

# "Passive Digital Nomadism" – A Study on Social Media Platform Migration and Chinese Language Acquisition Among Overseas Users

Dan Gou <sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Northeast Normal University, Changchun, Jilin 130117, China

## KEYWORDS

*Implicit acquisition,  
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## ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the implicit Chinese language acquisition that occurs among overseas users who—due to external policy factors—are passively driven from mainstream short-video platforms such as TikTok to RED Note, a platform primarily featuring Chinese-language content. Drawing upon multiple perspectives, including digital migration, implicit acquisition, sociocultural theory, and cross-cultural communication, this study reveals three main findings: first, the multimodal, highly cohesive community ecology of RED Note provides overseas users with a low-anxiety, authentic, and high-frequency environment for Chinese-language input; second, interactive features such as comments, live streaming, and private messaging prompt user output and peer feedback, thereby reinforcing internalization of language and cultural identity; third, the fragmented, lifestyle-oriented Chinese content unconsciously permeates rich cultural symbols, accelerating cross-cultural understanding. Based on these findings, this article suggests proactively incorporating authentic platform-based materials in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, promoting task-based teaching strategies and cross-cultural practice, and advocating in-depth collaborations between educational institutions and social media platforms to stimulate more potential learners' enthusiasm for the Chinese language. This research not only expands the theoretical agenda that integrates passive platform switching with implicit learning, but also provides operational insights for sustainable innovation in international Chinese education in the context of new media and globalization.

## 1. Introduction

Amid the increasingly intertwined processes of digitization and globalization, new media platforms have not only profoundly reshaped people's social and consumption habits but also subtly influenced the

landscape of cross-cultural communication and language learning. When certain countries or regions impose strict scrutiny or usage restrictions on overseas social platforms such as TikTok, user groups originally dependent on these platforms for daily social interaction, entertainment, or information exchange are forced to migrate to other platforms. A typical example is the influx of users located in the United

\* Corresponding author. E-mail address: [gdan5780@gmail.com](mailto:gdan5780@gmail.com)

States to REDNote since 2025, who refer to themselves as “TikTok refugees.” In the North American Apple App Store’s free download rankings, this Chinese social application is at the top of the list. According to data, from January 8 to January 14, 2025, REDNote’s mobile app downloads in the United States increased by more than 20 times compared to the previous seven days, and by more than 30 times compared to the same period in 2024 - measures taken to address the potential ban on TikTok. The U.S. government has required TikTok’s parent company, ByteDance, to divest TikTok by January 19 or face a shutdown of the application. This kind of cross-platform migration driven by external forces is gradually taking on the characteristics of what can be termed “passive digital nomadism”: users, without any voluntary or proactive intention to learn, unexpectedly enter REDNote, a platform dominated by Chinese content and uniquely characterized by its community atmosphere and interaction mechanisms. The language and cultural contact embedded within this migration process holds considerable value for research on cross-cultural communication and language education.

In the field of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL), implicit learning and incidental acquisition have long been considered important research issues that more closely mirror real-life language contexts. Unlike explicit classroom-based learning, implicit learning often occurs unconsciously or in low-anxiety situations, without a focus on systematically mastering language rules; yet it can help learners quickly accumulate vocabulary, cultural common knowledge, and even sociopragmatic skills. REDNote, as a highly lifestyle-oriented and content-diverse platform with distinctive Chinese community attributes, constantly provides rich Chinese and cross-cultural information through short videos, photo-text posts, and live interactions. This offers overseas users who have passively migrated to the platform informal exposure to language input and cultural immersion. It is foreseeable that, during activities like browsing posts, commenting, liking, or participating in discussion topics, these users could quietly experience some degree of implicit Chinese acquisition, while concurrently absorbing the symbols, values, and community norms of Chinese culture into their daily cognitive frameworks.

However, current research lacks a systematic analysis of the incidental acquisition that occurs due to passive migration: few studies from perspectives such as international Chinese education or linguistics

explore how this phenomenon affects language and culture absorption at the micro level, nor has sufficient attention been paid to the potential implications and challenges of this emerging model for TCFL and cross-cultural communication. Especially given that digital environments are becoming more complex and diversified - with new platform ecologies and algorithmic recommendation mechanisms constantly emerging - “passive digital nomadism” is likely to happen on a larger scale, exerting a far-reaching influence on the global spread of Chinese. Considering the enormous impact of new media on language education and cross-cultural communication, this study focuses on this under-researched topic in international Chinese education, seeking to address three core questions: Under what cross-cultural interactive contexts does “passive digital nomadism” facilitate the implicit or incidental acquisition of Chinese language and culture among overseas users? In the diverse content and community interactions provided by REDNote and other platforms, what are the unique motivational forces and operational logic of overseas users’ language exposure and cultural identity formation? In the face of such unexpected opportunities, how should TCFL and international Chinese teaching adjust pedagogy, curriculum design, and teacher training to fully tap into the language-learning potential of these overseas users? By exploring these questions in depth, this study aims at the academic level to fill the gap at the intersection of digital migration and second language acquisition research, providing practical evidence from new media settings for implicit learning theory; it also seeks to offer an up-to-date and practical analytical lens for research in TCFL and cross-cultural communication. At a practical level, this research strives to provide actionable insights for Chinese education institutions, educators, policymakers, and platform operators: how to leverage the potential enthusiasm for Chinese learning among passively migrated overseas users; how to incorporate effective language-teaching elements into community interaction mechanisms; and how to harness platform features to achieve a positive synergy between TCFL and cross-cultural communication. Answering these questions may bring new directions for sustainable development and innovation in international Chinese education in the new era, as well as offer more possibilities for Chinese-language enthusiasts worldwide and for cross-cultural communication.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Digital Migration and “Passive Digital Nomadism”

With the widespread availability of the Internet and mobile technologies, scholars have increasingly paid attention to the phenomenon of users migrating across platforms or across boundaries. Early studies often focused on how digital platforms affect work and lifestyle. “Digital nomads” typically refer to groups who utilize networks and digital tools to maintain mobility and autonomy across different regions or platforms.<sup>[1-2]</sup> This nomadic form usually reflects individuals’ proactive pursuit of self-fulfillment or business opportunities, possessing a strong sense of spontaneity and free will. In contrast to this spontaneous form of digital nomadism,<sup>[3]</sup> passive digital nomadism places greater emphasis on how external conditions (policy, platform regulation, geopolitical factors, etc.) constrain user behavior. Often, users do not choose to leave their original platform out of personal interest or intrinsic needs but rather are compelled by external pressures to turn to alternative platforms or communities. Such passive migration is not an isolated event; it has become more common as the international community pays increasing attention to cross-border data security, information monopolies, and other related issues. During the process of “passive digital nomadism,” the ecological characteristics of the new platform become crucial in shaping user behavior and experience.<sup>[4-5]</sup> If the new platform differs significantly in content format, community atmosphere, or cultural orientation from the user’s original usage habits, the migrating users may experience unfamiliarity or cultural conflict. However, precisely because users lack prior preparation or deliberate selection for the new platform, unexpected cross-cultural contact and language-learning opportunities may naturally emerge in daily interactions. In this study, “passive digital nomadism” is regarded as a newly emerging form of cross-platform migration. We examine its potential implications for language acquisition and cultural exchange, thereby offering a novel analytical perspective for researching TCFL in the digital era.

### 2.2. Implicit Learning and Incidental Acquisition

Implicit and explicit learning are critical concepts in education and linguistics. Explicit learning often relies on conscious mastery of rules and knowledge points, typically seen in classroom education or structured learning programs. In contrast, implicit learning usually

occurs without the learner’s awareness or predetermined learning goals, and is driven by observation, imitation, and unconscious absorption of environmental information.<sup>[6-7]</sup> When individuals focus on a task or activity rather than on deliberate learning, implicit learning more readily occurs in low-anxiety or high-interest environments. In second language acquisition, incidental acquisition often explains the unconscious absorption of vocabulary and cultural knowledge. Learners’ attention is usually on the information content or social interaction itself rather than on language forms when reading articles, watching videos, or participating in social interactions, yet they may incidentally gain new vocabulary usage or semantic understanding. This learning model holds great practical significance for foreign learners with limited access to natural language input, underscoring the importance of informal, real-life contexts for language learning.<sup>[8-10]</sup> Increasingly, TCFL research has recognized the significance of informal environments and implicit teaching.<sup>[11-12]</sup> Outside the traditional classroom, overseas learners can acquire large amounts of authentic language input through Chinese TV dramas, short videos, or social media, unconsciously learning vocabulary, pragmatic rules, and cultural knowledge in daily-life contexts. For example, some educators have deliberately introduced social media updates or trending topics as language materials to spark learners’ interest and create immersive experiences similar to how native speakers use the language. Yet existing studies mostly focus on learners who actively use Chinese social platforms or apps; the incidental acquisition effects arising from passive platform switching remain understudied.

### 2.3. Sociocultural Theory and Cross-Cultural Communication

Sociocultural theory posits that language learning and cognitive development are rooted in social interactions and cultural contexts. Its core concept, the Zone of Proximal Development, indicates that learners can surpass their current abilities by observing, imitating, and engaging in collaborative dialogues with others or within their environment.<sup>[13-14]</sup> In digital platform contexts, users’ behaviors - such as commenting, liking, sharing, or connecting through live streaming - may constitute a dynamic process of language socialization. Overseas users can accumulate language skills and integrate into the community culture by observing and imitating Chinese expressions. For overseas users, entering a Chinese-dominated community means confronting cultural differences in content con-

sumption and community interaction. Should the platform continuously push Chinese cultural elements (e.g., cuisine, festivals, slang) to these users via algorithmic recommendations or social interactions, they might gradually develop interest or identification with Chinese culture as they browse, comment, or imitate. The interactivity of digital platforms accelerates the flow of information and fosters a two-way exchange of language and culture. On the one hand, users engage in interlingual communication on social platforms, interacting through comments, direct messages, and live streams, leading to a multi-layered input and output scenario. On the other hand, users with different cultural backgrounds participate in reproducing community culture by liking, sharing, or remaking content, creating more complex cross-cultural symbol flows. This interactive process often features subtle characteristics: even if users did not intend to learn a language, frequent interactions may gradually enable them to absorb target language expressions and cultural connotations. <sup>[15-19]</sup>

#### **2.4. The Digitalization of TCFL and Informal Teaching Models**

In the digital transformation of TCFL, the use of new media platforms has become inescapable. Research indicates that short videos, social media, and online streaming not only enrich teaching resources but also expand the reach of Chinese-language education. <sup>[20-22]</sup> Nevertheless, few dedicated studies focus on the subtle influence of the RED Note platform on overseas user groups, particularly regarding the incidental acquisition and cross-cultural effects arising in contexts of passive platform switching. Informal learning models play an increasingly prominent role in cross-cultural contexts. Compared to classroom-based explicit teaching, informal learning depends more on learners' spontaneous or passive exposure to the target language environment, internalizing language and culture in real-life settings. <sup>[8-10]</sup> With the ubiquity of social media and mobile devices, learners can browse or engage with Chinese-language content anytime and anywhere, while TCFL educators can design subtle teaching activities through these platforms, seamlessly integrating into learners' daily lives. Although research on the digitalization of TCFL and informal learning models has grown significantly, systematic investigations into the combination of passive platform switching and implicit acquisition remain lacking. Existing literature often focuses on users who proactively choose or use a Chinese-language platform, or on teachers incorporating platform resources into formal

instruction, neglecting the phenomenon of forced migration caused by external policies or platform restrictions. <sup>[23]</sup> Under these circumstances, overseas users who engage in daily social activities and content consumption on RED Note may unwittingly embark on a language-learning and cultural-identification process with far-reaching implications. Based on this observation, the present study uses theories of digital migration, implicit learning, and cross-cultural communication to clarify the multiple opportunities and challenges triggered by "passive digital nomadism" from the perspective of TCFL.

In summary, the concept of digital migration and "passive digital nomadism" provides a macro framework for understanding why overseas users, under external pressures, enter new Chinese social platforms. Implicit learning and incidental acquisition theory clarifies the potential mechanisms of unconscious language absorption and cultural internalization in informal contexts. Research on sociocultural theory and cross-cultural communication offers analytical perspectives for deciphering language socialization and cultural identity under digital platform interactions. Although TCFL research has already explored some aspects of new media-enabled instruction, it lacks systematic investigation into how passive platform switching and incidental acquisition intertwine. Building on this complementary body of literature and theory, this study further examines the implicit Chinese acquisition experiences of overseas users who have been passively migrated from TikTok to RED Note, and discusses how this emerging phenomenon may provide practical insights and innovation opportunities for TCFL.

### **3. Dissecting the Platform Migration Phenomenon: From TikTok to RED Note**

Amid increasingly stringent regulatory policies on new media worldwide, some overseas users heavily reliant on TikTok have been forced to move to other platforms due to external factors or the platform's self-censorship. As a platform integrating text-and-photo posts, short videos, live streaming, and community sharing, RED Note has gained growing recognition in overseas markets in recent years, attracting a considerable number of these "passive digital nomads." In this process, the differences between TikTok and RED Note - regarding content ecosystem, community atmosphere, and cultural orientation - have become key elements shaping users' cross-cultural experiences and language contact.

### **3.1. Causes and Characteristics of Passive Migration**

Since 2020, Europe and North America have intensified their scrutiny of TikTok and other foreign social platforms, raising concerns about data privacy, content regulation, and national security, with some lawmakers even proposing nationwide bans. These policy measures objectively forced large numbers of users—particularly younger groups reliant on mobile devices for social interaction and entertainment—into a predicament where the application could no longer function or was severely limited, thus prompting them to seek alternative platforms to meet their social and information consumption needs.

Beyond government-imposed restrictions, changes in TikTok's business strategies or content moderation practices could also diminish trust or convenience for certain users. For example, to comply with local laws, TikTok or its parent company might alter algorithms, advertising strategies, or approaches to protecting minors, potentially negatively impacting user experience and the platform's diverse creator ecosystem. Should users' usage smoothness or interest decline, they will likely explore other available social platforms, further increasing migration dynamics.

Unlike traditional digital nomads who actively seek freedom of movement, passive digital nomads exhibit insufficient spontaneity under external pressures. In contrast with users who switch platforms voluntarily, these passive migrants typically know little about the new platform and have not established specific content preferences or interests. This sets the stage for them to encounter a radically different language and cultural environment post-migration: once they enter RED Note's Chinese-language community, cross-cultural contact with the Chinese language is highly likely to occur during everyday usage, albeit unintentionally.

### **3.2. RED Note's Cross-Cultural Potential and Community Ecology**

Whereas TikTok focuses on short videos oriented toward entertainment and personalized creation, RED Note offers a product mix encompassing text-and-photo posts, short videos, and live streaming, emphasizing lifestyle and experience sharing. From beauty, cuisine, travel, and fitness to pets and parenting, RED Note aggregates a great deal of user-generated, original content in the form of "recommendation posts." This framework—intimately connected to daily life—provides overseas users with wide-spread, authentic

Chinese-language contexts when browsing the platform. It may also subconsciously stimulate users' curiosity and acceptance of Chinese expressions and cultural features.

At the community level, RED Note fosters a user-to-user focus on interaction and sharing. Features such as comments, private messages, and topic discussions allow for multi-layered communication centered around a certain product or lifestyle theme. Compared with TikTok, whose comments section often consists of short text or emojis, RED Note's comments are typically more substantial, including emotional expressions, personal experiences, and specialized product-related vocabulary. Such in-depth textual interaction supplies overseas users with more nuanced observation and imitation opportunities, enabling them to unconsciously internalize new Chinese vocabulary, sentence structures, and even sociocultural thought patterns.

Technically, RED Note's recommendation algorithms push relevant content to users based on interest tagging and engagement data, including posts or short videos about Chinese culture and lifestyle. Overseas users, in the early stages of their migration, may not actively search for Chinese-language topics; however, after preliminary profiling by the platform's algorithms, they often continue to receive streams of Chinese content aimed at maximizing exposure and retention. This process exposes them to diverse Chinese expressions and cultural symbols—even without any deliberate search or learning intentions. From a sociocultural perspective, such passive immersion may provide a potential zone of proximal development for language socialization and cross-cultural understanding.

### **3.3. Potential Scenarios of Chinese Exposure for Overseas Users**

RED Note users often produce detailed descriptions and comments in their "recommendation posts," involving not only everyday expressions but also specialized terms and slang. For instance, skincare and beauty posts may feature professional ingredient terminology (e.g., "niacinamide," "essence") or trending online slang, which are seldom included in traditional Chinese textbooks yet can offer fresh, practical linguistic experiences for interested overseas users. The high frequency of these terms creates a "vocabulary touch-point," whereby users might unintentionally acquire new Chinese expressions while focusing on product reviews or usage evaluations.

While browsing RED Note, overseas users may engage in cross-lingual interactions in comment sections—using English, Chinese, or a blend of both—asking questions or sharing personal experiences. As they become more accustomed to the platform culture, they may attempt to post short Chinese phrases or vocabulary in the comments to achieve higher engagement or show their alignment with community norms. Through this process, they not only receive Chinese input but also gain hands-on practice in language output. Meanwhile, responses from native speakers or advanced learners function as peer exemplars and error correction, allowing the user's language proficiency to grow naturally within the community.

Beyond posts from ordinary users, RED Note hosts numerous “influencers” or official accounts with professional credentials—travel bloggers, beauty gurus, or lifestyle consultants—who often discuss deeper topics and culturally significant content, such as Chinese traditional festivals, local customs, or culinary history. Even if overseas users initially seek fashion, beauty, or travel advice, they may indirectly absorb cultural knowledge and Chinese-language expressions through these more in-depth videos and postings, thereby developing a multi-dimensional perception of Chinese social life. Within the incidental acquisition framework, this type of unconscious knowledge gain can be profoundly relevant for both language development and cultural identity.

In summary, the cross-platform migration from TikTok to RED Note provides overseas users with new conditions for cross-cultural and linguistic contact at the micro level. Unlike TikTok's entertainment-oriented, fragmented short-video paradigm, RED Note's high-density lifestyle-sharing ecosystem offers more abundant and continuous Chinese input, along with a community-based space for diverse interaction and exploratory output. Although users do not intend to learn Chinese, they are nevertheless exposed to a large volume of Chinese content during migration, potentially developing interest, forming identification, and participating in interactions—thus acquiring foundational vocabulary and cultural knowledge through an implicit learning model of second language acquisition.

Furthermore, RED Note's recommendation algorithms, topic tagging, multilingual comment areas, and “recommendation” and “review” features all reinforce cultural and linguistic influences, allowing overseas users to deepen their latent understanding and usage skills through browsing, interaction, and imitation. Consequently, migrating from TikTok to RED Note entails more than a mere change in entertainment platforms

or social outlets. It also has the potential to spark deeper language and cultural effects at the user level, introducing both opportunities and challenges for TCFL and cross-cultural communication. Within such an environment, “passive digital nomadism” emerges as a phenomenon that merits in-depth examination: it exemplifies how external policies and platform factors strongly shape user migration, while highlighting the inherent potential for language learning and cultural transmission within the digital media environment.

#### **4. Mechanisms and Logic of Implicit Chinese Acquisition**

The cross-platform migration under “passive digital nomadism” provides overseas users with a potentially rich environment for Chinese input and cross-cultural contact. However, such linguistic exposure typically happens informally, in low-anxiety, and often unconscious states—differing markedly from explicit, rule-based classroom learning. Under the frameworks of second language acquisition and sociocultural theory, implicit learning involves a set of complex motivational mechanisms.

##### **4.1. Language Input and Affective Filter**

According to the Affective Filter Hypothesis, learners' emotional attitudes—such as anxiety, motivation, and confidence—affect whether language input can effectively enter the language acquisition mechanism. In highly formal settings with strong evaluation pressures or heightened self-consciousness, learners often feel nervous or anxious, raising the affective filter threshold and reducing the effectiveness of input. Conversely, in natural, relaxed, and low-anxiety environments, learners are more open to external information, enhancing the internalization of language.

Overseas users typically treat RED Note as a space for leisure, sharing daily life, or accessing practical information rather than as a language-learning platform. Such an entertaining, lifestyle-oriented context helps lower learners' psychological defenses regarding language acquisition. When users casually browse “recommendation” posts, watch culinary or travel videos, or engage in small talk in the comments, they do not feel evaluated, corrected, or forced to learn. Consequently, the affective filter is greatly reduced, allowing Chinese input to flow effortlessly into their subconscious, thereby increasing the likelihood of incidental acquisition.

Furthermore, RED Note's diverse content formats and algorithmic recommendations provide frequent,

varied language input. This includes everyday vocabulary, special-ized terminology, slang, and internet catchphrases across various topics. If a user shows interest in a particular type of content, the platform's algorithm frequently pushes similar posts, creating repeated exposure. Repetition allows learners to become increasingly attuned to the language items, eventually incorporating them into their own linguistic repertoire.

#### **4.2. Community Interaction and Opportunities for Output**

The Output Hypothesis emphasizes that language production is crucial for genuine acquisition. Simply receiving extensive input does not necessarily lead to full internalization; only through active attempts to use the target language can learners become aware of their pragmatic gaps or grammatical deficiencies, seeking corrections and improvements. Digital platforms' interactive functionalities may play a critical role in driving passive language exposure toward more active output.

RED Note fosters a community environment that is relatively welcoming and oriented toward sharing experiences, with users highly motivated to engage in deep dialogues in the comments or through private messages. When overseas users become interested in particular topics, they might be encouraged by others or self-motivated to provide brief feedback, ask questions, or express opinions in Chinese. Such output behavior prompts more responses from native speakers or other learners, forming a dynamic chain of language interactions. Compared with the teacher-driven Q&A format in traditional classrooms, this more authentic, socially driven exchange can heighten learner engagement, prompting them to discover and correct linguistic shortcomings in real time.

While interacting in the comments or discussion sections, overseas users may connect with peers who share similar interests or linguistic backgrounds, forming informal learning communities. When users produce inaccurate or awkward Chinese, others may offer more appropriate phrasing, equivalent expressions, or cultural explanations in their replies. This parallels teacher-led error correction or peer review in formal TCFL settings but occurs under more real-life, personalized circumstances. Learners can integrate feedback more thoroughly, gradually moving toward their zone of proximal development.

#### **4.3. Integration of Cross-Cultural Knowledge and Cultural Identity**

The concept of a "hidden curriculum" posits that values, norms, and social expectations outside the official syllabus also shape learners' attitudes and behaviors. While RED Note primarily functions as a platform for sharing everyday experiences and consumer insights, the cultural themes, interaction rules, and commenting style within its community implicitly convey aspects of Chinese society and culture. Overseas users inadvertently absorb these cultural norms while looking for product information or entertaining content.

Cultural symbols closely associated with China (e.g., festivals, cuisine, traditional etiquette, and trending vernacular) appear frequently on RED Note, embedded in daily posts and short videos. This fragmented, repetitive representation may be more effective than standalone or static cultural introductions, subtly shaping overseas users' understanding of Chinese culture. When users repeatedly encounter topics such as the Chinese New Year, food compilations, or city-specific lifestyles, the cultural recognition and interest may accumulate, increasing attachment to the platform's content.

From a cross-cultural communication perspective, every day and authentic cultural exchanges foster trust and understanding of foreign cultures. RED Note presents Chinese domestic consumer scenarios, lifestyle details, and aesthetic styles in a user-generated, multimodal manner, giving overseas users a near-realistic experience despite geographical or linguistic barriers. Unlike formal cultural curricula or official tourism campaigns, decentralized content created by users is typically more down-to-earth, making it easier for learners to transition from surface-level awareness to deeper cognitive insights - thus supporting ongoing motivation for language learning.

#### **4.4. Potential Shift from Incidental to Deliberate Learning**

Implicit acquisition is often a gradual, continuous process. As users accumulate Chinese vocabulary and cultural background knowledge through community interactions, they may become increasingly intrigued by the language and its underlying social and cultural dynamics. Realizing their growing comprehension but continued limitations in expression or vocabulary breadth, they may seek more systematic learning resources. This transformation - from unconscious, incidental acquisition to conscious, deliberate study -

signifies an increase in learner motivation and the start of deeper language engagement.

On and off RED Note, numerous Chinese teaching accounts, online courses, or live-streaming tutorials aim at overseas users. Those who have developed an initial interest might actively follow these resources. They may also explore specialized Chinese-learning apps, online TCFL programs, or Confucius Institute digital offerings. At this stage, they no longer rely solely on fragmented input but instead pursue structured knowledge of grammar, syntax, and balanced training in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, thus advancing their proficiency and cross-cultural communication skills.

For TCFL practice, guiding passive migrants to progress from incidental to deliberate learning offers an innovative opportunity. Educators, for instance, could provide simple, progressive instructional content (e.g., short vocabulary clips, cultural tidbits, or community Q&As) on RED Note. By doing so at the moment users' interests are piqued, they can be steered toward more structured learning. This form of pedagogy integrated with platform ecology could open new channels for international Chinese education, linking informal and formal learning paradigms.

Overall, RED Note's environment under "passive digital nomadism" offers overseas users relaxed, diverse, and high-frequency input and interaction opportunities in Chinese. Various components collectively create an implicit learning mechanism: the low-anxiety environment allows for minimal affective filtering, supporting unconscious acquisition; community functionalities like comments, private messages, and live chats enable output practice and peer feedback; and abundant cultural symbols and community norms quietly enhance users' understanding and acceptance of Chinese culture. Throughout this process, incidental learning and cross-cultural encounters intertwine, and some users may move on to more conscious learning phases, exploring structured TCFL resources in greater depth.

Hence, from passive to implicit and then potentially to active learning, this pathway highlights how cross-platform migration in the digital era can facilitate Chinese learning internationally. For this reason, if educators and policymakers systematically analyze the interactive models, content ecosystems, and user demographics of RED Note, they can gain deeper insight into how overseas users develop linguistically and can adopt more targeted measures to promote innovative TCFL. These implicit learning mechanisms and logics resonate with the trend of digital-era TCFL, which is

increasingly social, personalized, and culturally integrated - suggesting rich possibilities for future research and multi-dimensional applications.

## **5. Implications for International Chinese Education**

The "passive digital nomadism" phenomenon and its implicit Chinese learning process shed new light on how international Chinese education might evolve and upgrade in the digital era. As overseas users gradually heighten their awareness and interest in Chinese through non-formal and unconscious exposure, educators and policymakers can intervene and provide structured guidance, turning potential interest into systematic, lasting language learning behavior.

### **5.1. Innovations in Pedagogy and Curriculum Design**

#### **5.1.1. Subtle Instruction Using Authentic Platform-Based Materials**

In traditional TCFL, teaching materials usually come from textbooks or highly filtered texts, lacking the richness and authenticity of contemporary online environments. By contrast, platforms like RED Note spontaneously generate vast amounts of authentic Chinese text, audio, and video materials for overseas users. Educators can selectively adapt representative "recommendation" posts, comment threads, or short-video content based on pedagogical objectives and learner levels to construct implicit teaching contexts. For instance, a teacher might use RED Note posts discussing a traditional Chinese snack as a classroom task, asking students to comprehend and summarize key opinions and then simulate giving a reply in Chinese in the comment area or during video calls. This approach effectively stimulates genuine communicative needs while imparting both language and cultural knowledge.

#### **5.1.2. Integrating Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) with Platform Interaction**

Task-based language teaching emphasizes acquiring language skills through real-world tasks. RED Note is inherently filled with real-life tasks- price comparisons, local food recommendations, travel itineraries, etc. TCFL instructors might ask students to search posts on a given topic within the platform, write short Chinese notes or comments, and then bring screenshots or links back to the classroom for discussion. In doing so, learners receive instantaneous feedback in



an authentic social environment, enhancing motivation. The teaching content shifts from simulations to genuine engagement with platform content, boosting learners' holistic language skills.

### **5.1.3. Multimodal and Interdisciplinary Course Integration**

RED Note content is delivered in multimodal forms, including text, photos, short videos, and live streams - offering new possibilities for combining TCFL with other disciplines or fields. For example, in a "Language + Culture + New Media" course, teachers might ask students to follow culturally oriented influencers on RED Note, analyze their communication strategies or cultural narratives, and write observation reports in Chinese. Alternatively, in a "Language + Business + Marketing" course, students could examine how certain brands are promoted on RED Note, producing market analyses or marketing plans in Chinese. Such interdisciplinary designs simultaneously cultivate students' language proficiency and broaden their cross-cultural business and communication perspectives.

## **5.2. Teacher Roles and Digital Competencies**

### **5.2.1. Teacher Familiarity with New Media and Platform Capabilities**

In the digital era, TCFL instructors need robust new media competencies, including familiarity with various platforms' content formats, interaction mechanisms, algorithmic recommendations, community norms, and trending topics. Only by thoroughly understanding RED Note's ecosystem and user behaviors can teachers effectively integrate authentic cases into lessons and accurately identify overseas learners' linguistic challenges or cultural misconceptions. Compared with traditional textbook-driven knowledge transfer, educators become resource curators, cross-cultural coordinators, and facilitators of participatory learning activities.

### **5.2.2. Teacher-Student Connectivity and Cross-Cultural Guidance**

TCFL is no longer confined to the classroom but extends to continuous teacher-learner engagement through online platforms. For instance, teachers could create public accounts or class groups on RED Note, regularly posting content related to course themes and encouraging students to comment, like, or share, followed by extended discussions or vocabulary explanations in the comment section. Such community-based learning transcends temporal and spatial constraints,

enabling real-time language output and cross-cultural communication practice. Moreover, teachers can swiftly identify common linguistic or cultural misunderstandings and offer targeted support.

## **5.3. Platform Collaboration and Official Support**

### **5.3.1. Cross-Sector Collaborations Between Educational Institutions and Platforms**

As RED Note's overseas user base grows, educational institutions and platform operators could explore diverse modes of cooperation to attract potential Chinese-language learners. For example, RED Note might partner with Confucius Institutes (or other TCFL bodies) to establish an official Chinese learning section or host regular virtual Chinese corners, inviting instructors or outstanding students for live streaming. Alternatively, the platform could launch internship programs in collaboration with university-level Chinese language departments, engaging trainee teachers or volunteers to act as community teaching assistants, offering language and cultural consultations in comments or direct messages. Such synergy satisfies the platform's need for global expansion and content diversification, while enabling TCFL stakeholders to reach sizable groups of passive migrants.

### **5.3.2. Policy and Resource Guidance**

Policymakers overseeing international Chinese education can allocate funding or resources to support innovation projects integrating TCFL with new media. This includes grants for research teams to develop digital materials, interactive tools, or educational apps suited to social-media-based dissemination, fostering collaboration between official digital Chinese courses and commercial platforms. Additional resources could be devoted to cross-border academic partnerships and cultural exchange programs focusing on new media-based Chinese promotion, encouraging more scholars and practitioners to engage in this field. By offering policy advantages or resource support to content creators, it is possible to expand and enhance the volume and quality of Chinese-language content, thereby enriching the experiences available to overseas users.

## **5.4. Fostering Cross-Cultural Communication Skills**

### **5.4.1. Integrating Language and Culture**

A cross-cultural perspective acknowledges that language is both a tool and a social product for cultural communication. On platforms like RED Note, users are

exposed not only to vocabulary and sentence patterns but also to aspects of everyday Chinese social life and value systems. Hence, TCFL should organically incorporate language instruction with cultural introduction. While teaching vocabulary or grammar, instructors should contextualize them within relevant cultural settings, providing case analyses to illustrate underlying societal norms. For instance, explaining popular online slang could involve tracing its typical usage scenarios and cultural roots within the Chinese online milieu, helping learners grasp deeper pragmatic logic.

#### **5.4.2. Cultivating Cultural Sensitivity and Cross-Cultural Communication Techniques**

As overseas users interact with other platform users from diverse cultural backgrounds, various misunderstandings or cultural clashes may emerge. TCFL should promote students' cultural sensitivity, including understanding differences in communication styles, taboo topics, and etiquette. Teachers can simulate multicultural scenarios or incorporate real-life cases of cross-cultural conflict, guiding students to develop adaptive communication strategies. Encouraging students to keep reflective journals on their cross-cultural experiences—analyzing their challenges and insights—can reinforce cultural awareness and inclusivity.

## **6. Conclusion**

Centering on the emerging “passive digital nomadism” in cross-platform migration, this article explores, from a TCFL perspective, how overseas users—driven by policy and commercial factors—may unintentionally acquire Chinese while moving from TikTok to RED Note. Employing the frameworks of digital migration, incidental acquisition, sociocultural theory, and cross-cultural communication, this study systematically examines the processes of implicit language learning and discusses their implications for both TCFL theory and practice.

The findings suggest that although passive migration is driven by external forces, it provides overseas users with a low-anxiety, multimodal, and highly interactive cross-cultural environment that facilitates language and cultural absorption through daily, fragmented browsing and social engagement. In summary, firstly, users begin with no explicit language-learning motives yet obtain large amounts of varied Chinese input through RED Note's text-and-photo posts and short videos. Repetitive exposure to commonly used vocabulary, specialized terms, and cultural symbols in

comments or algorithm-generated feeds enhances incidental acquisition. Secondly, the platform's friendly environment and interactive features—comments, private messaging, live streaming—provide overseas users with authentic opportunities to practice output. Peer corrections and demonstrations further promote users' linguistic internalization and cultural acceptance. Thirdly, rich Chinese cultural symbols repeatedly appear in daily posts and videos, strengthening users' interest and identification with Chinese culture. As users gain knowledge and curiosity, some transition to more systematic learning, seeking advanced TCFL resources and expanding their cross-cultural communication skills. Moreover, RED Note's authentic materials and cohesive community ecology can complement implicit or task-based pedagogy in TCFL. If educators capitalize on this trend—designing teaching activities suitable for the platform or partnering directly with RED Note to create dedicated learning spaces—they can incorporate passively migrated overseas users into more structured, professional language programs. Simultaneously, interdisciplinary learning, heightened cross-cultural sensitivity, and resource support from policymakers can make TCFL more flexible and accessible in the new media era.

From an academic standpoint, this study enriches the literature on informal language acquisition and cross-cultural interaction, revealing the significant impact of passive migration within the contemporary digital environment. It aligns with calls in second language acquisition studies to emphasize authentic contexts and real-life corpora. Practically, it informs TCFL pedagogical innovation, platform collaborations, and policy formulations. For educational institutions, how to harness algorithms and the multifaceted content ecosystems of social platforms to establish an unobtrusive pathway for Chinese learning has emerged as a focal concern, offering new possibilities for digitally expanding the reach of Chinese and enhancing cross-cultural communication.

Several limitations remain. First, this study relies on conceptual and literature-based arguments, lacking longitudinal or empirical data on the actual progress of passive migrants' language skills. Second, by focusing primarily on the TikTok - RED Note transition, it does not account for the diverse cultural environments and functionalities of other platforms. Future research could adopt mixed quantitative and qualitative methodologies, examining how overseas users' linguistic proficiency and cultural attitudes evolve, or comparing this phenomenon across multiple platforms and regions to

see if “passive digital nomadism” follows similar patterns in different linguistic or cultural contexts. Longitudinal studies could yield more robust theoretical evidence on how sustained social media engagement affects language attainment and cultural identity over time.

Ultimately, “passive digital nomadism” arises from changing global media regulations and platform ecologies, marking a new convergence between cross-cultural exchange and language education in the digital realm. The incidental acquisition and social interaction processes seen here not only create novel educational resources and discourse spaces for TCFL but also highlight how learners in a highly fluid network environment dynamically negotiate linguistic and cultural identities. By converting this externally driven, serendipitous opportunity into a stable, systematic, and sustainable educational practice and collaborative model, this phenomenon could produce far-reaching impacts on international Chinese education, cross-cultural communication, and global knowledge sharing. As the digital wave continues to evolve, so will the public’s demand for language learning and cultural understanding; “passive digital nomadism” thus reflects important current and future challenges for pedagogy and presents a space for innovation. Through collaborative efforts spanning theory and practice, this study hopes to inspire more empirical work and interdisciplinary exploration—offering valuable references for the next phase of research and application.

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