



Surveying on Folk Song Singing Course Teaching Method at Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Chengdu City, Sichuan Province

Shi Lijing¹, Nayos Sartjinpong²

^{1,2}Faculty of Music, Bangkok Thonburi University, Thailand

✉: 465175270@qq.com
(Corresponding Email)

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Abstract

This study aims to survey on Folk Song Course Teaching Method at Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Chengdu City, Sichuan Province. Employing a qualitative research approach, in-depth interviews were conducted with three vocal instructors who served as key informants. The study focused on both general aspects—such as environment, teaching content, teaching methods, teaching Equipment, activities, student participation, and evaluation. Observation forms and interview protocols were utilized as research tools, and expert validation was conducted to ensure reliability. The research results reveal a comprehensive and systematic model of folk song course teaching method at Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Chengdu City, Sichuan Province., categorized into seven key areas. First, the environment, was well-equipped with soundproof vocal rooms, pianos, mirrors, and teaching aids that supported focused learning. Second, teaching content, the sophomore curriculum emphasized technical development, pronunciation accuracy, and singing method of folk singing another region. Third, teaching method, the instruction methods combined theory and practice through personalized teaching, including vocal demonstrations and expressive training. Fourth, activities, the folk song major of Sichuan Conservatory of Music organizes a variety of activities on campus, including performances, teaching, practice and communication. Fifth, teaching equipment, the teacher used modern technologies such as multimedia courseware, vocal analysis software, and recording systems were effectively integrated. In addition, diverse instructional tools, including pianos, sound systems, and student-prepared media devices, enhanced practice and performance. Sixth, student participation, Teachers closely target the singing development of students, focusing on integrating the content learned in the classroom and developing singing and stage performance skills. After school, there will be at least 2 hours of practice every day. Seventh, evaluation, Emphasis on overall academic performance and professional abilities, assessed through vocal techniques, expression and song interpretation skills, and a singing examination of 2 songs. Overall, the program integrates traditional folk artistry with modern pedagogical approaches to foster students' vocal, musical, and artistic growth.

Keywords: folk song singing course, teaching method, Sichuan Conservatory of music

1. Introduction

Folk songs are an integral part of cultural heritage, serving as a vital link to regional identity and historical narratives. In China, folk music encompasses a rich tapestry of sounds and styles, with Sichuan folk songs standing out for their unique characteristics and expressive qualities. These songs not only reflect the diverse cultural landscape of Sichuan's multi-ethnic population but also play a significant role in the preservation of local customs and traditions (Chen, 2016).

The Sichuan Conservatory of Music (SCM) in Chengdu is a leading institution dedicated to the education and promotion of traditional Chinese music. Recognizing the cultural significance of Sichuan folk songs, SCM offers specialized courses aimed at training students in both vocal techniques and the cultural context of this regional repertoire. However, despite the importance of these courses, there has been a lack of comprehensive research exploring their structure, effectiveness, and pedagogical methodologies (Li, & Yu, 2024).

2. Literature Review

Ancient Origins, Chinese folk vocal music dates back to ancient times and reflects early human interaction with nature and daily life. It combined song, dance, and music, with themes like labor, love, and rituals. Although primitive in form, it displayed fixed patterns of scale, pitch, and rhythm. Western Zhou Dynasty, During the 11th century BC, the "Grand Master Music" institution was established, formalizing music education, administration, and performance. This included teaching music theory, singing, and dance, marking the early structure of vocal music in China. Han Dynasty, Folk vocal music reached a peak during the Han Dynasty, with institutions dedicated to collecting and composing folk songs and creating musical instruments. Large-scale singing and dancing performances became a hallmark of this era (Xi, 2023).

Tang and Song Dynasties, these dynasties were a golden age of culture and art. Tang poetry, Song Ci (lyric poetry), and a blend of music, performance, and dance flourished. The Song Dynasty saw innovations in poetry, Qu art, palace tunes, and drama. Yuan Dynasty, Yuan opera became the cultural highlight, featuring diverse forms like Sanqu and Zaju. This era marked a new artistic peak in folk vocal music. Ming and Qing Dynasties, Traditional opera evolved into "legends," with complex performances and characters. These operas blended with folk music, becoming the foundation for modern folk vocal music. Modern Formation, In the early 20th century, school songs signaled the start of modern folk vocal music. The 1930s Revolutionary Music Movement, led by the Communist Party, integrated traditional Chinese and Western vocal techniques. Notable vocalists like Zhou Shuan and Zhou Xiaoyan elevated traditional singing to new heights (Zhao, 2006).

The types of Chinese folk vocal music

Traditional Folk Song Performance, this type is rooted in local folk styles, retaining distinct regional cultural characteristics and singing methods. For instance, folk songs from northern Shaanxi, like "Driving the Livestock", are high-pitched and straightforward, featuring leaps in intervals that reflect the personality and dialect of the region. In contrast, Jiangnan songs, like "Jasmine Flower", are soft and delicate, emphasizing "intonation" with careful control of breath, pronunciation, and melodic ups and downs to achieve smoothness and natural beauty. Folk Narrative Singing, combining speech and singing, this style emphasizes storytelling, with melodies closely integrated with the rhythm of the language. Examples include Jingyun Dagu, performed in the Beijing dialect with a melodious tone, and Suzhou Pingtan, which uses the soft and gentle Wu dialect (Zhou, 2022).

Opera Singing, this style involves strict role divisions, unique vocal techniques, and comprehensive performances that combine singing, recitation, acting, and martial arts. For example, Peking Opera ("Drunk Concubine") uses precise pronunciation and intonation to express emotions, while Henan Opera ("Flower Woodland") features mixed real and false voice techniques to create distinct character portrayals. Singers like Chang Xiangyu innovated by blending traditional methods with contemporary vocal techniques, influencing modern folk vocal music. And Folk Opera Performance, Combining Western opera techniques with Chinese folk

elements, this style focuses on character portrayal and plot expression. A notable example is "The White-Haired Girl", where the character Xier's singing integrates folk techniques and dramatic performance, vividly conveying emotions and personality (Li, 2017).

Sichuan Folk Vocal Music

Chinese folk vocal music can mainly be classified into the following categories:

Traditional folk song performance

- Characteristics: Based on the styles of local folk songs, it retains the original local flavor and singing methods, with a strong regional cultural color.

- Examples: The singing style of folk songs from northern Shaanxi is high-pitched and clear, such as "Driving the Livestock"; while the folk songs from the Jiangnan region are gentle and delicate, like "Jasmine Flower".

Li (2019) analyzed the melody of "Driving the Livestock" is overall high-pitched, straightforward, and simple. The main forms of musical phrases are quarter notes and eighth notes, with long-duration notes at the end of each phrase for extension. Under the 2/4 time signature's strong and weak beats, the author appropriately uses quarter notes and eighth notes to represent the footsteps of the mules and horses during the journey. The long-duration extensions vividly depict the shouts of the drivers urging the livestock, and also reflect the unique pronunciation of the northern Shaanxi dialect due to the geographical environment. The use of some small syncopations perfectly integrates the northern Shaanxi dialect with the melody. "Driving the Livestock" is in the Lydian mode, with most of the intervals being leaps. This piece frequently features fourths, fifths, sevenths, and octaves. The a phrase has a seventh leap, giving a distinct, broad, and comfortable feeling. Such leaps also showcase the straightforward and unrestrained personality of the people in northern Shaanxi.

Zhang (2024) studied this "Jasmine Flower" requires a soft and gentle voice, light and elegant, with the sound placed forward. The most challenging part is the "intonation". In the performance of folk songs or folk operas, the most difficult aspect is the "intonation". One character with multiple notes, rising and falling, forms the so-called "intonation"; the sequence of high and low notes forms the so-called "melody". The "intonation" of Jiangnan folk songs mainly lies in one character with multiple notes. For instance, in the ending phrase of this song, the characters "fa" and "ya" are the key points of the performance. The reason is that these two characters have multiple notes, with ups and downs. When performing, two points need to be grasped: first, the breath should be well-prepared; second, the pronunciation should be placed forward, and the control of the vowel sounds should be accurate: "fa" - "ah", "ya" - "ah". The endings of these two characters should be emphasized, and the transitions should be smooth and natural, whether ascending or descending.

Sichuan Folk Songs

Sichuan folk songs are a vital part of the region's cultural heritage, reflecting the diverse ethnic groups and traditional lifestyles of its people (Chen, 2016). These songs are distinguished by unique vocal techniques and expressive qualities that help preserve local customs and traditions (Li & Yu, 2024). Studies highlight the importance of soft, delicate singing styles and precise breath control characteristic of Sichuan folk music (Zhang, 2024). Institutions such as the Sichuan Conservatory of Music play a significant role in teaching and promoting these folk songs, ensuring their continuation through specialized training programs (Li, 2019). Research also emphasizes the integration of vocal techniques with local dialects and cultural expressions, underscoring the inseparable link between music and regional identity (Zhou, 2022). Overall, Sichuan folk songs represent a treasured cultural asset requiring ongoing preservation and development through education and performance.

Sichuan Conservatory of Music

Sichuan Conservatory of Music, formerly known as "Sichuan Provincial Experimental School of Dramatic Music", was founded in 1939. In 1959, it became one of the six professional music colleges with undergraduate education level in China at that time. At present, the university has 29 undergraduate majors in four major categories: Music, Dance, Fine Arts and calligraphy,

and design. The school has won 1 second prize of National Science and Technology Progress Award and Folk Invention Award. In the past five years (2019-2024), the faculty and students of the University have won nearly 500 awards in international and domestic art competitions and awards of great influence, and more than 10 prizes in philosophy and social science at or above the folk and provincial levels; More than 100 works of various kinds have been published; Has published nearly 2,000 academic papers, including more than 500 in core journals; Nearly 20 national research projects and nearly 50 provincial and ministerial research projects have been approved. More than 30 patents have been authorized.

Related Research

Wang (2018), emphasized that correct singing posture is essential for producing a beautiful and accurate sound, as posture directly impacts breathing and vocal coordination. A proper posture involves standing upright with a relaxed and positive demeanor, looking slightly above the horizontal plane, with the chest naturally rising and the lower abdomen slightly retracted. The arms should hang naturally, feet shoulder-width apart, or with one foot slightly forward, ensuring balanced weight distribution. The mouth and jaw should remain relaxed, and the chin slightly retracted to regulate breath control. When sitting, the waist should be straight, and the singer should sit on about one-third of the bench. Mastering these techniques is crucial for singers to achieve optimal vocal performance and produce wonderful sounds.

Yang (2023), highlighted the close connection between vocal music and language art, both relying on the human vocal cords for expression. Language art focuses on the rise and fall of tones, as well as the combination of syllables in varying lengths, which aligns with the aesthetic principles of music. To fully convey the emotional meaning of language, singers must use rhythm, vocal strength, and tonal variations. The integration of music and language has given rise to diverse musical genres, and vocal performers must have foundational knowledge of related arts to meet the aesthetic demands of joy and emotional expression.

Liu (2021), emphasized that the basic knowledge of music—encompassing pitch, rhythm, speed, tone, volume, beat, and style—is essential for singing. Among these, pitch is the foundation of singing, ensuring accurate melody lines and emotional expression. Accurate pitch not only enhances the singer's enjoyment and emotional delivery but also resonates with the audience, reproducing the original essence of the work and touching hearts. Rhythm and beat are equally critical, with rhythm acting as the "skeleton" and beat providing the driving force for singing. Together, they shape the flow, distinguish sections, and elevate the emotional depth of the performance, enabling the smooth progression and thematic development of the song.

In summary, the research underscores the multifaceted nature of vocal performance, highlighting the importance of physical posture, the interplay between music and language, and foundational musical knowledge. emphasizes that proper singing posture is vital for optimal sound production, enabling effective breath control and vocal coordination) points out the intrinsic link between vocal music and language art, where rhythm and tonal variations are essential for conveying emotional depth. reinforces that fundamental music elements—such as pitch, rhythm, and style—are crucial for accurate singing and emotional expression.

Together, these insights illustrate that successful vocal performance requires a harmonious blend of technical skill, physical awareness, and artistic sensitivity. Singers must cultivate these aspects to not only enhance their own enjoyment but also to resonate deeply with their audience, ultimately enriching the art of vocal music.

3. Research Methodology

This study used qualitative research. The researcher used a method of collecting data from 7 classroom observations and interviews with 3 teachers. The observation form and structured interview form were used for data recording. The survey topics were divided into 7 topics: environment, teaching content, teaching methods, teaching Equipment, activities, student participation, and evaluation.

3.1 Key informants

Three teachers were selected as key informants based on the following criteria:

1) Have more than 10 years of teaching experience in Chinese national folk singing music

2) Must have a master degree in singing music major.

3) Have academic position

The following three teachers were selected as key informants;

1) Associate Professor Ren Juan, the associate professor at the Vocal and Opera College of Sichuan Conservatory of Music, member of the Chengdu Musicians Association

2) Professor Shi Qian, deputy director of the Vocal Teaching and Research Section in the National Vocal Department of the Opera Academy.

3) Professor Zhang Yu, Professor of Vocal Music at Sichuan Conservatory of Music.

3.2 Experts

The experts were selected based on the following criteria:

1) Have more than 10 years of teaching experience in music education.

2) Must be a master's degree.

3) Have academic position

The following three teachers were selected as key informants;

1) Professor Dong Hua, works at the China Conservatory of Music, a soprano singer, she is a member of the China Musicians Association.

2) Professor Zhao Jing, works at the China Conservatory of Music, doctoral supervisor, she is a member of the China Musicians Association.

3) Professor Zhang Yanchuan, opera choral department of sichuan conservatory of music

3.3 Research tools

- Interview Form, for collect the data from key informants.

- Observation form, for collect the data from observe in classroom.

- IOC form, used to assess the quality of research data collection tools by experts.

3.4 Data Analysis

From the study and data collection from key informants, the researcher analyzed the data by dividing the survey issues into 7 topics: environment, teaching content, teaching methods, teaching equipment, activities, student participation, and evaluation.

4. Results

Sichuan Conservatory of Music has become one of the six professional conservatories with undergraduate education in China. At present, at the undergraduate level, the arts are taught in music, dance, fine arts and calligraphy. As for the music performance department, it focuses on the courses of composition and theory, music composition technology, recording arts, musicology, dance, drama, film and television. The college has a strong teaching staff. There are 50 full-time faculty members, including 13 professors and 14 associate professors.

In this study, the researcher studied seven survey topics: environment, teaching content, teaching methods, teaching equipment, activities, student participation, and evaluation. As summarized below:

4.1 Environment

The folk song class is conducted in a professionally designed vocal training room with a square layout and an area of approximately 50 square meters. The room features thick, sound-insulated walls and specialized soundproofing materials that create a quiet and distraction-free learning environment. A piano is centrally positioned for instructional accompaniment and demonstrations. Adjacent to the piano, a large floor mirror allows students to observe their posture, facial expressions, and mouth movements during vocal practice. A floor-standing music stand is placed near the wall to support the use of song scores, helping students follow lyrics and

reduce performance anxiety. Additionally, a small chair next to the piano is provided for assistant instructors who support the main teacher during accompaniment sessions.

The Sichuan Conservatory of Music offers comprehensive and modern instructional facilities that support the teaching of ethnic vocal music at both undergraduate and graduate levels. These include multi-functional concert halls and performance venues used for teaching demonstrations, student recitals, and professional assessments. Dedicated vocal training rooms and rehearsal spaces are available for both individual and group classes, ensuring sufficient space and acoustic support for focused practice.

Teaching spaces are equipped with a variety of acoustic pianos—including upright and grand models—used for accompaniment and foundational music theory instruction. Specialized classrooms are also available for visual singing and aural training, equipped with tools for rhythm, pitch, and listening exercises.

To enhance instructional effectiveness through modern technology, the conservatory has established multimedia and recording classrooms equipped with professional-grade recording devices and audio analysis systems. These facilities enable students to record, review, and improve their singing performance. Teachers frequently incorporate digital tools such as audio playback systems, multimedia courseware, and vocal analysis software to promote scientifically informed vocal training. In ethnic vocal lessons, computers and audio devices are widely used to play accompaniment tracks, and students are encouraged to bring their own USB drives with self-produced accompaniments for live performance simulations.

In this conservatory of Music, maintains interoperability of teaching resources, ensuring consistent and integrated instruction throughout the program. Overall, the institution's configuration of teaching equipment reflects a well-balanced combination of traditional ethnic vocal training needs and contemporary educational technology, creating an effective and professional learning environment.



Figure 1: The grand piano in folk song classroom

Source: Shi Lijing

4.2. Teaching content

The second-year curriculum of the National Vocal Music Department at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music primarily focuses on deepening the development of singing techniques, stylistic interpretation, and artistic expression. Building upon the foundational training established during the first year, the program aims to gradually form a comprehensive and systematic approach to national vocal performance.

The instructional content emphasizes several key areas:

During the sophomore year, particular attention is given to the refinement of vocal technique and the cultivation of a personalized vocal timbre. Through structured vocal training, students further develop their skills in breath control, tone consistency, vocal range expansion,

and smooth transitions between chest and head voice. In addition, students begin singing works in a variety of ethnic styles, requiring them to understand and accurately express the stylistic characteristics of Han and minority folk songs, such as those of the Tibetan, Mongolian, Hui, and Zhuang peoples. Comparative singing exercises are used to enhance students' adaptability in tone and pronunciation imitation.

In the area of language and diction, continued emphasis is placed on standard Mandarin pronunciation, while students are also introduced to the phonetic features of regional dialects and minority languages. The repertoire progresses from simple to more complex works, incorporating intermediate-level ethnic vocal pieces, such as newly composed artistic folk songs and adapted traditional folk songs. Instruction also stresses emotional interpretation and stage expression. To strengthen performance skills, various stage-based assessments are conducted throughout the semester, including class presentations, small recitals, and final solo performances, aimed at developing students' stage presence and artistic appeal.

The theoretical component of the course continues with the study of *An Introduction to Chinese National Music*, which explores the cultural and musical characteristics of various ethnic traditions. This is supported by foundational training in music analysis and sight-singing to enhance overall musical literacy. Furthermore, students begin introductory courses in national vocal pedagogy, including teaching methodology and song analysis, laying the groundwork for future specialization in teaching or advanced study.

In summary, the second-year national vocal music course spans 16 weeks per semester, with two 45-minute sessions each week. A total of six songs were studied during the semester, including two Sichuan folk songs such as "When the Flowers of the Locust Tree Bloom" and "Kangding Love Songs" and four folk songs from other regions, such as Tibetan, Northern Shaanxi, Guangxi, and Peking Opera styles as follows; "orchid" from Shaanxi folk songs, "Mountain Songs Like Spring River Water" from Guangxi Folk Songs, "Zhuoma" from Tibetan Folk Songs, and "Ode to Pear Blossoms" in Peking Opera Style.

From analyzing the differences in singing styles using Tibetan folk songs, Shaanxi folk songs, Guangxi folk songs, and Peking opera as examples:

1. Tibetan folk singing features a high-pitched and melodious style, with long and sustained breath control. The voice is bright and often includes vibrato, mainly using head resonance.
2. Shaanxi folk singing is rough and bold, with a hoarse quality to the voice and strong explosive breath power, primarily utilizing chest resonance.
3. Guangxi folk singing has a bright and soft tone, with flexible breath control and lively melodies, combining head and oral cavity resonance.
4. Peking opera vocal style is precise and delicate, emphasizing the transition between chest and falsetto registers. Breath control is accurate, focusing on head and oral cavity resonance.

Most of them are folk singing contents that are featured in the folk singing course at Sichuan Conservatory of Music.

3. Teaching Method

The teaching methods employed for second-year student in the National Vocal Music Department of the Sichuan Conservatory of Music emphasize a balanced integration of foundational training and practical application, as well as the combination of theoretical knowledge and expressive performance. Instruction is student-centered, with personalized teaching plans developed according to individual vocal characteristics and learning progress.

Teachers—most of whom possess extensive stage experience and strong pedagogical backgrounds—guide students through a critical phase of technical enhancement and artistic development. Core instructional areas include language and diction training (in both Mandarin and selected foreign or ethnic pronunciations), artistic song and aria interpretation, stage presence, choral practice, and operatic scene rehearsals. Techniques such as classroom demonstration, guided imitation, corrective feedback, emotional coaching, and performance-based activities are used to develop expressive skills and vocal control.

Teaching is supported by institutional practices such as teacher recitals, master classes,

competitions, and internal performance opportunities. These activities provide students with real-world exposure and enhance stage adaptability. Additionally, instructors incorporate contemporary vocal science—covering topics such as vocal health, breathing mechanisms, and resonance—into the curriculum to promote safe and effective vocal development.

Interviews with educators reveal that the methodology of national vocal instruction is rooted in cultural respect and scientific rigor. The pedagogical approach stresses the importance of aligning national identity with modern vocal techniques. Fundamental training centers on three core elements: breathing (with emphasis on abdominal and thoracic support), vocalization (fostering natural tone production and smooth register transitions), and resonance (enhancing timbral clarity and cultural specificity through head and nasal resonance).

Language and stylistic accuracy are also key components, especially due to the close connection between folk vocal styles and regional dialects. Teachers provide targeted instruction on ethnic ornamentation techniques, such as glides, appoggiaturas, and tremolos, to reinforce authentic stylistic expression. Emotional and cultural understanding is deepened through storytelling and contextual exploration of the repertoire.

Repertoire progression follows a scaffolded approach—from short folk song excerpts to full-length compositions—with song selection tailored to each student's vocal ability and stylistic aptitude. Evaluation is continuous and multifaceted, incorporating audio-visual feedback, periodic assessments, and vocal health monitoring to ensure long-term, sustainable learning.

In summary, the teaching methods of the second-year national vocal program emphasize the integration of tradition and modernity, artistry and science, while adapting to the unique needs of each student. The ultimate aim is to cultivate singers who are not only technically proficient but also culturally grounded and artistically expressive.



Figure 2: One-on-one student teaching
Source: Shi Lijing



Figure 3: Teaching students in groups
Source: Shi Lijing

4.Activities

The folk song major of Sichuan Conservatory of Music organizes a variety of activities on campus, including performances, teaching, practice and communication. First of all, there are special concerts and exhibitions on campus, such as the "How Much Folk Songs Know - Sichuan Folk Songs Special" tour. This type of activity is planned and participated by teachers and students of folk songs, showing ethnic folk songs including Sichuan, Shanxi, Hunan and other places. The activities are diverse, including both on-campus performances and external tours to improve students' stage practice ability. The second is the teaching activities such as "Music Culture Week" and "Teaching Seminar on the Comprehensive Folk Music in Colleges and Universities", focusing on joint rehearsals and comments by teachers and students, and strengthening professional understanding and ensemble skills of national vocal music. In addition, folk song students also actively participate in the summer "Three Going to the Countryside" social practice activities, and go to western and ethnic minority areas to carry out music teaching, folk song field collection and public welfare performances, such as interacting with rural schools in Gansu, Guizhou and other places to carry out art poverty alleviation and cultural dissemination. Folk song students often participate in competitions and results display such as "College Student Art Exhibition Festival" and "Campus Vocal Competition", and demonstrate their singing skills and stage performance skills on these platforms. Overall, the on-campus activities of Sichuan Conservatory of Music's folk song major not only provide students with practical opportunities, but also strengthen the implementation and transformation of teaching results and the cultivation of cultural communication capabilities.



Figure 4: A part of activities of singing Student
Source: Shi Lijing

5. Teaching Equipment

The configuration of ethnic vocal teaching equipment at Sichuan Conservatory of Music is the findings indicate that the instructional equipment used in ethnic vocal music teaching effectively integrates both traditional tools and modern technology to support student learning and artistic development. Fundamental musical instruments such as vertical and grand pianos are central to the teaching process, serving as the primary tools for vocal accompaniment and basic music theory instruction. In addition, music stands are used regularly in both practice and performance settings to assist students in reading vocal scores and reducing performance anxiety.

Modern technological tools further enhance the effectiveness of instruction. Computers equipped with vocal analysis software help evaluate vocal tone, frequency control, and register transitions. Audio playback systems are used extensively during practice sessions, while professional recording equipment and audio analysis systems allow students to review their performances and receive targeted technical feedback. Visual aids such as projectors, monitors, and multimedia courseware contribute to a more interactive and engaging learning experience.

To support student participation and self-directed practice, portable devices such as USB flash drives are encouraged for use in bringing personalized accompaniment tracks, enabling students to simulate live performances. High-quality headphones are also employed to strengthen ear training and pitch accuracy. Overall, the integration of these instructional tools provides a well-rounded and professional learning environment, ensuring that students develop not only technical proficiency but also musical expressiveness and performance readiness.

6. Student Participation

The after-class exercise plan for sophomore students in the Department of Ethnic Vocal Music of Sichuan Conservatory of Music should closely combine the teaching requirements of this major and personal development goals, and formulate scientific, systematic and continuous training plans with the consolidation of the content learned in the classroom and improving singing skills and stage performance abilities as the core. There are no less than 2 hours of professional practice after class every day, which is divided into three parts: vocal training, work practice and comprehensive literacy improvement. Voice training mainly includes basic breath control, resonance position exercises, pitch rhythm training and sound extension exercises. Each time, it focuses on the balanced development of sound quality, strength and control. The work practice is mainly based on classroom teaching repertoire, combined with various ethnic vocal works, conduct in-depth analysis and repeated singing, improve the work's processing ability and emotional expression, and arrange about 1 hour of practice time. The comprehensive literacy improvement part includes piano basics, visual singing and ear training, language expression and stage performance training. It is carried out alternately every week according to the course schedule, focusing on improving overall musical literacy and comprehensive performance ability. At the same time, students are encouraged to participate in performances and competitions inside and outside the school, test and apply the content they have mastered in practice, and enhance self-confidence and artistic appeal. The entire after-class exercise planning emphasizes scientific and continuity, and requires regular guidance and feedback from professional teachers to help students discover problems, correct deviations, and make continuous progress, laying a solid foundation for future professional development and postgraduate entrance examination further study.

7. Evaluation

The evaluation of sophomore students in the Department of Vocal Music at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music is conducted through a comprehensive approach that emphasizes overall performance and professional competence, rather than segmented assessments by academic period. The assessment system comprises four main components:

First, professional course performance serves as the core element of evaluation, accounting for approximately 50%–60% of the total grade. This includes mid-term and final singing examinations, with a focus on repertoire mastery, vocal technique, expressiveness, and interpretive skills. These assessments are conducted through live performances, in-class

evaluations, and teacher scoring.

Second, classroom participation and performance represent an important aspect of continuous assessment. This includes student attendance, discipline, participation, practice habits, and task completion. Teachers observe and record these elements throughout the semester. This component typically contributes about 10%–15% to the overall score.

Third, students are also assessed through theoretical and supplementary courses, such as vocal theory, visual singing and ear training, music theory, and piano fundamentals. Evaluation in these subjects is based on daily assignments, classroom participation, and final examinations, contributing approximately 15%–20% to the total performance.

The final component involves phase performance evaluations, which include participation in concerts, progress reports, teaching demonstrations, and competitions. Students are assessed on their level of engagement, artistic quality, and stage presence. This portion accounts for roughly 10%–15% of the total score.

As part of the semester's final practical examination, students are required to perform two songs: one Sichuan folk song and one from another regional style, enabling evaluation of both vocal technique and stylistic adaptability. For example, students may choose to perform "Kangding Love Song" (a Sichuan folk song) and "Ode to Pear Blossoms" (in the Peking Opera style). This selection process is designed to test their overall singing proficiency developed over the semester.

Based on feedback from instructors, it is suggested that continued refinement of the evaluation process could further enhance the alignment between teaching objectives and student outcomes, ensuring a more holistic development of both technical and artistic competencies.



Figure 5: The scene of the assessment of second-year students majoring in folk songs at Sichuan Conservatory of Music
Source: Shi Lijing

5. Conclusion

The research reveals that the folk song class is conducted in a professionally designed vocal training room, carefully equipped to create an optimal learning environment. The room features effective sound insulation, a centrally placed piano for accompaniment, and a large mirror that allows students to observe their posture and facial expressions during practice. This thoughtful setup supports focused and immersive vocal training.

The teaching content for sophomore students builds progressively on foundational skills acquired in the first year, emphasizing the refinement of vocal techniques, understanding of diverse ethnic singing styles, and strengthening of language pronunciation and emotional expression. The curriculum introduces increasingly complex repertoire while providing ample opportunities for stage performance, which helps students develop both technical proficiency and artistic sensitivity. Teaching methods are characterized by a balance of theory and practice, with instructors tailoring personalized plans to meet individual student needs. Emphasis is placed on breath control, vocal resonance, stylistic interpretation, and stage presence. Classroom demonstrations, imitation exercises, emotional guidance, and performance practice all contribute to nurturing students' comprehensive vocal abilities. The conservatory is well-equipped with a

variety of traditional and modern teaching tools. Alongside numerous pianos and rehearsal spaces, advanced multimedia classrooms and professional recording equipment facilitate detailed vocal analysis and self-assessment. These resources help integrate traditional ethnic vocal techniques with contemporary pedagogical approaches. Teachers employ a range of instructional tools and methods that combine scientific vocal training with ethnic vocal traditions. Digital sound sources, audio playback systems, and multimedia materials are used extensively, while teachers' interdisciplinary knowledge in anatomy, vocal acoustics, and psychology further supports students' holistic development in both technique and artistry. Student assessment is conducted through a multifaceted approach that includes professional singing exams, classroom participation, theoretical coursework, and performance showcases. This comprehensive evaluation system emphasizes not only technical skills but also artistic expression and consistent engagement throughout the semester. Finally, practical singing tests require students to perform selected pieces from both Sichuan folk music and other regional styles. This method allows instructors to assess students' adaptability and mastery of diverse vocal traditions. Representative works such as "Kangding Love Song" and "Ode to Pear Blossoms" exemplify the emphasis on stylistic variety and sustained progress over the semester.

Overall, the research highlights a well-rounded, systematic approach to ethnic vocal training at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music, where traditional culture and modern techniques harmoniously coexist to cultivate skilled, expressive vocal artists.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study align with prior research emphasizing the importance of a well-equipped learning environment for effective vocal training. As shown by Sundberg (1987), optimal acoustic settings and visual feedback tools, such as mirrors, significantly enhance vocal technique development, supporting our observation of the professionally designed vocal training room at Sichuan Conservatory of Music. Moreover, the progressive curriculum and teaching methods integrating both technical skills and artistic expression reflect principles highlighted in Miller's (2004) work on vocal pedagogy, which stresses the balance between scientific vocal training and artistic interpretation. This integration is essential for developing versatile singers capable of performing diverse ethnic styles, consistent with the findings of Himonides and Welch (2006), who emphasize culturally informed vocal training that respects traditional styles while incorporating modern pedagogical advances. The use of modern technology such as multimedia classrooms, recording equipment, and vocal analysis software in this program resonates with studies by Pabon and Milbrath (2018), who demonstrate how technological tools can enhance student self-assessment and promote more objective feedback, leading to improved vocal outcomes. Finally, the comprehensive evaluation methods, combining performance assessments with theoretical knowledge and classroom participation, reflect a holistic approach to vocal education that is widely recommended in contemporary vocal pedagogy literature (Colton, Casper, & Leonard, 2011). This multi-dimensional assessment ensures that students are not only developing technical competence but also artistic and expressive skills, which are crucial for professional vocalists. In summary, this study contributes to the growing body of research supporting an integrative approach to ethnic vocal training—one that respects cultural heritage while embracing scientific rigor and modern educational technology.

7. Suggestions

Future studies should explore the long-term effects of combining traditional ethnic vocal techniques with modern vocal science on students' vocal health and career outcomes. Research on students' personal experiences and challenges in learning ethnic vocal music would provide valuable insights into motivation and cultural identity. Additionally, more investigation into the effectiveness of digital tools and technology in vocal training is needed. Comparative studies across different institutions could also help identify best practices in ethnic vocal education.

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