

基于跨文化交际与可持续旅游视角之旅游教材——以泰国 旅游中文为例

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摘要

在新冠疫情爆发前，为了服务中国游客，泰国大学中文相关系所都开设了旅游课程，使用的教材为中国编写的教材或是教师的自编教材。然而中国教师编写的教材以中国视角介绍知名景点，当地泰国教师编写的教科书则侧重于如何介绍泰国或中国旅游景点。旅游中文不但属于专业汉语范畴，更涉及跨文化交际，包含深入的人际交往、中泰旅游文化等不同文化层面，如改掉贬义词“人妖”，强调中泰生活文化差异等。新冠疫情重击全球旅游业，可持续性已成为未来旅游业生存的关键要素。然到目前为止，还没有旅游中文教材反映出这些概念，因而可持续旅游教育的概念亦融合其中，除了泰国绿色旅游理念，还让学习者反思环保材料的使用。本文以 2020 学年于泰国东北湄公河地区采取行动研究编写的教材且施教为例，希冀此跨领域的教材设计和教学方式成为泰国旅游中文的新典范。

关键词： 泰国旅游中文；跨文化交际；可持续旅游教育

“TRAVEL CHINESE” IN THAILAND FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM¹

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Abstract

Before the outbreak of COVID-19, the largest population of tourists in Thai tourism were Chinese. In order to meet this demand, all Chinese departments in Thai universities offered related courses in their curriculum. Local textbooks designed by Thais were also composed to teach Thai learners about tourism in Bangkok or China. Travel Chinese is thus a course scoped out of teaching materials of Chinese for Specific Purposes (CSP). In addition, it addresses intercultural communication, including interpersonal and varied cultural aspects at a deep level. While COVID-19 seriously attacked tourism worldwide, especially the tourist-oriented Thailand, sustainability has become a key element for the survival of future tourism. However, so far no teaching materials reflect this perspective. Based on the Mekong region in Northeast Thailand, action research is applied for composing and teaching for a yearly program in 2020 written from the perspective of intercultural communication and Sustainable Tourism education. The teaching materials and the way of teaching can be a model for new sustainable Thai tourism in Chinese.

Keywords: Travel Chinese; Intercultural Communication; Sustainable Tourism Education; Thai Tourism

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1. Introduction

Chinese tourists contribute to the economy of the countries they visit. Famous for their sea attractions and friendly smile, Thailand became the top tour destination for the Chinese, according to the research of Kasikom Research Center in 2016², 2018³, and even after the early outbreak of Covid 19⁴. To better serve Chinese tourists, Travel Chinese is a required course within the Chinese or Business Chinese departments in Thailand in order to cultivate and train Chinese speaking personnel.

Situated in Northeast Thailand, Isan area has inseparable relationship with Megong River. However, tourism in this area is not highly promoted as beaches or islands. Even on the Chinese official website of Lancang-Mekong Cooperation⁵, the main focus of Thailand, like most travel websites, is on Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket Island; its Thai food section⁶ also misses Som Tam (Papaya Salad) originally from Isan area. It seems that the culture of Megong area is unknown by foreign tourists, especially Chinese tourists.

Travel Textbooks from China though handy, are based on Chinese context. On the contrary, some Thai teaching materials composed by Thai teachers introduce the tourist sites in Thailand. The way of teaching such a specified course, which is usually comprehensive, neglects the nature of intercultural aspects and hardly has any weight. Facing the shrinking tourism in the era of COVID, Sustainable Tourism deserves attention in teaching and teaching materials in Thailand.

2. Literature

2.1 Intercultural communication in teaching materials

Byram (2017) clarifies that the development of intercultural competence in a modern intercultural class is from “knowing that” to “know how” by comparing, interpreting, relating,

² <https://kasikomresearch.com/ch/analysis/k-econ/business/Pages/35732.aspx>

³ <https://kasikomresearch.com/ch/analysis/k-econ/business/Pages/36812.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.kasikomresearch.com/ch/analysis/k-econ/business/Pages/z3035.aspx>

⁵ http://www.lmcchina.org/2017-07/24/content_41448700.htm

⁶ http://www.lmcchina.org/2017-11/03/content_41448697.htm

discovering, and evaluating (critical cultural awareness). Despite the development of teaching Chinese as a second language, there are still unsolved problems. As for language teaching framework, Zhang (2007) proposes an intercultural teaching framework based on the characteristics of English teaching in China. However, Huang (2015) thinks Zhang's (2007) distinction is unclear, and certain description is too general. She proposes an intercultural communication framework in Chinese teaching.

Li (2021) criticizes that Chinese teaching, based on western theories of second language acquisition, is comprehensive, including phonetics, grammar, vocabulary, characters, and skill training from basic to advanced levels. As a result, such structure influences international Chinese language education, which as Dechrach (2019) affirms when she mentions that Chinese curriculum in Thai universities is skill-oriented but lacks any emphasis on intercultural communication. She therefore proposes offering an intercultural Chinese communication course and under the circumstances of limited teaching hours and resources, teaching in other courses with its supplementing concept. However, using teaching materials composed with the concept of intercultural communication is a key factor for improving the intercultural attitudes, skills and knowledge of not only students but also teachers.

Zhang (2007) suggests an intercultural Chinese communication teaching frame for teaching English in China from knowledge, ability and attitude aspects. Although not for the purpose of teaching Chinese, she points out the importance of intercultural communication in teaching in the Chinese context. Chantasriviroj (2018) points out that Chinese teaching in Thailand does not pay much attention to cultivation of intercultural communicative competence, so related teaching materials are even rare. She believes that Chinese tourism teaching is to train and cultivate intercultural communication ability for reducing or avoiding conflicts due to cultural differences in communication and to be aware of the custom taboos.

2.2 Travel Chinese teaching and textbooks in Thailand

Lacking talents in intercultural communication field, Thai Travel Chinese teaching and textbooks are not yet constructed with the concept. Shi (2001) brings out that cultural differences

should be considered since Travel Chinese teaching is an organic combination of language, travel and culture. Peng (2017) analyzes that Tourism Chinese, without sufficient CSP theories support, lacks a teaching guideline, full-time tourist Chinese teachers, teaching materials, sufficient research on the construction of textbooks, and omits the importance of cultural teaching. Simply adding cultural knowledge at the end of each lesson does not contribute organic combination of cultural and language and therefore results in poor pertinence and practicality of materials.

Chinese teaching materials are composed with a Chinese centered viewpoint, as Li (2021) criticizes out of a belief in what foreigner learners should learn, ignoring learners' needs, interests, way of thinking and the lack of knowledge of Chinese encyclopedia. No fun and readability, too comprehensive, broad, abstract, and specialized are the weaknesses. He suggests to learn what lies close at hand by introducing the materials on the spot, being case-based and story-based. To explore the culture of a local tourist site, instead of the Great Wall, through sensory experience and storytelling is more appropriate for the foreign learners who study in South province of China. Liu (2020) also mentions that Travel textbooks are panoramic based on big tourist sites of China excluding most regional culture. Back in 2011, the researcher was aware of it and already edited a teaching material, *Fun with Chinese*, based on a local tourist site in northern Taiwan with regional food culture, etc.

Tourism Chinese in Thailand face similar difficulties in lacking adequate textbooks, related reference books, heuristic teaching with multimedia facilities of Chinese teachers, oral communicative practice, active Thai learners, revelation of cultural differences and Chinese cultural elements, in-depth cultural connotation discussion, and experienced Chinese teachers with Travel Chinese knowledge (Yang, 2017). In addition, the curriculum of Tourism Chinese in School of Sinology and Management (Tourism Management) lacks continuity and comprehensiveness in teaching hours and objectives, also lacks Tourism Chinese textbooks for meeting professional needs (He, 2018). Thai local Tourism textbooks miss the focus of tourist sites which foreigners are interested in; they lack temple culture, illustration and Buddhism vocabulary; neglect Thai culture and cultural differences between two countries; lack complementary of synonymous and common vocabulary

from Chinese speaking countries; miss consensus in translation of proper nouns; and a need for practical and interesting exercises (Cai, 2017).

Chen (2021) categorizes target learners of Tourism Chinese in three types: general Chinese learners who wish to travel to China; foreign students who study tourism management in Chinese; and foreign tourism practitioners. Under the background of international Chinese vocational education, the teaching process should treat students as travelers and practitioners by offering occasions of practice, such as travel route design and tour commentary.

2.3 Sustainable Tourism

The term “sustainable development” was initiated in 1987, in the UN report “Our Common Future”. Ecotourism is the tool to achieve Sustainable Tourism. The definition is evolved and becomes more complete through different nonofficial and official organizations. In the United Nations Environment Programme 2005, the scope of Sustainable Tourism is clear, which includes three aspects in environment, economy, and socio-culture.

Table 1 Comparison of Sustainable Tourism development

China	2009 China Ecotourism Year: Build a green industry that follows the principles of sustainable development
	2016-2025 National Ecotourism Development Plan 2016-2025: based on sustainable development of achieving harmony with nature, and of protecting the ecological environment, etc.
Taiwan	2002 Taiwan Ecotourism Year
	2010 Green Tourism Association of Taiwan (GTAT): “to be the vanguard of the Earth's ecology and sustainability”, with the spirit of “energy saving and carbon reduction”.
	2011 Sustainable Travel Taiwan: “aim to promote the sustainable program to local businesses in the tourism industry in Taiwan, to promote the public's awareness of “sustainable tourism” and “responsible travel.”
	2017-2020 Taiwan Sustainable Tourism Development Plan: sets annual tourism themes since 2017 Year of Ecotourism

Thailand	1997 Thai Ecotourism and Adventure Travel Association (TEATA): “to promote ecological conservation and sustainable tourism”
	2003 Designated Area for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA): “with the roles and responsibilities over sustainable tourism operation”
	2008 7 Greens concepts: to promote Sustainable Development

According to The International Ecotourism Society (TIES, 2015), the target of Sustainable Tourism education is not only staff but also guests. Compared with international organizations, Taiwan and Thailand, the awareness of Sustainable Tourism in China is considerably late. National Ecotourism Development Plan 2016-2025 of China particularly mentions the problems of current Chinese tourism development, which are profit-orientated and lacking educational function, etc. Therefore, the teaching materials of Travel Chinese composed by Chinese are unlikely to involve the concept of sustainability.

The tour guides who are used to being market-orientated, mostly the followers of the government policy, might not be the pioneers to such new issue of tourism in training programs. Travel Chinese Vocabulary Manual published in 2008 produces from Chinese practitioner's experiences without any vocabulary of such a concept. The 378 words of the Tourism Business Word List (TBWL) created through corpus by Laosrirattanachai & Ruangjaroon (2021) only includes the word “ecosystem”.

From the literature above, Travel Chinese textbooks based on Chinese context might not include vocabulary needed in Thailand. As Thailand is a Buddhist country, related vocabulary has higher frequency than China, but it seems to be omitted in the textbooks composed by Thai as well. The concept such as Sustainable Tourism, though not a new one, which echoes today's tourism reality needs to be taken into account in the tourism education.

3. Methodology

Action research was applied. First of all, the problem of lacking intercultural and Sustainable Tourism education in Travel Chinese based on Mekong region in Northeast Thailand was identified.

The teaching materials and the teaching were designed to solve the problem. Data was collected from students' projects, interpreted and evaluated.

In Thailand, the target learners of Travel Chinese are those who are Chinese or Business Chinese majors. Participants were 14 students of a public university in northeastern Thailand where local travel is not yet developed for foreigners, especially Chinese tourists. Travel Chinese is a subject taught for two semesters.

The content of Travel Chinese combined both tourist and practitioner, and the curriculum was designed for tourist and practitioner one semester respectively. The teaching materials and the teaching of Travel Chinese were designed out of intercultural communication viewpoints, and three Sustainability principles (environmental, economic, and socio-cultural). Culture plays the key role in the professionalism of tourism. Since intercultural communication covers multicultural aspects, without learning these, intercultural conflicts are quite unavoidable in Tourism. Disclosure of common intercultural conflicts about realistic issues in teaching can help learners to be well prepared.

In the second semester, local tourist sites tour guiding and Sustainable Tourism education were designed as part of the teaching content. The teaching topic therefore followed the aspects above by proposing related issues for learning and discussion. After the researcher presented the theme, being learner-centered, students were asked to propose the learning materials they are interested by discovering and designing on their own. They introduced the tourist sites in Megong region they picked, such as a local festival, local temple, and tourist sites based on 7 greens concept, etc. Then they learned to design an itinerary from their previous introduction to attract the Chinese tourists to their Megong hometown. They needed to present it and upload their PPT in an online platform for sharing and post in the department Facebook page for further promotion and discussion.

For the first semester, 3 units with 4 sub lessons respectively were designed with tourist knowledge in traveling, cultural differences, and dialogue with the Thai tour guide in culture shock since Travel Chinese is not just for tourist site introduction. Demonstrating intercultural conflicts, for instance, in Tourism should also be a prerequisite for cultivating Thai tour guides. The second semester covered Megong regional introduction in festivals, temples, travel route design, green tourist sites, and concept of sustainability.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Aware of Cultural differences

Students use the material the researcher designed. Like a tourist in the first two units with 8 lessons, the students learn such as what is famous to eat, how to book Chinese homestay online, what to observe and experience while traveling in China or Taiwan. Useful dialogues are designed as the model to practice. The intercultural differences are demonstrated in the content of dialogue and exercise. The third unit (with 4 lessons) puts emphasis on Thai's travel culture from the eye of Chinese tourists in order to initiate Thai learners, the future practitioners.

Table 2 Examples of Chinese for Travel 1

Lesson example	Culture point in the dialogue	Culture exercise
Unit 1 Having fun in travel		
L1 Pearl milk tea	Customized "sweet and ice volume" drinking culture in Taiwan (between local Taiwanese tea shop owner and Thai tourists)	Introduce famous drinks in Thailand
Unit 2 Having fun in their culture	Non-cash scan pay and loud speaking volume in China (between local Chinese fruit vendor/breakfast shop owner and Thai tourists)	Comparing cultural differences between China and Thailand
L5 China		
Unit 3 Having fun in eye opening		Comparing Thai's unique
L9 Living habits	Cold shower and toilet hose in Thailand (between Thai tour guide and Chinese tourists)	living habits with another country
L12 Third gender	The phenomenon of the third sex and the appropriateness of its Chinese translation (between Thai tour guide and Chinese tourists)	Comparing Thai's gender culture with another country

Take lesson 1 as an example. Pearl milk tea, originated in Taiwan, is quite popular around the world, including Thailand. However, the sweet and ice volume can be customized in different stores, which is more specific than Thai ones. By learning this detailed drinking culture, Thai learners can

know how to ask next time while ordering pearl milk tea out of Thailand. In addition, they learn to introduce Thai milk tea or other famous drinks in Thailand. In lesson 5, China is a non-cash country ahead of the world, so to scan in small street vendors or any shops gives the tourists a convenient paying experiment. However, from the perspective of nonverbal communication, the loud volume of speaking in Chinese society might be a shocking experience for Thai learners since they consider it as rude in Thai culture. Through comparing these differences, Thai learners can become more sensitive in culture differences. As for lesson 9, Chinese tourists are not used to cold showers since they are not from the tropics, but facing the heat in Thailand, Thai learners can learn how to explain from the reply of the Thai tour guide why Thai prefer cold and more showers in daily life. The use of the toilet hose is also quite common for avoiding using tissues in the matter of hygiene in Thai daily life. Most tourists treat it as a toilet washer or have no idea what it is for. What Thai get used to every day might not be used to foreign tourists.

Facebook fanpage of 7 greens started to suggest green eco-friendly tableware on February 7th 2022. Online news Thailand Headlines also mentioned that the law started to forbid to use 5 disposable tableware in the national parks on April 9th 2022. Both are related to eco-friendly tableware introduced in lesson 6. It is evident that Thai society starts to be serious about this issue.

4.2 Aware of cultural bias

The vocabulary in the teaching materials of Travel Chinese can reflect the ideology of the Chinese towards another culture. Certain translations are just being used, without exploring their cultural denotations. For example, gender identity is a social phenomenon in Thailand. The performance of ladyboy, “Katoey”, is a tourist attraction for foreigners. However, the Chinese translation of this kind of performer, “*rén yāo*”, is derogatory. Literally it means a person plus a monster. We do not know exactly who translated it at the beginning; however, as the third gender is being used for political correctness, we might need to change such Chinese translation accordingly.

The well-known ladyboy, “Katoey”, shows are popular among tourists. The dialogue in lesson 12 explicitly exposes this topic for the curiosity of Chinese tourists on one hand, and on the other hand, Thai tour guide's explanation and clarification of the derogatory Chinese translation “*rén yāo*”

might not be proper. The third sex is quite common in Isan area, so this topic is also for learners to rethink and know how to respond while facing Chinese tourists in the future.

Exposing Culture factors directly in the dialogue is different from other teaching materials which tend to arrange the culture points at the end of lesson and explain them in Chinese or English as Peng (2017) criticizes. Those practical dialogues are authentic and embody the core concept of intercultural communication and adaptation. However, the students in Thai northeastern area have very rare chances in contacting foreigners, especially Chinese since it is not a popular and known tourist area. In addition, they are not heritage Chinese as in Bangkok. Learners' knowledge toward Chinese is quite limited. Most have never tried dumplings since there are no Chinese restaurants in town. Therefore, in the culture exercise they have problems in comparing cultures.



4.3 Aware of Sustainable Tourism

In the Sustainable Tourism education concept, taking the eco-friendly products in lesson 9 Book 2 as an example, the topic of festival in Table 3 below is economical since festival celebration can be a key factor to attract tourists. Tourists can visit a place simply because of the desire of celebrating a local festival in a foreign country. However, not every festival celebration is environmentally friendly. Loy Krathong Festival is very famous for setting out the water lanterns in the water for paying respect to the water goddess; however, the materials of making water lanterns might cause problems in recycling. The key problem is that the water lanterns become non-biodegradable garbage after the candlelight is out. After the introduction of the topic, students are asked to make a presentation of environmentally friendly water lanterns. Then they need to design a poster and post it on the Facebook of Chinese department for sharing, voting and follow-up discussion of their favorite environmentally friendly water lanterns (such as made from ice, watermelon, or cabbage) in order to arouse the interests of other Chinese learners, even Thai non Chinese learners.

Thailand is a Buddhist country, and burning incense in praying is part of temple culture. By contrasting the "No burning incense" for avoiding air pollution in Taiwan temples, students are asked to have reflection on this issue. They present their group work and post on Facebook the substitutive

ways to worship environmentally friendlier in Thai temples, such as Thai Wai, Thai flower garlands, tea, lotus and auspicious Thai desserts.

Table 3 Examples of Sustainable education focus in teaching (Chinese for Travel 2)

Dimension	Economic & environmental	Sociocultural & environmental
Topic	Traditional festival	Temple worship
Content	Loy Krathong Festival	Incense burning
Activity	Presentation & Poster on Facebook	Presentation & Poster on Facebook
Poster		

4.4 Creativity from Megong culture

In the assessment of the first semester, students present Thai culture and culture differences individually and in pairs. Students need to be able to write dialogues while sightseeing and while being a Thai tour guide with Chinese tourists, to compare culture differences, and to introduce Thai culture. In the assessment of the second semester, students present individually every two weeks. In

addition, students work in groups to design a 2-day itinerary of local tourist sites in Megong region and promote it by singing with their local dialect in a short introduction video. Each tour is named with creativity and word play of homophone. Take the tour of “Thai” Delicious which takes tourists to eat all delicious Megong food as an example. The pronunciation of “too” delicious is the same as “Thai” Delicious in Chinese. By using Chinese typical word play, people can tell that the tour is about delicious food in Thailand. It's very catchy and easy to remember for tourists.

By observing from the video how popular Thai tour guides lead Chinese tours and learn how to entertain and serve Chinese tourists. At the end, they work together to design a specific Naga Travel Route from what they have learned with tour guiding as an intern for the course. Everyone is assigned and takes turns to be the tour guide during the trip. They teach tourists useful Isan phrases, sing or dance in their Isan style, tell interesting jokes about Isan people, tell the legend of Naga and the Movie of Nakee.

4.5 Discussion

Before the class started, students' feedback towards “travel” in the survey is vague and taken it as literally visiting the world, learning the world, meeting new people and culture, etc. In this course, they are trained to present Thai culture or culture comparison. After the Sustainable Tourism introduction, 50% like the concept of 7 Greens the most since they can conserve the nature while having fun in travel; and 50% like the concept of environmental friendly substitutions since they learn the importance and how to protect the environment in the world. Their response seems to demonstrate that the awareness of Sustainable Tourism is grown in them. Ironically, outside of class and examination, they still use plastic bottles, straws or disposable food ware. From knowledge to practice, it still takes time and efforts.

Similarities of Thai Nakee story and Chinese White Snake might be attractive. As Naga exists not only in the belief of Megong region, but also in the temple culture and local tourism. The popular story of Nakee, being produced in dramas and movies, shares certain similarities of the famous Chinese legend of the White Snake. If the local travel organization can use it and tell a good story along with local Snake Rock with its legend, it might be a good attraction for Chinese tourists.

Temples are essential in the Isan area, however, the way they worship might not be that attractive for Chinese tourists since China is not a Buddhist country. Take the historical site, one of the most well-known temples, Phra That Phanom, as an example. The pagoda enshrines the holy relics of the Lord Buddha. But it is usually not open for tourists to see the relics and other precious treasures inside the pagoda. Even female tourists are not allowed to enter. Compared with other temples in Bangkok, it does not seem to be tourist friendly. Learners are asked to reflect what can attract Chinese tourists.

Nevertheless, the level of the students and the course arrangement might not be suitable for leaning the whole course in the sophomore year. First of all, when students present Thai culture and 7 Greens with Thai tourist sites, they search the Thai information online and use Google Translate to Chinese for presentation. The vocabulary is way beyond their level, and their Chinese proficiency is not high enough for appropriate translation. It turns out that they just use translate application to prepare the presentation. Secondly, the department, only 3 years old, arranges the course by taking curriculum of other Chinese departments in Thailand as reference, without considering the specific details of course arrangements and difficulty. Thirdly, the previous Thai teacher who taught this course for 2 years got the feedback of being too hard and boring in leaning tour guiding of Bangkok temples by using a Thai tour guide textbook composed by Thai and explained by Thai. It might prove that learning to introduce famous Thai tourist sites instead of local ones does not arouse the interests of learners since they are not familiar with it. Fourthly, according to the survey from students, they also think the vocabulary is too hard, and the course should be arranged in junior or senior year. Therefore, the yearly course should not be arranged in the sophomore year or it can be separated into different school years.

5. Conclusion and reflection

Travel Chinese, as a major Chinese subject for specific tourism purpose, deserves the attention of teachers, publishers and researchers, especially in tourism-oriented Thailand. With its

multiple cultural aspects, intercultural communication is at the core of Tourism and Sustainable Tourism is a new consensus worldwide.

Situated in the Norther of Thailand away from Chinese tourists, Chinese learners are unaware of the culture differences between the two countries and are not quite sensitive of their local travel attractions. Lacking tour agencies and tourism promotion to Chinese tourists has shut them out from the main Chinese tourist culture and travel market. Most Chinese tours are proposed for coastal attractions, such as Phuket and other islands, or big cities such as Bangkok, etc. Even the 7 greens concept includes very few sites in this area. Travel tours also cover tourist sites towards the northern provinces with day return trips. The local charm, beliefs and values of Naga, and traditional culture are yet to be discovered. Without beautiful beaches and scenery, local travel organization and Travel Chinese might need to explore how to tell Chinese tourists good stories in order to attract them.

In addition, eco-friendly products are not popular in Thailand as yet. The use of plastic bags, straws, bottles, and food ware are everywhere in their daily life. Certain Thai tourist sites which are western oriented are aware of it and already avoiding using these ahead of the competition. Travel Chinese should catch up in educating these future practitioners. For this reason, Sustainable Tourism Education should be taken into account in teaching and composing Travel Chinese, along with intercultural communication. By putting forward this exploratory example, hopefully, it can arouse attention and have more related study in the future.


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