By engaging in activities such as narrating the life stories of Pingju artists in English, translating classical arias, or analyzing performance features, students are required to simultaneously master language knowledge and expressive skills, while gaining a deeper understanding of the cultural meanings embedded in the operas. This process facilitates a transformation from language comprehension to intercultural expression, reinforcing students' comprehensive language competence and guiding them to construct a three-dimensional learning model that integrates language, culture, and values.

Meanwhile, the aesthetic characteristics and ethical values conveyed by Pingju art can be naturally embedded into the goals of moral education (known as curriculum-based ideological and political education in Chinese pedagogy). When students explore the life stories of artists, analyze character virtues, and reflect on the transmission of traditional culture, they not only improve their English expression and intercultural communication skills, but also cultivate a deeper sense of cultural identity and patriotic consciousness. This dual enhancement allows college English courses to transcend instrumental training and evolve into a more humanistic and holistic educational experience, thereby strengthening their value-shaping function.

## 4.3. Promoting the International Dissemination of Local Opera Culture

College English courses serve as vital platforms for cultivating foreign language talent and facilitating cultural communication in higher education. Through classroom storytelling, translation practice, and multimodal presentation, students accumulate bilingual expression resources related to Pingju opera and gradually develop intercultural communication awareness and competence. In future contexts such as international academic exchange, career development, and digital media dissemination, they will be equipped to actively introduce Pingju culture and share the stories of local operas, thereby becoming a new driving force in the global promotion of China's outstanding traditional culture<sup>[10]</sup>.

For Pingju opera itself, its integration into college English classrooms not only expands its audience base, but also fosters innovation in its modes of expression and channels of dissemination. The English translations, bilingual micro-videos, and multimodal presentation projects produced through classroom teaching and project-based learning provide multilingual and multimedia pathways for the global representation of Pingju art. This creative transformation and diversified dissemination rooted in educational settings contribute to the innovative development of Pingju opera in the context of globalization, revitalizing local opera culture on the international stage.

## 5. Conclusion

Integrating Pingju opera culture into College English teaching serves as an effective approach to fulfilling the fundamental mission of moral education and advancing the inheritance and global dissemination of China's outstanding traditional culture. By constructing a systematic teaching approach that includes narrative storytelling, classic aria translation, multimodal resource integration, and teaching evaluation, College English classrooms have achieved a deep integration of language competence, cultural literacy, and value-oriented education.

Educational practice indicates that this model not only enriches teaching resources and classroom content but also enhances students' understanding and

identification with local culture, while significantly improving their intercultural communication skills and global awareness. Moving forward, further optimization of instructional design and resource systems is recommended. This includes the development of bilingual micro-videos and digital performance products through

the integration of new media and artificial intelligence technologies. Such efforts can lead to the formation of replicable and expandable teaching models, helping Pingju opera move beyond the classroom and onto the global stage.

### Funding

Key Teaching Reform Project of Tangshan Normal University in 2025: A Practical Study on Integrating Pingju Opera Culture into College English Teaching (Project No. 2025JGZD116)

### Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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