

DIGITIZATION OF FESTIVAL CULTURE IN TAIWAN'S INDIGENOUS LITERATURE

Cheng-Hui Tsai and Chuan-Po Wang[♦]

Abstract: The term 'teaching practice' focuses on creative teaching and innovative research to promote multi-intelligence digital humanities and cultivate knowledge of indigenous culture through field investigation and humane care. Thus, the curriculum of indigenous literature is based on: (i) an awareness of local and tribal culture and care; (ii) an innovative teaching model (from a cognitive model to a cognitive skills model); (iii) an emotional model (care of ethnic humanities); (iv) a digital model (digital humanities and archives, learner-based learning, flipped classrooms and Problem Based Learning). The curriculum aims at guiding students to reflect on multicultural values, learn about holistic education, and focus on people's core concerns. Ritual part of Taiwan's Atayal and Thao cultures are integrated into the innovative education of indigenous literature, and students are led to participate in field investigations of the ceremonies to complete the digital cultural documentary of the Atayal Thanksgiving ceremony and reach the innovative teaching goal of digital humanities education. This ensures student participation in tribal ceremonies, which in turn leads to practical knowledge and experience of indigenous cultures. Such an attempt contributes towards an action study for the digitization of indigenous culture. The research method combines text teaching with the action research, and the specific multi-teaching through digital documentary. The findings from the study reveal that students learn literature through action

[♦]**Dr Cheng-Hui Tsai** is Assistant Professor, Centre for General Education, National Taichung University of Science and Technology, Taiwan. Her areas of research are indigenous literature, modern literature, and classical literature. **Dr Chuan-Po Wang** is Assistant Professor, Department of Industrial Design, Chaoyang University of Technology, Taiwan. His areas of research are assistive technology, interface design, and rehabilitation design.

research more realistically and accurately, and thereby save indigenous cultures.

Keywords: Action Research, Digital humanities, Field study, Indigenous Culture, Indigenous Literature.

1. Introduction

The study focuses on the digitization of ceremonial cultures in Taiwan's indigenous literature. The action research incorporates the Atayal ritual culture into the indigenous literature curriculum. The teaching goal of this research is to cultivate and advance the digital humanities students: i) by inviting indigenous scholars and experts to give special lectures, and contact the local tribes during field surveys; ii) creating documentaries, interviews with tribal elders, and exhibitions at the Indigenous Cultural and Creative Documentary Film Festival. This approach allowed indigenous cultures to be more accessible to the ethnic population, essentially through student participation in the Thao ancestral sacrifice and the recorded documentary of the ritual culture.

The student learning further enhanced and led to specific desired results with the original ethnic documentary interviews, expert lectures, teacher's lectures, etc., including the Atayal Thanksgiving Festival. The study results are expected to enable students to enrich and fully understand the characteristics of indigenous literature and culture through innovative and realistic action research. The introduction of innovation, creativity, and originality has established a new teaching model for indigenous literature. This new teaching model employs the terms 'original teaching and research' and 'creative thinking and teaching' as the important indexes on teaching purposes.

The four major elements of innovation in indigenous literature are, (i) an awareness of local and tribal culture and care; (ii) an innovative teaching model (from a cognitive model to a cognitive skills model); (iii) An emotional model (care of ethnic humanities); (iv) A digital model (digital humanities and archives, learner-based learning, flipped classrooms and Problem Based Learning). The study hopes to cultivate students'

knowledge and ability within humanities education by focusing on the aforementioned four core elements of innovative teaching and research development. It combines humanistic care and expert cultural knowledge, which are integrated into innovative digital technology, with flipped classrooms and Problem based learning. This creative element has developed a new era of humanities education.

2. Festival Culture of Taiwan Indigenous Literature

Taiwan's population comprises of various cultural and ethnic groups, including the Han people, and those of Austronesian descent, including the Pingpu tribes. The people from the Nandao language group, which comprises less than two percent of Taiwan's total population, are located in an area of more than 16,000 square kilometers, covering forty-five percent of the whole of Taiwan.

The indigenous people developed different ways of livelihood such as farming, hunting, fishing, and food collecting leading to various tribal groups, due to Taiwan's diverse ecosystem. Therefore, indigenous culture reflects a dialogue between the ethnic groups and the natural environment, while simultaneously embracing the rich spiritual meanings in Taiwan's indigenous culture.

The sacrificial rituals of the Atayal people intrinsically connect with their creation narrative. When their ancestors, Mabuta and Mayan, went up the mountain, one of them was killed by a snake. It was believed that this tragedy occurred because no sacrifice had been offered, and to rectify this, a pig was slaughtered. Thus, the sacrifice becomes part of their beliefs and customs.

Traditional rituals are an essential part of Taiwan's indigenous culture, with each group having their own practices that are indigenous. The rituals of the various ethnic groups also entail different spiritual meanings. In order to understand the indigenous culture holistically, it becomes pertinent to first understand the cultural significance of the rituals within these ethnic groups. This entails necessity since many of the

traditional rituals contain many cultural meanings and ethnic moods, which can lead people to gain a deeper understanding.

The rituals of these indigenous people are often held on a mountain or at a river, with the sky and the earth as the stage and the night as the backdrop. Worship of the gods and respect for the ancestors are important elements within tribal ethics and social life. For example, the practice of various traditional ceremonies is actually a declaration of belief in ancestral spirits among the Atayal. The rituals concern themselves with the group's livelihood: agriculture, hunting, and headhunting. Therefore, there are pioneering offerings, sowing festivals, weeding offerings, harvest festivals, collection offerings, headhunting offerings, and ancestral offerings.

Ethnic group	Population	Note
Pangcah (Amis)	210,839	One of the nine ethnic groups officially recognized by the Ethnology Research Office of National Taiwan University in 1948.
Payuan (Paiwan)	101,400	
Tayal (Atayal)	90,788	
Bunun	58,823	
Pinuyumayan (Puyuma)	14,321	
Drekay (Rukai)	13,383	
Cou (Tsou)	6,663	
SaiSiyat	6,655	
Tao	4,624	One of the nine ethnic groups officially recognized by the Ethnology Research Office of National Taiwan University in 1948. Formerly known as the Yami, the name of the group has now been changed to Tao.

Thao	794	Originally classified as Tsou, the group was included on August 8, 2001.
Kebalan (Kavalan)	1,481	Originally classified as Ami, the group was included on December 25, 2002.
Truku (Taroko)	31,782	Originally classified as Atayal, the group was included on January 14, 2004.
Sakizaya	956	Originally classified as Ami, the group was included on January 17, 2007.
Seediq	10,162	Originally classified as Atayal, the group was included on April 23, 2008.
Hla'alua (Saaroa)	407	Located in the Taoyuan and Namasa Districts of Kaohsiung City and originally classified as Southern Tsou, and legally recognized on June 26, 2014.
Kanakanavu	342	Living in the area of Namasa District, Kaohsiung City. Originally classified as Southern Tsou, and legally recognized on June 26, 2014.

Table 1. Indigenous Ethnic Groups

The rituals also embody the enormous spiritual symbolism that is part of the indigenous culture. The indigenous people believe that all things are spiritual, and the shaman is usually responsible for communicating with the gods. The people believe that the ancestors have a direct influence on their lives, whether it be good or bad. The people revere their ancestral spirits, who are believed to inhabit the mountains and protect their crops. This shows the distinctiveness of the ethnic spirit of the diverse indigenous cultures.

As mentioned earlier, each indigenous ethnic group has its own traditional rituals. There are many such diverse rituals in

the honor of the ancestral spirits; such as the rituals of the Atayal and the Truku, the New Year's festival of the Thao, the biennial Dwarf Festival (Pasta'ai) of the Saisiyat, and the Shearing Festival (Malahtangia) of the Bunun. Furthermore, there are the Tsai tribe's War Festival (Mayasvi), the Shahru's Bei Shen Festival (Miatungusu), the Rukai's Millet Harvest Festival (Tsatsapipianu), the Ami's Sea Festival (Misacpo), and the Harvest Festival (Malalikit). The Puyuma have their Monkey Festival (Mangayangayaw) and Big Hunting Festival (Mangayaw) every five years. Each year, there are 'Year of the Harvest Festival,' 'Autumn Festival,' and 'Sea Festival' of the Amis. The Dawu people celebrate the Flying Fish Festival (Mivanwa) and the New Boat Festival (Mapabosbos), while the Night Festival of the Pingpu tribes has gradually been revived.

In addition, the important rituals of the Puyuma include 'Sea Festival,' 'Monkey Festival' for men, and 'Hay Harvest Festival' for women. The La Aruwa people believe that the ancestral spirits are attached to the collection of Bezhu, so there is a 'Bei Shen Festival' (Miatungusu). The Zou people have 'War Festival' (Mayasvi) and 'Harvest Festival.'

The diverse traditional rituals contribute immensely to the richness and distinctiveness of the indigenous culture and the strong ethnic identity of the various population groups in Taiwan. Taiwan's indigenous peoples can be divided into mountain forests and marine people. The extent to which these mountain forests, sea waters, and natural environments contribute to the cultural wisdom and the folklore of the indigenous people has been catalogued according to the rituals that have persisted throughout the ages. Therefore, the influence of indigenous people on mountains, oceans and nature is very profound. Many ceremonies firstly exhibit the core values of indigenous cultural significance and ethnic spirit.

The lives of the Atayal people are controlled by the 'gaga' (the ancestral teachings). These include all rites of passage such as birth, naming, marriage, death; and the rituals associated with day-to-day activities, such as hunting, weaving, tattooing, and

childbearing. Other rituals are associated with social norms, such as tribal farming, revenge, and inheritance of rights.

The Taiwan Atayal people live in the central and northern mountainous areas of Central Taiwan, from Puli to the north of Hualien County with a population of approximately 89,958 people. They live mainly by hunting and growing crops on burned-out mountain fields. The people are also very well known for their weaving skills. The woven fabric with its complex patterns has exquisite colors, the most predominant of which is red. This color, associated with blood, is deemed to ward off evil.

In the Ayatal creation mythology, the original ancestors were a brother and sister who lived for a very long time between heaven and earth. However, after the flood, the brother and sister were troubled and unable to have children. The sister decided to paint her face to disguise who she was from her brother after which they had children and ensured the continuation of the tribe. However, there are strong taboos against cognation marriage in the present day.

3. Atayal Festival Culture in Taiwan's Indigenous Literature

The unique patterns on their faces, their music played from the mouth harp, and the hip-hop form of dancing are important unique aspects among the Atayal traditions and customs. The Atayal social organization conforms to ancestral rituals, the most important of which is the Thanksgiving ritual.

Participants	Males only. According to tradition, women may not participate in ancestral festivals.
Location	The various tribes host the festival in turn.
Time	4 a.m., every August 31.
Festival refreshments	Wine, millet cakes, crops, fruit, fish, etc. Bacon may not be eaten at the festival.

<p>Funeral oration</p>	<p>The main singer chants sacred words: "Ancestral ancestors! Ancestors! Today the people who worship you are in a serious mood. May the ancestors greet Jiana, and we sincerely invite all the ancestors to gather and share the gifts. Festival....."</p> <p>"Ancestral ancestors, we bring crops that have been cultivated this year. Every member of the family has acted according to the ancestral teachings (gaga) and has worked hard. We are your people, and we look forward to your blessing next year. Now, we are joyfully celebrating."</p>
<p>spirit</p>	<p>The ancestral spirits are thanked for their gifts and the speaker reports to the ancestors on the tribe's life during the past year. They promise to abide by the traditional culture of the ancestral training and gaga, and ask the ancestors to give the tribe health and happiness.</p>
<p>Taboos</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ceremony must be completed before dawn. The tribe believes that the ancestors will come and participate in the festival at dawn. 2. Women are not allowed to participate in the ceremony.

Table 2. Atayal Smyus Festival

The results of this research are in the ceremonial documentary, which specifically presents the blessing ceremony of the Atayal people. The Atayal rituals offer their gratitude to their ancestors for blessing the peace and good harvest of crops sown by their children, and they reiterate the Atayalan cultural customs, myths, and legends. In addition, in the ancestral rites of the Thao, the priests invite the ancestors to participate in the ceremonies, and thank the ancestors for their blessings to their children and grandchildren, and express their feelings for the awe and remembrance of the ancestors.

In the Bunun's Shearing ceremonies, the people pray for the ancestral spirit to bless the farming harvest, and also ask blessing for their hunt. In addition, in the Shearing festival, outsiders are also allowed to experience the traditional Bunun skills, such as sawing, wrestling, archery, tug-of-war, and other traditional activities. In the Indigenous Digital Culture Documentary of this study, the ceremonial culture has been enriched and recorded.

4. Conclusion

The research methods on the digitization of ceremonial culture in Taiwan's indigenous literature comprise eight innovative research threads:

(a) In-depth problem awareness – identify research issues: the development of tribal ceremonies in indigenous ethnic groups.

(b) Multi-disciplinary consultation – discuss preliminary plans with relevant parties: project hosts and co-hosts, scholars and experts, students, tribal elders, interviewees, etc.

(c) Extensive information collection – refer to relevant literature: search and induction analysis, historical literature review of text narratives and literature on indigenous culture.

(d) Digital humanity cross-border – hold joint discussions to determine the research methods (observation, interviews, questionnaires, photographs, audio recordings, videos, documentaries, texts, and literature analysis, etc.), and show the specific results of the "humanization of humanities" process.

(e) Two-track information cross-border – collect data, text narratives and literature on the culture of the indigenous rituals, and collect digital information in actual textual teaching and tribal ritual fieldwork practice.

(f) Text field adjustment – during actual text teaching, summarize the text narratives and literature of the indigenous ritual culture, and analyzing the digital information collected by the tribal ritual fieldwork practice.

(g) Teaching and research improvement strategy – present a research report with suggestions on improvements that can be made to the text narratives and literature materials of the

indigenous culture of the actual text teaching, the digital information collected by the tribal ritual field research practice and the inductive analysis of teaching practice. The research report will offer strategies to improve action research aiming to enhance teaching practices and results.

(h) Multiple results presentation – finally, share experiences and present the concrete results of teaching practice and action research. These will be presented in a multi-modal model of teaching research results, such as the indigenous festival cultural documentary contest film festival, teaching achievement exhibition research results exchange, sharing of talks, etc.

The subject of this research refers to the study of ritual culture presented in the Taiwan Indigenous literature, leading students to join the culture of the Indigenous rituals through digital research and integration with the aborigines via a multidisciplinary study of literature, rituals, culture, and digital technology. The ceremonies and the culture are of great significance to the indigenous people. They symbolize the cultural knowledge that has been handed down by ancestors, and symbolize the ethnic spirit of the indigenous people. In addition, for the significance of the inheritance and cultural preservation of indigenous cultures, many people are now striving to preserve their cultures in order to inherit the symbolic spirit of Taiwan's diverse culture.