

Culture as discourse in podcasts for Chinese as a foreign language

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Quantitative and qualitative analysis of digital resources to learn CFL (Gay-Punzano & Vargas-Urpí, 2025)

Main findings

Culture-related content in CFL digital resources:...

- remains limited;
- often lacks depth and tends to reproduce stereotypes;
- repeatedly focuses on similar topics (e.g. festivals, food, etc.)



Written texts (e.g. in websites) and podcasts → more detailed analysis and contextualised cultural explanations.

The **pedagogical potential of podcasts** was highlighted in the previous study.

Objective: to examine how culture and interculturality are discursively constructed in podcasts designed for learning Chinese as a foreign language



Research questions

01

How is Chinese culture represented in these podcasts?

02

To what extent do the discourses tend to generalize cultural practices or reproduce stereotypes?

03

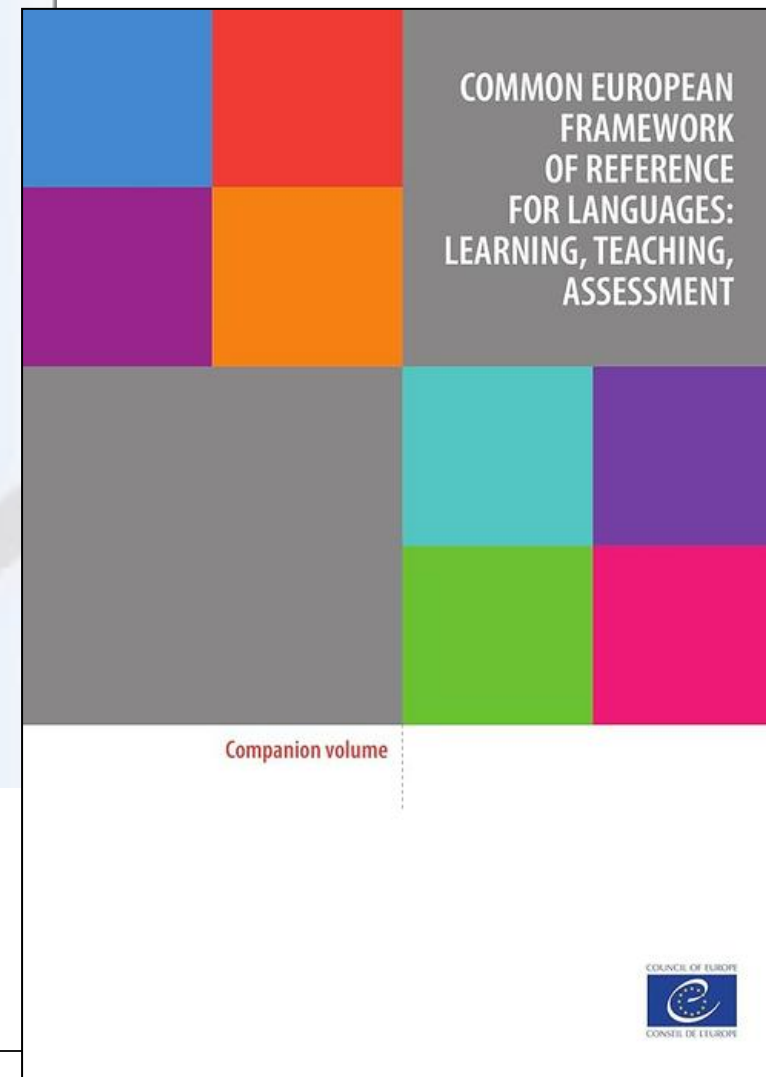
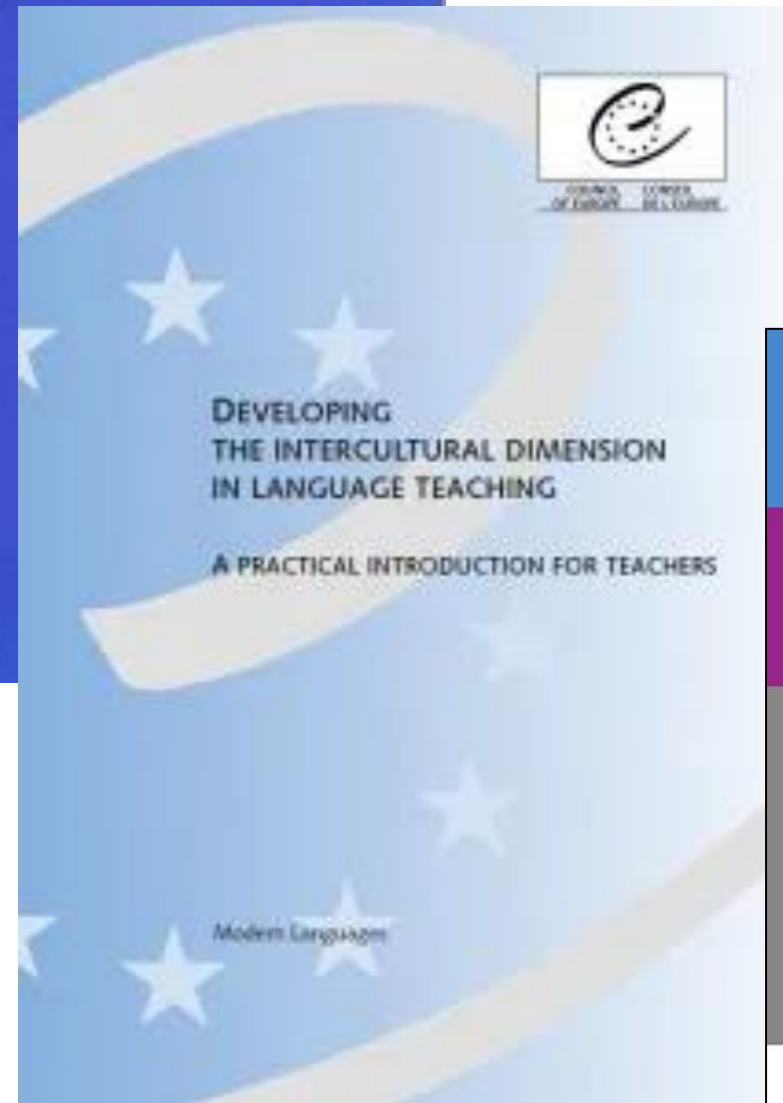
Are there recurring cultural themes?

The importance of training cultural and intercultural skills in foreign language teaching

Common European Framework
of Reference for Languages:
Learning, teaching, assessment



Modern Languages Division, Strasbourg



Companion volume

- Sociocultural Knowledge topics (CEFR, 2001);
- Intercultural Skills and know-how (CEFR, 2001);
- Components of intercultural competence (Byram et al. 2002)

Previous studies: Podcasts in the teaching and learning of foreign languages – focus on CFL



- Podcasts enhance **motivation** and **language proficiency** (Chen, 2021; Ramírez, 2024)
- Students prefer short podcasts, **topics** are important (Chan et al., 2011)
- Grammar podcasts good to improve **speaking skills** and **confidence** (Kelly and Klein, 2016)
- Good for autonomous listening skills (Shi et al., 2025)

There is a gap regarding podcasts for fostering cultural or intercultural skills

Method: creation of a corpus of episodes

1. **Purposive sampling.** Criteria for the selection of episodes:
 - a. Open access
 - b. Chinese as main language of instruction
 - c. Content potentially useful for the analysis
2. First search of podcasts in e-Chinese Tools, complemented by search in platforms such as Spotify
3. Identification of potentially relevant podcasts and episodes
4. Co-researcher agreement on the podcasts to include
5. **Transcription:**
 - a. Download from official website (if available)
 - b. Use of a variety of tools if not available (Spotify transcription, voice-to-text tools, etc.) + revision by researchers

Current corpus (work in progress)

Podcast	Episode Title	Date of publication	Length
Learn Taiwanese Mandarin with Miss Lin	Why Taiwanese don't want children?	6/6/2025	0:10:40
TeaTime Chinese 茶歇中文	第92集：《黑神话：悟空》的成功故事 The success story of "Black Myth: Wukong"	15/10/2024	0:21:40
還可中文 Haike Mandarin	233. 除夕閒聊：還可中文回顧、新年新希望、馬年吉祥話 New Year's Eve Chat: 2025 Review, New Year's Resolutions, Year of the Horse Blessings	16/2/2026	0:25:34
還可中文 Haike Mandarin	205. 還可新聞:清明不排隊 男子偷春捲遭逮捕 Haike News: Skipping Line, Man Arrested for Spring Roll Theft	19/4/2025	0:19:11
Chinese explained	Why Do Chinese Place Names Have So Many "Yin" and "Yang"? 中国地名为什么有那么多“阴”和“阳”?	21/8/2022	0:06:47
Chinese explained	Morning and Night Markets in Northern China 中国北方的早市和夜市	21/4/2022	0:09:41

Method: thematic and discourse analysis

Coding procedure

1. Deductive–inductive approach
2. Initial coding scheme based on an adaptation of the components of intercultural competence.
3. Additional code sets developed inductively:
 - a. **Approach:** descriptive, anecdotal, stereotypical, humorous/ironic, etc.
 - b. **Purpose of questions:** engagement, introductory, rhetorical, etc.
4. Transcripts coded using **Taguette**.
5. **Intercoder agreement:** after a detailed joint review of four transcripts, remaining transcripts are coded by one researcher and revised by the other.

tags	description
APP.anecdotal	explains cultural content through personal experiences or individual stories
APP.comparative	explicitly compares the target culture with another culture
APP.criticalanalytical	engages in reasoning, analysis, or reflection about cultural phenomena, going beyond description to interpret or problematize them.
APP.descriptive	presents cultural information in an objective, factual or encyclopedic manner without interpretation or personal involvement
APP.humorirony	uses humor, irony, or sarcasm when presenting cultural content
APP.implicit	refers to cultural elements without providing explicit explanation or contextualization
APP.metacultural	reflects on culture as a concept, including how cultural differences are perceived, interpreted, or constructed
APP.stereotyped	presents generalized or simplified representations of a culture, often lacking nuance or acknowledging variation
IC.criticalawareness	promotes critical reflection on cultural practices, including multiple perspectives
IC.deconstruction	challenges or problematizes stereotypical representations of a culture
IC.discovery	encourages or models how to learn about and adapt to new cultural contexts
IC.interaction	provides guidance or strategies for appropriate intercultural communication
IC.interpretation	explains the meaning, function, or underlying logic of a cultural practice
IC.lowpotential	presents cultural content without clear opportunities for intercultural learning
IC.mediation	models or explains how to bridge between cultures or resolve misunderstandings
IC.openness	encourages curiosity, openness, and suspension of judgment towards other cultures
IC.relation	connects the target culture with another culture, enabling comparison and relational understanding
Q.engagement	addresses the listener directly to create involvement or reflection
Q.introductory	introduces a new topic, idea, or segment
Q.rhetorical	does not seek an answer; used for emphasis or stylistic effect





There is usually a general tone (e.g. descriptive in podcasts for basic level, more critical or analytical in more advanced levels), but different approaches might be used in a single excerpt.

那臺灣的少子化到底有多嚴重呢？你看哦，想一下，如果臺灣的小孩越來越少，是不是就代表，哎，沒有學生，那學校、補習班也要慢慢關起來了？那現在很多私立大學也招收不到學生，所以也必須關閉學校。嗯，臺灣已經是嚴重老化的國家。嗯，老年人越來越多。第一名老化嚴重的國家應該是日本，我們好像快跟上日本的腳步了。那根據2025年臺灣的統計，我查了一下，每5個人就有一個人是65歲以上的老人。所以，其實你臺灣，你走在路上，可能你左看右看，看到的都是老人比較多，65歲的老人，呃。所以這幾年新聞、社群媒體也都是討論，哎，為什麼生育率這麼低？生育率低，Birthrate is low，呃，這個大家也可以記起來哦。

Critical/analytical

Descriptive

Comparative

Relational skills

Implicit approach and humour/irony are mostly used in podcasts for medium-advanced level



- A: 有在上班之後就比較不會期待說爸媽會給你紅包。
- B: 啊，我會很期待，而且我還會自己問我爸欸，我就會問他說，爸爸，你今年要包給我嗎？
- A: 他一定覺得你很不要臉。
- B: 對，他一定覺得我很不要臉。
- A: 嗯，我覺得這樣很好啊，就是不管幾歲都是爸媽的寶貝。
- B: 哦，對，他也是這樣子講的。

Descriptive

Implicit

Interpretation skills

最後她被依偷竊罪送辦，許多網友也常常開玩笑說，在台南連貴的安全帽和錢包都不會被偷，食物倒是會被偷走 (...)

對啊，很好笑 滿好笑的。 嗯，或是馬上有房啊馬上怎樣啊？ 哦，馬上就有房子。 嗯嗯。 馬上不加班。 馬上不加班。 這個聽起來很。 很射醋嗎？ 很可憐，對啊。 對，就可能是上班族之間的一個比較好笑的吉祥話啦。

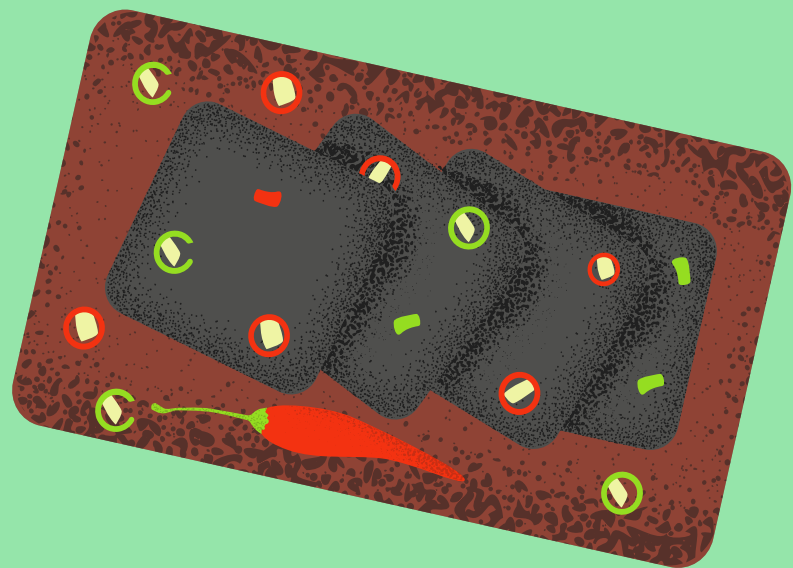


Humour, irony

Interpretation skills

Stereotype

我很多外国朋友不喜欢豆腐的口感，觉得很奇怪。



Anecdotes give a sense of closeness or help providing specific examples.

有一年夏天，我去了一個比較大的夜市，發現有一個攤兒圍了不少人，我很好奇，所以就走過去看了一下



Anecdotal

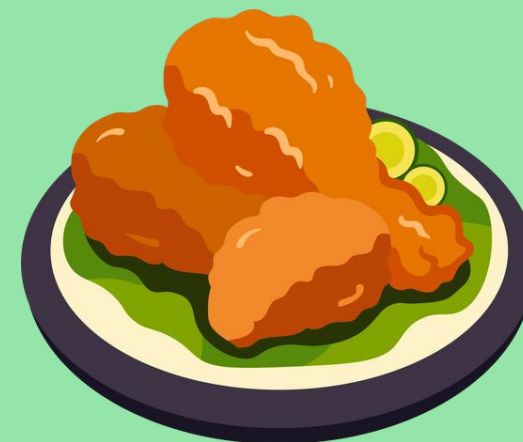
A: 因為臺南也有類似的新聞，就是因為之前有一個臺南人發生一個事件，他買了一包鹽酥雞。就掛在機車上面，他就去買別的東西，回來之後發現那包鹹酥雞變成一包滷味。

B: 蛤，什麼意思啦？

A: 我就覺得這個算偷東西嗎？

A: 這叫換東西，對啊。

Humour / irony



我第一次看到这种算卦方式的时候，还是挺新奇的。不过，任何形式的算卦我都不相信，所以只是看看热闹。后来，回到家我去网上搜了一下，原来这种算卦方式已经出现很长时间了。



当然，里面有很多，很有意思的小故事。比如说，在播客的第79集里，我给大家讲了孙悟空《大闹天宫》。这就是《西游记》最开始的一个故事。感兴趣的朋友一定要去听听。

很有意思的一点就是，游戏里的坏人，很多都是《西游记》里的。如果你已经读过这本书的话，一定对你玩游戏有帮助，因为你已经认识这些坏人了。不少玩游戏的外国朋友，为了玩这个游戏，都开始读《西游记》这本书。

Preliminary conclusions

01

How is Chinese culture represented in these podcasts?

- More complex and diverse, less monolythical than in other kinds of content - especially in the case of dialogues
- Topics are more varied and adapt to current issues (e.g. Black Myth)

02

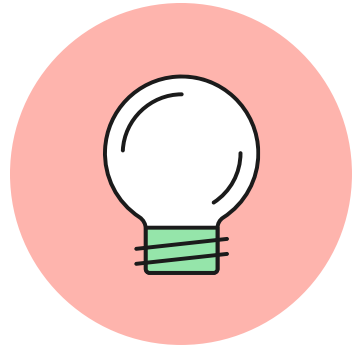
To what extent do the discourses tend to generalize cultural practices or reproduce stereotypes?

- Importance of basic knowledge of cultural aspects
- Importance of intercultural communication skills (interpretation, relation, mediation, etc.) to fully understand the implicits in some podcasts + grasp irony/humour

03

Are there recurring cultural themes?

- Despite diversity, some themes are still recurring (festivals, food) - possible researcher bias?

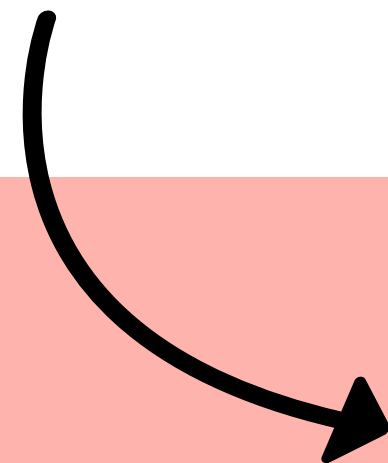


Future steps

Analysis of new episodes (objective: 50)

Identification of frequent topics

Further analysis of discursive aspects



Empirical data collection with CFL learners
Close analysis of actual intercultural skills

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Thanks for your attention!

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