

The High-efficiency and Intensive Chinese Program for Thai Students on Short-term Chinese Training Course in China: Thai High School Students Program in KUST

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Abstract

Nowadays, the teaching of Chinese is growing worldwide. Chinese is one of the world's official languages. Thai people's interest in studying Chinese is increasing. The Thai government also encourages Thai people to learn Chinese. Therefore, the government has established Chinese language courses at primary schools, secondary schools and higher educational institutions. Chinese language education of Thailand witnesses a good development. Most of Thai schools directly employed local Chinese teachers. However, many Thai schools are still lack of Chinese teachers. Therefore, the Ministry of Education of Thailand also cooperates with the Ministry of Education of China for sending the Hanban's volunteer teacher to Thailand. From inquiring and collecting information from various schools in Thailand, it was found that although Thai students can learn Chinese with native speakers, but there are many factors that cause the students to spend quite a long time to learn Chinese well. Many parents desire their students to have a chance

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for learning Chinese in China mainland, because their Chinese will be level up faster. So, the Ministry of Education of Thailand directly cooperates with Kunming University of Science and Technology to open the *High Quality Chinese Education Program for Thai High School* at KUST, China in 2011. This cooperation is for Thai high school students have the opportunity to learn Chinese in real place, touch the real environment, which has got the high quality and good success. In just half a year, these students' Chinese skill and knowledge have improved rapidly.

Keywords: China, Chinese Course, Education, Short-course, Thai student

โปรแกรมภาษาจีนแบบเร่งรัดที่มีประสิทธิภาพสูง สำหรับนักเรียนไทยในหลักสูตรฝึกอบรมภาษาจีน ระยะสั้นในประเทศไทย: โครงการนักเรียนมัธยมปลาย ของไทยในมหาวิทยาลัยวิทยาศาสตร์ และเทคโนโลยีแห่งคุณหมิง

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บทคัดย่อ

ในปัจจุบันการสอนภาษาจีนมีการเติบโตทั่วโลก ภาษาจีนเป็นหนึ่งในภาษาชาติการของโลก คนไทยสนใจเรียนภาษาจีนเพิ่มมากขึ้น รัฐบาลไทยก็ยังส่งเสริมให้คนไทยเรียนภาษาจีน ดังนั้น รัฐบาลได้จัดหลักสูตรภาษาจีนเข้าสู่ระบบการศึกษาในโรงเรียนระดับประถมศึกษา มัธยมศึกษา และสถาบันการศึกษาขั้นสูง ทำให้การศึกษาภาษาจีนของไทยมีการพัฒนาที่ดี โรงเรียนส่วนใหญ่ของไทยได้จ้างครุภัณฑ์สอนภาษาจีนคนไทยโดยตรง อย่างไรก็ตาม โรงเรียนอีกจำนวนมากยังคงขาดครุภัณฑ์สอนภาษาจีน ดังนั้น กระทรวงศึกษาธิการแห่งประเทศไทยจึงได้ประสานงานกับกระทรวงศึกษาธิการของจีนเพื่อส่งครุภัณฑ์สอนภาษาจีนเข้ามาสอนภาษาจีนในประเทศไทย จากการสอบถามและรวบรวมข้อมูลจากโรงเรียนต่าง ๆ ในไทย พบว่า แม้ว่านักเรียนไทยสามารถเรียนภาษาจีนกับเจ้าของภาษาได้แต่เมื่อหลายปัจจัยที่ทำให้นักเรียนต้องใช้เวลาในการเรียนภาษาจีนค่อนข้างนานจึงจะได้ผลดี ผู้ปกครองจำนวนมากต่างมีความต้องการให้นักเรียนของตนเองได้มีโอกาสเรียนภาษาจีนในประเทศไทย เพราะภาษาจีนของนักเรียนจะพัฒนาขึ้นได้เร็วกว่า ดังนั้น ในปี 2011 กระทรวงศึกษาธิการไทย

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จึงได้ลงนามทำข้อตกลงความร่วมมือกับมหาวิทยาลัยวิทยาศาสตร์และเทคโนโลยีแห่งคุนหมิง (KUST) เพื่อเปิดโครงการพัฒนาการเรียนการสอนภาษาจีนที่มีคุณภาพสูงสำหรับนักเรียนมัธยมไทย ณ KUST ประเทศจีน ความร่วมมือนี้ทำให้นักเรียนมัธยมไทยได้มีโอกาสที่จะเรียนรู้ภาษาจีนในสถานที่จริง ได้สัมผัสรายการศจริง ซึ่งมีประสิทธิภาพและผลสำเร็จสูง โดยระยะเวลาเพียงครึ่งปีทักษะความรู้ทางภาษาจีนของนักเรียนเหล่านี้พัฒนาขึ้นเรื่อยๆ อย่างชัดเจน

คำสำคัญ: การศึกษา นักเรียนไทย ประเทศจีน หลักสูตรภาษาจีน หลักสูตรระยะสั้น

Introduction

After China participated in to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 and with its success in the establishment of Free Trade Agreements (FTA's) with many countries, the People's Republic of China has played a crucial role in international trade and the political sphere. With the increasing of Chinese international status and rapid development of economy, the Chinese language has become interesting worldwide. Chinese has been used widely for global communication, particularly in terms of trade and investment. Most peoples around the world view future trading with China favorably and have dedicated themselves to learn Chinese language as well as Thai people. Chinese becomes one of the world's official languages. Up to now, Chinese has been spoken by nearly one-fourth of the world's population.

Thai and Chinese people have a good relationship for a long time. Thai-Chinese relationship had developed rapidly since official relations had been established in 1975. Nowadays, Thailand-China economic and trade cooperation has yielded fruitful results. China is Thailand's largest trading partner while Thailand is China's third largest trading partner among ASEAN countries. By the end of 2018, Chinese enterprises had signed contracts for engineering projects in Thailand with a contract value of \$28.1 billion. The China-ASEAN Expo, as a key platform for friendly exchanges, economic and trade cooperation and collaboration in multiple fields between China and ASEAN countries, has contributed to the in-depth exchanges and cooperation between Thailand and China. The process of business trade impacts in all sectors. Whether it is a business of export trade, investment, tourism or business services, these all bring the income and career to Thai people. In order to catch up the growing requirement in many fields between the two countries, Thailand has to offer promptly the basic Chinese education for the youth. The Ministry of Education of Thailand is also aware of this necessity for them. In 1992, the government took the teaching of Standard Chinese into the Thai school system. Chinese language courses are established at primary schools, secondary schools and higher educational institutions. Recently, the Chinese language in Thailand is one of the popular languages chosen by students or their parents. As a result, most of the secondary schools in Thailand have provided students the opportunity of learning Chinese in various class levels. With the increasing needs for Chinese language talent, the demand for professional personnel to help Thai students improve their Chinese

level also increases. However, the lacking of Chinese teachers results in a great many difficulties in preparing and ensuring Chinese teaching quality. Therefore, although most of Thai schools directly employed native Thai teachers as Chinese language instructors, it still can't preserve the huge demands. On the request of Thailand, Confucius Institute Headquarters (hereinafter referred to as the "HANBAN"), as a public institution affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education, is committed to providing Chinese language and cultural teaching resources and services worldwide, initiated a project of sending Chinese teachers to teach Chinese in all public schools of Thailand. Although, the teaching and learning Chinese in Thai school is growing well, there are lots of factors that make Thai students not achieving the high Chinese level in the short time. Therefore, some students' parents want to send their children to study Chinese in China in order to learn the Chinese language in the real environment. Because they think that the students of Chinese language will improve faster than studying in Thailand.

This issue focuses on the short-term Chinese study program of Thai high school students in Kunming University of Science and Technology (hereinafter referred to as the "KUST"), China. Accordingly, in this introduction we aim first to provide readers with an overview of the teaching and learning of Chinese as a foreign language in secondary school in Thailand, and secondly to report the teaching and learning of Chinese as a foreign language through the short-term Chinese study program of Thai high school students in KUST, China. In discussion part we show the information and analysis issues relating to the differences in teaching and learning Chinese between the two countries, China and Thailand. These will show the readers about the reason of some Thai students coming to China for short course. This issue aims therefore to prove the short course of Chinese study in China mainland can be faster improving the Thai students' Chinese level.

The Teaching and Learning Chinese in Secondary School, Thailand

Background

Thailand and China relationship has maintained stable in the past century. Historically, Thailand was in contact with the Chinese for thousands of years. There had been many Chinese schools established across the country. Thai government had regulated Chinese schools, starting with the Private Schools Act of 1918. This act required all foreign teachers to pass a Thai language test and for principals of all schools to

implement standards set by the Thai Ministry of Education. The Chinese and Chinese teachers in Thailand also suffered discrimination between the 1930s to 1950s under the military dictatorship of Prime Minister Plaek Phibunsongkhram (in spite of having part-Chinese ancestry himself), which allied itself with the Empire of Japan. The Primary Education Act of 1932 made the Thai language the compulsory medium of education, but as a result of protests from Thai Chinese, by 1939, students were allowed two hours per week of Mandarin instruction. When Thailand and the People's Republic of China established official diplomatic relations in 1975, trade and investment between the two countries strengthened, and the teaching of Chinese language in Thailand had become popular. Due to the rapid economic growth and increasing political power in international context, China has become a new world power which has lots of influence on other regions around the world. Moreover, China is a main export partner country of Thailand. From that time on, Chinese has been used for communication. Thai people, nowadays, especially students and those of working age come to realize the importance of the Chinese language. They are more interested in learning the Chinese language as it can benefit their future careers and offer them better job opportunities.

In 1992, the Cabinet of Ministers of Thailand adopted the resolution of “Freedom of Foreign Language Learning” submitted by the Ministry of Education, so that schools had the right to choose foreign language teaching. Chinese had also become one of the optional foreign languages in primary and secondary schools, and it had become the foreshadowing of the policy of Chinese fever in primary and secondary schools in Thailand. The Thai government approved that Thai schools can offer Chinese courses from primary school to university. Each school had the right to choose its own teaching materials and employ Chinese teachers. Since then, Chinese education in Thailand had entered a period of vigorous development. In 1997, some schools set up “Liberal Arts Chinese class” in high schools, focusing on intensive learning of Chinese. This class of the students became the backbone of Chinese learning in the basic education stage, and also became the reserve talents of Chinese department in the university and studying abroad in China. In 1998, Chinese became one of the optional foreign languages in the National College Entrance Examination of Thailand, which contributed more strength to the Chinese learning in the basic education stage. More public and private schools had been offering courses on the Chinese language. While the government encouraged Thai people to

learn Chinese. In 2006, Thailand promulgated the Strategic Plan for Promoting Chinese Language Teaching and Improving National Competitiveness, which set a clear goal: "Within the Buddhist calendar 2555 (2012) academic year, all basic education schools should offer Chinese courses in the third and fourth education stages (junior and senior high school)." This plan determines the status of Chinese in the basic education stage of Thailand by administrative order, which directly leads to the demand for Chinese teachers in primary and secondary schools in Thailand (Qiu & Zhang, 2013). Since then, Chinese education in Thailand has made good progress. Recently, Chinese language is one of the popular languages chosen by students or their parents. Many secondary schools in Thailand have provided students the opportunity of learning Chinese in various class levels.

Curriculum

After the Thai government approved Chinese as an optional subject for college entrance examination, more public and private schools began to offer Chinese courses. In 2000, 34 secondary schools in Thailand had offered Chinese language courses. In 2008, the Thai government ordered to offer the popularization of Chinese language education in a secondary school. Subsequently, almost all secondary schools offered Chinese optional courses. Since now, many schools have also established Chinese professional classes, making Chinese one of the optional major subjects. There are more than 8 hours of Chinese language courses in Chinese major classes every week, which provide students who plan to enter the Chinese department in university, with necessary Chinese knowledge these are the opportunities for Chinese major class students to learn a basic Chinese education in their secondary school (Zhang, 2011).

From the Institute of Asian Studies research of Ronnaphol (n.d.) researcher report showed that Chinese language study in public schools is optional. It generally begins in middle school. Schools that offer the Chinese language as a concentration will begin teaching it in high school, mostly two hours per week. The learning Chinese in private secondary schools is compulsory, but some of them may offer Chinese language classes as electives during middle school. On average, the private school students have to learn Chinese language 2-16 hours per week (mostly 1 hour per day or 5 days per week). The difference in the amount of hours spent teaching reflects the importance the school administrators attached to the study of the Chinese language.

Table 1: Chinese Class Period in Thai Secondary School

Secondary School Name	Chinese Course Category	Chinese Class per Week
Kanjanapisek Wittayalai Nakhon Pathom School	major /compulsory	6-8 hours / 1 hour
Kasetsart University Laboratory School	compulsory /elective subject	7-10 hours/ 2 hours
Mahidol Wittayanusorn School	elective subject	3 hours
Benjamarachutit School	major / compulsory	6-8 hours / 2 hours
Srinagarindra The Princess Mother School Kanchanaburi	elective subject	1-6 hours
Charoensinsuksa “Phokham’s Memorial” School	compulsory	1-2 hours
Montfort College	major	6-7 hours
Satree Phuket School	compulsory	6 hours

Source: Author’s data

The above table shows that the time of Chinese class per week in secondary school (the data only from the upper secondary education) is different. Since these schools do not give equal importance to the teaching and learning of Chinese, many problems are bound to follow.

Instructor

When the Confucius Institute which aims at helping people around the world to meet the demands for Chinese learning was established in 2004, it endeavored to provide experienced Chinese teachers and flexible teaching patterns to people who had desire of learning Chinese. It extended opportunities for more Chinese teachers come to teach Chinese in Thailand. Each year, the Confucius Institute sponsors some Thai students to go to study Chinese in China, and sends exchange Chinese students come to study in Thailand. The Hanban supports 1,000-5,000 Chinese volunteer teachers per year to teach Chinese in various schools in Thailand. Exactly, these Chinese teachers have almost equal rights to Thai teachers such as the supply of residential accommodation for free; and the salary is the same with a Thai teacher or even more. Besides, they also get the allowance from the Hanban (Sureeporn, 2014).

In Thailand, Chinese language teachers in secondary schools can be divided into Thai teachers and Chinese teachers. From the report of 2009 which surveyed all schools in Chiangmai, there are 93 Chinese language teachers in 32 schools. Among them, 59 are Thai teachers, accounting for 63%, 34 are Chinese teachers, accounting for 37%, 76% are female teachers and 24% are male teachers (Feng & Wu, 2009). Most of the Thai teachers trained in Thai universities begin to learn Chinese in the first year of undergraduate course. Although a few teachers have been to China for short-term exchanges, their Chinese pronunciation still needs to be improved. As some teachers admitted that they do not have standard Chinese pronunciation and weak knowledge of Chinese culture. Among Thai teachers, although, ethnic Chinese teachers who were born in Thailand have strong ability to use Chinese, but they lack theoretical knowledge. Teachers returning from abroad once have long resided in China, have strong Chinese language skills and theoretical knowledge, and have a better understanding of Chinese culture, but the amount of this kind teacher is very limited. As for Chinese teachers, most of the self-employed teachers in schools have stayed in Thailand and applied for teaching job in Thailand after graduation, so they are basically adapted to Thai society, culture, transportation, food and other aspects. Such teachers have strong Thai language ability and play a very important role in teaching. However, most of the volunteer teachers and intern teachers sent by Confucius Institute come to Thailand for the first time. They need the time to adapt to Thai culture, food, transportation and so on. Most of them have no Thai language knowledge foundation and cannot explain meanings of words to the students in Thai.

The proportion of young teachers in both Thai and Chinese teachers is very high. There are over 78% of both nationality teachers under 30 years old, and their teaching experience is relatively weak. Among Thai teachers, over 65% are young teachers under 30 years old (34% are 22-24 years old; 9% are 25-27 years old; 22% are 28-30 years old; 21% are 31-40 years old; 14% are over 40 years old). 29% of the teachers have less than two years of teaching experience, 38% have three to five years teaching experience, 21% have six to nine years teaching experience and 12% have more than ten years teaching experience. Young teachers under the age of 30 account for more than 91% of Chinese teachers (up to 50% aged 22-24, 26% aged 25-27, 15% aged 28-30 and 9% over 30). Teaching experience less than two years of Chinese teachers is 59%; from three

to five years teaching experience is 35%; and teaching experience more than six years is 6% (Feng et al., 2009).

Teaching material

The textbook is another significant factor affecting students' ability to learn. If the textbook is appropriate for each age/level of learning, it will systematically develop students' language skills and attract their interest.

The Chinese textbooks used in some schools are mainly those compiled or revised by the Chinese teachers themselves and copied to the students. Although such textbooks can be arranged according to the situation and the price is cheap, they are not standardized, cannot attract the attention of students, and are not convenient to use diversified teaching methods. Nowadays, there are various kinds of Chinese textbooks for Thai students on the market. Schools do not need to compile new Chinese textbooks anymore. However, after trying out these new textbooks, some problems have been found, such as: the content is too difficult, the content is not in line with real society, and the price is too high.

The writer found that at present, there are many kinds of Chinese textbooks used by Chinese major classes in senior high schools in Thailand, such as Hanyu Jiaocheng (Figure 1), Experiencing Chinese (Figure 2), Learn Chinese with Me (Figure 3), Happy Chinese (Figure 4).



Figure 1: Hanyu Jiaocheng (Chinese Course) Textbook 1A – Revised Edition (v.1) (Chinese Edition)

Source: Beijing Language and Culture University Press BLCUP, 2008



Figure 2: Experiencing Chinese Senior High School Students' Book (Thai Edition)

Source: Higher Education Press HEP, 2009



Figure 3: Learn Chinese with Me Students' Book (Thai Edition)

Source: People's Education Press PEP, 2005



Figure 4: Happy Chinese Textbook (Thai Edition)

Source: People's Education Press PEP, 2009

The current situation of teaching Chinese

There are five conditions that Chinese language teaching and learning faced in Thailand.

The first condition is the high demand of learning Chinese in Thailand. The writer judges from the number of newly opened Chinese language schools, both public and private schools, and from the number of Thai students studying in China.

The second condition is the ineffectiveness of the teaching and learning. Although Thai students can accept and get more Chinese language learning in school, they cannot apply Chinese language to the daily life.

The third condition is the shortage of teachers. Most Chinese teachers in secondary schools are volunteer training teachers from HANBAN who just teach Chinese language in one or two semesters. After these volunteer teachers go back to China, the schools must have a new teacher to replace the old ones. As a result, the content of the Chinese course has been discontinued and the learning some contents of the Chinese language will be repeated in Chinese class.

The fourth condition is the inappropriate textbooks used in Thai schools. The Chinese textbooks in Thailand are few, not varied and no continuity. There is no standard curriculum of Chinese course: each school textbooks are not the same, lack of teacher's guide to teaching which result in an unequal level of language acquisition. Although most of high school students have learnt the Chinese language in various levels, the Chinese textbooks in all secondary schools are not inadequate. Most of textbooks will need to be ordered from China which results a high price.

And the last condition is that many Chinese language teachers don't have competence in teaching. The teachers cannot arouse the enthusiasm of students to learn Chinese. Students get a sense of boring in the class. For instance, Thai teachers often guide students to read aloud a lesson 3 times or copy the vocabulary and the lesson 10 times. Most Thai teachers adapt the same teaching method in classes which create a tedious atmosphere in the classroom. For most of Chinese volunteer teachers who obtain flexible Chinese teaching approaches, however, can't speak Thai. Their English is poor as well. The communication between the student and the teacher in the class is

ineffective. Chinese teachers cannot control the students completely and effectively during the teaching in the class. It tends to the boredom to both teachers and learners.

The short-term Chinese training course in Kunming University of Science and Technology, China

Background

Kunming University of Science and Technology (KUST) has many various short-term Chinese training courses. In the present paper we focus on the short-term Chinese study program of Thai high school students in KUST, China. This program is called *The High Quality Chinese Education Program for Thai High School* which is set up by the Ministry of Education of Thailand and Kunming University of Science and Technology and is a successful practice of the signed Memorandum of Understanding in 2011. This program was tailor made for Thai high school students, providing the opportunity for Thai students to learn Chinese in context and enjoy the real language environment. Since the first year of this program started in 2012, it has gone into the seventh year, in which, 544 Thai students have participated in this program. This short-term Chinese training course spends six months. In the past years, the program has been successfully carried out. Most of students pass the Test of Chinese Language Ability for Foreigners (HSK) level 4.

Curriculum

The High Quality Chinese Education Program for Thai High School students Program in KUST is carried in six months, including a total of 25 weeks of language teaching. 8 weeks of intensive training before HSK examination is also part of the whole program. There are 20 hours of Chinese class per week which is divided into Comprehensive class 12 hours per week, listening class 4 hours per week, and speaking class 4 hours per week. Moreover, this training program has also arranged 10 hours of cultural class per week. Based on the practice of previous projects, this program has offered rich and interesting cultural experience courses, namely: Handicraft, Chinese Painting, National Dance, Sports, Local Musical Instrument, Martial Arts, Chinese Calligraphy, and Chinese Song. At the same time, the program also carries out cultural activities once a month, including hand-made traditional Chinese craftwork competitions, Chinese painting competitions,

food festivals, sport games, performance competitions, singing competitions, etc. The program class schedule is shown in schedule 1. Beyond the learning time, the program is also organized the fieldtrip outside the university. The program teachers will lead the students out of the campus to look and learn the local customs of Kunming by themselves, such as going to Yunnan Ethnic Culture Village, Yunnan Museum, Grand View Tower Park, Stone Forest Scenic Spot, etc. This program creates an all-time Chinese learning environment for Thai students, provide high-quality teaching courses, organize rich and colorful cultural activities, and strive to improve each student's Chinese proficiency significantly after the training.

Table 2: The High Quality Chinese Education Program for Thai High School Students Program Class Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30-9:15	Chinese Comprehensive	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
9:20-10:05		Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Comprehensive
10:15-11:00	Chinese Listening & Speaking	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
11:05-11:50		Listening & Speaking	Listening & Speaking	Listening & Speaking	Listening & Speaking
14:00-14:45	Chinese Cultural	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
14:50-15:35		Cultural	Cultural	Cultural	Cultural
19:00-20:30	Homeroom				Homeroom

Source: The High Quality Chinese Education Program for Thai High School Students Program, Kunming University of Science and Technology

Instructor

The High Quality Chinese Education for Thai High School students Program consists of 2-3 full-time Chinese teachers who teach the Chinese comprehensive, Chinese listening and speaking and perform as the head teachers for the Thai students, In addition, another 8-10 Chinese teachers join the program and conduct all the cultural courses. All teachers in this program are selected from experienced and Chinese language qualified teacher.

Teaching material

This training program has used various Chinese textbooks such as Hanyu Jiaocheng (Figure 5), Practical Chinese (Figure 6), Approaching Chinese – Reading and Writing (Figure 7), HSK Standard Course 3 (Figure 8) during the program accordingly. Each year before the practice of the program, the course designer would select appropriate textbooks for Thai student in according with students' level. The curriculum for each year various along with the assessment of students' language proficiency, and is adjusted to meet different requirement.



Figure 5: Hanyu Jiaocheng (Chinese Course) Textbook 1A – Revised Edition (v.1) (Chinese Edition)

Source: Beijing Language and Culture University Press BLCUP, 2008



Figure 6: Practical Chinese Textbook (Chinese, English and Thai Edition)

Source: China Book Press, 2015



Figure 7: Approaching Chinese – Reading and Writing Textbook (Chinese Edition)

Source: Beijing Normal University Press BNUP, 2009



Figure 8: HSK Standard Course 3 Textbook (English and Chinese Edition)

Source: Beijing Language & Culture University Press BLCUP, 2014

Academic achievement

The High Quality Chinese Education Program started in 2012. These seven years of the training courses have been successfully carried out. There are 544 Thai students who have participated in this program. Most students pass at least the Chinese proficiency test (HSK) level 3. From 2012 to 2018 year supported by statistics (Figure 9 and Table 3), 96% students have passed the HSK in the different levels.

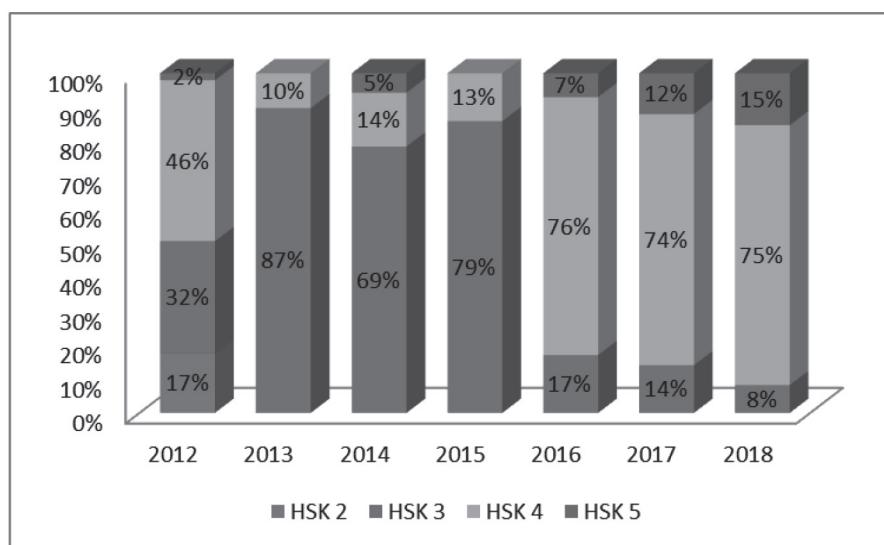


Figure 9: The Percentage Passed the Chinese Proficiency test of Thai Students during the Year 2012-2018

Source: The High Quality Chinese Education Program for Thai High School students Program, Kunming University of Science and Technology

Table 3: Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK) Score of Thai Students in the High Quality Chinese Education Program, China

Year	HSK Level	Student Amount	Pass Student	Pass Percent
2012	2	165	28	17%
	3	165	52	32%
	4	165	76	46%
	5	165	4	2%
	total	165	160	97%
2013	3	72	63	87%
	4	72	7	10%
	total	72	70	97%
2014	3	42	29	69%
	4	42	6	14%
	5	42	2	5%
	total	42	37	88%
2015	3	71	56	79%
	4	71	9	13%
	total	71	65	92%
2016	3	59	10	17%
	4	59	45	76%
	5	59	4	7%
	total	59	59	100%
2017	3	58	8	14%
	4	58	43	74%
	5	58	7	12%
	total	58	58	100%
2018	3	53	4	8%
	4	53	40	75%
	5	53	8	15%
	total	53	52	98%

Source: The High Quality Chinese Education Program for Thai High School Students Program, Kunming University of Science and Technology

The Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK; Chinese: 汉语水平考试), translated as the Chinese Proficiency Test used in China, is the standardized test of Standard Chinese language proficiency of China for non-native speakers such as foreign students and overseas Chinese. From the figure 9 and the table 3, we can be seen that 67% students who have learnt in the short-term Chinese training program during the year 2012-2015, passed the Chinese Proficiency Test level 3 which is designed for learners who can use Chinese to serve the demands of their personal lives, studies and work, and are capable of completing most of the communicative tasks they experience during their Chinese tour. Moreover, there were 75% students who have learnt in the short-term Chinese training program during the year 2016-2018, passed the Chinese Proficiency Test level 4 which is designed for learners who can discuss a relatively wide range of topics in Chinese and are capable of communicating with Chinese speakers at a high standard.

Discussion

Based on the situation outlined in the previous section, an attempt can be made to analyze the current situations in Thailand and to discuss the effectiveness and efficiency of the language program in China. Due to the increasing interest in Chinese culture and China, it was found out that the practice of Chinese teaching among Thai high school students was trending, both in general and with respect to research on curriculum, course books, conductors and teaching methods. Studying in China, particularly joining in the Chinese language program at KUST in China becomes a case study for the research on improvement of Chinese language learning for Thai high school students. Discussing the differences would find a reflection in research on language teaching and learning strategies. In this case, even though it is statistically reported that the results of the KUST language program is a successful attempt, the comparisons between courses, course books, instructors, syllabus, etc. are necessary for further improvement and shall be regarded a valuable guidance for the expansion of this kind of program both in Thailand and in China. Considering the differences of Chinese learning in both countries, the most competitive strength of the language program in China is its contextual environment which is a natural advantage for Chinese learning and the learning motivations for those L2 (second language) learners participated in the program.

Language acquisition and learning is a complex issue. Helping people learn a second language more effectively and efficiently is always a task for those who have concerns with language teaching and learning. Based on second language acquisition (SLA) research, many people investigate study cases in various areas. In the language program in KUST, a bunch of factors which contribute to the success are considered in ways that how do they affect the teaching and learning.

Learning Environment

Compared with the teaching and learning environment for Chinese language in Thailand and China, definitely provides a favorable learning environment for foreign students. Mostly, the Chinese language learning in Thailand is confined to classrooms. Students commonly take the chance of learning Chinese at schools or guided by private tutors, which, in a way, lack real environment for second language learners, particularly limit the practice of communication. It is not good enough for all the Chinese language learners that they don't have opportunities for practicing their skills in real life. Although nowadays, Thai students in Thailand can practise Chinese with their teachers and Chinese people living in the Thailand. But the time to communicate and practise is not enough. On the contrary, studying Chinese language in China would be a better option for them. The Thai students can actually use what they obtained and learned at language school to real language-using environment. To life and study in China, there is a mandatory environment that requires almost 24 hours of Chinese use. The full time practice makes them more skillful in Chinese language proficiency. For instance, they have chance to talk in Chinese with Chinese native speakers. In the case of KUST Chinese program, a specific group of Thai high school students deployed the strategy of immersion environment learning which means placing students in an environment of target language and culture. This kind of learning strategy is strongly advocated by a group of language experts and was approved in several language strategy research programs. Surrounded by Chinese teachers, students and materials in classroom, and by Chinese speaking community in life, Thai students joined in the KUST program were forced to temporarily forget their native language and intentionally use the Chinese into application, giving attention to the function of Chinese language skills. In the classroom, students were conducted in Chinese, learning Chinese knowledge bit by bit. Getting dismissed from the class, students came back to life, trying to surviving

in an unfamiliar environment. They intended to communicate with people everywhere by practicing what they obtained in classroom. If students can actively took advantage of this kind of environment, it would give them the best chance to apply their speaking and listening skills. By survey, we found out the students can at least talk casually and freely in Chinese and understand other Chinese quite correctly before they graduate from the program. The improvement in speaking and listening, as important part of the language skills, was a solid evidence for the results of the program.

Course books

As one of the essential factors in language learning, course books play an important role. As it mentioned before, Chinese language programs in Thailand faced an awkward situation in course books. The inadequate textbook choices limited the feasibility and flexibility of Chinese learning for Thai students. Even though they can adopt some classical language course books that enjoy a great popularity in China, it is difficult for them to use up-to-date teaching materials for the limits in space and time. However, there are abundant course books written and compiled in Chinese language learning and teaching with the advent of teaching Chinese as a second language for foreigners in mainland of China. A bunch of Chinese teachers endeavored to and would continue to make efforts in the career of teaching Chinese for foreigners. They teach Chinese while learning the approaches of learning Chinese. After accumulated adequate experience in teaching, they update their course books constantly, adding more practical knowledge into books. The Chinese language course books become more and more useful gradually. Meanwhile, the variety of Chinese language and culture leave the teachers sufficient chances of compiling various textbooks for many aspects of Chinese learning. Therefore, learning Chinese in China provides Thai students more chances of getting to know different textbooks and finally choose the most suitable textbook according to their interest and their level.

In the program in KUST, course books were carefully and delicately chosen by the university. Course books were updated gradually with the help of previous programs. Dealing with language learning strategy and HSK exam results, the university considered all potential textbooks and finally adopt the most suitable course books for various levels thanks to the vast market of Chinese language course books in China. The course books

for programs were not fixed during all these years. They were flexible and always caught up with new version.

Instructors and teachers

A central issue in SLA research is the discussion of what kind of instructors or teachers are the perfect language model for L2 learners. The question is also asked in the beginning of the program. For Thai students who eagerly want to learn and use Chinese, an appropriate language model would help them build up confidence, acquire basic knowledge and shift their identity from a L2 learner to L2 user. In SLA, bilingual method is a frequently adopted teaching method. To some extent, this method shows advantages in the first phase of L2 teaching. Statistically, most Chinese language teachers in Thailand are native Thai who are of qualification of Chinese language teaching to some extent. They are L2 users who teach Chinese explicitly with the help of their first language. They help students accumulate basic rules and grammar of the Chinese language, which have profound meaning for the next phase of language study. However, bilingual method in SLA may not be the ultimate teaching method for L2 learners who desire to make further improvement. Even though those Thai teachers can speak and teach in Chinese, most of them are, with certain limits, not expert at the knowledge of Chinese language and culture as that of native Chinese teachers of professional training. Those Thai teachers' expertise in Chinese language and culture are limited. By comparison, coming to study in China enjoys one obvious privilege. Attending classes conducted by native Chinese teachers would be a better choice. Students could communicate in Chinese with their teachers without the intention of speaking in Thai. At the same time, with experience of teaching in the program, it became clear that certain teaching approaches and techniques were mostly accepted by Thai high school students. They brought these approaches into their classroom instruction and gradually become the best role model for the Thai students. By exploring the best teaching methods for Thai students, teachers and instructors were well qualified and made an effort on enhancing their teaching ability.

Language course syllabus

Supported by a bunch of experienced Chinese language teachers, Chinese language courses in China are of great variety. Based on foreign students' weakness in language learning, teachers design various course curriculum and syllabus specifically for

groups of students. For certain course, there are alternatives, which greatly reduce the possibility of being disliked by students.

The intensive Chinese language courses offered by KUST program were designed with clear purpose, which aim at improving program participants' Chinese language proficiency in a short term. Compared with the Chinese courses in Thai high schools, the course schedule in KUST was pretty tight. The course syllabus was to enhance students' Chinese level in an effective, efficient and high-quality way with the ultimate purpose of helping students to pass HSK level 3/4 at the end of the program. Considering these requirements, the university, based on previous research, condensed the teaching time into six months with 30 class hours per week. With intensive input of Chinese knowledge and practice, participants were immersed into the Chinese learning. Each course was carefully designed. The phases, the schedule and the test of teaching, etc. were listed in the syllabus which guided the whole progress. When it came to comprehensive Chinese learning, the course syllabus focused on the elementary knowledge of fundamental parts of Chinese learning: words, grammars, sentences, etc. With respect to practical application of the language, the program provided Speaking and Listening respectively. The speaking course emphasized on the skills of speaking. Organized by topics, students got chances of discussing with teachers and students with learned language patterns. The more students practiced, the more fluently they can speak. In addition, the listening course was also considered an indispensable element. As supplement of the intensive Chinese course, the listening course gave students chances of doing listening tasks based on the intensive course. Output of the program, including intensive Chinese knowledge, speaking and listening skills, was recognized by participants, their parents and Thai high schools.

Culture-focused courses were added to the program. As the culture study defined, culture is a broad topic, covering all aspects of a society and a group of people. Usually, it takes a long time to study culture in depth. Therefore, the culture courses in the short program in KUST were undoubtedly limited in scope and depth, but covered a few significant fields. Supported by geographic advantage, Thai students in China had the chance of getting known to representative local culture. These culture courses have maintained in the programs for all these years as supplemental assistance for students to study Chinese and Chinese culture. Participants enjoyed the culture courses and regarded them as another privilege of studying in China.

Conclusion

The present paper has reported a study intended to discuss the current situation of Chinese language learning for Thai high school students in Thailand and in China respectively with the help of collected dates and information on course books, teaching materials, conductors, atmosphere, teaching approaches, etc. Although the research is not free from limitation, the statistics of the learning results listed out approved that participating the Chinese program in China is a better choice for Thai high school students, both on results and participants' personal satisfactions. With respect to Thai students' recognition of this kind of language program, it was more likely to be preferred compared with learning Chinese in Thailand. In the case of Chinese language program for Thai students at KUST, participants were offered a delicately designed teaching syllabus, carefully chosen course books, experienced language teachers, favorable model language and an immersion atmosphere. The impact of these elements of learning was evident: the differences on variety of teaching materials, flexibility of teaching approaches, capability of instructors and suitability of atmosphere. The instruction that the students received and the format of examinations were surprisingly accepted by Thai students. These findings are promising and leading to a more prosperous pattern for Chinese language learning for foreign students around the world. It may help advance the program focusing on the effectiveness of language learning. There is clearly an urgent need for Thai high school students to find out a convenient and high-efficiency pattern in improving the Chinese learning in Thailand. With reference of the results and pattern adopted by KUST, high schools in Thailand may employ the program, targeting on the improvement of Chinese teaching and learning in native country. This paper explores the Chinese language learning specifically for Thai high school students with respect to different aspects which impact the learning, compares the application of what second language learning involves, and takes into account the communication takes which are the privileges of learning a foreign language in its motherland. With suitable learning strategy and atmosphere, obviously, Thai student, based on pedagogic intervention, would seek a well-designed method for themselves.

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