



Integrating a Streaming Series into the Curriculum to Foster Listening Proficiency and Cultural Competence

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This classroom-based action research project investigates the use of a Chinese streaming series to foster listening proficiency and cultural competence in a 19-week Intermediate Chinese Program. The authors integrated narrative media (e.g., films or television dramas) within the course's Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) curriculum. For 12 weeks, eight students participated in weekly episode viewings with Chinese subtitles, followed by guided analysis of excerpts from the novel the series was based on and instructor-facilitated discussion. The module included culture-based discussions and culminated in a 600-word student reflection. Data included Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT5) scores, student reflections, and post-project student feedback. Seven of eight students achieved Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Level 2+ in listening. Students perceived the integration positively, reporting increased confidence in processing fast-paced spoken Chinese and enhanced cultural competence through intercultural comparison and reflective engagement with sociocultural themes. Findings indicate that this structured integration of narrative media can support listening proficiency development, cultural competence, and positive learner perceptions in intensive, military-oriented language education.

Keywords: *Action Research, Chinese Language, Cultural Competence, DLPT5, Listening Proficiency, LREC, Media-Based Instruction, Narrative Media*



INTRODUCTION

Media-based instruction has been widely recognized for its role in improving vocabulary acquisition (Chen, 2012; Wang, Y.C., 2012), listening proficiency (Fujita, 2019; Wang, D., 2012), and cultural competence in second language learning (Fujita, 2019). Cultural competence is a multidimensional construct that goes beyond factual knowledge of a target culture (Byram et al., 2002; Deardorff, 2006). Byram et al. (2002) describe it as comprising five interrelated capacities: attitudes of curiosity and openness toward otherness; knowledge of social groups and intercultural processes; skills of interpreting and relating across cultural contexts; skills of discovery and interaction in real-time communication; and critical cultural awareness, the ability to evaluate practices and perspectives in both one's own and other cultures. Rather than positioning the learner as a native-speaker imitator, this framework aims to develop an intercultural mediator capable of engaging with complexity, multiple identities, and unfamiliar perspectives.

Building on this foundation, Deardorff (2006) empirically validated a process model in which attitude, specifically respect, openness, and curiosity, serves as the essential starting point, leading toward an internal shift in frame of reference and ultimately an external outcome of behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations. Deardorff further emphasizes that cultural competence exists on a continuum and is best assessed through multiple qualitative methods rather than any single instrument.

In this study, cultural competence is defined as the ability to interpret cultural practices, compare perspectives across sociocultural contexts, and reflect on one's own cultural assumptions (Byram et al., 2002; Deardorff, 2006). Grounded in the interpretive and critical dimensions of Byram et al.'s framework along with Deardorff's emphasis on perspective-taking and self-reflective awareness, this paper reports on a 12-week action research project that incorporated *The Long Night*, a Chinese-language streaming series (based on a novel) about the justice system in China, into an Intermediate Chinese Program.

BACKGROUND

The Efficacy of Media-Based Instruction and Activities

The effectiveness of media-based instruction in second language acquisition (SLA) has been widely explored, particularly in vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension. Chen (2012) conducted a corpus-based lexical richness study analyzing the sitcom *Friends*, concluding that the show's scripts offer "a high possibility to be an appropriate resource for English as an additional language (EAL) learners' lexicon instruction" due to their alignment with high-frequency words in English corpora. This aligns with Y. C. Wang (2012), who examined American TV dramas' impact on L2 vocabulary learning and emphasized that learners benefit from "authentic dialogues and contextualized expressions" that reinforce vocabulary retention. These findings suggest that narrative media (e.g., films or television dramas) may support vocabulary development by



providing contextualized input. However, much of the existing research has focused primarily on vocabulary outcomes rather than broader discourse-level analysis (Chen, 2012; Y. C. Wang, 2012). Fewer studies have provided detailed descriptions of how narrative media can be systematically integrated into classroom instruction.

Listening comprehension also improves through exposure to TV dramas. While some learners struggle with rapid speech and phonological reductions, research suggests that structured scaffolding can enhance decoding ability and retention. Fujita (2019) found that students identified fast speech as the primary obstacle to comprehension, with higher-proficiency learners demonstrating greater awareness of phonological features such as linking and reduced forms. The study further suggested that structured scaffolding and guided analysis help learners decode these features more effectively. These findings support the use of layered instructional tasks, such as guided analysis and structured follow-up activities, in classroom media-based instruction.

Media-Based Instruction and Cultural Competence

In addition to its efficacy, media-based instruction plays a vital role in authentic linguistic and cultural competence. In the context of China, where many learners lack immersive English-speaking environments, D. Wang (2012) emphasized that watching TV dramas enables students to “gain exposure to natural speech patterns and pragmatic competence that traditional textbooks fail to provide” (p. 2). This perspective highlights the role of narrative media as a form that allows learners to access authentic linguistic input beyond formal classroom settings. Media also supports cultural engagement and sociocultural awareness. Fujita (2019) reported that over 70% of students expressed greater interest in other cultures after watching dramas that “depicted daily life overseas” (p. 26). In addition, Richardson (2010) argues that television drama operates as a complex semiotic system in which meaning is constructed through multiple simultaneous channels, making it a uniquely rich resource for language learners. The research indicates that narrative media offers an integrated context for developing both linguistic and cultural competence by combining authentic linguistic input, cultural representation, and multimodal meaning-making.

Research Questions

These studies shaped the planning and implementation of the present classroom-based project. Fujita’s (2019) findings regarding rapid speech and phonological complexity informed the decision to embed guided analysis and the combination of the streaming series and corresponding excerpts from the novel into weekly lessons. While prior research on media-based language learning has primarily examined vocabulary acquisition and learner motivation (Chen, 2012; Y. C. Wang, 2012; Fujita, 2019), fewer studies have provided detailed pedagogical models demonstrating how narrative media can be systematically integrated into classroom instruction through structured tasks and instructor-facilitated activities. The present project addresses this gap by implementing an instructional sequence centered on a Chinese streaming series, incorporating guided analysis of excerpts from the novel, and instructor-facilitated discussions to



support both listening proficiency and cultural competence, and examines how students perceive this integration.

Informed by this literature and grounded in the needs of Chinese learners of Interagency Language Roundtable scale (ILR) Level 2 (Intermediate High proficiency), the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are students' perceptions of integrating narrative media into a Chinese language course, in terms of development of their listening proficiency and cultural competence?
2. In what ways might including narrative media in a language course impact students' listening proficiency development?

ACTIONS TAKEN

Student Profile

The study was conducted in a 19-week Chinese BA Degree Program with eight students enrolled at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC). All participants were preparing to take the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT5) at the conclusion of the course, with an institutional target of achieving at least ILR Level 2+ (described as Advanced Plus) in listening and reading. While their professional background is omitted here for anonymity, it is worth noting that they shared similar career goals requiring strong linguistic proficiency to perform their military duties. Their prior DLPT5 score histories (see Appendix A) indicated variability in listening and reading performance across testing cycles.

At the beginning of the course, all eight students had achieved at least ILR Level 2 in listening and reading, with entry scores ranging from 2 to 2+ in listening and from 2 to 3 in reading (see Appendix A). Speaking proficiency, as measured by Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) ratings, showed greater variability, with scores ranging from 1+ to 2. For example, one student entered with a 2+/3/2 profile (listening/reading/speaking), while another entered with a 2/2/1+ profile, reflecting stronger receptive skills relative to productive ability. This pattern of initial inconsistency followed by improvement was seen across several learners and strongly informed the design of the instructional intervention. The aim was to consolidate recent gains, address lingering weak areas (especially listening and oral fluency), and maintain forward momentum.

Although students reported that they had engaged with authentic materials in earlier classes (e.g., news articles, podcasts), none had previously participated in a long-term, curriculum-integrated media-based project. Their experience with audiovisual materials had been limited to isolated clips or test prep items. As such, this project served not only to develop linguistic and cultural skills, but also to introduce learners to a structured mode of learning, which required clear scaffolding, pacing, and reflection tools to help learners transition from familiar formats.



Instructional Design and Teaching Steps

Implementing a 12-week media-based project within an intensive, schedule-driven language curriculum required both administrative support and instructional flexibility. The program in which the project was conducted follows a tightly structured weekly plan, with nearly every instructional hour accounted for in the standardized syllabus. With approval from program leadership, time was made available each week to run this project without interfering with the standardized curriculum content or required objectives.

The instructional content was centered around the Chinese streaming series *The Long Night* (《沉默的真相》). The series, which was based on a novel, provided rich cultural content on the legal system in China. In addition to the series, instructional activities included excerpts from the original novel. Students did not read the full novel independently; instead, short instructor-selected excerpts were introduced during guided review sessions in class to support analysis of key scenes. The careful selection and pairing of episodes and excerpts from the novel were undertaken by the instructional team, whose deep cultural and literary insight ensured that the materials were not only thematically appropriate but also pedagogically rich. Weekly implementation included guided classroom discussions, vocabulary review, and concept mapping activities designed to support comprehension and critical reflection.

Each week, students viewed one full episode of *The Long Night*, which aligned with a 50-minute instructional period. Due to the length of the episodes and time constraints, there was no pausing or rewatching, and the show was screened with Chinese subtitles only, without English glossing or scene breakdowns. While some pedagogical approaches advocate limiting subtitle use to promote inferencing strategies, the use of Chinese subtitles throughout viewing was intentional to provide lexical support appropriate for ILR Level 2 learners while maintaining exposure to authentic spoken language. This format challenged students to follow naturalistic, fast-paced dialogue in real time, replicating the kind of immersive listening scenario often encountered in real-world or testing contexts.

Vocabulary and grammar were not pre-taught prior to viewing. Instead, a structured 50-minute review session was conducted during the class period on the following day after each episode was viewed. During these review sessions, instructors guided students through key vocabulary lists, thematic prompts, and character mapping linked to the corresponding episode and excerpts from the novel. This process allowed students to consolidate their understanding of the language while also reflecting on the story's progression and moral dilemmas.

Scaffolding of the justice system and related culture was an essential part of the instructional design. Every week during the 50-minute review session of each episode, instructors posed guiding questions such as: "How is evidence handled in this case?" "What role do prosecutors and defense attorneys play?" and "How might this situation be handled differently in the United States?" These prompts prepared students for discussions that would happen in the next class sessions. Meanwhile, the instructors maintained a concept map on the classroom whiteboard to



help students track characters, motives, and events within the evolving crime narrative. This visual framework became a shared interpretive tool, linking plot elements to linguistic features and sociocultural themes (e.g., legal terminology, formal register). Though photographs of the map could not be retained due to security protocol, the concept map remained a central artifact of the project's development and classroom engagement.

After they watched the show, students discussed the reflective topics they had been prompted to consider, such as comparing the Chinese justice system depicted in the streaming series with the U.S. system based on their prior knowledge or real-life experience. These conversations extended beyond language practice into meaningful cultural interpretation, enhancing the development of students' cultural competence in the process.

Instruction was delivered using a hybrid of physical and digital tools. Episodes were streamed from YouTube, projected in-class. Instructional prompts, vocabulary notes, and reading materials were compiled in Microsoft OneNote, which students accessed regularly. The classroom whiteboard was used for concept maps and group contributions, to reinforce the interactive nature of the instructional design.

In summary, the instructional workflow followed a consistent weekly structure:

Step 1: Episode Viewing on Monday

Students viewed one full episode of *The Long Night* during a 50-minute session. Episodes were screened with Chinese subtitles only, without pausing or English glossing, requiring real-time processing of naturalistic dialogue.

Step 2: Guided Discourse Analysis on Tuesday

Instructors facilitated structured analysis comparing key scenes from Monday's episode with corresponding excerpts from the original novel. These excerpts were introduced and read collaboratively in class rather than assigned as independent homework reading. Activities included examination of dialogue structure, narrative perspective, legal terminology, and thematic interpretation.

Step 3: Vocabulary Consolidation and Cultural Discussion

Students reviewed targeted vocabulary lists derived from the episode and excerpts from the novel. Discussions incorporated comparative discussion of Chinese and U.S. legal systems, guided by instructor framing questions.

Step 4: Concept Mapping and Narrative Tracking

A collaborative concept map was updated weekly to track characters, relationships, motivations, and key events, supporting comprehension of the complex narrative structure.



Step 5: Reflective Engagement

Students participated in group discussions and ongoing reflective interpretation, culminating in a final written reflection synthesizing linguistic and cultural insights.

Student Engagement and Participation

Given the intensity of the course and the already substantial volume of homework associated with the standardized curriculum, no additional assignments were given outside of class for this media-based project. The design was intentional: the goal was to enhance in-class learning experiences without increasing the cognitive load on students. Instead, participation was emphasized during class time, with special attention to the review sessions on Tuesday, which followed each episode viewing and focused on the analysis of the televised episode alongside the excerpt from the novel, vocabulary review, and cultural interpretation.

Students were expected to contribute actively to group discussions each Tuesday. These discussions were led by the instructors to ensure that students could follow the complex storyline and navigate advanced vocabulary, given their approximate ILR Level 2 proficiency. Because *The Long Night* presents multiple timelines and dense legal terminology, students often relied on the instructor's framing questions, narrative summaries, and conceptual cues (e.g., character maps or cause-effect prompts) to make sense of the story's progression. While students did not lead the discussion independently, their verbal contributions, questions, and reflections were critical in creating a shared understanding of both language and narrative content.

The only formal written assignment required of students was an individual 600-word final reflection, submitted by each student at the end of the 12-week module. This reflection asked students to synthesize their understanding of the show's narrative, compare elements of Chinese and American justice systems, and express personal insights about characters, plot developments, and broader cultural themes. Though this was not formally graded, it provided a capstone opportunity to demonstrate comprehension growth.

Students were not assessed through quizzes or comprehension checks during the weekly reviews or discussions. Instead, the real-time evaluation in class emphasized formative participation and qualitative indicators of engagement, including meaningful contributions to thematic discussions and reflective analysis. Changes in proficiency were indicated through DLPT5 scores (see Appendix A). However, these scores are presented as contextual indicators rather than direct causal outcomes of the intervention.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data sources included in this study were standardized proficiency measures, students' qualitative written reflections, and students' post-project feedback, providing both quantitative and qualitative perspectives on language development and learner experience.



The primary performance indicator was DLPT5, which all students completed near the end of the course. Though not designed specifically to evaluate the project itself, the DLPT5 offered a standardized benchmark for assessing changes in listening proficiency over the duration of the course. DLPT5 scores were interpreted as contextual indicators of proficiency development that served as a valuable reference point for correlating instructional exposure to receptive language outcomes.

To explore the cultural and interpretive dimensions of learning, we analyzed students' 600-word final reflection in Chinese (the written reflections are not authorized to publish due to the security protocol). This reflection required students to:

- Compare aspects of Chinese and American justice systems,
- Reflect on the cultural themes presented, and
- Comment on their personal experience engaging with the story.

While not formally scored, the reflections were reviewed through repeated readings to identify recurring themes related to justice system comparison and cultural interpretation. Notes were taken to document patterns across the eight submissions, and common themes were summarized descriptively rather than coded using formal qualitative software. This descriptive thematic approach allowed the researchers to identify shared interpretive tendencies while maintaining the exploratory nature of the classroom-based project.

In addition, students completed a post-project feedback form that consisted of Likert-scale items and open-ended response fields (See Appendix B). The form gathered feedback on:

- Perceived improvements in listening proficiency and vocabulary recognition,
- Confidence following Chinese narrative media without English support,
- Cultural learning and engagement with the sociocultural themes presented in the series,
- Preferences for media-based versus traditional instructional materials.

Together, these data sources provided complementary perspectives on the instructional intervention. Student reflections and feedback addressed students' perceptions of narrative media integration and cultural competence development, corresponding to RQ1, while DLPT5 scores provided contextual indicators of listening proficiency development in relation to RQ2. This combination of performance data and supporting qualitative evidence allowed the study to examine measurable listening outcomes within an intensive, military-oriented language learning context.



RESULTS

The findings suggest that the integration of narrative media and structured cultural discussion was associated with the improvements in listening proficiency and cultural competence. Three major outcomes emerged from the data: (1) the majority of students demonstrated improved listening proficiency as reflected in DLPT5 scores (see Appendix A), (2) students' cultural competence deepened, evidenced through students' written reflections, and (3) students reported strong personal engagement with and positive perceptions of the narrative media approach, evidenced through post-project feedback. It should be noted that all students reported being Very to Extremely Satisfied with the program.

Listening Proficiency Outcomes

The most measurable outcome was observed in the DLPT5 scores (See Appendix A). A closer examination of score movement shows that five students (S2, S4, S5, S6 and S8) advanced from Level 2 to Level 2+ in listening. Students who entered at Level 2+ in listening generally maintained that level at the end of the course. One student (S3) remained at Level 2 in listening. DLPT5 scores were merely interpreted as a contextual indicator of proficiency development instead of a causal indicator of instructional effectiveness. Student feedback sheds light on these gains. Seven out of eight students reported overall feeling that this program greatly helped their listening improve, while one student reported feeling the program helped a neutral amount. Open-ended responses indicated that they felt increased confidence in processing fast-paced spoken Chinese (see Appendix B). Several noted that viewing episodes with Chinese subtitles, without English translation, required sustained attention to real-time speech.

Cultural Competence

Across the reflections, students demonstrated evidence of cultural competence, particularly regarding themes of corruption, justice, sacrifice, and legal complexity. Many were able to articulate intercultural comparisons between Chinese and American justice systems. For example, one student wrote, “在中国，因为有很多腐败，江阳花了很长时间找证据，还付出了很大代价。但在美国，新闻自由，法院公平，可能让真相更快被发现。” (“In China, because there's a lot of corruption, Jiang Yang spent a long time collecting evidence and paid a great price. But in the U.S., freedom of the press and fair courts might allow the truth to be revealed more quickly.”)

Another student reflected on the moral nature of the justice system in China, observing, “即使‘好人’犯法也会受到惩罚。” (“Even if ‘good people’ break the law, they will still be punished.”)

This student highlighted the show's emphasis on the rule of law as interpreted in Chinese cultural narratives. Multiple students also referenced their surprise that such a critical depiction of



Chinese institutions had passed censorship, indicating deeper engagement with questions of media production, institutional context, and cultural interpretation.

Students responded actively to the series' portrayal of the justice system, despite having limited prior exposure to Chinese legal language. Many reflections discussed the dilemma of ethical sacrifice and the role of whistleblowers. One student wrote, “《沉默的真相》让我思考：为了真相，你愿意付出什么？” (“The Long Night made me ask: what would you be willing to sacrifice for the truth?”) Rather than reflecting solely on character motivation, such responses demonstrated perspective-taking and self-reflection across sociocultural contexts, which were key components of the study's operational definition of cultural competence. Through iterative qualitative analysis of reflection content, these patterns were identified as evidence of students' increasing ability to interpret cultural practices and evaluate them in relation to their own assumptions.

Increased Motivation and Personal Engagement

Nearly all students expressed strong personal engagement with the material. Survey results showed that students found the show emotionally impactful, intellectually stimulating, and linguistically challenging, which contributed to a greater sense of relevance in their learning. One student reflected, “我肯定会向任何学习中文的人推荐这个电视剧……可以提高听力和生词知识。” (“I would definitely recommend this series to anyone learning Chinese... it can really improve your listening and vocabulary.”)

Another added, “这部剧不仅是一个谋杀悬疑的故事，更是关于权力、腐败和正义代价的深度探索。” (“This series isn't just a murder mystery—it's a deep exploration of power, corruption, and the cost of justice.”)

Several students noted they had never completed a media project like this before, and some requested similar units in future courses. Survey responses and reflective comments collectively suggest increased motivation and perceived personal relevance of language learning within a narrative-driven instructional context. Although formal speaking output was not a major focus of the project, students did note that the in-class discussions helped them “find their voice” when explaining complex ideas in Chinese.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that media-based instruction can support the development and consolidation of listening proficiency and cultural competence in an LREC-focused classroom. While media-based instruction is not new to second language acquisition, the structured integration of *The Long Night*, paired with instructor-facilitated discussions and analysis of



excerpts from the novel, demonstrated a structured pedagogical approach for Chinese learners of ILR Level 2.

Listening Development

In terms of language development, the project's outcomes show alignment with prior scholarship. Student feedback indicated perceived growth in vocabulary recognition during listening and greater comfort processing authentic spoken input following sustained exposure to high-frequency lexical items in the media. These perceptions align conceptually with findings reported by Chen (2012) and Y. C. Wang (2012), who also observed vocabulary and listening benefits associated with media-based instruction. The DLPT5 results reflect a similar pattern: seven reached ILR Level 2+ in listening, with five students moving from Level 2 to Level 2+. While gains were not uniform across all participants, these findings are broadly consistent with Fujita's (2019) observation that higher-proficiency learners may benefit from media-based instruction when accompanied by structured scaffolding. By embedding weekly episode viewing combined with subtitle-supported listening, guided analysis, and post-viewing vocabulary review rather than repeated scene playback, the project appears to have supported students' efforts to decode complex dialogue.

Cultural Competence Development

The findings also suggest evidence of cultural competence development as defined in this study. Rather than merely engaging with narrative themes, students' reflections demonstrated interpretive engagement with culturally embedded practices and institutional structures. For example, several students analyzed representations of judicial corruption and civil responsibility within the sociopolitical context of contemporary China and contrasted these depictions with their understandings of the justice system in the United States.

These reflections went beyond plot comprehension to include intercultural comparison and perspective-taking, two core components of the operational definition of cultural competence guiding this study. In examining differences in media portrayal, institutional trust, and legal accountability, students articulated both cultural distinctions and the assumptions underlying their own perspectives. Such reflective comparison aligns with Richardson's (2010) emphasis on multimodality as a vehicle for cultural meaning-making.

Student Perceptions and Engagement

Beyond proficiency outcomes and cultural competence development, students' feedback revealed strong personal engagement with the instructional approach, which addresses the perceptual dimension of RQ1. Nearly all students reported that the program meaningfully contributed to their listening development and expressed a preference for narrative media over traditional instructional materials. Students particularly noted the value of sustained, real-time exposure to naturalistic spoken Chinese, a feature of the instructional design that traditional



curricula rarely replicate. This perceived confidence in processing fast-paced authentic input is consistent with Fujita's (2019) finding that structured scaffolding enhances learners' awareness of their own listening strategies. Importantly, students' positive perceptions of the approach suggest that narrative media integration need not come at the expense of learner motivation or program satisfaction, a meaningful consideration for instructors weighing the feasibility of media-based projects within standards-driven, LREC-focused curricula.

Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, while most students demonstrated stabilization or advancement within the ILR Level 2 to 2+ range in listening, gains were not uniform across all participants. Two out of eight students did not demonstrate measurable improvement in listening but remained at Level 2+ and one remained at Level 2. While it is possible that these students' listening proficiency did not increase to the level needed for a higher score, it is also the case that score fluctuation across administrations is not uncommon within mid-level proficiency bands of the DLPT5. Also, the DLPT5 was not designed to isolate the effects of a single instructional unit. Because both assessments capture performance at a specific testing moment, factors such as test-day conditions, interactional dynamics, and individual variability may influence outcomes. Future research employing longitudinal designs or multiple assessment points could provide a more stable picture of instructional impact.

Second, the small sample size limits generalizability. Replication across multiple cohorts and institutional contexts would strengthen claims regarding the broader applicability of narrative media-based instruction for supporting listening development and cultural competence.

CONCLUSION

This project suggests that the structured integration of narrative media within an intermediate-level Chinese curriculum may support the development and consolidation of listening proficiency and cultural competence. Through a 12-week module built around the streaming series *The Long Night*, students engaged with complex language, culturally embedded themes, and authentic discourse practices in a format aligned with DLPT-oriented demands.

Triangulated evidence from DLPT5 scores (Appendix A) indicates upward movement within the ILR Level 2 to 2+ proficiency range for several learners, alongside qualitative evidence of intercultural comparison and interpretive reflection (student feedback shown in Appendix B and student reflections). While gains were not uniform across all participants, the findings suggest that guided analysis and reflective discussion can create opportunities for learners to interpret culturally situated practices and examine their own assumptions, which are core components of the study's operational definition of cultural competence.

Student feedback further indicated strong personal engagement with the narrative media approach, with nearly all participants reporting perceived improvements in listening confidence



and a preference for this instructional format over traditional materials. These perceptions suggest that structured media integration can support learner motivation and satisfaction alongside measurable proficiency outcomes, an important consideration for programs weighing the feasibility of similar interventions within demanding, standards-driven curricula.

The findings indicate that narrative media can function as a structured context for engaging learners with linguistically complex and culturally embedded content within an LREC-focused curriculum. Rather than displacing core instructional goals, the module operated alongside established proficiency targets and assessment benchmarks.

Use of AI Tools

The authors used generative AI tools (OpenAI, ChatGPT, and Microsoft Copilot) solely for limited language editing support, including grammar and phrasing refinement, as none of the authors are native English speakers. The authors drafted all substantive content independently, including research design, analysis, interpretation, and conclusions. AI tools were not used to generate research ideas, arguments, data, analyses, references, or sources. All final content was reviewed and approved by the authors in accordance with journal policy.

Authors

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APPENDIX A

DLPT5 Scores of the Students in this Project

#	Entry DLPT & OPI	DLPT L	DLPT R	OPI
S1	2+/3/2	2+	2+	2
S2	2/2+/2	2+	2+	2
S3	2/2+/2	2	2+	1+
S4	2/2/1+	2+	2+	2
S5	2/2+/2	2+	2+	2
S6	2/2+/1+	2+	2+	2
S7	2+/2/2	2+	2+	1+
S8	2/2+/2	2+	2+	2

DLPT5 Scores of the Students in this Project

#	Entry DLPT Listening	Exit DLPT Listening	Change from Entry to Exit
S1	2+	2+	No Change
S2	2	2+	Increase
S3	2	2	No Change
S4	2	2+	Increase
S5	2	2+	Increase
S6	2	2+	Increase
S7	2+	2+	No Change
S8	2	2+	Increase



APPENDIX B

Post-project Student Feedback Gathered in Online Form

Scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)

Questions	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8
How satisfied were you with the overall Media-Enhanced Linguistic and Cultural Studies (MELCS) program?	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
How much did you feel that your listening comprehension improved as a result of this program?	3	5	5	4	5	5	5	5
How much did your vocabulary expand through the TV-based content?	3	4	5	4	5	4	5	4
How effective were the after-show activities (e.g., discussions, reading) in reinforcing your language learning?	2	4	5	4	5	4	5	4
How effective was the instructor’s guidance in connecting language and cultural aspects?	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4
How much did the program enhance your ability to interpret cultural nuances?	4	5	5	4	4	4	5	5
How confident do you feel in using the language in real-life situations after the program?	3	5	5	3	4	4	4	5
How much would you recommend using the same teaching program for future students?	3	5	5	4	5	5	5	5

	Do you think the TV show <i>The Long Night</i> is a valuable addition to the CHIN3950 Course?	In what ways did <i>The Long Night</i> contribute to your advanced Chinese language learning in this course?
S1	I did enjoy the show. The part that I enjoyed the most was picking up parts of the language I had studied previous in a more authentic environment.	I learned a lot of crime vocab and learned how to use it situationally. I will say that I wish I would have done more exercises with these words to better grasp them, but I definitely know them better now with the show than I would have if we had not watched the show.
S2	Yes. It is a good way to relax but also take in new and focused vocabulary as well as colloquial terms. However, i think that it would have been better if we had come up with vocab lists for the episodes the day after and ran through the timeline of the previous episode. I feel like i didn't	I liked discussing what had happened in the previous episode and going over the character charts. I wish we had been able to come up with vocabulary words as a class for each episode and maybe did a basic timeline together so that if we got a little lost, we could get un-lost.



	really learn much from reading excerpts from the script.	
S3	Yes, I was able to learn more crime and science related vocabulary in a less stressful way	improved reading, listening, and speaking skills through analysis of the show and studying vocabulary used.
S4	Yes, but I feel like it should be moved to a Thursday/Friday, Monday and Tuesday, I feel we should focus on other things, and it'd be a nice way to end the week.	we heard more colloquial spoken language and read colloquial text.
S5	yes, it shows us how the language gets used outside of the classroom setting	it allowed us to use our listening skills with more than a couple minutes of context, also it used more colloquial language than we are normally exposed to
S6	Yes-- the material is more recent/modern than a lot of other curriculum used	The show was full of realistic modern speaking patterns/structure
S7	I do believe it was helpful. I believe it helped with rapid understanding and trying to understand through context.	I think the show helped to expand our exposure to language/colloquialisms and culture. Having the novel analysis the next day was also helpful in cementing understand while also showing the differences in spoken versus written language.
S8	Yes, because adding a more passive way to learn gave me a way to slowly digest information that I was being given without being overwhelmed. That being said I would have preferred this to be an every other day type of class instead of just once a week so we could have explored different topics.	I think the show aided in acquisition of rare vocab and giving a unique perspective on the history/ development of police departments in China.