

Practice and Reflection on the Construction of the Cultural Database of ASEAN Countries from the Perspective of Teaching

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Abstract

The practice of building a cultural database for ASEAN countries has received some suggestions, as follows: Firstly, the material forms should be diverse; secondly, it is necessary to indicate the source of the materials and verify their accuracy; thirdly, technical support is indispensable; fourthly, the database can be used in conjunction with the classroom; fifth, assign homework after class for students to use the database; sixth, it is best to improve the database in a timely manner based on user feedback. This construction process also inspires us, such as: firstly, we need to have a foundation, preferably with relevant achievements in the early stage; secondly, attention should be paid to the collection and organization of materials; thirdly, pay attention to the input process of materials; fourthly, pay attention to the space of network servers; fifth, pay attention to personnel issues.

Keywords

Chinese Language Teaching, ASEAN Countries, Cultural Database, Practice, Reflection

1. Introduction

At present, there are still some problems in the cultivation of Chinese teaching talents for ASEAN countries. In terms of the content of Chinese teaching, it focuses on the teaching of the Chinese language and the cultivation of students' language skills, and lacks or ignores cultural teaching. Strengthening cultural teaching has gradually become the consensus of the academic community.

According to incomplete statistics, there are many majors in international Chinese education in many colleges and universities. Many of these are mainly for

ASEAN countries to cultivate a large number of students, especially in colleges and universities in Guangxi, Guangdong, Fujian, Yunnan, and other provinces, such as Jinan University, Guangxi University, Nanning Normal University, Beibu Gulf University, Guangzhou University, Lingnan Normal University, Guangdong Ocean University, and even related graduate students.

Among these students in the lower grades, many do not have experience with field trips to ASEAN, so the cultural teaching of their ASEAN countries is mostly theoretical, which makes students feel bad. Many colleges and universities offer international Chinese education, and there are also many students. Most of them have not been to ASEAN countries in person and have no personal experience with ASEAN countries' cultures. What should we do to cultivate these students? This is an objective and universal problem. This is especially true in the case of the new coronavirus pneumonia epidemic that has lasted for several years.

How can we solve this common practical problem? We have our own solutions for this. The cultural database of ASEAN countries, which is closely related to this course, has been connected to the Internet, allowing students to study independently all day long. The database includes 10 ASEAN countries, covering all aspects of their etiquette and folk culture. The material in the database includes not only text but also audio and video. Practice shows that the above measures have achieved positive results.

As for the preliminary research on the construction of the ASEAN countries' cultural database, we searched CNKI with the title or keyword of "ASEAN countries' Cultural Database," and the results showed that there was no corresponding paper. The relevant early achievements mainly include [Li Yang \(2015\)](#), [Chen LiMao \(2016\)](#), [Chen LiMao, Zhang Hong \(2022\)](#), [Chen LiMao \(2023\)](#), [Li Mingwan \(2023\)](#), [Li Hongyan \(2024\)](#), [Li Yaohui \(2025\)](#), etc. However, the original research mainly envisages how to build the cultural database of ASEAN countries, as well as the individual problems and solutions encountered in the teaching of etiquette and folk culture in ASEAN countries. The problems encountered in the actual construction of the cultural database of ASEAN countries and related thinking have not been involved. This paper makes up for this on the basis of the specific practice of ASEAN countries' cultural database construction and provides some thoughts and enlightenment.

2. Construction Practice

Through unremitting efforts, we began preparations in 2020. After years of practice and construction, we have built the ASEAN countries' Cultural Database Website. It is accessible on the Internet at all times. The cultural database of ASEAN countries can be accessed publicly via the Internet, free from the restrictions of regional IP addresses, and can be accessed all day long, regardless of time. The cultural database of ASEAN countries that we have established has gained widespread influence, with 19,253 visits so far. Our school only has one class for each Chinese International Education major, with a maximum of just over 60 students per class.

In the four years of undergraduate studies, the maximum number of enrolled students is over 240, and now there have been 19,253 visits, indicating that our ASEAN cultural database is being accessed and used by a large number of peers from sister universities outside the school, which has produced good results.

The exercises and answers in the database are created by us according to the contents of the database to strengthen readers' understanding and mastery of the cultural knowledge of ASEAN countries.

3. Relevant Thinking and Enlightenment

We have some thoughts in practice, as follows:

1) Thoughts on database construction

① The form of the corpus should be diverse. It needs text, pictures, and videos. If it is just words, a large number of consecutive passages will give people a bad impression. The cultural database of ASEAN countries that we have developed can accommodate multimedia materials such as text, images, audio, and video.

② The source of the corpus shall be marked. Because the materials for making the database include first-hand materials by yourself and other materials collected and sorted by yourself. Because this database is related to the culture of the ten ASEAN countries, the data is huge, so it cannot be all first-hand materials of your own. Restricted by objective conditions, it can only be based on the collection and collation of other people's materials. In order to avoid disputes over intellectual property issues, it is very necessary to mark all the corpora. And the database we built is public welfare and serves teaching. If it is for profit, it is another case.

③ The corpus should be proofread. Because the corpus is collected and sorted out, it is inevitable that there will be some omissions. Even if it is your own first-hand material, due to the large amount of material, errors will inevitably occur in the process of material processing. Strengthening proofreading and inspection is an effective way to reduce possible omissions.

④ The construction of a database needs technical support. Technical support is indispensable for database production. This is because engineers who understand technology are often not in this field and are not very familiar with the corpus. However, those who study this field are not very familiar with technology, so technical engineers and researchers should combine organically to solve this problem. Technical support is indispensable. The database is related to computers. If it is an online shared database, it also involves the Internet. These are not traditional paper writing. The development of the database must be supported by computer professionals or experts. Of course, if you are not a computer professional, but you know this, you can, but it is not easy to find. The development and maintenance of the database, and the handling of possible problems in the operation of the database, all need the support and solutions of technicians.

⑤ It should be modified according to the feedback given by students. There is no end to perfection. The same is true of the database. After completion, it should be constantly modified and improved.

2) Thinking about the construction and use of the database

① It should use the cultural database of ASEAN countries to meet the needs of the classroom. We have offered the “ASEAN etiquette and folk culture course” at ordinary times. However, due to the limited PPT capacity of the 45-minute class, the content and breadth can be expanded with the help of the ASEAN culture database.

② Promote students’ use in combination with course assignments. We will combine learning with learning and use the “ASEAN countries’ Cultural Database” in our teaching, and write an article based on our own experience. The requirement we put forward is to have something to say. We should log in to the database and study in person. We cannot make empty comments. It is best to point out the direction of continuous improvement for the “ASEAN countries’ Cultural Database.”

3) Encouraging students to consolidate their knowledge through exercises in the ASEAN cultural database after class.

In the process of building the database, we also gained some insights, mainly as follows:

① It is better to rely on it. We have published the relevant book “etiquette and folk culture of ASEAN countries” in the early stage, and are familiar with the culture of ASEAN countries. We have the corresponding early foundation; on this basis, the construction of the database has been guaranteed. The early stage supports ASEAN countries’ cultural database construction.

② Data collection is the focus. Database development. If database technology is a human skeleton, then the data itself is flesh and blood. The goal of some projects is to build a database, but if its data collection and collation are delayed, this will affect the construction of the database. The data shall be first-hand materials as far as possible. If they are not first-hand materials, the source shall be marked, and the page number shall be detailed. If it is a network resource, it should indicate the quoted website address, etc. The cultural library of ASEAN countries built by us includes taboo culture, social etiquette, language culture, food culture, and other aspects of ASEAN countries. Our data includes not only text, but also pictures, audio, and video. Because audio and video materials are difficult to obtain as first-hand materials, especially those involving foreign ASEAN countries, and there are ten countries, it is very difficult to obtain first-hand materials. Therefore, we can only collect the existing materials. We can do this by recording or screen recording the existing materials. Practice has proved that it can be achieved. However, attention should be paid to the source of the quotation. The database we developed is only used for teaching and scientific research, not for commercial purposes. If it is for commercial use, relevant procedures shall be handled according to relevant requirements.

③ Data entry is an important link. After collecting and sorting out the data, it also involves the problem of entry. The entry phase is less difficult than the collection and sorting phase, but it does not mean that it is not important. Because

of this process, the responsibility of the entry person is very important. When entering, the format of text, pictures, etc. may be disordered, or the setting of the database may not be very perfect, resulting in individual problems when entering. In addition, when inputting, when the inputter contacts the material again, he may also find that there are problems such as typos in the original collected material. At this point, the entry operator can check again to eliminate these errors. Therefore, in this link, the responsibility of the entries is extremely important.

④ Handling of storage space. The traditional stand-alone database can only be used offline, cannot be shared, the usage time is limited, and it cannot be accessed 24 hours a day. It has been difficult to meet the needs of current teaching, research, and hobbyist exchanges. The establishment of the database generally needs to achieve real-time access to the Internet in order to break through these traditional bottlenecks. The storage space can be its own server or the server space of Internet-related enterprises. Of course, materials involving confidentiality shall be subject to relevant regulations. The server space of the database should be large enough. The database should be attached to the corresponding network server. The space of the network server should be large enough; otherwise, when users access it, there will be problems such as sluggishness or videos that cannot be opened.

⑤ People are one of the key elements. The completion of the work mainly depends on people, so having a team with a strong sense of responsibility and hard-working ability is an extremely important aspect of building a good database. Because of the construction of the database, the workload is often very large, and it is impossible for one person to complete it. So in this process, the guarantee of personnel is indispensable. At the same time, these personnel should preferably have a professional knowledge background. Only with a professional knowledge background can we better find possible problems in the materials. Some of these problems may be problems of the material itself, and some may not be problems of the material itself, but problems that occurred in the input process. If there is no professional knowledge background, it is difficult to find these problems and deal with them in time. For example, some professional symbols may have errors when entered.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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