



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
HUMANITIES, PHILOSOPHY
AND LANGUAGE
(IJHPL)
www.ijhpl.com



INCORPORATING CHINESE TRADITIONAL CULTURE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHINESE TEXTBOOKS

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Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 30.09.2021
Revised date: 05.10.2021
Accepted date: 25.10.2021
Published date: 05.12.2021

To cite this document:

Sik, R. Y. (2021). Incorporating Chinese Traditional Culture In Primary School Chinese Textbooks. *International Journal of Humanities, Philosophy and Language*, 4 (16), 16-46.

DOI: 10.35631/IJHPL.416002.

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Abstract:

"Where there are Chinese people, there is Chinese education". The Malaysian Chinese ancestors practised Chinese education in Malaysia since their arrival and with their efforts, Malaysia has the most comprehensive and systematic Chinese education in Southeast Asia. It is also considered the country that has preserved Chinese culture the best (Qian, 2017). Since 2011, the Chinese language has been offered as an elective subject in the standards-based curriculum for primary school (KSSR) syllabus. Since introducing Chinese into classrooms, there have been two versions of Chinese textbooks for the national primary schools: (KSSR) National Primary School Chinese Textbook from grade 1 until grade 6. Its subsequent revision in 2017 KSSR (Semakan 2017) National Primary School Chinese Textbook has been applied up to grade 5. By studying these two versions of the textbooks, this paper will discuss how Chinese culture is depicted in Malaysian national primary school Chinese textbooks. It will also analyse the elements of Chinese culture and subsequently investigate whether cultural content is necessary to be reinforced in national primary school Chinese textbooks for its text to be enriched. The research objective is determined using integrated studies done within and beyond Malaysia and includes relevant materials, research reports, literature, and dissertation papers. Through literature review, this paper summarises, categories, and analyses content about traditional Chinese cultural elements that can be found in both versions of the Chinese textbooks in national primary school. The traditional Chinese cultures found in both versions of textbooks are listed under seven elements which are: Traditional Chinese Festivities, Traditional Chinese Folk Games, Traditional Chinese Family Appellations, Traditional Chinese Food Culture, Traditional Chinese Arts, Traditional Chinese Customs, Chinese Literature. The collected content is then categorised, arranged, and analysed. A deduction can then be made to provide conclusive recommendations. It can be deduced that the textbooks are pretty packed with relevant and related Chinese cultural elements, but primarily, it is apparent that the Chinese culture is mainly influenced by local cultural

elements, which are very close to our daily life. National primary school Chinese language education plays a role in cultural dissemination. It enables pupils of different ethnic backgrounds to learn Chinese and gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture. As well as can help prevent misunderstandings caused by cultural differences.

Keywords:

Chinese Traditional Culture, National Primary School, Chinese Textbooks, Chinese As A Second Language, Chinese Language As An Elective Subject

Introduction

China began teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL) on December 1st, 1950, in Tsinghua University, where five Romanian students became the first to enroll in a Chinese Language Course for Eastern European exchange students (Xinzhongguo Duiwai Hanyu Jiaoxue 70nian Xilie Xuesu Luntan Kaimu, 2020). In the last 70 years, The number of international students learning the Chinese language in China has risen to over 100,000 students a year. Along with this, the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language has also increased worldwide. The Chinese language is now the most commonly used language after English (Eberhard, David, Simons, & Fennig, 2021)

China has worked with foreign countries to set up Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms to enable more non-native students to learn Chinese as a second language. It launched its 'One Belt, One Road' initiative in 2013, which has been instrumental in driving the global frenzy for learning the Chinese language and promoting Chinese language-based education to the international masses (Xu, 2019).

Malaysia and China share an inseparable bond. Malaysian Chinese are descendants of the first generation of immigrants who went down South of the Yangtze River to earn a living during the *Han*, *Ming*, and *Qing* Dynasties. Today, Malaysian Chinese account for 22.6% of the Malaysian population (Mahidin, 2020), making them the second-largest ethnic group in Malaysia. Malaysia was the first ASEAN member to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China on 31 May 1974, where Malaysia signed a joint communique with the People's Republic of China. Since then, it has sent many ambassadors to the country (Changjiu Weichi Mazhong Guanxi Xu Geshou Duiwai Zhengce Yuanzhe, 2019). In fact, up until this took place, many Malaysian Chinese did not return to their hometowns of origin to visit their relatives. These layered sentiments are indicative that Malaysian Chinese will always have some sense of attachment with China.

Research Background***Chinese Education in Malaysia***

In Malaysia, however, reconciling "Where there are Chinese people" and "there is Chinese education" has always been a thorny path fraught with hardships. The Malaysian Chinese have only managed to pave a better way for Chinese education for the sake of their community by persevering through obstacles and overcoming many critics.

Through their forefathers' efforts, Malaysian Chinese students today have a comprehensive path to Chinese education. Consequently, from kindergartens to universities, aside from China, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, Malaysia has the most comprehensive and systematic Chinese education in Southeast Asia and is also the country that has preserved Chinese culture best (Qian, 2017). There are still many unknowns ahead, but Malaysian Chinese students can walk on with their chests out and heads held high for these accomplishments.

The Manifestation of Chinese Culture in Malaysia

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country. Its five major ethnic groups are Malay, Chinese, Indian, Iban, and Kadazan-Dusun. Politics, economy, culture, and education, have been and will always be influenced by one another. Due to the influence of local life, Malaysian Chinese have come to incorporate the culture of other ethnic groups into their own culture. Likewise, they have also influenced other ethnic groups with Chinese culture.

(Zheng, 2005) wrote about how "culture is life". However, culture can also be a way of life. A Malaysian Chinese person can be influenced by the learning environment of Chinese language education. They will come to learn more about their ancestral national customs, traditions, festivals, culture, history, and so on. On the other hand, if Malaysian Chinese were to be educated in different languages, such as English or Malay, their way of life would become less "Chinese". They might not be able to understand or comprehend their mother tongue and may even prefer using languages belonging to other ethnic groups. Consequently, they would become soulless Chinese without a national identity, and others may resent them for their lack of national dignity.

In Malaysia, most ethnic groups have some knowledge about the customs, traditions, festivities, culture, and history of their people through the Malaysian education system, which they become a part of from an early age. Regardless of whether a person is 'very Chinese' or 'not very Chinese', many are exposed to diverse cultures from a young age. It is especially true for children of intermarriage between different ethnic groups. Thus, it does not really matter if one can understand or comprehend the Chinese language, for one can still be familiar with the Chinese people's customs, traditions, festivities, culture, and history.

The Malaysian Education System

Kindergarten (4-6 Years of Age)

Malaysia has integrated the teaching of Chinese as a second language into its private and public education curricula from kindergartens to universities. In 1992, the Malaysian Ministry of Education had set up the first Chinese language kindergarten and pre-school classes for primary schools. On 6 June 2001, a cabinet meeting unanimously agreed that the Ministry should continue to expand this pre-school education plan. This proposal was also included in the 10th Malaysia Plan (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2021). Malaysia's pre-school curricula use Malay as its medium of instruction and English as its second language. However, pre-school classes for national-type school (Chinese), which uses the Chinese language as the medium of instruction (*Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina)*, SJK(C)), and national-type school (Tamil), with Tamil language being used as the medium of instruction (*Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Tamil)*, SJK (T)) are to use their mother tongue as their medium of instruction, with Malay and English as compulsory learning languages (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2021).

After World War II, private kindergartens began to be established by private institutions and groups in urban areas. Still, it was not until the 1960s that pre-school education gained traction in Malaysia, and kindergartens were set up in different regions. As a result, all kindergartens were private in the beginning, and most of them used Chinese and English as their medium of instruction. Later, the Malaysian government began establishing kindergartens that used Malay as their medium of instruction in various regions through official or semi-official organisations such as KEMAS, FELDA, and RIDA (Malai Xiya Jiaoyu Fazhan Gaikuang, 2007).

Primary Schools (7-12 Years of Age)

In Malaysia, the national education system at the primary school level under government education institutions comprises national and national-type schools (vernacular schools). National primary schools (*Sekolah Kebangsaan*, SK) use the Malay language as the medium of instruction. There are two types of national-type schools, one is national-type school (Chinese), which uses the Chinese language as the medium of instruction (*Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina)*, SJK(C)), and national-type school (Tamil), with Tamil language being used as the medium of instruction (*Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Tamil)*, SJK (T)). Malaysia also used to have national-type schools (English), which used English as their medium of instruction. However, many of these English schools were converted to national primary schools in the 1970s, after the National Language Act was passed in 1967; and Malay became their medium of instruction (Malai Xiya Jiaoyu Fazhan Gaikuang, 2007).

The Malaysian government mandated a compulsory six-year primary school education for all school-age children. To ensure that this rule was upheld, parents who were found to be in violation would be fined (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2021). After gaining independence in 1957, Malaysia started offering Chinese language classes in various national primary schools. These classes were known as Pupils Own Language (POL). They were only open to Chinese students, and there had to be at least 15 Chinese pupils to start a POL class. Chinese language education was only opened to pupils of other ethnicities in 1996 at a national primary school level, but even then, it was only offered on an extracurricular basis. Pupils had to stay behind after school classes to attend the lessons. This situation lasted until 2011, when, in accordance with Malaysia's Education Blueprint, the Ministry of Education implemented a new curriculum which is the standards-based curriculum for primary school (KSSR) whereby it offered such as Chinese, Arabic, Tamil, Iban, and Kadazan-Dusun languages as an elective school subject. Moreover, to further improve national primary schools, the elective subject is allocated 90 minutes (30 minutes x 3 sessions) for learning per school week into the pupils' schedule (Alimuddin Mohd. Dom, 2010).

Secondary Schools (13-18 Years of Age)

Most Malaysian secondary schools are government secondary schools, also known as national secondary schools, and all of them use the Malay language as their medium of instruction. However, a few private secondary schools use the English language as their medium of instruction. Some Chinese private high schools, more known as Duzhong 独中 for short, use the Chinese language as their medium of instruction. The Chinese society is mainly responsible for the funding of Chinese independent high schools. Before the implementation of the Education Act 1961, there were both Chinese and English private secondary schools. Nonetheless, in a bid to qualify for subsidies provided by the Malaysian government, many of these schools reformed themselves as National secondary schools and adopted the Malay language as their medium of instruction. If a National secondary school had more than 15

Chinese students, it could propose that the school have mother tongue classes; but most of these classes were extracurricular and not considered as main school classes. On the contrary, Chinese secondary schools that reformed as National secondary schools could retain mother tongue lessons as part of their primary school classes, and this decision was based on the management decisions of the schools themselves (Malai Xiya Jiaoyu Fazhan Gaikuang, 2007).

Tertiary Institutions (19 Years of Age and Above)

Malaysian institutions of higher education are divided into private and national institutions. There are about 20 national universities or colleges, and the rest are private higher learning institutions, private colleges or universities, and foreign branch colleges or universities (Malai Xiya Gaodeng Jiaoyu Tizhi Jianjie, 2018). Many of these national and private institutions have Chinese language departments, such as the University of Malaya, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, New Era University College, Southern University College, Han Chiang University College, and Xiamen University Malaysia (Benke Kecheng -q-a: Malai Xiya Youduo Shaojian Zhongwenxi, 2018). In addition, some higher education institutions also teach Chinese as a foreign language so that more foreign nationals can learn about the Chinese language and traditional Chinese culture. On 8 July 2009, the University of Malaya and the Beijing Foreign Studies University jointly established the first Confucius Institute in Malaysia- the Kong Zi Institute, University of Malaya (Kong Zi Institute University of Malaya, 2016). Presently, there are five Confucius Institutes in Malaysia: the Kong Zi Institute in the University of Malaya, the Confucius Institute in New Era University College, the Confucius Institute in University Malaysia Sabah, the Confucius Institute in University Malaysia Pahang, and the Confucius Institute in the University College of Technology Sarawak. These institutions have the same goals: to promote and cultivate a deeper understanding of the Chinese language and culture and provide opportunities for their students to learn about them (Wong, 2020). At the same time, these Confucius Institutes hope to serve as communication platforms between China and Malaysia in education and cultural exchange (Kong Zi Institute University of Malaya, 2016).

As a whole, Malaysia offers a comprehensive way to learn the Chinese language, whether through national or private higher institutions of learning. A well-rounded Chinese education can be accessed by students in kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, and tertiary institutions, where Chinese is the medium of instruction. Even in schools where the Malay or English language is used as the medium of instruction, there are opportunities to learn Chinese. In any case, the power of decision lies in the hands of the people.

Research Problem

Chinese Language as an Elective Subject in National Primary School (BCSK)

In the last decade, the Malaysian government has placed greater importance on teaching the Chinese language as a National primary school subject. There have been two versions of Chinese textbooks for primary schools since the introduction of Chinese into classrooms, following the standards-based curriculum for primary schools in 2011 until its revision in 2017 KSSR (Semakan 2017). The KSSR (Semakan 2017) has been applied in national primary schools up to Grade 5. Chinese language learning in national primary school is offered as a second language. High expectations and a heavy content load of this subject may cause a burden to pupils. When comparing the versions of textbooks that have been used, a significant reduction in learning topics can be observed in the revised version. This reflects how the

Malaysian Curriculum Development Department (BPK) has been adapting to students' capabilities. This measure may have been taken to prevent students from feeling too much pressure as they learn a second language. It may also have been done in response to students who struggle with learning Chinese and eventually give up altogether due to a sense of helplessness. Evidently, students in the Malay or English medium primary schools are not overlooked when teaching Chinese in national primary schools. Ultimately, the purpose of teaching Chinese as a second language in these learning environments is to encourage students to use this language in their everyday lives. It is also hoped that students can benefit from a more relaxed, dynamic, and engaging curriculum. In this aspect, teachers play a crucial role. The quality and ability of the teachers will have a significant impact on the dissemination of the curriculum provided.

Besides, cultural differences among the various ethnicities in Malaysia can be a sensitive issue. The lack of cultural understanding can easily cause conflict between the different ethnic races. Education is the best way to expose pupils to the diverse cultures of different ethnicities in Malaysia. If pupils are educated from an early age on other cultures, misunderstandings between the various ethnic races can be reduced and may even foster closer relations instead.

Research Questions

Apart from learning the Chinese language as a means of communication, the learning of the Chinese language also introduces pupils from different ethnicities to the language's culture.

There is two research question in this research which are:

1. What are the traditional Chinese cultural elements chosen to be included in the Chinese textbook in national primary school for both versions?
2. Can traditional Chinese cultural elements included in the Chinese textbooks in national primary school (for both versions) become a medium for cultural communication or culture dissemination?

Research Objective

National primary school Chinese language education plays a role in cultural dissemination. It enables people of different ethnic backgrounds to firstly learn Chinese as a second language and consequently gain a deeper understanding of the traditional Chinese culture. At the same time, it allows Malaysian Chinese children to understand their ancestral culture's traditions better. It can help prevent misunderstandings caused by cultural differences. From an early age, pupils will learn about each other's cultures, foster respect and harmony among each other, and pave the way for a peaceful country.

The (KSSR) used two versions of national primary school Chinese textbooks over the last decade. Both versions include topics on traditional Chinese culture and localised Malaysian Chinese culture based on real-life situations. By studying these two versions of the textbook, this paper will discuss how traditional Chinese culture is depicted in Malaysian national primary school Chinese textbooks. It will also analyse the elements of traditional Chinese culture and investigate the need to reinforce cultural content in national primary school Chinese textbooks. This way, other ethnic groups may also obtain a better understanding of traditional Chinese customs, traditions, festivities, culture, and history.

The objectives of this research are:

1. to study the appropriateness of the traditional Chinese cultural elements that are introduced in the Chinese textbook in national primary school for the benefit of cultural education.
2. to analyse the traditional Chinese cultural elements and investigate the need to reinforce cultural content in the Chinese textbook in national primary school.

Significance of the Research

Language and culture are correlated and cannot be separated (Sapir, 1912). Culture has to be educated at an early age, especially in Malaysia, which has a multitude of races and ethnicities. Offering the Chinese language as a second language in national primary school means the Chinese language can be taken up by non-native learners where their culture is different from Chinese culture. It is very important that while introducing a language, pupils learn how to speak, how to read, and how to write. Pupils are also taught elements of Chinese culture. Cultural elements included in the Chinese textbook in national primary school are essential because they can become a medium for cultural communication among different ethnicities.

After study the traditional Chinese cultural elements and analysing the traditional Chinese cultural elements that are included in the Chinese textbook and the revised KSSR (semakan 2017) Chinese textbook in national primary school, it can be seen that traditional Chinese cultural elements are the focus, and is regarded as important for developing a peaceful and harmonious country with all the pupils. Comments and suggestions will be given to reinforce the cultural content in national primary school Chinese textbooks.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

An Introduction to Language and Culture

Language

What is language? Edward Sapir defined language as “a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols.” (Sapir, 1912). According to Ferdinand de Saussure, language is a well-defined homogeneous. It is a system of signs (meanings and sound images) that express ideas. It is the social side of speech and is something that we can study separately compared to speaking. Language is a storehouse of sound images, and writing is the tangible form of those images (Saussure, 1966). In the Oxford Dictionary, Language means the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people of a particular country or area (Language, 2021).

Culture

Edward B. Tylor’s definition of culture is *that complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society* (Tylor, 1871).

The modern Chinese dictionary defines culture in three ways: Firstly, as the combination of material and intellectual wealth created by human beings in the process of social and historical development, it mainly refers to intellectual wealth in literature, art, education, science, etc. Secondly, culture is defined as an archaeological term referring to the relics and remnants of a historical period. Their collective synthesis is independent of the location(s) to which they have been transferred. Tools, utensils, and production techniques are distinct characteristics whose similarity indicates a shared, same culture. Meanwhile, the third definition of culture refers to applying words and general knowledge (Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Yuyan Yanjiusuo Cidian Bianjishi, Xiandai Hanyu Dacidian, 2006).

(Wang & Zhu, 2006) summarised the meaning of culture into four levels: (1) the sum of material wealth accumulated and created as a result of the historical practice of human society, (2) the superstructure of society and its interconnected systems and organisations, (3) general knowledge, (4) ancient culture and education.

Language and Culture

Language and culture are correlated. As culture changes, language responds by adapting and complimenting the shift (Sapir, 1912). Concurrently, languages and cultures also play an essential role in education. The culture of a nation can be explained when one learns its language.

In researching Chinese curricula, it has been found that cultural factors are always prevalent, whether in kindergarten or university syllabuses. Learning a language translates to the understanding of its culture and background. It is commonly believed that the destruction of a people's culture is equivalent to the disappearance of their language (Sapir, 1912). The Chinese language and its Chinese characters have been among the world's most perfectly preserved languages since ancient times, reflecting the many languages that have vanished with the degeneration of its people.

An Introduction to Traditional Chinese Culture

Traditional culture refers to the spirit of a people and its manifestations that have been shaped by their history, as well as the casting of their history, which then gives life to their present and nurtures their future. A people and its culture are inseparable. To leave culture behind is to lose trace of traditions; without traditions, culture cannot be sustained (Pang, 2003).

The traditional Chinese culture has existed before the May Fourth Movement for thousands of years, shaped by China's environment, economic structures, government systems, social frameworks, and ideologies. Accumulated and inherited until today, traditional Chinese culture still affects modern society. Traditional Chinese culture is very much the pulse and 'genes' of Chinese civilisation. It is the Chinese people's source of power and wisdom in their endless pursuit for growth and progress, and it is their shared bond and interconnected state of being (Li, 2014).

Traditional culture is the overall representation and compilation of a people's ideologies, conceptual notions, and value orientations. It is "everything that has existed in the past"; a stream of ideas, an understanding of morality, a trend of consciousness, and a state of existence; which began in the past, melds with the present, and extends into the future. Traditional

Chinese culture is also based on Confucianism- the collective memory and sustaining life force of the Chinese people (Wang, 2006).

Research on Traditional Culture in Teaching Materials

Studies on Traditional Culture in Chinese Primary Schools

(Hu, 2016) investigated the distribution of traditional culture content in the teaching materials of Chinese primary schools from grade one to six. His findings of traditional cultural content in teaching materials were previously under-explored in academia. The findings outlined the advantages and disadvantages of existing textbook compilations and served as a reference for textbook editors.

(Tu, 2016) by conducting in-depth analysis and investigation, assisted by a questionnaire survey and comparative analysis, *Tu* highlights the importance and significance of including traditional Chinese cultural elements in primary school education. According to her, students can learn to show gratitude to their parents and respect their teachers through the influence of traditional Chinese culture in their textbooks. They will also learn to lead lives filled with integrity and responsibility.

Studies on Chinese Traditional Culture Elements in Second Language Teaching Materials

The teaching of traditional Chinese culture is important and necessary to teach Chinese as a foreign language. Culture plays a significant role as it reinforces the customs and values of the Chinese people. Culture has the potential to shape the attitudes of its students toward the Chinese language and encourages enthusiasm towards Chinese culture. The teaching of Chinese as a foreign language should include more information on the traditional Chinese culture. This is to improve the appeal of Chinese culture, which could elevate the Chinese language's teaching and usage. This will inevitably undermine the core values and status of the Chinese language among other world languages (Zhou, 2013).

(Wang, 2009) stated in his studies that teaching the Chinese language as a foreign language mainly focuses on the ultimate goal to achieve cultural understanding. In other words, as international students learn the Chinese language, they will gain a better understanding of traditional Chinese culture. The study attempts to understand the objectives of teaching the Chinese language, handle language teaching and cultural teaching in sequence, and coordinate its synergy. Through these experiences, adaptations, and innovations and explored to combine the teaching practices. *Wang* then explains how teaching Chinese as a foreign language uses culture to foster multicultural understanding.

Studies on Cultural Elements Found within Malaysian National Primary School Chinese Teaching Materials

(Zhang, 2020) compared the teaching materials of Malaysian national-type schools (Chinese) (SJK(C)) and national primary schools (SK), and further explored and compared the cultural elements contained within the teaching materials of these two different streams of primary schools that pertain to China's traditional Chinese culture and local Malaysian Chinese culture, while analysing which of these two sets of teaching materials is more suitable for the Malaysian Chinese community, in terms of the heritage of, as well as the need for, traditional culture.

Next, (Lin & Zhu, 2020) compared and analysed the Chinese textbooks of (SJK(C)) with the Chinese textbooks of (SK), which focused on Chinese cultural elements. Their conclusion after the analysis is that there are differences and similarities, in the educational content and composition, in the Chinese textbooks of (SJK(C)) and the Chinese textbooks of (SK). The thought process behind the composition of the Chinese language syllabus for national primary schools has Chinese cultural heritage as its primary focus and was heavily influenced by Chinese primary schools and cultural heritage. They used charts to summarise and analyse the two versions of the textbook. They found that the teaching of Chinese in national primary schools as a second language, under the influence of Chinese education and cultural heritage in Malaysia, shows other ethnic groups the traditional values of Chinese culture that the Malaysian Chinese so highly value. In addition, Malaysia's national primary school Chinese textbooks have incorporated multicultural content to expose non-Chinese Malaysians to the joy of learning Chinese.

Research Gap

After comparing the integrated studies done within and beyond Malaysia, including relevant materials, research reports, literature, dissertation papers, etc., notice that there are fewer studies in teaching the Chinese language as a second language in national primary school. Comparison usually makes between the Chinese traditional cultural elements in the Chinese textbooks of (SJK(C)) and the Chinese textbooks of (SK) or just discussing the Chinese traditional cultural elements in the Chinese textbooks of (SJK(C)). Actually, Chinese traditional cultural elements play an important role in second language teaching, whereby it is culture dissemination and a path for racial harmony.

Research Methodology

Textual Analysis

The research objective shall be determined using integrated studies done within and beyond Malaysia that are relevant to the teaching of Chinese in primary schools and the inclusion of Chinese cultural elements in the teaching materials of teaching Chinese as a second language. It will also make use of Chinese cultural elements found in the teaching materials of Malaysia's Chinese language subject in national primary schools and the study of collecting relevant materials, research reports, literature, dissertation papers, and the like. Through literature review, this paper summarises, categorises, and analyses content about traditional Chinese cultural elements that can be found in (KSSR) Chinese textbooks for national primary school grade one to six, and in revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbooks for national primary school grade one to five. An objective deduction will be made based on the certainty, importance, and value of promoting traditional Chinese cultural elements in the Chinese textbooks of national primary schools.

Chart Statistics

Firstly, elements of traditional Chinese culture found in national primary school Chinese language textbooks from grades one to six are listed out. The same is done for cultural elements found in the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) national primary school Chinese textbooks from grades one to five. Next, the collected content is categorised, arranged, and analysed. It is evident that elements of traditional Chinese culture can be found in national primary school Chinese textbooks. Such content can be summarised, analysed, and then deduced in order to provide conclusive recommendations.

Research Analysis and Findings

Categorised and Elaborated Traditional Chinese Culture

This paper summarises content about Chinese culture found in (KSSR) national primary school Chinese textbooks from grades one to six, as well as from grades one to five in their revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) versions of national primary school Chinese textbooks. The content is divided into seven categories of traditional Chinese cultural elements.

Traditional Chinese Festivities

Chinese New Year - Nong Li Xin Nian (农历新年)

In Malaysia, we call the first day of the Lunar New Year as *Guo Nian* (过年), or *Nong Li Xin Nian*. But in China, it is commonly known as the Spring Festival (春节). Undoubtedly, this is the biggest festival for the Chinese diaspora. The historical origin of the Chinese New Year is described in *The Story of Nian* 《年的故事》. Once upon a time, there was a beast called *Nian*. On the last day of every year, *Nian* would emerge to eat humans. On the night of the last day one year, when the villagers were rushing to hide in the mountains, an old man came to beg from a grandmother. Seeing that he looked pitiful, the grandmother cooked a bowl of dumplings for the old man. After that, the old man taught the grandmother to stick a piece of red paper on her door and burn bamboo trunks at the door. Then the old man put on a red robe. When the *Nian* came, it saw the red paper stuck on the door, the old man in his red robe, and the burning bamboo trunks. Hearing the burning trunks crackle and pop, the *Nian* rolled on the ground, then ran away, covering its eyes and ears. The next day, the villagers returned and listened to the grandmother's fortunate encounter. From then on, every year, when the day came for the Year beast to emerge, everyone would put on red clothes, stick red paper on their doors, and burn bamboo trunks. Driven away, the *Nian* eventually stopped appearing, and that day the *Nian* been chase away to be known as the Chinese New Year. The red paper stuck at doors became Spring Festival couplets, the burnt bamboo trunks became firecrackers, and the red clothes worn became the custom of wearing red clothes whenever Chinese New Year is celebrated.

In Unit 12: Lunar New Year *Nong Li Xin Nian* (农历新年) on page 34-36 of the (KSSR) national primary school Chinese textbook of grade one, the story of the *Nian* is told. The text also introduces that day's meaning, the 'Big Day of the Chinese'. "Children eat New Year rice cakes, receive red packet *Hong Bao* (红包), every one of them is happy." In a simple way, it explains how the Lunar New Year is a 'Big Day' for the Chinese. The food that must be eaten during Lunar New Year is the New Year sticky rice cake *Nian Gao* (年糕), to symbolise rising year after year. Another custom of the Chinese is a red packet with money given by elders to younger generations, or vice versa, to symbolise well-wishes and blessings. Pictures in the book depict the Lion Dance, which is very well-known in Malaysia. There are Lion Dance championships held every year, and non-Chinese Malaysians have embraced the culture of this dance. Many have become participants of the Lion Dance.

Activity (4) of Unit 8: Today is Monday *Jin Tian Xing Qi Yi* (今天星期一) on page 42 of the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade two, has a small reading article titled Happy Chinese New Year *Xin Nian Kuai Le* (新年快乐), which mentions Chinese New Year, or the Lunar New Year.

Every New Year, the Chinese open their doors and visit their friends. It is a festival of harmony and friendship. It could even be called a day of universal celebration.

Dragon Boat Festival - Duan Wu Jie (端午节)

The Dragon Boat Festival is one of China's four major festivals. It is also known as *Long Zhou Jie* (龙舟节). On the fifth day of the fifth lunar month every year, Chinese households will wrap rice dumplings, *Zong Zi* (粽子), and the community will organise dragon boat races, *Sai Long Zhou* (赛龙舟). There are several versions of history that allude to the origin of the Dragon Boat Festival. But what most people know is the story of *Qu Yuan* (屈原), who did not want to see his home lost and country defeated, and so threw himself into the *Mi Luo River* (汨罗江), tied to a boulder, to kill himself. After hearing that *Qu Yuan* had thrown himself into the river, the people immediately rowed boats out to rescue him. However, they could not find *Qu Yuan's* body. Because the people did not want fish feeding on *Qu Yuan's* body, they began dropping rice balls into the river and beating drums to drive the fish away. This is how the custom of dragon boat racing and dumpling eating came about for the Dragon Boat Festival. The Malaysian Chinese tend to treat this festival with great importance. Every year, it is customary for them to wrap and eat rice dumplings, have dragon boat races, and return to their hometowns to have dinner with their elders. Besides the Chinese, other ethnicities are also known to wrap rice dumplings but with different fillings, and gradually, a local flavour for rice dumplings has emerged.

The Dragon Boat Festival is mentioned in Unit 7: Back to Hometown for Festival Celebration *Hui Xiang Guo Nian* (回乡过年), on page 38-42 of the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade three. The accompanying text mentions the following: "Eldest Uncle, Aunt, and Younger Uncle have all returned to grandpa and grandma's house for the festival. Everyone loves to eat grandma's dumplings." Later, Eldest Uncle and Aunt even bring the author to see a dragon boat race. This text briefly describes the Dragon Boat Festival and its customs, including family gatherings, dumpling eating, and dragon boat racing.

Mid-Autumn Festival - Zhong Qiu Jie (中秋节)

The Mid-Autumn Festival falls on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of the Chinese Lunar Calendar. This is a day where Malaysian Chinese eat mooncakes, admire the moon and carry lanterns. The beautiful love story between *Hou Yi* (后羿), who shot the sun, and *Chang'e* (嫦娥), who flew to the moon, is the most popular Mid-Autumn Festival myth. As the story goes, after *Hou Yi* bravely shot down nine suns in the sky, the Queen Mother of the Heavens had rewarded him with two elixirs of immortality. He took the elixirs home to his wife, *Chang'e*, to keep, and they both made plans to have a meal together. However, *Hou Yi's* elder brother unexpectedly discovered his brother's elixirs and arrived to ask *Chang'e* for them while *Hou*

Yi went out. In an anxious hurry, *Chang'e* gulped down the two elixirs and began floating upwards into the sky. At that very time, she caught a glimpse of her husband who was returning home. The two of them were separated from that moment. This kind of imperfection of this story evokes the ideal of reunion in people's hearts and makes people cherish this day of symbolising reunion.

The (KSSR) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade two has a picture story of *Chang'e* flies to the Moon *Chang'e Ben Yue* (嫦娥奔月), on page 87-90 of its Unit 16: The Round, Round Moon *Yuan Yuan De Yue Liang* (圆圆的月亮). There is also text which mentions mooncakes as a Mid-Autumn Festival Food.

Meanwhile, activities of eating mooncakes, carrying lanterns, and drinking tea while admiring the moon are mentioned on page 38-42, in Unit 9: Today is the Mid-Autumn Festival *Jin Tian Shi Zhong Qiu Jie* (今天是中秋节) of the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade four.

Winter Solstice - Dong Zhi (冬至)

The Winter Solstice is one of the most significant solar terms in the Chinese Lunar Calendar. It is the first of 24 solar terms and falls on December 22 or 23 of the Gregorian calendars. The Winter Solstice is always the last festival of the year for the Chinese people. After the Winter Solstice, the New Year is always just around the corner. The Chinese community in Malaysia has maintained the custom of celebrating the Winter Solstice. On this day, everyone eats glutinous rice balls *Tang Yuan* (汤圆) to symbolise reunion.

In Unit 12: Winter Solstice *Dong Zhi* (冬至) on page 117-129 of the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade five, the custom of rolling *Tang Yuan* is mentioned and brings out how the Winter Solstice is a good day for a family reunion. In addition, this lesson also introduces traditional Chinese festivals and their foods, which include: eating *Nian Gao* during Chinese New Year, eating *Zong Zi* during the Dragon Boat Festival, eating mooncakes during the Mid-Autumn Festival, and eating *Tang Yuan* during the celebration of Winter Solstice. Text on page 126 also mentions how people will gather and make merriment during every celebration and festival.

Next, the (KSSR) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade five introduces the custom of eating Mandarin Oranges during Chinese New Year to symbolise auspiciousness. The chapter also teaches that it is customary to eat *Tang Yuan* during Chap Goh Meh, which falls on the fifteenth day of the first Lunar month; eat *Zong Zi* and watch dragon boat racing during the Dragon Boat Festival, which falls on the fifth day of the fifth Lunar month; and admire the moon, drink tea and eat mooncakes during the Mid-Autumn Festival, which falls on the fifteenth day of the eighth months. All these festivals are briefly introduced on page 104-112 of Unit 13: Understanding Each Other *Hu Xiang Liao Jie* (互相了解).

All traditional Chinese festivals have one thing in common: they wish for those who have been away from home to return and visit their relatives, to share delicious food with them, and to reunite with them as a family, because that is happiness!

Traditional Chinese Folk Games

Chinese Chess - Xiang Qi (象棋)

Chinese Chess is an intangible cultural heritage of China. It is a two-board chess game, which is quite popular in Southeast Asian countries, especially among Southeast Asian Chinese communities. Chinese Chess is an official sport in the World Mind Sports Games. (Wood, 2016)

Diabolo Juggling - Che Ling (扯铃)

Diabolo juggling or *Kong Zhu* (空竹) is widely known as *Che Ling* in Malaysia. There are two types of diabolo juggling: single and double. The latter is more accessible than the former.

Shuttlecock Kicking - Ti Jian Zi (踢毽子)

Shuttlecock kicking is another traditional Chinese game. Most shuttlecocks are made using chicken feathers. The sport can be played in any flat-open space. The game's goal is to repeatedly kick a shuttlecock in the air and prevent it from touching the ground. This game compares the number of kicks its players can make, how long they can keep a shuttlecock suspended, and the kicking technique they use. It is a popular fitness activity in China.

Top Spinning - Tuo Luo (陀螺)

Top spinning is a traditional Chinese folk game that involves spherical wooden tops. A thread would be wound around a top with its tip pointing to the ground. The thread would be released in a whipping motion, and the top would spin on the floor. The top can be whipped again as it is spun to speed it up. The player who can keep their top spinning for the longest time wins the game.

These four traditional games are introduced in Unit 6: The Blue Sky is My Way *Lan Tian Ren Wo Xing Li* (蓝天任我行) on page 43 of the (KSSR) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade five. Although the explanations are brief, teachers may be able to go into greater detail about each game

In the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school, shuttlecock kicking is mentioned from page 85-93 in Unit 9: Going back to Grandma's house *Hui Wai Po Jia* (回外婆家). A picture shows a game of shuttlecock kicking; meanwhile, a short poem briefly introduces the game and even explains how it is a healthy activity for the body. The same book mentions top spinning next. There is a short passage for reading about spinning tops with friends. Next, Unit 10: I Love Camping *Wo Ai Lu Ying* (我爱露营) on page 94 mentions Chinese Chess.

Traditional Chinese Family Appellations

All ethnic groups practice family appellation. When it comes to the Chinese people, family appellations emphasise seniority and order of lineage. Every family appellation uniquely indicates whether one refers to a relative who is older, younger or the same generation as themselves. The national primary school Chinese language textbook also teaches one how to address their paternal and maternal relatives.

In Unit 8: My Family *Jia Ren* (家人) on page 22-23 of the (KSSR) Chinese language textbook for national primary school grade one, appellations are taught for one's father, mother, older brother, older sister, younger brother and younger sister. Next, (KSSR) Chinese language textbook for national primary school grade two introduces appellations for one's paternal and maternal grandparents in its Unit 13: Relatives *Qin Ren* (亲人), on pages 42-44. In Unit 12: Visiting Relatives and Friends *Tan Fang Qin You* (探访亲友) on page 89-96 of the (KSSR) Chinese language textbook for national primary grade four, appellations are introduced for one's relatives on their paternal side. These include appellations for one's uncle (father's elder brother) and his wife: *Bo Fu, Bo Mu* (伯父, 伯母); uncle (father's younger brother) and his wife: *Shu Shu, Shen Shen* (叔叔, 婶婶); aunt (father's sister) and her husband: *Gu Gu, Gu Zhang* (姑姑, 姑丈); as well as paternal and maternal cousins *Tang Xiong Di Jie Mei, Biao Xiong Di Jie Mei* (堂兄弟姐妹, 表兄弟姐妹).

Similarly, in Unit 6: My Family *Wo De Jia Ren* (我的家人) on page 23-28 of the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade one, appellations are taught for one's father, mother, older brother, older sister, younger brother and younger sister. At the same time, revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade two teaches appellations for one's father, mother, older brother, older sister, younger brother, and younger sister, in its Unit 3: This is My Home *Zhe Shi Wo De Jia* (这是我的家) on page 13-18. In the same book, Unit 4: Who Are They *Ta Men Shi Shei* (他们是谁) on pages 19-24 teaches appellations for paternal and maternal grandparents.

The revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade three teaches appellations for one's paternal aunts (姑姑) and uncles (大伯, 叔叔) in Unit 7: To Hometown for Festival Celebration *Hui Xiang Guo Nian* (回乡过年) from page 38-42. On the other hand, Unit 3: Having Dinner *Chi Wan Fan* (吃晚饭) on page 17-24 of the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade four introduces appellations for one's mother's siblings, or maternal aunts (阿姨) and uncles (舅舅).

Chinese family appellations differ significantly from those used by other ethnicities. The revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school introduces these appellations to students in gradual stages. This indirectly teaches Chinese children the proper way to address their family members and relatives.

Traditional Chinese Food Culture

Food culture often changes due to the influence of local culture and the culture of other ethnic groups. The eating habits of the Malaysian Chinese still retain traditional Chinese food customs, but they have been localised to adapt to local customs. The Malaysian Chinese still enjoy eating deep-fried dough sticks *You Tiao* (油条), soybean *Dou Jiang* (豆浆), *Dian Xin* (点心), *Bao Dian* (包点) and tea for breakfast.

Unit 4: The Market *Cai Shi* (菜市) on pages 11-15 of the (KSSR) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade three describes Chicken Rice. Chicken Rice commonly sold at markets

originated from the Chicken Rice of *Wen Chang, Hainan* (文昌,海南). It was brought to Malaysia by the Chinese who travelled to Southeast Asia in the 20th century. Nowadays, Hainan Chicken Rice is a popular food among the Malaysian Chinese and other ethnic groups.

In Unit 11: Grandfather's Birthday *Ye Ye De Sheng Ri Hui* (爷爷的生日会) on page 88 of the (KSSR) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade four, there is a poem which mentions peach-shaped birthday buns *Shou Tao* (寿桃), birthday noodles *Shou Mian* (寿面) and Chinese tea *Zhong Guo Cha* (中国茶). Longevity is often a theme associated with elders. They will have *Shou Tao* and *Shou Mian* on their birthdays to signify that they will have longevity after eating them. Tea culture is another element of Chinese food culture.

Meanwhile, Unit 11: I Love Malaysia *Wo Ai Ma Lai Xi Ya* (我爱马来西亚) on page 87-94 of the (KSSR) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade five also mentions Chicken Rice.

Tea is mentioned in Unit 12: What Do You Want to Drink *Ni Yao He Shen Me* (你要喝什么) on page 67-73 of the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade two. From this book, we can also observe how tea culture has been integrated into the culture of other ethnic groups in Malaysia. Tea culture is mentioned once again in Unit 2: Brushing Teeth Together *Yi Qi Shua Ya* (一起刷牙) on page 7-12 of the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade three.

Meanwhile, the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade four mentions red-dyed birthday eggs on page 88-97 of its Unit 12: My Birthday *Wo De Sheng Ri* (我的生日). The Chinese have always had the tradition of eating red eggs to celebrate birth occasions. When a family celebrates the birth of a child, they will give red eggs to their relatives and friends on the full moon of the baby. During birthday celebrations, Chinese families are also known to dye eggs red as a mark of good luck and merriment. The preparation of red eggs has become a custom for the Chinese during family celebrations.

In Unit 6: Local Cakes *Ben Di Gao Dian* (本地糕点) on page 53-64 of the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) Chinese textbook for national primary school grade five, Chinese buns *Bao Zi* (包子) and *Red Tortoise Cakes Hong Gui Gao* (红龟糕) are introduced. This section also mentions the making of *Nine-Layered Cake Jiu Ceng Gao* (九层糕) and *Spring Roll Bao Bing* (薄饼).

Traditional Chinese Arts

Chinese Calligraphy - Shu Fa (书法)

Chinese calligraphy is the unique and traditional art of visual Chinese characters. The paper, brush, ink, and inkstone required for calligraphy are known as the Four Treasures of the Study. Calligraphy entails a devotion to posture and brush penmanship.

Chinese calligraphy is mentioned in Unit 3: Everyone Come and Learn Chinese, *Da Jia Lai Xue Hua Wen* (大家来学华文) on pages 17-24 of the (KSSR) Chinese language textbook for
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national primary school grade four. Meanwhile, Chinese calligraphy activities can be found on pages 24, 48, 64, 80, 96, and 112 of the same book. Teachers can disseminate Chinese arts and culture in classrooms by allowing students to try their hand at Chinese calligraphy. Additionally, exercises simulating Chinese calligraphy can be found on pages 16, 50, 89, 128 and 129 of the (KSSR) Chinese language textbook for national primary school grade five. The (KSSR) Chinese language textbook for national primary grade six has sections on pages 23, 62 and 101 that encourage appreciation for Chinese calligraphy.

Chinese Paper Cutting - Jian Zhi (剪纸)

Chinese paper cutting is one of the world's oldest folk arts. As its name implies, Chinese paper cutting involves using scissors to cut paper into various patterns and shapes. Chinese paper cuttings are a must-have decoration during festivities, such as Chinese New Year and weddings, to bring a special touch to the atmosphere.

In Unit 4: The Joy of Paper Cutting Jian Zhi Le (剪纸乐), Chinese paper cutting is mentioned on pages 19-24 of the revised (KSSR Semakan) Chinese language textbook for national primary school grade three. Teachers can let their students try their hand at Chinese paper cutting by having them cut out patterns of their choice. In this way, the students would experience the fun and joy of Chinese paper cutting.

Traditional Chinese Customs

The traditional Chinese wedding, its etiquette and customs, wedding procedure, wedding items, wedding taboos, and so on, are complex and detailed. The Malaysian Chinese still maintain some elements of these traditional customs in modern-day weddings.

In Unit 10: Festive Customs *Feng Su Xi Qing* (风俗喜庆) on page 79-86 of the (KSSR) Chinese language textbook for national primary school grade 6, the text briefly describes the wedding proceedings of an aunt's Chinese wedding. It mentioned that the wedding ceremony takes place on an auspicious day where family and friends are invited to gather. The bridegroom's entourage arrives, and the bridegroom gives out red packets as a symbol of auspiciousness to maternal cousins who help him with his journey to reach his bride. The newlywed couple serves tea to their parents, who in turn give them red packets to wish them an enduring love and the short arrival of offspring of their own.

A short article also briefly introduces Chinese marriage customs. Marriage, for the Chinese, must take place on an auspicious date and time. The bride will wait at home for the bridegroom to arrive. Red packets are distributed to symbolise good fortune. The new couple should have a tea ceremony with their parents to show respect and gratitude to their parents and elders. In addition, parents and relatives should give the newlywed couple red packets to signify their blessing.

Chinese Literature

Ancient Poetry

Ancient poetry also includes references to ancient Chinese musical poetry. Chinese ancient poetry can be classified according to its number of verses, and for example, there are four-character poems, five-character poems and seven-character poems. Famous Chinese poets

include *Li Bai* (李白), *Bai Ju Yi* (白居易), *Li Shang Yin* (李商隐) and *Meng Hao Ran* (孟浩然). Ancient Chinese poetry appears in the Chinese language textbooks of Malaysia's national primary schools. Catchy poems allow students to appreciate the wonder of Chinese characters. All it takes is a few characters to convey a situation, mood or intended meaning.

(Translated English Version)	(Original Chinese Version)
Compassion for the Peasants (1) Tang Dynasty. <i>Li Shen</i>	悯农 (一) 唐.李绅
Millet hoed in the midday heat, Sweat dripping onto the earth beneath. Who knows about the food on their plates, Every grain has toiled.	锄禾日当午, 汗滴禾下土。 谁知盘中餐, 粒粒皆辛苦。

**Unit 3: Beautiful Sights of Malaysia *Ma Lai Xi Ya Hao Feng Guang* (马来西亚好风光)
KSSR National Primary School Grade Six Chinese Language Textbook (Page 24)**

(Translated English Version)	(Original Chinese Version)
Urging Learning Tang Dynasty. <i>Yan Zhen Qing</i>	劝学 唐.颜真卿
In the middle of the night, at cock of crow, That is the best time for boys to read. Being unmindful in early learning during youth, Is to regret late study in old age.	三更灯火五更鸡, 正是男儿读书时。 黑发不知勤学早, 白首方悔读书迟。

**Unit 15: Looking Up to You *Xiang Nin Kan Qi* (向您看齐)
KSSR National Primary School Grade Six Chinese Language Textbook (Page 127)**

(Translated English Version)	(Original Chinese Version)
Song of Tomorrow Ming Dynasty. <i>Qian Fu</i>	明日歌 明.钱福
Tomorrows are upon tomorrows, How abundant they are. If I wait upon tomorrow, All my plans are in vain.	明日复明日, 明日何其多。 我生待明日, 万事成蹉跎。

**Unit 1: The First Day of School *Kai Xue De Di Yi Tian* (开学的第一天)
Revised (KSSR Semakan) National Primary School Grade Five Chinese Language
Textbook (Page 8)**

(Translated English Version)	(Original Chinese Version)
Up the Stork Tower Tang Dynasty. <i>Wang Zhi Huan</i>	登鹤雀楼 唐.王之涣
The sun reclines beyond mountains, The Yellow River flows into the sea. Wish to view thousands of miles of sights, Have to ascend another storey.	白日依山尽, 黄河入海流。 欲穷千里目, 更上一层楼。

**Unit 8: Beautiful Malaysia *Mei Li De Ma Lai Xi Ya* (美丽的马来西亚)
Revised (KSSR Semakan) National Primary School Grade Five Chinese Language
Textbook (Page 82)**

(Translated English Version)	(Original Chinese Version)
Failing to Seek the Recluse Tang Dynasty. <i>Jia Dao</i>	寻隐者不遇 唐.贾岛
I asked a child beneath pine trees, Master has gone to gather herbs, said he. Just on this mountain, Among dense clouds, unknown his position be.	松下问童子, 言师采药去。 只在此山中, 云深不知处。

**Unit 10: I Love Camping *Wo Ai Lu Ying* (我爱露营)
Revised (KSSR Semakan) National Primary School Grade Five Chinese Language
Textbook (Page 105)**

Proverb Stories

Proverb Stories contain rich Chinese culture and the essence of the Chinese people's wisdom. There is usually a profound story behind every Chinese proverb. Some are about history, others about life, culture, morality and the like. Through the teaching of Chinese proverbs in stories, students come to appreciate the meaning of every proverb. Chinese proverbs are found in the Chinese language textbooks for national primary school grades five and six. The proverb stories illustrate historical tales and introduce other ethnic groups to the Chinese people's background, culture, and language.

Knowing Gratitude and Repaying It *Zhi En Tu Bao* (知恩图报)

The textbook quotes the story *Ants Repay Gratitude, Ma Yi Bao En* 《蚂蚁报恩》 which is about receiving kindness and returning it.

Unit 4: Gratitude & Repaying It *Zhi En Tu Bao* (知恩图报)

(KSSR) National Primary School Grade Five Chinese Language Textbook (Page 126-128)

A Crow Feeds its Mother *Wu Ya Fan Bu* (乌鸦反哺)

A baby crow is born and its mother searches for food to feed it. When the crow is grown, its mother has grown old, so it is now the crow's duty to feed its mother. This story is about caring for elders by showing them filial piety.

Unit 7: Selfless Maternal Love *Wu Si De Mu Ai* (无私的母爱)

(KSSR) National Primary School Grade Five Chinese Language Textbook (Page 52)

Drawing Legs onto Snakes *Hua She Tian Zu* (画蛇添足)

Drawing snakes and adding legs onto them when snakes do not have legs at all. *Hua She Tian Zu* is a metaphor that means performing redundant or unnecessary tasks, which end up being inappropriate (Page 590, Modern Chinese Dictionary) .

Unit 14: The Animal Kingdom *Dong Wu Wang Guo* (动物王国)

(KSSR) National Primary School Grade Five Chinese Language Textbook (Page 121)

The Blind Feeling an Elephant *Mang Ren Mo Xiang* (盲人摸象)

This story tells of a few blind men who feel an elephant. One stroke the elephant's nose and decides that it is like a curving tube, one touches the elephant's ears and says the elephant is fan-like, one feels the elephant's stomach and likens it to a wall, and another grabs hold of the elephant's tail and exclaim that the creature is like a piece of thread. Each believes their findings and argues with each other to no end. This proverb is a metaphor for understanding things incompletely and then making inaccurate speculations (Page 919, Modern Chinese Dictionary).

Unit 6: The World of Proverbs *Cheng Yu Shi Jie* (成语世界)

(KSSR) National Primary School Grade Six Chinese Language Textbook (Page 46-47)

Pulling Seedlings to Make Them Grow ('Ba Miao Zhu Zhang', 拔苗助长)

This story tells of a farmer who saw that his seedlings were growing too slowly, and so he pulled each of them up one by one. When he got home, he said to his family, "I made the seedlings grow much taller all at once." Hearing this, his son went to their field and found that all their seedlings were dead! This proverb is a metaphor for negatively thirsting for success, against the law of development of things. (Page 1561, Modern Chinese Dictionary)

Unit 6: The World of Proverbs *Cheng Yu Shi Jie* (成语世界)

(KSSR) National Primary School Grade Six Chinese Language Textbook (Page 48)

A Fox Assuming the Majesty of A Tiger *Hu Jia Hu Wei* (狐假虎威)

A fox takes advantage of a tiger by using it to scare away all the other animals. This proverb refers to causing oppression by relying on the influence of others. (Page 574, Modern Chinese Dictionary)

Unit 6: The World of Proverbs *Cheng Yu Shi Jie* (成语世界)

(KSSR) National Primary School Grade Six Chinese Language Textbook (Page 51)

Slaughtering A Chicken For Its Eggs *Sha Ji Qu Luan* (杀鸡取卵)

This is the tale of an old woman who had a hen that laid a golden egg every day. She wanted to extract all the golden eggs quickly because she was greedy, and so she killed the hen with a knife and cut open its belly. She did not, however, find a single golden egg. This proverb is a metaphor for someone who jeopardises long-term profits in pursuit of short-term gain. (Page 1180, Modern Chinese Dictionary)

Unit 6: The World of Proverbs *Cheng Yu Shi Jie* (成语世界)

(KSSR) National Primary School Grade Six Chinese Language Textbook (Page 54)

Diligence *Wen Ji Qi Wu* (闻鸡起舞)

During the Eastern Jin Dynasty, *Zu Ti* (祖逖) and *Liu Kun* (刘琨) were good friends. They often encouraged each other practiced sword fighting late into the night. Later, this proverb was used as a metaphor for aspiring individuals who are working diligently against the clock. (Page 1429, Modern Chinese Dictionary)

Unit 15: Looking Up to You *Xiang Nin Kan Qi* (向您看齐)

(KSSR) National Primary School Grade Six Chinese Language Textbook (Page 124-125)

Chart Statistics

Comparing Elements of Traditional Chinese Culture between (KSSR) National Primary School Chinese Textbook and its Revised Versions KSSR (Semakan 2017) National Primary School Chinese Textbook

Table 1. Traditional Chinese Cultural Elements in (KSSR) National Primary School Chinese Textbook

Cultural Element	Primary grade 1	Primary grade 2	Primary grade 3	Primary grade 4	Primary grade 5	Primary grade 6
Traditional Chinese Festivities	Lunar New Year	Mid-Autumn Festival			Lunar New Year Chap Goh Meh Dragon Boat Festival Mid-Autumn Festival	
Traditional Chinese Folk Games					Chinese Chess Diabolo juggling Shuttlecock kicking Top spinning	
Traditional Chinese Family Appellations	Father Mother Older brother Older sister Younger brother Younger sister	Father Mother Older brother Older sister Younger brother Younger sister Paternal grandparents Maternal grandparents		Uncle, Aunt (Father's elder brother & wife) Uncle, Aunt (Father's younger brother & wife) Aunt, Uncle		Uncle (Mother's brother) Aunt (Mother's sister)

				(Father's sister & Husband) Paternal cousins Maternal cousins		
Traditional Chinese Food Culture	New Year sticky rice cake	Mooncake	Chicken rice	Peach- shaped birthday buns Birthday noodles Chinese tea	Chicken rice Mandarin Oranges <i>Tang Yuan</i> <i>Zong Zi</i> (dumplings) Mooncake Tea	
Traditional Chinese Arts				Chinese calligraphy	Chinese calligraphy	Chinese calligraphy
Traditional Chinese Customs				Birthday (Paternal grandfather 's birthday)		Marriage
Chinese Literature						Ancient poetry Idiom stories

**Table 2. Traditional Chinese Cultural Elements in Revised KSSR (Semakan 2017)
National Primary School Chinese Textbook**

Cultural Element	Primary grade 1	Primary grade 2	Primary grade 3	Primary grade 4	Primary grade 5
Traditional Chinese Festivities		Lunar New Year	Dragon Boat Festival	Mid-Autumn Festival	Winter Solstice Lunar New Year Dragon Boat Festival Mid-Autumn Festival
Traditional Chinese Folk Games					Shuttlecock kicking Top spinning Playing Chess (Chinese Chess)
Traditional Chinese Family Appellations	Father Mother Older brother	Paternal grandparents Maternal grandparents	Uncle (Father's elder brother)	Uncle (Mother's brother)	

	Older sister Younger brother Younger sister		Uncle (Father's younger brother) Aunt (Father's sister)	Aunt (Mother's sister)	
Traditional Chinese Food Culture	<i>Bao Zi</i> Noodles Cakes <i>Dian Xin</i>		<i>Zong Zi</i> (dumpling)	Red eggs Mooncakes	<i>Bao Zi</i> , <i>Red Tortoise Cake</i> , <i>Nine-layered cake</i> , <i>Spring Roll</i> , <i>Tang Yuan</i> , <i>Zong Zi</i> (dumplings), <i>Mooncakes</i> , <i>New Year sticky rice cake</i>
Traditional Chinese Arts			<i>Chinese Paper Cutting</i>		
Traditional Chinese Customs					
Chinese Literature				Ancient poetry	

When comparing the cultural elements featured in the (KSSR) national primary school Chinese textbook with their revised versions KSSR (Semakan 2017) national primary school Chinese textbook, there are clear similarities and differences observed. In terms of 'Traditional Chinese Festivities', both textbook versions mention the Lunar New Year, Dragon Boat Festival, and Mid-Autumn Festival. However, the details provided vary. The (KSSR) national primary school Chinese textbook mentions that the Chap Goh Meh falls on the fifteenth day of the last day of the Lunar New Year celebration. However, the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) national primary school Chinese textbook does not mention this detail. Instead, it introduces the Winter Solstice festival, which involves eating glutinous rice balls *Tang Yuan*.

'Traditional Chinese Folk Games' such as Chinese Chess, Diabolo juggling, Shuttlecock kicking, and Top Spinning are mentioned in the (KSSR) national primary school Chinese textbook. But in the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) national primary school Chinese textbook, only Chinese Chess, Shuttlecock kicking, and Top spinning has been retained. Diabolo juggling has been excluded from the syllabus.

In both versions of (KSSR) national primary school Chinese textbook, 'Traditional Chinese Family Appellations' include appellations for one's father, mother, older brother, older sister, younger brother, younger sister, paternal and maternal grandparents, paternal uncles, and aunts, and maternal uncles and aunts. However, it is observed that the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) national primary school Chinese textbooks use a more gradual approach to teach these

appellations. At the same time, there are no longer appellations taught for neither paternal or maternal cousins.

In terms of 'Traditional Chinese Food Culture', the (KSSR) national primary school Chinese textbooks mention the Chinese New Year Sticky Rice Cake, Mooncakes, Chicken Rice, Peach-shaped birthday buns, Birthday noodles, Chinese Tea, Mandarin Oranges, Glutinous Rice Balls, Dumpling, Mooncake, and Tea in this order. Meanwhile, the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) national primary school Chinese textbook mentions *Bao Dian*, Noodles, Cakes, *Dian Xin*, Dumplings, Red Eggs, Mooncake, Red Tortoise Cake, Nine-layered cake, Spring Roll, Glutinous Rice Balls, Dumpling and Chinese New Year Sticky Rice Cake. There are some similarities but also differences.

The topic, 'Traditional Chinese Arts' could be found in the earlier version of the (KSSR) National Primary School Chinese Language Textbook grade four, where Chinese calligraphy is introduced. However, the revised (KSSR Semakan) National Primary School Chinese Language Textbook no longer mentions Chinese calligraphy. Instead, the book teaches about Chinese paper cutting.

'Traditional Chinese Customs' was introduced in the earlier version of the (KSSR) National Primary School Chinese Language Textbook, which features the birthday celebration of an elder and a marriage ceremony. The revised (KSSR Semakan) National Primary School Chinese Language Textbook does not mention this cultural element at all.

As for 'Traditional Chinese Literature', the earlier version of the (KSSR) National Primary School Chinese Language Textbook mentions proverb stories. Proverb stories are not present in the revised (KSSR Semakan) National Primary School Chinese Language Textbook, but ancient poetry is taught.

Because the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) national primary school Chinese textbook has only been printed until primary grade five, we cannot determine which Chinese cultural elements will be included in the revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) national primary school Chinese grade six textbooks. But hopefully, we can expect to see more elements that will enrich the contents of the Chinese Traditional culture in the book.

A Comparison Between Chinese Cultural Elements

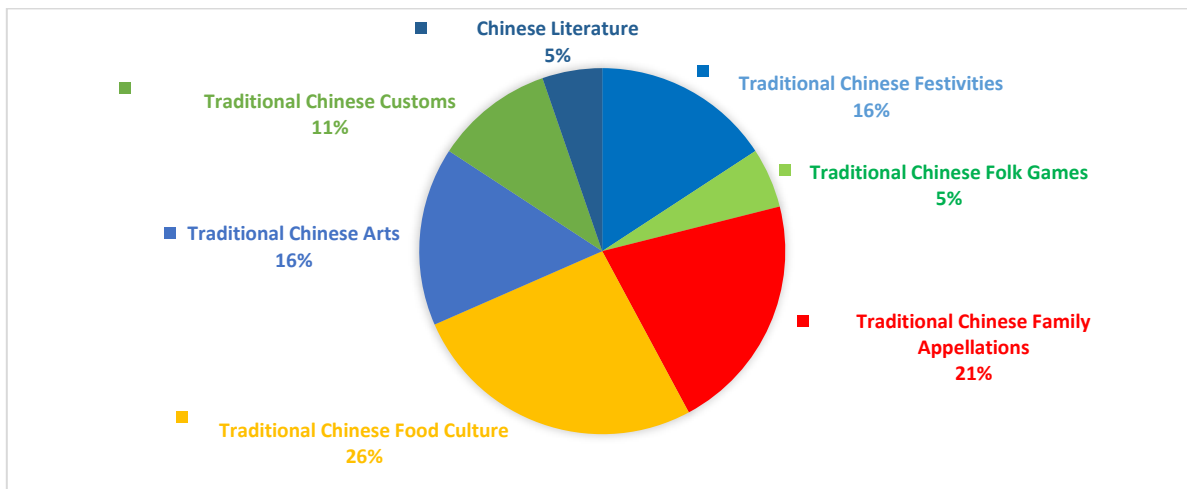


Figure 1: Distribution of Traditional Chinese Cultural Elements Found in (KSSR) National Primary School Chinese Textbook

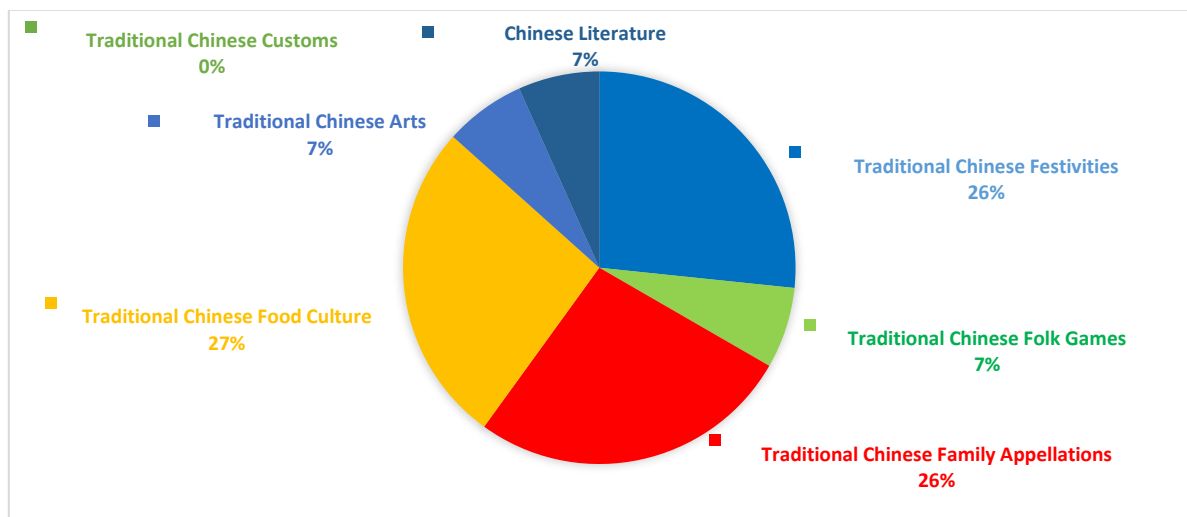


Figure 2. Distribution of Traditional Chinese Cultural Elements Found in the Revised KSSR (Semakan 2017) National Primary School Chinese Textbook

Based on Figure 1: Distribution of Traditional Chinese Cultural Elements Found in the earlier version of the (KSSR) National Primary School Chinese Language Textbook, 'Traditional Chinese Food Culture' is the cultural element that appears the most in the textbooks. This is followed by 'Traditional Chinese Family Appellations'. Next, 'Traditional Chinese Festivities' and 'Traditional Chinese Arts' appear at the same frequency, while 'Traditional Chinese Literature' appears at the same frequency as 'Traditional Chinese Folk Games'. 'Traditional Chinese Customs' is the cultural element that appears the least.

On the other hand, Figure 2: Distribution of Traditional Chinese Cultural Elements Found in the Revised (KSSR Semakan) National Primary School Chinese Language Textbook again reveals how different Chinese cultural elements in textbooks do not get the same emphasis. 'Traditional Chinese Festivities', 'Traditional Chinese Family Appellations', and 'Traditional

Chinese Food Culture' feature in the same proportions, and this could perhaps be because these three elements are much closer to real-life experiences. In comparison, fewer pages are given to 'Traditional Chinese Arts', 'Traditional Chinese Folk Games', and 'Traditional Chinese Literature'. It is also noted that 'Traditional Chinese Customs' is not mentioned in the textbooks from grade one to grade five.

The revised (KSSR Semakan) National Primary School Chinese Language Textbook are more comprehensive at introducing 'Traditional Chinese Festivities'. However, it removed some cultural elements such as introductions to Chinese calligraphy, the Chinese marriage ceremony, and proverb stories. Similarly, no Units mention the Chinese (Lunar) New Year, but some introduce the Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, Winter Solstice celebration, systematically introduce the 'Traditional Chinese Family Appellations', and introduce some popular Chinese *Gao Dian* (糕点). The revised version (KSSR Semakan) National Primary School Chinese Language Textbook grade six has yet to be printed. So we look forward to observing what kinds of cultural elements may be introduced there.

This paper has analysed the two versions of (KSSR) national primary school Chinese textbook. It can be deduced that the textbooks are pretty packed with Chinese cultural elements, but of course, the Chinese culture is influent mainly by the local cultural elements. How far can cultural heritage sustain itself? Teachers play an important role in finding out. Teachers can provide guidance and give more detailed explanations about topics taught, and they can also initiate activities for students to participate in. A lesson in culture can be as rich as it can be shallow. When it comes to cultural differences between ethnic groups, teachers also have the duty of helping to resolve misunderstandings and foster respect and tolerance between students in the classroom. It is safe to say that the cornerstone of national harmony has always been the quality of our educators.

Discussion and Summary

After comparing and analysing both versions of (KSSR) national primary school Chinese textbook, it is found that the Chinese traditional culture Elements included are relevant and related to the local Chinese culture, which is relevant to daily life. Introducing these cultural elements can bring understanding to other races and foster cultural communication among different ethnic races. As Chinese calligraphy, the Chinese marriage ceremony, and proverb stories are removed from textbooks, and it is deduced that it is quite difficult for pupils to write Chinese calligraphy, which is already a challenge for them to write Chinese characters. Anyway, Chinese calligraphy should continue to be presented because it is a unique cultural heritage. It may be passed down to the next generation or other races. The Chinese marriage ceremony is considered a meaningful ceremony in Chinese culture, especially for new couples. Maybe it is deemed unsuitable for explaining in primary school textbooks, but it would be pretty good if it continues to discuss. Proverb stories should be continued to appear in primary school textbooks. It is hoped to be included again in the new KSSR grade six Chinese textbook (semakan 2017). It would be preferable if all three cultures were included in the new grade six textbook.

Thus, this paper found that some Chinese traditional culture Elements have not been included. This paper would like to suggest including some Chinese traditional cultural elements. Examples:

1. Chinese traditional stories, legends, tales, historical elements
2. Chinese traditional sports element: *Wu Shu* (武术)
3. Chinese traditional performance element: 24 Festival Drums (二十四节令鼓)
4. Local Chinese elements: history and building

If these elements are added, they can enrich the contents in the national primary school Chinese textbook. Both Chinese or non-Chinese pupils can learn about the Chinese traditional culture as well as the local Malaysian Chinese culture, which is relevant to their daily life in Malaysia.

It has been nearly 50 years since China first formed diplomatic relations with Malaysia. Ever since China opened its doors, China's vigorous economic development has allowed its standing in the world to be elevated day by day. The 2008 Beijing Olympics further cemented the People's Republic of China and Beijing in everyone's minds. That deep impression has intensely piqued people's interest in this ancient country filled with mystique, which has more than five thousand years' worth of history and culture. They are further filled with an ever-increasing curiosity about its culture, its language, and its people. This has led to an increase in the number of Chinese language learners in the world and caused an unceasing flow of people who visit China for holidays or study tours.

The Chinese culture portrayed in the 2008 Beijing Olympics to the outside world further promoted Chinese ethnic customs. The impact of Chinese culture on the outside world can be likened to waves stirred up in the water, coming one after another, profound and far-reaching. This is especially evident in Malaysia, which has strong ties with China. Due to having an excellent Chinese education system as their foundation, many Malaysians have the capability and opportunity to further their studies, establish their careers, and build a strong future.

The Malaysian government is placing ever greater importance on the Chinese. Starting from 2008, the Beijing Foreign Studies University and the Malaysian Ministry of Education, together with the People's Trust Council, have committed to doing a collaborative program to train Malay teachers, and especially launched the "Chinese as a Foreign Language - Malay Teachers Training Programme" (Shihua Ribao online, 2017). The Malaysian government sends Malay students to study Chinese in China in the hopes that these Malay students will be able to teach Chinese as a second language in national primary schools after returning to Malaysia upon completing their studies. In 2011, the Chinese language was included in the KSSR syllabus as an elective subject and was officially accepted as a legitimate class, with a complete duration of 90 minutes per week.

Other Malaysian ethnic groups, by way of their appreciation towards the Chinese language, as well as realise the value of the Chinese language, have chosen to send their children to national-type school (Chinese) to receive Chinese education. But at the same time, some Malaysian Chinese families send their children to national primary schools for particular reasons. Different families with different needs to be met have caused Malaysia's education system to have a diverse ethnic mix of students. Because of this, the curricula should emphasise accurately representing the traditional cultures, customs, and festivities of all ethnic groups.

In Malaysia, students of different ethnicities can be found across public, national, and private schools. Therefore, education is an important channel where teachers play a fundamental role in ensuring that this multi-ethnic country can understand each other, help each other, and be

united for the country's prosperity. With this said, the transmission of culture in Malaysia safeguards the identities of different ethnic groups and promotes cultural exchanges among them.

The Malaysian Chinese play a significant role in the governance of Malaysia. Now that learning and communicating in Chinese is becoming a global trend. It is good that there is a comprehensive way to learn the language in Malaysia due to the cooperation between the Malaysian Chinese community and our local government. However, their efforts depend on how well Malaysian Chinese children will accept and propagate what they have learned in school.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country. Thus, living and growing up here is to learn how to live harmoniously with other ethnic groups. Because of this, Malaysia's education curricular includes teachings about the traditional culture, customs, and festivals of its various ethnic groups. This is done so that conflicts between different ethnic groups can be prevented from the time they are young. All Malaysians will instead be more united and have fewer misunderstandings due to differences. In this way, harmony will be strengthened.

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