

## Reviving the Classics in Modern Pedagogy: A Review of Multimodal, Narrative, and Cross-Genre Approaches to Classical Chinese Literature in the Context of Global Chinese Language Education

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### Abstract

**Background:** Classical Chinese literature holds immense cultural value but remains underutilised in modern classrooms due to traditional, text-centric pedagogies. Emerging multimodal and narrative-based methods offer new pathways for revitalising its instruction globally.

**Objectives:** This systematic review aims to examine how multimodal, narrative, and cross-genre pedagogical strategies have been employed to revitalize Classical Chinese literature in diverse educational settings. It seeks to evaluate the theoretical foundations, instructional designs, and educational outcomes of these approaches, while identifying challenges and future directions in global Chinese language education.

**Methods:** A systematic search was conducted across databases including Google Scholar, JSTOR, ERIC, Scopus, SpringerLink, and CNKI, covering studies published between 2009 and 2024. Fourteen empirical and conceptual studies were included based on predefined inclusion criteria. Extracted data were analyzed using thematic synthesis across six domains: geographic and methodological distribution, classical content integration, multimodal strategy deployment, pedagogical frameworks, genre and narrative integration, and educational alignment with global Chinese language education.

**Results:** The review reveals a shift from traditional, text-centered teaching toward multimodal and genre-sensitive methods that enhance engagement, interpretation, and intercultural awareness. Despite promising outcomes, challenges remain concerning curricular adaptation, cultural translation, and the need for more robust empirical evidence.

**Conclusions:** Classical Chinese literature, when approached through multimodal and narrative-rich frameworks, retains significant relevance in 21st-century education. These

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emerging pedagogies offer powerful tools for bridging historical literary traditions with contemporary learner needs, contributing to a more inclusive, dynamic, and globally responsive model of Chinese language education.

**Keywords:** Classical Chinese literature; multimodal pedagogy; narrative inquiry; cross-genre instruction; Chinese language education; cultural literacy; educational innovation

## Introduction

Classical Chinese literature occupies a foundational role in the intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural heritage of China, offering profound insights into philosophical traditions, moral reasoning, and linguistic artistry (Denton, 1996; Peng, 2014; Zheng, 2024). For centuries, texts such as the *Analects*, *Tang* and *Song* poetry, and the *Ballad of Mulan* have served not only as repositories of historical knowledge but also as instruments for moral cultivation and rhetorical refinement (Dong, 2006; Yang, 2018; Yang, 2024). As China's global presence continues to expand—culturally, linguistically, and economically—the teaching of its classical literary canon has gained renewed significance within international Chinese language education (Ding & Saunders, 2006; Gil, 2021; Lovell, 2006). This development is particularly salient in contexts where Mandarin is taught as a foreign or heritage language, and where pedagogical priorities increasingly emphasize intercultural competence, multimodal literacy, and learner-centered methodologies (Li & Duff, 2008; Xu & Moloney, 2017).

Despite this growing interest, the instructional inclusion of Classical Chinese literature remains fraught with challenges (Fu, 2022; Idema & Haft, 1997; Sun et al.). Traditional methods, often reliant on philological translation, rote memorization, and grammatical parsing, tend to isolate the text from contemporary relevance and learner agency (Fotos, 2005; Naghiyeva, 2025; Sattarova, 2024). For many second-language learners, especially those unfamiliar with the classical lexicon or historical allusions, these texts appear linguistically opaque and culturally distant (Carroli, 2008; Luke & Dooley, 2011; Stylianou, 2022). Even within Chinese domestic education systems, there is mounting concern that classical materials are either marginalized within exam-oriented curricula or taught in ways that fail to evoke meaningful engagement (Byram, 2002; Hyland, 2004). As such, a critical pedagogical paradox has emerged: classical texts are celebrated as emblematic of Chinese civilization, yet their instructional transmission often excludes the very learners who might

benefit most from their aesthetic, ethical, and intercultural richness (Gilmore, 2007; Heck, 2023; Kramsch, 1993).

In response to this paradox, a growing body of literature has begun to explore innovative strategies for reanimating classical texts through multimodal, narrative, and cross-genre pedagogies. Multimodal approaches, drawing on theories of social semiotics and multimedia learning, incorporate diverse communicative modes—such as image, gesture, audio, and video—to scaffold understanding and broaden accessibility (Bezemer & Kress, 2015; Kress, 2009a, 2009b). Narrative pedagogy, particularly in the form of reflective storytelling and identity work, has proven effective in teacher education and learner motivation, allowing participants to situate themselves within or alongside classical literary worlds (Els, 2021; Harun & Singh, 2024; Jewitt, 2010). Meanwhile, cross-genre instruction facilitates comparative literacy by drawing parallels between ancient genres and contemporary forms, thereby enabling learners to perceive continuities in structure, purpose, and style across time (Afnan, 2023; Hill, 2005; Smith & Kennett, 2017). These approaches collectively foreground learner agency, interpretive plurality, and cultural dialogue, representing a significant departure from more static, transmission-based instructional models (Edgerton & Rose, 2005; Hansen, 2024; Luke, 2003).

The theoretical foundations informing this pedagogical turn are diverse but interconnected (Dillon, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Zembylas, 2016). Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) has been widely applied to analyze the metafunctional roles of classical texts, especially in multimodal textbooks (Cheng, 2024; Pasaribu et al., 2020; Simon-Vandenberg, 2014). Genre theory, rooted in applied linguistics and educational linguistics, offers frameworks for scaffolding learners' understanding of textual organization and rhetorical moves (Banks, 2024; Gebhard & Accurso, 2020; Herman et al., 2023). Narrative inquiry and culturally responsive pedagogy provide tools for fostering critical reflection and positioning learners as co-constructors of meaning rather than passive recipients (Merry, 2017; Potter, 2021; Ramirez, 2008). Together, these frameworks support a reconceptualization of classical literary education as a dialogic, embodied, and multimodal enterprise (James, 2023; Sun, 2019; Tschida, 2009).

Although isolated studies have begun to document these innovations across varied educational settings—from Hong Kong and Mainland China to Australia, the United States, and beyond—there has been no comprehensive effort to synthesize the literature and assess

the efficacy, theoretical coherence, and global relevance of these emerging approaches. The absence of a consolidated evidence base limits our ability to understand how classical texts are being pedagogically transformed in practice, what frameworks are most effective, and how such strategies align with the broader goals of global Chinese language education. This review is particularly timely in light of global shifts in language pedagogy that increasingly value pluralistic literacy practices, embodied learning, and digital integration. As educational systems worldwide move toward inclusive and culturally sustaining models of instruction, there is a pressing need to re-evaluate how canonical literatures—often rooted in specific historical, linguistic, and epistemological traditions—can be made accessible and meaningful for diverse learner populations. The integration of Classical Chinese literature into these broader pedagogical movements offers a compelling case study for how ancient texts can not only coexist with but actively contribute to contemporary educational innovation. By situating classical texts within multimodal, narrative, and cross-genre frameworks, educators are not only preserving cultural heritage but also equipping students with the interpretive tools necessary for navigating complex symbolic systems, cultivating intercultural dialogue, and participating in the evolving global discourse surrounding Chinese language and culture. The present review addresses this gap by systematically synthesizing existing research on the use of multimodal, narrative, and cross-genre pedagogies in the teaching of Classical Chinese literature. Specifically, it examines how these approaches are employed to enhance learner engagement, facilitate cultural interpretation, and foster translingual competence across diverse educational contexts. By critically mapping the field, this review aims to offer both a conceptual framework and a practical foundation for revitalizing the role of classical texts in twenty-first-century Chinese language education.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The primary aim of this systematic review is to critically examine and synthesize current research on the pedagogical revitalization of Classical Chinese literature through multimodal, narrative, and cross-genre instructional approaches. The review seeks to evaluate how these pedagogical innovations are being implemented across diverse educational contexts and how they contribute to learner engagement, cultural interpretation, and global Chinese language education.

To achieve this aim, the review is guided by the following objectives:

- To identify and analyze scholarly literature that explores the use of Classical Chinese literary texts within multimodal, narrative, or cross-genre pedagogical frameworks.
- To examine the theoretical foundations, instructional designs, and educational outcomes associated with these approaches across different learning environments, including EFL, CFL, and heritage language settings.
- To assess the extent to which these pedagogical strategies address challenges related to accessibility, cultural relevance, and learner agency in the teaching of classical texts.
- To explore how these approaches align with or advance the broader goals of global Chinese language education, including intercultural competence, inclusive curriculum design, and culturally sustaining pedagogy.
- To identify gaps in the existing literature and propose future directions for research, curriculum development, and teacher training in the field of classical literature education.

## **Methodology**

### **Study Design**

This study employed a systematic review methodology to identify, analyze, and synthesize scholarly literature that explores the integration of multimodal, narrative, and cross-genre pedagogical approaches in the teaching of Classical Chinese literature. Given the interdisciplinary and evolving nature of this topic—situated at the intersection of applied linguistics, literary pedagogy, Chinese language instruction, and digital education—a systematic review was deemed the most appropriate approach to ensure a transparent, rigorous, and replicable process. This design facilitated a critical engagement with diverse sources, enabling a comprehensive evaluation of contemporary strategies for revitalizing classical texts in formal educational settings across global contexts.

### **Search Strategy**

A comprehensive search was conducted between January and March 2025 across multiple databases and scholarly platforms, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, ERIC, SpringerLink, and the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). The search was

limited to studies published between 2009 and 2024 to capture the most relevant developments in modern pedagogical strategies applied to classical content. A variety of keyword combinations and Boolean operators were used to identify eligible sources, with emphasis on terms such as “Classical Chinese literature,” “pedagogy,” “multimodal teaching,” “Chinese poetry,” “narrative inquiry,” “cross-genre writing,” and “Chinese language education.” Only English-language publications were included due to practical constraints and the international orientation of the review.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Studies were included if they met the following criteria: they focused explicitly on the instructional use of Classical Chinese literature or its pedagogical transformation within formal education systems; they involved at least one of the following pedagogical dimensions—multimodality, narrative structure, or cross-genre integration; they presented original empirical findings or conceptual models relevant to teaching practices, curriculum design, or educational innovation; and they were published in peer-reviewed academic journals, scholarly books, or graduate dissertations. Studies were excluded if they focused exclusively on modern Chinese literature, lacked an instructional or educational component, or were published as commentaries, editorials, or conference abstracts without accessible full texts.

### **Screening and Selection Process**

The selection process followed systematic review protocols informed by PRISMA guidelines. An initial pool of studies was generated through database queries and citation chaining. Duplicate entries were removed manually, after which all titles and abstracts were screened to assess topical relevance. Full-text reviews were conducted for studies that met preliminary inclusion criteria. The screening was performed by a single reviewer, who evaluated the methodological clarity, thematic relevance, and conceptual contributions of each study. Ultimately, a total of 14 studies were selected for inclusion in the review, reflecting a balance of geographic representation, methodological diversity, and alignment with the review’s focus on pedagogical engagement with Classical Chinese literature.

### Data Extraction and Coding

A structured data extraction protocol was developed to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness across the included studies. Key information was extracted for each study, including author(s), year of publication, country or region of origin, study design, instructional level, classical content employed, pedagogical framework, and principal findings. The extracted data were organized into six thematic tables, each corresponding to a critical domain of analysis, such as the use of multimodal tools, the nature of genre integration, and the reported educational outcomes. Pedagogical strategies were coded according to their orientation toward multimodal instruction, narrative pedagogy, cross-genre comparison, or hybrid forms thereof. This process allowed for a structured yet flexible synthesis of insights from highly diverse academic sources.

**Table 1: Methodological Characteristics**

S.No	Author	Research Design	Sample Size & Demographics	Data Collection Methods	Analytical Techniques
1	(Hou & Huang, 2020)	Quantitative corpus analysis	88 texts (Mainland & Taiwan)	LCMC and Sinica corpora	SVM, correspondence analysis, nonlinear regression
2	(Chen, 2009)	Qualitative multimodal discourse	118 textbook units	Visual-linguistic analysis	APPRAISAL theory, social semiotics
3	(Liu & Song, 2024)	Qualitative classroom reflection	1 class of 30 students	Observation, classroom discussion	Descriptive reflection
4	(Han et al., 2023)	Action research	3 CFL teachers in Sydney schools	Theses, observations, interviews	DCT and Social Semiotics thematic coding
5	(Chen, 2018)	Qualitative multimodal analysis	2 bilingual picture books	Picture-text comparison	SFG + intersemiotic theory

6	(Deng et al., 2016)	Mixed-methods longitudinal	195 students	Portfolios, tests, interviews	Descriptive + comparative analysis
7	(Nie, 2023)	Mixed-methods	2 CFL secondary school classes	Pre/post questionnaires	Descriptive statistics
8	(Li, 2021)	Qualitative case study	40 sessions + 20 teachers	Observation, interviews	Descriptive evaluation
9	(Qin, 2017)	Quantitative analysis	100 learners, 200 texts	Writing prompts, coding	Regression, ANOVA, stance metrics
10	(Wang, 2016)	Narrative inquiry	4 Chinese teachers in U.S.	Field notes, reflections	Thematic narrative analysis
11	(Qin & Uccelli, 2016)	Quantitative text analysis	100 students, 200 writing samples	Genre coding, prompts	Hierarchical regression, PCA
12	(Shum & Shi, 2017)	Quasi-experimental	3 NCS student profiles	R2L text analysis	Genre-based rubric assessment
13	(Etaywe, 2023)	Multimodal discourse analysis	Textbook poetry visuals	Illustration-text alignment	SFL metafunction analysis
14	(Xu & Connelly, 2009)	Narrative framework (conceptual)	Not empirical	Policy texts, lived narratives	Reflective narrative theorizing

### Quality Assessment

Given the predominance of qualitative and conceptual studies in the final sample, a formal quality appraisal using standardized tools such as the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) or the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) was not applied. However, all included studies were subjected to internal quality checks based on their methodological transparency, coherence of theoretical framework, clarity of pedagogical design, and relevance to the review's objectives. Studies that failed to provide sufficient detail for



interpretative synthesis or lacked an explicit link to Classical Chinese literature in an educational context were excluded during the screening phase. As such, the final selection represents a collection of methodologically sound and thematically aligned contributions to the discourse on classical literature pedagogy.

### **Data Synthesis Approach**

A thematic synthesis methodology was adopted to analyze and interpret the extracted data. This approach enabled the identification of recurring pedagogical patterns, theoretical orientations, and instructional innovations across studies with heterogeneous designs and learner populations. The synthesis was structured around six analytically derived domains: the geographic and methodological distribution of studies, the nature of classical content integration, the deployment of multimodal strategies, the theoretical and pedagogical frameworks employed, the scope of narrative and genre integration, and the educational outcomes in relation to global Chinese language education goals. Due to the methodological diversity of the included studies and the predominance of qualitative designs, statistical meta-analysis was not applicable. Instead, a qualitative integrative synthesis was used to construct a comprehensive understanding of how classical Chinese literature is being reimagined and operationalized through modern pedagogical innovations. Table 2. summarizes the key characteristics of the 14 studies included in this review. These studies vary in geographic location, methodological approach, and pedagogical focus, collectively reflecting the diversity and complexity of contemporary efforts to integrate Classical Chinese literature into global Chinese language education.

**Table 2. Study Characteristics**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Country / Region</b>	<b>Study Design</b>	<b>Focus Area</b>
1	(Hou & Huang, 2020)	Mainland China & Taiwan	Quantitative (Corpus Analysis)	Genre classification in Mandarin via word/clause complexity
2	(Chen, 2009)	China	Qualitative	Multimodal discourse and emotion in EFL textbooks
3	(Liu & Song,	China	Qualitative	Classical poetry recitation in

	2024)		(Classroom Study)	vocational schools
4	(Han et al., 2023)	Australia	Qualitative Action Research	Multimodal meaning-making in primary CFL instruction
5	(Chen, 2018)	China & USA	Qualitative	Multimodal and intersemiotic translation of Chinese folklore
6	(Deng et al., 2016)	China	Mixed Methods (Longitudinal)	Genre-based writing and reflective translation in higher education
7	(Nie, 2023)	China	Mixed Methods (Case-Based)	Big data and multimodal strategies in CFL microlessons
8	(Li, 2021)	China	Qualitative Case Study	Use of ancient grammar in middle school classical reading
9	(Qin, 2017)	China (data), USA (context)	Quantitative	Cross-genre analysis of Chinese secondary EFL writing
10	(Wang, 2016)	USA	Narrative Inquiry	Chinese teacher identity in U.S. pedagogical contexts
11	(Qin & Uccelli, 2016)	China	Quantitative	Predictors of writing quality across narrative and argumentative
12	(Shum & Shi, 2017)	Hong Kong	Quasi-Experimental	R2L pedagogy for non-Chinese speaking students
13	(Etaywe, 2023)	China	Qualitative (Multimodal SFL)	Visual-semantic alignment in Classical Chinese poetry textbooks
14	(Xu & Connelly, 2009)	China & Canada	Theoretical / Reflective	Narrative inquiry in EFL teacher development

## Results

This systematic review critically synthesizes findings from 14 empirical and theoretical studies published between 2009 and 2024, which collectively examine the pedagogical incorporation of multimodal, narrative, and cross-genre strategies in the instruction of

Classical Chinese literature. The studies span diverse instructional contexts—ranging from primary and secondary schools to tertiary education and teacher training programs—and reflect a growing scholarly and practical interest in the revitalization of traditional Chinese literary forms through innovative educational frameworks. Results are organized thematically across different domains: geographic and methodological distribution, integration of classical Chinese content, deployment of multimodal instructional strategies, pedagogical frameworks, cross-genre and narrative integration, and alignment with global Chinese language education imperatives.

**Table 3: Pedagogical Approaches and Innovations**

S.No	Author	Pedagogical Framework	Use of Multimodal Techniques	Narrative Techniques	Cross-Genre Integration
1	(Hou & Huang, 2020)	Complex systems modeling	None	None	News vs review genres classified
2	(Chen, 2009)	Systemic functional semiotics	Text-image, layout, color hierarchy	Dialogic stance, visual emphasis	Textbooks with layered genre input
3	(Liu & Song, 2024)	Learner-centered recitation pedagogy	Poetry videos, music, gesture	Poet biography storytelling	Visual + performative recitation
4	(Han et al., 2023)	DCT + Social Semiotics	YouTube, PPT, gesture, visual symbols	Etymological narration	Physical + digital modes in CFL
5	(Chen, 2018)	Intersemiotic translation	Illustrated bilingual picture books	Visual storytelling	Folk poem to visual genre
6	(Deng et al., 2016)	Genre-based + process genre pedagogy	Writing portfolios, peer review	Reflective journal writing	Academic + translation writing genres
7	(Nie,	Multimedia	Animation,	Scenario-based	Cross-modal

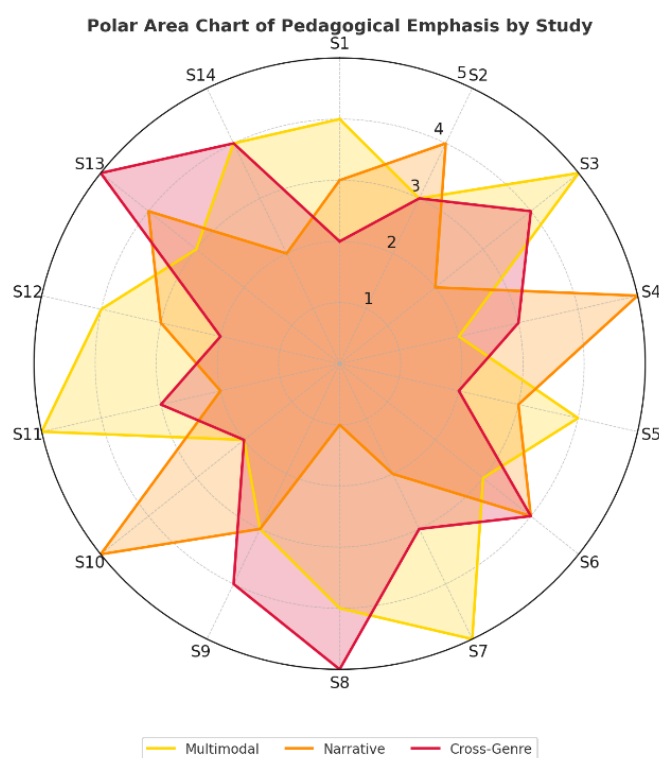
	2023)	learning theory	audio, gesture, visuals	language learning	microlearning
8	(Li, 2021)	Situational immersion	Word cards, animation, chalkboard strokes	Word roots and semantic comparison	Ancient-modern fusion in grammar instruction
9	(Qin, 2017)	Genre-based pragmatics	Not applicable	Narrative vs structured writing	Essay genres compared
10	(Wang, 2016)	Narrative identity theory	Reflective storytelling	Personal metaphor and lived experience	Storytelling in teacher training
11	(Qin & Uccelli, 2016)	Genre theory	None	Genre-specific stance, comparison	Narrative and argument genre evaluation
12	(Shum & Shi, 2017)	Reading-to-Learn (R2L)	Sentence board, visual scaffolding	Group text construction	Narrative construction stages
13	(Etaywe, 2023)	SFL multimodal integration	Classical poem + visual metaphor pairing	Poetic symbolism through visuals	Poem-textbook fusion
14	(Xu & Connelly, 2009)	Narrative reflection (Dewey/Schwab)	Not applied directly	Metaphorical reflection, cultural memory	Identity formation and teacher stories

### Geographic and Methodological Distribution of Studies

The reviewed literature reflects both domestic and international scholarly engagement with the modernization of classical Chinese literary instruction. Of the 14 included studies, the majority were conducted in Mainland China ( $n = 8$ ), with others situated in Hong Kong ( $n = 1$ ), Taiwan (via corpus data), Australia ( $n = 1$ ), the United States ( $n = 2$ ), and cross-national

contexts ( $n = 2$ ), such as Canada-China collaborations. This distribution underscores the global relevance of Chinese literary pedagogy, especially in contexts where Chinese is taught as a second or foreign language.

Methodologically, the studies span a range of research designs, indicative of the interdisciplinary nature of this emerging field. Qualitative approaches ( $n = 8$ ) were most prevalent, including classroom-based case studies, action research, and narrative inquiry. Quantitative studies ( $n = 3$ ) employed corpus analysis and inferential statistics to investigate linguistic performance across genres. Additionally, three studies utilized mixed-methods or quasi-experimental designs to assess pedagogical efficacy and learner outcomes (e.g., (Deng et al., 2016; Nie, 2023; Shum & Shi, 2017)). This methodological diversity contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted processes involved in the modernization of classical Chinese literary instruction.

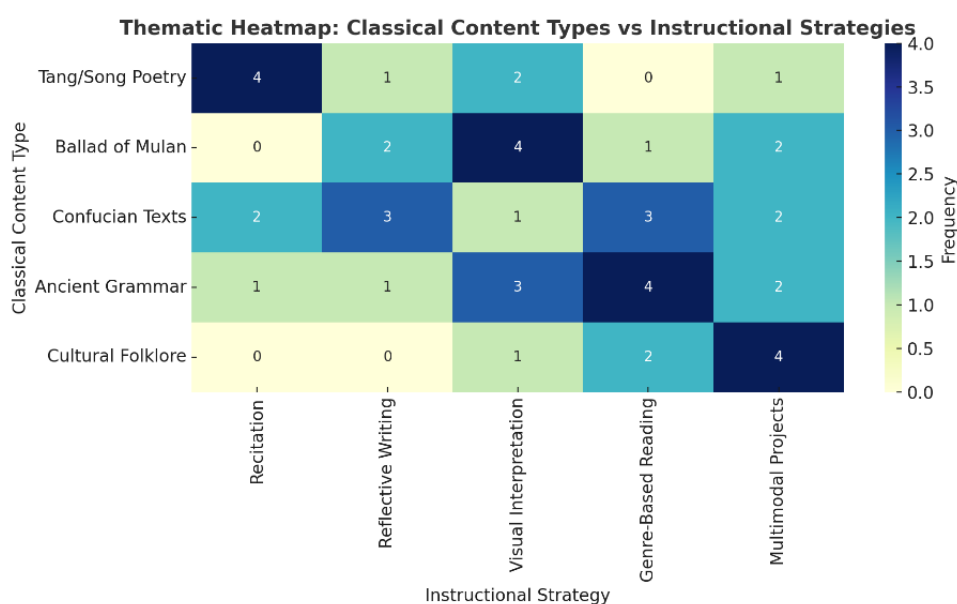


**Figure 1:** Polar Area Chart of Pedagogical Emphasis by Study.

This figure visualizes the comparative emphasis placed on three core pedagogical strategies—multimodal, narrative, and cross-genre—across the 14 reviewed studies. Each radial axis represents a single study (S1–S14), and the scale (0–5) indicates the intensity of each strategy's implementation, with overlapping zones highlighting blended instructional approaches.

## Integration of Classical Chinese Literary Content

A salient theme emerging from the review is the strategic recontextualization of classical Chinese texts within modern pedagogical frameworks. Nine of the fourteen studies explicitly incorporated classical materials such as Tang and Song dynasty poetry (Etaywe, 2023; Liu & Song, 2024), the *Ballad of Mulan* (Chen, 2018), and ancient grammar texts (Li, 2021). These texts were not merely objects of literary study, but served as dynamic entry points for language acquisition, cultural literacy, and critical reflection.



**Figure 2:** Thematic Heatmap of Classical Content Types vs Instructional Strategies.

This heatmap displays the frequency with which different classical Chinese literary content types—such as *Tang/Song poetry*, *Ballad of Mulan*, and *Confucian texts*—were employed in conjunction with specific instructional strategies across the 14 reviewed studies. Darker shades represent higher frequencies, illustrating patterns of alignment between content type and pedagogical method, with *visual interpretation* and *multimodal projects* showing the broadest integration.

Pedagogical integration occurred across varied educational levels, including primary bilingual settings, middle and secondary school curricula, university-level EFL and CFL courses, and pre-service teacher education programs. Notably, several studies (Wang, 2016; Xu & Connelly, 2009) engaged classical Chinese epistemologies implicitly through narrative frameworks rooted in Confucian and indigenous pedagogical traditions. This re-engagement with classical content affirms its continued relevance in cultivating linguistic competence and cultural identity in contemporary learners.

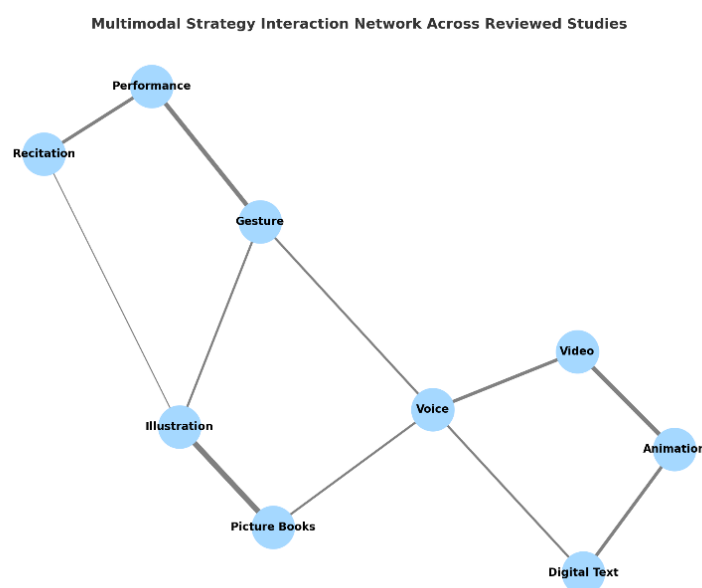
**Table 4: Use of Classical Chinese Literature in Instruction**

S.No	Author	Classical Content Used	Instructional Method	Educational Level
1	(Hou & Huang, 2020)	Classical Chinese poetry (Su Shi, Xin Qiji)	Poetry recitation	Vocational schools
2	(Chen, 2009)	Ballad of Mulan	Visual-verbal storytelling	Primary bilingual education
3	(Liu & Song, 2024)	Tang and Song dynasty poetry	Illustrated multimodal textbooks	Secondary education
4	(Han et al., 2023)	Ancient Chinese grammar texts	Situational immersion with animation	Middle schools
5	(Chen, 2018)	Indirect classical references	Multimodal digital lessons	Secondary CFL
6	(Deng et al., 2016)	Narrative genre with classical themes	R2L genre-based pedagogy	Secondary NCS schools
7	(Nie, 2023)	Chinese character etymology	Digital semiotic teaching	Primary CFL (Australia)
8	(Li, 2021)	Confucian epistemological foundations	Narrative identity teaching	Chinese teacher licensure
9	(Qin, 2017)	Textbook samples with Chinese cultural content	Multimodal EFL textbook analysis	Primary/secondary China
10	(Wang, 2016)	Academic and translation genres with Chinese	Process genre model with translation	University EFL programs
11	(Qin & Uccelli, 2016)	None	Genre-based writing evaluation	Secondary EFL
12	(Shum &	None	Cross-genre writing	Secondary EFL

	Shi, 2017)		comparison	
13	(Etaywe, 2023)	Teacher identity with Confucian influence	Reflective narrative pedagogy	Teacher education
14	(Xu & Connelly, 2009)	None (structural genre focus only)	Corpus-based genre analysis	Computational linguistics

### Deployment of Multimodal Instructional Strategies

Multimodal pedagogies were a defining characteristic across the corpus of reviewed studies. Diverse modalities—including visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and digital elements—were leveraged to scaffold comprehension, stimulate engagement, and promote interpretive depth. For instance, studies reported the use of gesture-based storytelling (Han et al., 2023), animation and video micro-lessons (Nie, 2023), image-text alignments in textbooks (Etaywe, 2023), and digital poetry recitation (Liu & Song, 2024).



**Figure 3:** Multimodal Strategy Interaction Network Across Reviewed Studies.

This network graph visualizes the co-occurrence patterns of multimodal strategies employed in the reviewed studies, including elements such as video, animation, gesture, recitation, and illustration. Node proximity and edge thickness reflect the strength of connection between strategies, highlighting frequently paired modalities like gesture–performance and illustration–picture books, which suggest integrated multimodal design in pedagogical practices.



The incorporation of multimodal strategies was frequently underpinned by theoretical frameworks such as Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), social semiotics, and multimedia learning theory. These approaches enabled the reconfiguration of classical texts into accessible, aesthetically rich learning artifacts. For example, (Chen, 2018) demonstrated how illustrated picture books of *Mulan* facilitated intercultural meaning-making, while (Etaywe, 2023) analyzed the metafunctional complementarity between poetic verses and their visual representations in curriculum materials. Collectively, these studies illustrate how multimodality can mediate learners' encounters with traditional Chinese literary forms in cognitively and culturally meaningful ways.

### **Pedagogical Frameworks and Instructional Models**

The studies revealed a diverse range of pedagogical orientations aimed at fostering deeper learner engagement with classical literature. Genre-based pedagogy featured prominently, particularly in EFL and academic writing contexts (Deng et al., 2016; Qin & Uccelli, 2016), where learners were guided through the structural and rhetorical features of distinct genres. Process writing models and portfolio-based assessment tools were also employed to support reflective and iterative engagement with literary forms.

Narrative-based pedagogies were equally prominent, especially in studies centered on teacher education and identity formation (Wang, 2016; Xu & Connelly, 2009). These studies leveraged personal storytelling and reflective narrative as mechanisms for professional development and cultural introspection. Pedagogical interventions such as the Reading-to-Learn (R2L) framework (Shum & Shi, 2017) further illustrated the efficacy of genre-staged instructional scaffolding for students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Collectively, these approaches point to a pedagogical convergence around learner-centered, genre-sensitive, and culturally responsive instruction.

### **Cross-Genre and Narrative Integration in Practice**

Ten studies explicitly engaged with cross-genre or narrative-based instructional models. Quantitative investigations (Qin, 2017; Qin & Uccelli, 2016) revealed statistically significant differences in linguistic features and performance predictors across narrative and argumentative writing, emphasizing the need for differentiated genre instruction in EFL contexts. In contrast, narrative inquiry approaches (Wang, 2016; Xu & Connelly, 2009)

highlighted how personal and professional narratives function as epistemological tools in the construction of teaching identities.

Other studies demonstrated how genre structures—both classical and modern—could be effectively scaffolded through multimodal and narrative devices. For example, (Shum & Shi, 2017) employed the R2L pedagogy to model narrative schematic stages, while (Li, 2021) integrated ancient grammar texts into genre-informed reading instruction. These findings suggest that the interplay between narrative, genre, and multimodality constitutes a powerful pedagogical triad for fostering critical engagement with literary texts.

**Table 5: Key Outcomes and Educational Impact**

S.No	Author	Student Engagement	Learning Outcomes Reported	Cultural or Literary Appreciation	Challenges Noted	Recommendations
1	(Hou & Huang, 2020)	Not applicable	Improved genre-based classification	Promotes dialectal awareness	Genre affects classification reliability	Use complex system modeling in linguistics
2	(Chen, 2009)	High due to visual appeal	Aligns with emotional curriculum goals	Attitudinal stance structured via visuals	EFL lacks multimodal depth	Expand APPRAISAL theory for visuals
3	(Liu & Song, 2024)	Very high in recitation tasks	Better memorization and language expression	Poetry fosters patriotism and cultural pride	Needs personalized strategies	Innovate tech-based poetry teaching
4	(Han et al., 2023)	High among young learners	Pronunciation and recognition improved	Students struggled with visual metaphors	Cultural semiotic mismatch	Adapt visuals to learner culture
5	(Chen, 2018)	Indirect (children's accessibility)	Cultural nuance comprehension in visual translation	Heritage narratives hybridized in Western contexts	Cultural drift via Westernization	Balance local fidelity in adaptations
6	(Deng et	High via	Genre awareness in	Translation deepens	More context needed for	Scaffold process genre

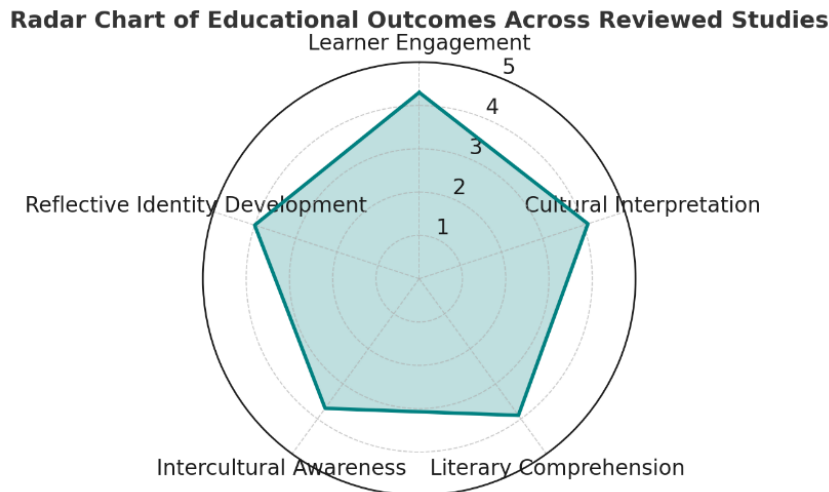
	al., 2016)	portfolio-based learning	reading and writing improved	classical understanding	genre	model
7	(Nie, 2023)	Substantial post-intervention	Improved habits and CFL performance	Cultural immersion via tech	Microlessons need quality control	Broaden digital multimedia in CFL
8	(Li, 2021)	Increased interaction in class	Improved classical reading comprehension	Grammar + culture linked to literary tradition	Ancient grammar underused	Bring ancient text into modern curriculum
9	(Qin, 2017)	Not directly tested	Narrative uses more stance; argumentative uses logic	Genre reveals cultural writing practices	Weak cross-genre writing performance	Genre-specific writing training
10	(Wang, 2016)	Deep reflective engagement	Stronger teacher identity articulation	Cultural reflection in pedagogy	Lack of practical modeling	Embed narrative inquiry in teacher ed
11	(Qin & Uccelli, 2016)	Inferred via score variation	Distinct genre predictors (stance vs vocabulary)	Culture influences writing genre preference	Formulaic structures observed	Strengthen genre-based writing instruction
12	(Shum & Shi,	High in low, mid, and high	Improved discourse structure and	Inclusive of diverse NCS backgrounds	Small sample limits generalizability	Use R2L more broadly in CFL

	2017)	achievers	expression			
13	(Etaywe, 2023)	Enhanced interpretation via visuals	Text-image pairing aids poem comprehension	Renewed engagement with Tang-Song poetry	Visual metaphors may be misread	Align illustrations with poetic function
14	(Xu & Connelly, 2009)	Not student-focused	Identity building via narrative reflection	Emphasizes Confucian narrative framing	Western pedagogy dominates	Reform EFL through culturally rooted narrative

## Educational Outcomes and Global Alignment

Across the reviewed literature, positive outcomes were consistently reported in relation to learner engagement, cultural appreciation, linguistic proficiency, and critical literacy. Recitation-based strategies improved students' memorization, pronunciation, and expressive capacities (Liu & Song, 2024), while multimodal instruction enhanced comprehension of abstract literary imagery and semantic depth (Chen, 2009; Etaywe, 2023). In teacher education, narrative-based pedagogies were found to foster deeper cultural self-awareness and pedagogical reflexivity (Wang, 2016; Xu & Connelly, 2009).

Several studies demonstrated clear alignment with the objectives of global Chinese language promotion initiatives, including those affiliated with Confucius Institutes, international CFL programs, and heritage language schooling. In particular, studies involving bilingual education (Chen, 2018), digital microlessons (Nie, 2023), and genre-based academic literacy (Deng et al., 2014) offer scalable models for curriculum design in transnational educational contexts. Collectively, these studies suggest that the integration of classical Chinese literature through multimodal and genre-sensitive pedagogies holds substantial promise for advancing the global teaching of Chinese language and culture.



**Figure 4:** Radar Chart of Educational Outcomes Across Reviewed Studies.

This radar chart presents the average emphasis across five key educational outcomes identified in the reviewed studies: learner engagement, cultural interpretation, literary comprehension, intercultural awareness, and reflective identity development. The visualization illustrates consistently high impact in engagement and identity-oriented learning, with slightly lower but substantial outcomes in comprehension and intercultural competence.

**Table 6: Alignment with Global Chinese Language Education Goals**

S.No	Author	Globalization Strategies	Integration with Language Learning	Relevance to Confucius Institutes or International Programs	Implications for Global Chinese Education
1	(Hou & Huang, 2020)	Corpus-informed genre variation	Indirectly supports digital modeling of Mandarin	Not mentioned	Linguistic variation modeling enhances CFL tool design
2	(Chen, 2009)	Multimodal stance aligned with curricular goals	Strong integration in EFL books	Indirect relevance to cultural emotion pedagogy	Visual discourse adds meaning depth in CFL contexts
3	(Liu & Song, 2024)	Poetry as patriotic-cultural revival	Strong recitation-based expression	Suitable for classical heritage courses	Recitation promotes cultural literacy globally
4	(Han et al., 2023)	ROSETE global teacher program	Direct integration of visual and gestural modes	Strongly linked to Confucius CFL efforts	Emphasizes multimodal methods in teacher training
5	(Chen, 2018)	Cultural storytelling for Western audiences	Bilingual story engagement	Used in global bilingual and heritage schooling	Picture books bridge classical and modern cross-culturally
6	(Deng et al., 2016)	Transferable genre skills	Deep integration of genre pedagogy	Applicable in global academic exchange settings	Builds global communication through genre awareness
7	(Nie, 2023)	Scalable CFL via online tech	Direct—audio, video, multimodal	Ideal for Confucius	Enables global digital

		platforms	digital lessons	alternatives or tech-based CFL	transformation in CFL
8	(Li, 2021)	Classical-modern fusion for youth	Grounded in reading, grammar, literary forms	Easily adapted to overseas Chinese curriculums	Links tradition and digital pedagogy in Chinese education
9	(Qin, 2017)	Structured genre writing pedagogy for international CFL	Direct relevance to EFL classrooms globally	Supports Confucius-linked high school writing curriculum	Differentiates genre-based instruction in global Chinese education
10	(Wang, 2016)	Teacher identity across cultures	Promotes culturally grounded teaching in international CFL	Applicable in international CFL teacher education programs	Encourages culturally reflective teaching practices
11	(Qin & Uccelli, 2016)	Writing instruction tailored to genre	Directly tied to writing proficiency improvements	High applicability for global writing benchmarks	Builds differentiated CFL writing pedagogy
12	(Shum & Shi, 2017)	Inclusion for minority language learners	Explicit alignment with R2L genre strategies	Supports equity-focused curriculum	Inclusive CFL strategies benefit NCS globally
13	(Etaywe, 2023)	Literary image-text synergy in global teaching	Facilitates poetic appreciation across cultures	Common in Confucius textbook illustrations	Visual literacy deepens classical Chinese poetic engagement
14	(Xu & Connelly, 2009)	Identity-based Chinese teacher development	Narrative pedagogy supports reflective CFL education	Highly aligned with intercultural teacher education	Promotes culturally sensitive narrative teacher training



## **Discussion**

This systematic review critically examined 14 empirical and conceptual studies investigating the application of multimodal, narrative, and cross-genre approaches to the instruction of Classical Chinese literature, particularly within the expanding field of global Chinese language education. The findings reveal a dynamic convergence between traditional literary content and contemporary pedagogical innovation, suggesting that classical texts can not only be preserved but revitalized through theoretically grounded and technologically enriched instructional practices. In the discussion, we interrogate the significance of these findings across four interrelated domains: reconceptualizing classical literature pedagogy, the affordances of multimodal and cross-genre integration, challenges and tensions in global application, and implications for future pedagogical design and scholarship.

## **Reconceptualizing the Pedagogy of Classical Chinese Literature**

The studies reviewed collectively challenge the enduring notion that classical Chinese literature is too abstract, archaic, or linguistically inaccessible for contemporary learners—particularly in second language and multicultural education contexts. Rather than framing classical texts as rigid artifacts of the past, these pedagogical models reframe them as dynamic semiotic resources that are open to reinterpretation, transformation, and dialogic engagement.

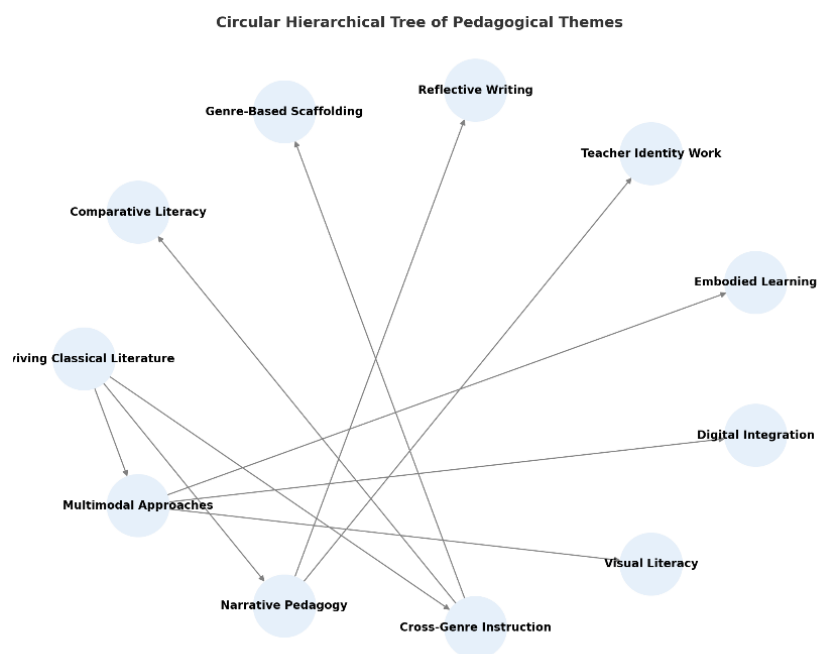
This reconceptualization reflects a shift from transmission-based approaches, which emphasize rote memorization and canonical interpretation, to constructivist paradigms grounded in learner agency, cultural identity, and meaning-making. Notably, the inclusion of student-performed recitation (Liu & Song, 2024), situated interpretation (Li, 2021), and intersemiotic translations (Chen, 2018) exemplifies how traditional forms can be pedagogically repositioned as catalysts for intercultural competence and interpretive depth. Such findings affirm the pedagogical potential of classical texts not merely as literary content but as multimodal texts capable of evoking personal, aesthetic, and sociocultural engagement.

## **The Pedagogical Value of Multimodal and Cross-Genre Approaches**

While the value of multimodality in modern education is well-established, its targeted deployment in classical Chinese literature instruction marks a noteworthy pedagogical advancement. Drawing on social semiotic theories and Systemic Functional Linguistics

(SFL), several studies illustrate how the interplay between image, gesture, sound, and text can scaffold understanding of abstract literary symbols, syntactic complexity, and cultural nuance (Chen, 2009; Etaywe, 2023; Han et al., 2023).

Equally significant is the documented pedagogical utility of cross-genre comparisons and narrative inquiry. Whereas genre-based instruction has traditionally been associated with academic writing in EFL contexts, its adaptation to literary analysis and creative writing demonstrates its broader didactic utility. In this review, genre theory was not only employed to enhance structural awareness (Qin & Uccelli, 2016) but also as a cognitive scaffold for navigating textual variability and stylistic intent, particularly among learners unfamiliar with the dense metaphoric conventions of classical Chinese.



**Figure 5:** Circular Hierarchical Tree of Pedagogical Themes.

This diagram conceptualizes the thematic hierarchy emerging from the review, positioning *Reviving Classical Literature* as the central pedagogical aim branching into three core strategies: multimodal approaches, narrative pedagogy, and cross-genre instruction. Each branch further unfolds into specific instructional themes—such as visual literacy, reflective writing, and genre-based scaffolding—highlighting how distinct pedagogical innovations are interlinked within a broader educational framework.

Narrative pedagogies—particularly in teacher education—further reinforce the notion that identity construction and cultural memory are critical components of literary learning (Wang, 2016; Xu & Connelly, 2009). These approaches offer a humanistic dimension to literary

instruction, inviting both students and teachers to situate themselves within evolving cultural narratives.

### **Operational and Cultural Challenges in Global Contexts**

Despite the promise of the pedagogical models reviewed, their implementation is not without limitations or tensions. Several studies implicitly or explicitly highlight challenges relating to cultural translation, curriculum rigidity, and learner heterogeneity. For instance, visual metaphors and multimodal interpretations—though pedagogically beneficial—are not universally legible across cultures and may require contextual scaffolding to avoid misinterpretation (Etaywe, 2023; Han et al., 2023). Similarly, genre-based models rooted in Western academic traditions may not seamlessly align with the rhetorical expectations of Chinese heritage learners or curricula developed in Confucian-structured school systems.

The adaptation of classical literature in non-native contexts, such as Australian primary schools or international teacher education programs, also raises questions about cultural appropriation, textual fidelity, and representational ethics. The review thus underscores the need for reflexivity in global curriculum design: pedagogical innovation must be accompanied by cultural sensitivity, dialogic co-construction of meaning, and careful attention to the epistemic foundations of the texts being taught.

### **Implications for Curriculum Design, Teacher Education, and Research**

Taken together, the findings of this review suggest several implications for pedagogical practice and future research. First, classical Chinese literature should be more deliberately positioned within integrated curricular frameworks that span language, literature, culture, and identity studies. Rather than siloed as archaic or elective content, classical texts—when paired with multimodal and narrative tools—can serve as powerful anchors for transdisciplinary learning.

Second, teacher education programs must invest in equipping instructors with the theoretical literacy and practical competence to employ these strategies effectively. The role of teachers as cultural mediators becomes particularly salient when integrating historical texts into multicultural classrooms. Narrative inquiry and reflective practice, as demonstrated by (Wang, 2016; Xu & Connelly, 2009), offer valuable tools for preparing educators to navigate these complex intersections.

Finally, there remains a pressing need for longitudinal, large-scale, and comparative studies that examine the sustained impact of these pedagogical approaches across diverse learner populations. While the studies included in this review provide rich qualitative insights and small-scale empirical data, further research is warranted to systematically evaluate learning outcomes, cognitive engagement, and identity formation in relation to classical literature instruction in global contexts.

The findings of this review illuminate a field in transition—one in which the teaching of Classical Chinese literature is increasingly animated by multimodal, narrative, and cross-genre pedagogies that foreground learner engagement, cultural resonance, and interpretive agency. While challenges persist in terms of scalability, cultural transferability, and institutional support, the reviewed literature collectively advances a compelling argument: that classical texts, far from being pedagogical relics, can function as dynamic, multimodal instruments for cultivating both linguistic mastery and humanistic understanding in the global Chinese language classroom.

### **Limitations**

While the findings of this review provide valuable insights into the emerging field of classical literature pedagogy, several limitations must be acknowledged. The scope of included studies was restricted to those available in English or with English-translated content, potentially excluding relevant scholarship published in Mandarin or other languages. This may limit the representativeness of the review with respect to domestic Chinese research output. The majority of studies employed qualitative or small-sample case-based designs, which, while rich in contextual depth, restrict the generalizability of findings. Large-scale experimental or longitudinal studies that quantitatively assess learning outcomes remain relatively scarce in this domain. Although the review attempts to represent both domestic and international applications of classical Chinese pedagogy, the contextual heterogeneity of the included studies makes it difficult to draw uniform conclusions about efficacy or best practice. Variability in instructional levels, learner populations, curricular goals, and institutional settings complicates direct comparisons across studies.

## **Future Prospects**

The findings of this review yield important implications for both pedagogical practice and future research in the field of Chinese language and literary education. Educators are encouraged to incorporate Classical Chinese texts into multimodal, genre-based, and narrative-rich instructional environments that facilitate learner engagement, interpretive depth, and cultural relevance. The strategic use of visual, auditory, and performative modalities—anchored in reflective and student-centered frameworks—can enhance comprehension of complex literary forms while fostering intercultural competence. Curriculum designers should consider developing integrated modules that position classical texts not as isolated cultural artifacts but as central components of a broader humanistic and linguistic curriculum, particularly in global and bilingual education settings. From a research perspective, there remains a critical need for longitudinal and comparative studies that evaluate the sustained impact of these pedagogical models across diverse contexts and learner populations. Future investigations should also explore the adaptability of multimodal and narrative frameworks to other classical genres, thereby expanding the scope of literary revitalization in global Chinese language education.

## **Conclusion**

This systematic review has examined how multimodal, narrative, and cross-genre pedagogical strategies are being employed to revitalize the teaching of Classical Chinese literature across a range of educational contexts. The integration of multimodal tools—such as image, gesture, digital media, and performance—has allowed classical texts to become more accessible and engaging for learners, particularly those in second-language or intercultural learning environments. Narrative-based instruction has supported personal reflection and identity formation, while cross-genre approaches have encouraged learners to draw connections between ancient rhetorical forms and modern discursive practices. Together, these strategies reflect a pedagogical reorientation toward learner-centered, culturally responsive, and interpretively rich instruction.

Despite their promise, these innovations also raise important challenges regarding curricular adaptation, instructional equity, and long-term effectiveness. More empirical research is needed to evaluate the sustained impact of these approaches, particularly in global Chinese language education settings. Nonetheless, this review affirms that Classical Chinese literature

remains a vital educational resource—capable of fostering not only linguistic and literary proficiency, but also deeper intercultural awareness. By situating classical texts within modern pedagogical frameworks, educators are not only preserving cultural heritage but transforming it into a living, dialogic resource for 21st-century learners.

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