



Japan Bilingual Publishing Co.

# Cultural Arts Research and Development

[https://www.bilpub.com/Journal/Cultural\\_Arts\\_Research\\_and\\_Development\\_19.html](https://www.bilpub.com/Journal/Cultural_Arts_Research_and_Development_19.html)

## ARTICLE

# Zhuang Song Preservation Efforts

Gisa Jähnichen<sup>1\*</sup>, Lin Zhi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Shanghai Conservatory of Music, 200031 Shanghai, 20 Fenyang Lu, Libr. Bldg. 604B (ORCID-ID: 0000-0003-0278-1579; website in academia.edu: <https://gisajahnichen.academia.edu/>; Scopus author ID: 54580997200)

<sup>2</sup>PhD Candidate, Music Department, Faculty of Human Ecology, Putra University, Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor D.E., Malaysia (ORCID-ID: 0009-0009-62427214; academia.edu account: <https://gxau.academia.edu/linzhi>)

\*Correspondence: [gisajaehnichen@web.de](mailto:gisajaehnichen@web.de)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55121/card.v3i2.81>

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received: 26 July 2023; Accepted: 28 October 2023; Published: 16 November 2023

### Keywords:

Guangxi Zhuang; singing; time and space; archiving, song lyrics; language impact

## ABSTRACT

Songs are at the center of music transmission in many educational institutions around the world. People in China say ‘song’, but they may mean “music and dance” or they just mean all consciously produced sounds they are confronted with in their daily lives, such as rap coming out of a technical device or the noise of birds around a trash bin. One of the main ways to overcome these shortcomings is to break up with conventional habits of holding on to assumptive statements without having clarified their purpose and diversification from sources taken as ‘the original ones’. Millions of songbooks and text collections are published and distributed. They are offering easy teaching and easy performance on stages in front of an unknown audience. Using songs and other ‘easy-to-teach’-items for presenting research goals or identity proofs could lead to many misunderstandings in more complex situations of life, which absorb over time many different appearances of sound, a large part of which is commercial output. This cannot be ignored and should inspire further discussions in a qualitative approach. Zhuang songs are but one of many examples that can be taken to give proof of the language impact on singing habits.

## Introduction

Songs, which is no secret, are at the center of music transmission in many educational institutions. People in China say ‘song’, but they may mean “music and dance” or they mean just all consciously produced sounds they are confronted with in their daily lives.

There were already many critics of “the song” in the past who exposed the nationalist and idealist notions of songs, their overemphasis on song texts, or their constructions as identity markers. Mainly all research regarding anthems or so-called typicalities of songs are at the core of these critical debates<sup>[1,2]</sup>.

The fact is that many times songs are seen as cultural examples<sup>[3,4]</sup>, as representations of a typical

cultural expression, as proofs of identity, as proofs of belongings. While national anthems may have weird histories, for example the history of the Malaysian anthem that is known very well, the discussion about which song might be right as an anthem is seemingly useful and brings a lot of positive interest in music to the table.

The old-fashioned critical points are still not yet answered and seem to last longer than ever thought<sup>[5,6]</sup>. Among them are the few ideas that can be summarized as follows:

- Do song texts carry the contents of a song? If so, what makes them distinct from spoken words? In consequence, what makes speaking different from singing?
- Can musical structures be fixed in transcriptions or in single broadcast recordings and whom could such an approach help?
- Are melodies indeed the most important parts of a song? If so, why do rhythmic features or the sonic embedding into a social context have to be taken away? Does it really help in order to serve a higher purpose of representation?
- Songs surely cannot be owned. When a song leaves the place of production, in some cases simply the mouth of the singer, it can be used by anyone who has listened to that song. Or can songs be owned?

Although these shortcomings have already been widely discussed mainly in Chinese music literature, there is a lack of understanding in academic writings that is dependent on the translation of earlier contributions in this field. Also, the topic of songs is in some instances often reduced to text discussions and evaluation techniques used for political approvals. These instances are not rare and are also applied to international organizations such as UNESCO's ICH sections, to grant providing bodies, and to grant schemes at tertiary educational institutions, universities, research colleges, and similar units.

It seems that one main task to overcome these shortcomings is to break up with conventional habits of holding on to assumptive statements without having a clarified purpose and diversification from sources taken as 'the original'. Millions of songbooks and text collections are published and distributed that offer easy teaching and easy performing on stage in front of an unknown audience, of which often the first row is the most eagerly addressed as there are sitting decision makers employed at important institutions and financial supporters for further research projects.

This should stop and be thought over. Using songs and other 'easy-to-teach'-items for presenting ambitions and research goals could lead to many misunderstandings in more complex situations of life in which over time

many different appearances of sound are absorbed mainly as commercial output. This commercial output is not only a necessity at this point in history. It is also a sign of change and reshaping.

## Cultural Context

The points discussed in the previous section, point toward that a different reasoning can be given and are often highly valued. Whereas saying that this and that (songs performed on stage in nice dresses) is just for a museum, an archive, or this concert as both authors could repeatedly observe. However, the personal view of the authors is that there must be clarity about songs and singing from an early age and among all people, at least within one definite region. Education does not only address a handful of selected people but everyone. Singing is an elementary skill. Anybody throughout the world should be able to express oneself through singing, speaking, dancing, or acting creatively. It is part of the human repertoire referring to expressive skills. The authors of this study are not yet sure whether this moralistic viewpoint can be supported in the future.

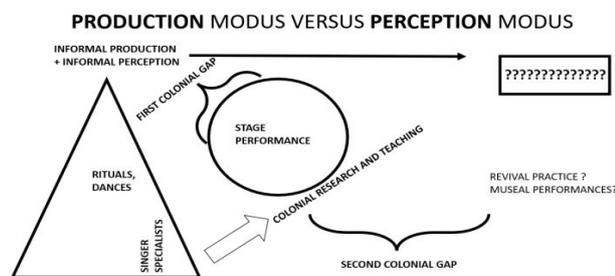
How often has somebody been heard saying 'Oh, I cannot sing', or 'I am not musical'? How often have scholars and teachers been angry with themselves for not being able to properly explain that everybody might have been able to sing and to be musical if there had not been a distorted kind of impact caused by double standards in accepting singing skills, either by close family members or the wider society<sup>[4,7]</sup>? These statements on singing skills apply to many regions; they are not only common in Asian open cultures of the limited territory this investigation alludes to in general and specifically.

In addition, very often, nobody ever cared about the definition of 'the song'. From the authors' perspective, a 'song' is quite a new item in the context of communal musical ideas<sup>[2]</sup>. It is representative mainly regarding other musical activities such as rituals, ceremonies, daily usage of music during work, household activities, and leisure times. An individual 'song' might be the expression of the now, which is a very short time span. However, on a stage, the song becomes a representation of an entire community and the past in rather an abstract way. The construction of this culture or imagining is partly if not entirely led by the properties a song provides. Mainly it loses history and, therefore, also loses any constructed or inherent culture<sup>[4]</sup>. Many majority communities face this problem. Whereas smaller communities are in rare cases accepted as teaching subjects<sup>[1]</sup>. This is definitely not what the singing or a song may have to do to those people. Songs are not owned by anyone, by no people alone, or by any nation-state, although they might have been used to express group behaviour and appear frequently through voicing certain ideas, if the lyrics are the primary focus. One fine example is the documentary by Peeva<sup>[8]</sup> 'Whose is this Song?'. The provoking question put in front of a number of 'owners' revealed the difficulties in containing sound

as it emerges. This found attention through a number of re-interpretations and claims. Text and musical structures were symbiotically exploited to express regional or even national ownership. This kind of thinking may easily lead to unrest and hate among rivaling people as the documentary attempts to portray.

One too often forgotten thing is that any song has definite musical contents, which is, for example, an important fact within China, where all musical pieces are called songs. A song is a musical unit of any shape filled with any kind of coordinated sound, not only the human voice. Scholars should be aware of this fact when teaching musicality and the meaning of music<sup>[5]</sup>. Moreover, one needs to accept that some people may have a pre-disposition never to sing or those people may sing only secretly.

One striking example is the data collection and the methods of song research, especially the collection of Zhuang singing carried out by Lin Zhi in the Guangxi border area. A border area has many specific features such as overlapping uses of artifacts and intangible items. Lin Zhi tried to be conscious of the basics in the thoughts discussed above. It is important to fully understand what Lin Zhi has to add. Current studies on this topic contribute to overcoming colonial thinking patterns and echo reputation-benefitting patterns in research in regions that were historically not directly colonized such as mainland China and parts of Southeast Asia. Below, a scheme drafted (Figure 1) provides a picture of the colonial gaps and misinterpretations of the flow from modus production to perception. Taking historically produced musical expressions to a local stage, even if there are maintained many features, will always increase at least the first colonial gap, namely, stage production. The second colonial gap is then produced through the teaching of these itemized expressions as if they were attributes of specific musical behavior that is then schematically and uncritically associated with specific communal groups, which are solely put in order according to language attributes.



**Figure 1:** Scheme of colonial gaps and misinterpretation of the flow from production modus to perception modus (Scheme by Gisa Jaehnichen).

In order to explain this scheme, here are some statements aiding the visual expression: Centre of observation is the stage performance potential as any song can be ‘used’ to promote something (either

politically or economically or both). The first colonial gap is the imposition of one’s own thoughts on the ‘use’ of skills and crafts onto another group of people and their inherent working mechanisms. These groups may have completely different social structures and stimuli for the arts. Not all performances serve rituals or dances, yet there could still be professional vocalists in every community. Competitiveness can play a role but there is probably also another communal opinion about this term. Hence, direct comparison may fail to reach any conclusions. Acknowledging this misunderstanding, a second colonial gap appears by teaching the group construction again from one’s own experience of coloniality and power structures in a static and categorized way as if a similar development is not wished and differences are to be clearly exhibited. This may happen namely within majority-minority constructions, which leads to a revival practice that excludes non-informed people and creates musical performances within the framework of the first colonial gap. A patronizing mechanism is applied bringing art expressions to the level of cultural items. Any kind of informal practice that includes production or perception declines quickly and becomes a simple symbolic tool that is only exhibited in living musical ideas. These symbolic tools serve as the re-interpretation rather than the thriving of a community.

This simple scheme also shows that colonial structures and created gaps of understanding are not dependent on the reality of territorial power. Rather, they are dependent on the social empowerment of a majority group. Academic views may amplify the given proportions and contribute to misinterpretations, if researchers definitely belong to the majority group or if they are in some ways corrupted in adhering to the conservative interpretation of colonial structures. Therefore, it is very important to find better ways of data collection and restoration that can neither be manipulated easily nor misunderstood.

### Terminology

‘Song’ is seemingly an isolated term that represents specific associations in strangers not belonging to the same group. At least that is what we learned through previous studies<sup>[1-7]</sup>. Some connect this fact with paid-for live entertainment. As a result of the observation, there was the impression that all Zhuang people regard in some contexts ‘singing’ as a ‘talk’, an exchange of ideas and information in general, which symbolizes a way of communication they often took for granted in the past<sup>[9]</sup>. Singing was just another way to ‘say something’. This perception of thoughts of Han-Chinese visitors and other learners of the language might be questionable from the viewpoint of decolonizing efforts. It may be impacted by the first colonial gap that considers a given usefulness of representation and commodification.

For instance, the survey subjects are approximately 35 Zhuang people from Guangxi. Specifically, data were

collected in three cities along the border of Guangxi, namely Fangchenggang, Chongzuo, and Baise (Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** Scheme of collecting ‘songs’ that were made in Fangchenggang, Chongzuo, and Baise. Drawing by Lin Zhi, 12 February 2022.

The group of Zhuang people, primarily defined through their language use rather than through other more inclusive thoughts, may sing in all aspects of life. Singing is a means to convey information about the singer and the relationship of the singer to the addressee. This seems to be a human commonality. All that is based on the economic history within a larger state unit and various writing skills that could be individually created. Language is the basic tool for people to spread and receive information. Therefore, it can be acknowledged that language also plays an important role in the informal production and perception of the performing arts. Moreover, as observed in another role, singing specific lyrics serves to transmit information in the context of an era filled with admiration for the music business and any business at large. The tool for modern society is the social use of newspapers, radio, television, mobile phones, and various social media. Nevertheless, in the agricultural era before current times, let us say 50 years ago, with limited communication tools, even shouting out loudly could have been an effective tool, and then the pursuit of human aesthetics born through ceremonial or ritual associations may have created a song or a sound structure that could have become a song over the time of use. It is remarkable that some songs need to be a voice-cultural challenge due to the high pitches used as only this feature enables the long-distance carrying of content given through lyrics and melodic patterns.

In various Zhuang dialects, there are different names for ‘singing’ like *guh fwen*, *nyaemz sei*, *guh beij*. The different names allude to various Zhuang regions and Zhuang song types, but when they introduce a Han person like Lin Zhi in Mandarin, they all say ‘shan ge’. ‘Shan’ means ‘mountain’ referring to long-distance communication. Therefore, one of the common features of some songs that have become common knowledge is that they are expected to be short, sharp, and catchy. This

is often performed on stages as a feature that is worth being exhibited.

The language is followed by the production of writing. Different writings found among a language group determine different times. Some are produced in early times (before the 1960s). Some are produced later and many communities have no writing system. These communities depend on translations or people in the diaspora who are willing to assist in translation or individual writings. In the long-term struggle of life and production, their language use seems to be a newly created language that was continuously developed by using the six characters of Chinese Mandarin in its traditional shape. That also means that the characters are not simplified as it were only in mainland China. A variety of character creation methods are the following: Pictograms, indications, pictophones, tone transfer and borrowings found together in one and the same writing. Not all methods follow a standard procedure and seem to individually divert from each other, among them the pictogram, indication, and knowledge transfer. The microphones are obviously the main ‘character creation method’, while the speech-tone transfer and borrowings are ‘character-using-methods’. ‘Fang Kuai Zhuang Words’ uses the radicals of traditional Chinese characters to recombine them into a common method to organize Zhuang characters. It is also called ‘Gu Zhuang Zi’ and ‘Tu Su Zi’.<sup>[10:81]</sup>

Zhuang language

**saw ndip** [θaw<sup>1</sup> dip<sup>7</sup>]



known word

uncommon

**Figure 3:** Scheme of word order and elements in Zhuang. (Scheme by Lin Zhi 2021).

The Zhuang inhabiting the area called this ‘saw ndip [θaw<sup>1</sup> dip<sup>7</sup>]’. ‘Saw’ refers to ‘character’, ‘ndip’ denotes ‘un-familiar or uncommon’. ‘Saw ndip’ means a character that is uncommon to Chinese characters. These characters are still today circulating among some Zhuang people, who are able to read them or who inherited them from their relatives who could read them. However it is not a commonly understood system and is not approved. Therefore, it cannot be comprehended and used by the entire Zhuang community or even by others interested in language studies.

So, in the 1950s, a small group of linguists created pinyin Zhuang, a kind of phonetic transcription that uses Roman letters. They also use Zhuangzi which applies specifically to a few Zhuang language characters created

from Han-Chinese combinations to give all the expressions a written form. In 1957, the Chinese State Council approved its initial use in the growing area<sup>[9:120-125]</sup><sup>1</sup>.

During the discussion with some Zhuang singers, questions of who you learned from, were asked. He Yulan<sup>[14]</sup> told the public: "I didn't learn from a certain person. I wanted to hear the elders sing." Someone told me: "I like to sing Zhuang songs and learn from local singers who can sing well". The question was extended to: "Why do you like it?" They smiled shyly and didn't know how to answer. The singer said: "I don't know how to speak. I can sing to explain to you". It means that this way of speaking is not a perfect way to express what I mean, but singing can help explain. This answer precisely reveals that the musical component in a song is information that cannot be provided by voicing language in an unsung way.

Since singing is furthermore considered a kind of self-entertainment, one can also use an individual 'pretending style' as a signal of what is about to happen. This singing is simply imitative and serves the dramatic aspects of staged performances. Therefore, people were practically caught up in the first colonial gap so it was impossible to understand why the singers would do anything to let others 'pretend' to be in a singing situation. 'Pretending' in this case had the primary purpose of playing and exercising to sing. The final function of all that is to transmit and receive information. The authors learned that the singers use their way of 'speaking' as a communication tool to talk and create their lives, to let others know what they are going to do, what they feel about it, and what they have to organize. This is also the reason for a specific classification of different themes appearing in the song lyrics such as love songs, memory songs, fairy tale songs, and lullabies. All these topics

<sup>1</sup>Even though the practicability was visible to everyone, there is an official approval needed in order to start the distribution and use of this system.

organise specific life situations as seen through the classifying scholars. This method was widely used until the middle of the 20th century<sup>[2]</sup> and is still today, accepted by many music teachers, who obviously were stuck in the second colonial gap and think of modernizing themselves by promoting songs in a pretending style. Since then, some students may try to sing in this style. However, to Zhuang singers in the area of research, these attempts reflect specific purposes.

The tunes of Zhuang songs are obviously limited, but the lyrics are very elaborate and can be extended. For example, the song of the Zhuang people in Longlin County, Baise City, has the tune of "A yo you a yo". It can be heard that the main melody revolves around an ascending pitch sequence 6 1 2 3 5, if it is thought of as a

relative basic frequency, the basic tone, is heard by a Chinese music learner using hybrid cipher notation. The ascending order using a chromatic approach would be then a minor third, a major second, a major second, and a minor third. Before the song starts, one must listen to a melody composed of tonal particles in the lyrics, namely "A yo you a yo". Songs in many areas of the Zhuang people name the song types according to the most commonly used redundant syllables as shown in this case, which can become the name of the respective type of songs, allowing the listener to hear or recognize the approximate place and category of the performed song. Therefore, the method of deriving words can become an important aspect to of giving names to songs.

The songs collected so far only record lyrics, and no musical melodies or song structures<sup>[11:148,12:102,13:20]</sup>. For those researchers, some aspects of lyrics are more important than the music entity represented through the melody. There are some pages of published Zhuang song books (with about 50 song lyrics) collected in Shangsi County of Fangchenggang City, Longlin County of Baise City, and Daxin County of Chongzuo City. (Figure 4).

#### 隆林各族自治县民族丛书

圩场就在小河边，  
小路沿河两边来，  
人来人往好热闹。  
阿妹今天过这里，  
不见阿哥在圩里，  
阿哥究竟去哪里？

⑨开春歌。开春歌壮族称“欢罗磨”。“罗磨”，指春天鸣叫的鸟儿。词例：

开春二月来，  
开春三月到；  
二月蝉声响，  
三月布谷叫；  
蝉声响树梢，  
布谷叫山坳；  
蝉声揪人心，  
布谷催人忙；  
阿妹忙活路，  
几时才相会？

⑩劳动歌。劳动歌壮族称“欢国摆”。山川、田野赞美歌里也有描述劳动场面的内容，但没有劳动歌所描述的具体。劳动歌专门描述劳动场面。词例：

五月太阳如火炉，  
田畴如蒸笼；  
哥我一人在耙田，  
四处无人影；  
牛在前面默默走，  
尾巴甩不停；  
我在后面扶耙把，  
两耳听布谷；  
脚下田泥难耙控，  
哥我真想哭。

⑪丰收歌。丰收歌壮族称“欢收苗”。丰收歌主要描述农作物丰收的情景。

第二辑壮话山歌

以下由唐海宝、马介文、何农林收集的大新县壮族壮语壮歌对唱歌词(一):

廿四季节歌		《芥心能肥海罗平》 入村歌	
壮歌	意释	男:(壮语)	男:(汉意译)
月争雨水受立春,	正月立春和雨水,	说讲色句话未罗,	(唱首山歌未进村),
节气圆米要忘,	季节巡还不要忘,	千路量摆明了色,	(噢!路走得太顺),
二月惊春分柳,	二月惊春分到,	千路量摆明了色,	(走过小坡路天公),
豆类候要农土,	豆类谷种要下土,	鲁德磁石拉罗色,	(噢!磁石头扎伤人),
三月清明连谷雨,	三月清明谷雨到,		
正在孔那紧风风,	孔那正是好时节,	男:(壮语)	男:(汉意译)
四月立夏连小满,	四月立夏和小满,	鲁德磁石列贵内,	(石头你排真到嘴),
老蛇游那暖米松,	种田之人最不松,	说讲猪样毛色,	(打乱路方是样),
五月芒种南夏至,	五月芒种又夏至,	说讲猪样毛色,	(噢!猪头不认份),
扎早的那之割割,	早熟的田将要熟,	后话猪样肉色,	(莫非不认猪样肉),
六月小暑和大暑,	六月小暑和大暑,		
日照火能做工,	太阳正照像火烘,	男:(壮语)	男:(汉意译)
七月立秋和处暑,	七月立秋和处暑,	后话猪样肉色,	(听你村上唱歌台),
个天甲晒又晒,	每天有晒又有晒,	为某扫毛样肉色,	(我才赶不把歌对),
八月白露秋分,	八月白露秋分到,	为留扫毛样肉色,	(不知是真还是假),
早晚多凉晒米吹,	早晚凉晒米吹,	待留猪样肉色,	(开口问一两句),
九月寒露安霜降,	九月寒露又霜降,		
天斗风北露念凉,	天气斗风北风吹,	男:(壮语)	男:(汉意译)
十月立冬受小雪,	十月立冬又小雪,	待留猪样肉色,	(开口问一两句),
		说讲猪样肉色,	(噢!猪头不认份),
		每句每样拉混,	(噢!重心长短不清),
		说讲你留肉色,	(才说猪样肉色),
		女:(壮语)	女:(汉意译)
		穿开和裤鼻上,	(同时人裤本穿穿),
		穿军裤穿风色,	(你坐我我也不),
		你盘古土样等比,	(噢!猪头不认份),
		欢喜话猪样肉色,	(噢!猪头不认份),

**Figure 4:** 3 pages of local Zhuang songs books published in the three different destinations Shangsi County of Fanchenggang City, Longlin County of Baise City, and Daxi County of Chongzuo City<sup>[11,12,13]</sup>. There are texts written mostly using Zhuang pictophones to make the song easy to follow based on the joint use of Chinese characters as taught at schools throughout China. All texts and prints are in the public domain and re-printed with permission.

In the example, only the lyrics are printed. This way of singing instead of talking to each other or texting each other is going to be less important to the future lives of the inhabitants. The reason lies in the fact that most people who continue this way of singing are aged people and by now already more than 55 years old. The singing has still a meaning to those people. Other communication tools or electronic devices cannot easily replace the production of songs and the direct actions caused by songs. However, history cannot be stopped at this moment. The future may reveal whether the impact of technological and social changes was justifying the loss of previous communication tools. Singing has become a symbolic act of the Zhuang that possesses a seemingly deeper emotional effect. It is part of a collective memory and a reminder of people's living style, who can or cannot sing Zhuang songs and live another life now, but those who still want to be competent enough to get back to past knowledge. If a community no longer possesses some of its own features, it has no collective memory. The question arises, whether these features need to be kept for coming generations. As nobody is sure of future needs, those features should be maintained until there is more certainty. The purpose of archives and museums lies in this fact.

Although today's Zhuang people under 50 can sing the same songs as their forefathers, nowadays considered as 'traditional', other people only know the commercially distributed or individually created popular songs in Chinese and Zhuang language as they are promoted via mass and social media platforms. In the process of collecting information, people were attracted to and willing to share their ideas about this issue. They adapted traditional songs and created new Zhuang songs, which frequently got high attention on some social media platforms and were also recognized by the older generation in some villages around the towns of the singers who sang conventional songs in their own rather old-fashioned style. These activities were also widely spreading even to neighboring countries such as Vietnam. Some feedback supported the potential demand. The popularity, however, cannot replace deeper knowledge with musical content as some discussions proved. The question came up, whether it is good to understand the songs, their meanings, and the current changes in evaluating these songs that become possible in the process of learning how to sing them. It was worth a try.

One of the questions was repeatedly asked by the authors themselves: How to learn Zhuang songs if someone neither originates from Zhuang people nor has adapted the language in any way? The method applied was to listen to existing audio and video recordings, singing the songs repeatedly together and individually, then recording as one's own singing. After that, the recordings were sent back to the singers via a personal social platform like WeChat (an online messenger used in China), and those singers were asked to indicate the shortcomings they observed<sup>[14]</sup>. This process could be repeated many times.

In terms of understanding the lyrics, a linguist was asked to help translate. However, translation in the best case is only a retelling of pure textual information. It is not the direct acquisition and transmission of information that includes the hidden knowledge in a way that other means are used like the produced sound, gestures, facial expressions, smells, looks, and specific situations. The translation cannot completely represent the original value of the songs. Language learning is an important part of how to inherit Zhuang songs and carry on the language and the lifestyle of the Zhuang people living in those areas of Guangxi's borders. Language learning is not superficial and meaningless if the experience is seen from a holistic perspective. It is important to establish a system of how to carry on with a safe system of life given through language uses in the context of current changes. To give a good example towards the inheritance of songs, the linguistic knowledge was and still is a big deal. Yet it is not the only idea of songs. In addition, educators

should try to acquire more tools than that as it must happen in a far more inclusive way appealing to all senses.

Learning some of the songs does furthermore not mean that these are songs sung decades or centuries ago. These songs could have been only some decades old. The songs in their current shape might not be the most important in carrying a specific message of the far past. However, the effort to keep them alive, to continue remembering them, is very useful. Academic approaches experienced in the course of this study, often fix songs in notations, mostly Western staff notation, and eventually destroy them by allowing them to be staged in a prescribed and unified manner. Therefore, the attempt to build up sound banks that allow for different purposes and listening experiences that helps find a way to keep the ideas needed today through knowing the older songs, with or without text, are useful to everyone.

One day, younger people, people who are not yet born, can get back to these sound banks and learn more about how musical meaning was created in the past and how different the world was in previous times. Recordings made in this way can also keep a framework of knowledge, since they intend to inform in different layers: the singer can observe how to sing (many singers already record their own singing in order to teach others or to keep track of their skills). The direct addressee is informed how to understand and respond either through actions or singing, and the accidental listener may only get a simplified hint of what is happening as accidental listeners just pass by or fill in the missing sounds through their experience and through their individual memories. Such differences are often misunderstood, not only in singing, also in communicating other ideas and with other means. Yet many communication systems were adopting this scheme of layered information as it can be seen across many countries' law systems. There is a need for changes doing preservations and a need for changing efforts.

## Conclusion

Finally, the history of 'the song' is yet unwritten. 'The song' is not limited to a specific sound, territory, people, or time. It is something that has connecting power and storage for knowledge that might be meaningful to future visions and purposes of life. All can be sure that every song has its informative richness and creates a huge pool of knowledge for everyone, not only due to the songs' captivating language features but also due to their musical expressiveness that one can find and discover through singing.

The idea of having songs to be used, not owned, was at times often not to impress a big crowd through a stage performance, as it became obvious in this brief study. It was rather the extension of an expressive tool for

conveying information. This happens currently pretty precisely and is not a simple random result. The musical content is as important as the language knowledge and the sung particles, such as redundant syllables, repetitions, and acclamations that do their part to deliver structure to the sound event. Most importantly, people must be able to tell the difference between talking and singing; between the sound of their non-human viewpoints and human sounds made on purpose. Maybe, this is one way to go on and to find out more about the history of the song, taking any example, and the history of humans in their different living spaces.

Ultimately, one cannot come to a definite conclusion, but exclude some ways to search for the history of 'the song'. There is no such thing as 'the song'. There are always many songs, each loaded with meanings and individual experiences. The more closely known to the singer, the easier to grasp exactly the intention of a song. Singers make their own songs through individuality in expression and through time and space distance. 'A song' sung for an anonymous crowd can never function in the same way and will do nothing but exhibit some select features that are part of the analytical attention trained in educational patterns causing the second colonial gap. Songs cannot be owned. If any song leaves the singer's throat, they are suddenly out and about belonging to the addressee, the bystander, the researcher, the stranger, as well as to the entire humanity. It is rather a question of whether the human community can own a tool to understand those songs.

If singing is freeing a song, then those who want to own a song may have to try to re-engage the song. Therefore, recordings made through sound banks can protect the song from being misunderstood in a prescribed shape. This might be completely different if other tools come into play such as musical instruments, recording equipment, specific skills and knowledge, or today's technical possibilities through mass media and social messenger platforms. Then the ethical dimension becomes very complex. If there is anything the history of the song can teach it is that the song is something multidimensional that is precisely achieved without tools outside the human body. The Zhuang songs are but an example of all these dimensions and, therefore, they are useful examples.

## References

- [1] Myers, H. (Ed.) (1992). *Ethnomusicology: An Introduction*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- [2] Herder, J.G. and Bohlman, P. V., (eEds.) (2017). *Song Loves the Masses — Herder on Music and Nationalism*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

- [3] Martí érez,J.(2004).‘Transculturación, globalización y músicas de hoy’ .Trans – Revista transcultural de música,8,<http://www.sibetrans.com/trans/articulo/188/transculturacion-globalizacion-y-musicas-de-hoy> (Last accessed 12 January, 2022).
- [4] Jähnichen, G. (2018). Review Essay on ‘Perspectives on a 21st Century Comparative Musicology: Ethnomusicology or Transcultural Musicology?’ . AEMR-EJ, 1, 65–69.
- [5] Regelski,T. A. (2005). Critical Theory as a Foundation for Critical Thinking in Music Education. *Visions of Research in Music Education*, 6: , 1-23.
- [6] Regelski, T.A. (1994/1995). Action Research and Critical Theory: Empowering Music Teachers to Professionalize Praxis. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 123, 63-89.
- [7] Jähnichen, G. (2020). Safeguarding Strategies of Sound Archives and its Meaning to the Pacific Region. AEMR-EJ,5: 39-43. (DOI: 10.30819/aemr.5-5)
- [8] Peeva. A. (2003). *Whose Is this Song*. Documentary. 70 Minutes. Sofia: Adela Media.
- [9] Li, A. and Lin Z. (2021). Interview about Zhuang Songs at Li Afei ’ s home, Longlin county, 25 September.
- [10] Lan S. (2021). Re-examination on the Reverse-cutting Method of Square Zhuang Characters. *Journal of Qiannan Normal University for Nationalities*, 4: , 67-74, 81.
- [11] Huang D., (Ed.) (2013). *The Zhuang of Long Lin*. Nanning: Guangxi Nationalities Publishing House.
- [14] He Y. and Lin, Z. (2021). Interview on Zhuang Songs. Wanjishan Park, Tianlin County, September 23. Personal collection.
- [12] Jiang, C. and Mo, J., (Eds.) (2019). *Anthology of Zhuang Dialect and Songs of Shi Wan Mountains*. Shangsi: Shangsi County Federation of Literature and Art Circles.
- [13] Nong D., (Ed.) (2014). *Songs Can Fill the Sea: Daxin Zhuang Songs*. Daxin: Daxin County Culture and Sports Bureau.
- [15] Wei, X. (2012). The Reform of Pinyin Zhuang Words in New Fangkuai Zhuang Words. *Journal of Minzu University of China (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 6:, 120-125.