

HANBAN CONFUCIUS CLASSROOMS AND THE LEARNING OF CHINESE LANGUAGE AND
CULTURE IN THAI SCHOOLS



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ห้องเรียนขงจื่อแห่งสถาบันฮั่นปู้กับการเรียนภาษาและวัฒนธรรมจีนในโรงเรียนไทย



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เจียฉี ซ่ง : ห้องเรียนขงจื้อแห่งสถาบันอันปั้นกับการเรียนภาษาและวัฒนธรรมจีนในโรงเรียนไทย (HANBAN CONFUCIUS CLASSROOMS AND THE LEARNING OF CHINESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THAI SCHOOLS) อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: ศ. ดร. อมรา ประสิทธิ์รัฐสินธุ์, 129 หน้า.

ห้องเรียนขงจื้อเป็นสถาบันที่จัดตั้งในส่วนของการศึกษาระดับประถมศึกษาและมัธยมศึกษาในหลายประเทศทั่วโลกทำหน้าที่เผยแพร่ภาษาและวัฒนธรรมจีน ซึ่งในปัจจุบัน การศึกษาวิจัยเกี่ยวกับห้องเรียนขงจื้อในประเทศไทยมีจำนวนน้อย ดังนั้น งานวิจัยนี้ จึงมุ่งศึกษาแนวการสอนและเผยแพร่ภาษาและวัฒนธรรมจีนของห้องเรียนขงจื้อในโรงเรียนไทย รวมถึงการมีส่วนร่วมในการเพิ่มระดับความเข้าใจระหว่างครูอาสาสมัครชาวจีนและครูไทยว่ามีมากน้อยเท่าใด

ผู้วิจัยเก็บข้อมูลจากโรงเรียนที่มีห้องเรียนขงจื้อ 4 แห่ง ซึ่งเป็นตัวแทนของห้องเรียนขงจื้อทั้งหมดสิบเอ็ดแห่งในประเทศไทย โดยใช้การสัมภาษณ์ในเชิงลึก แบบสอบถาม และแบบทดสอบ กับผู้ห้องเรียนขงจื้อ ซึ่งได้แก่ หัวหน้าครูไทย ครูไทย ครูอาสาสมัครชาวจีน และนักเรียนไทย

ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่าครูอาสาสมัครชาวจีนใช้วิธีหลายวิธีในการสอน ภาษาจีนแก่นักเรียนไทย ได้แก่ วิธีทำขั้นตอน การดูและการฟัง การจัดกิจกรรม การเล่นเกม การเน้นไวยากรณ์ การทำโครงการ และ วิธีฟังและพูด

อุปสรรคที่พบจากการใช้วิธีดังกล่าว มีตัวอย่างเช่น หนังสือเรียนไม่เหมาะสม ครูอาสาสมัครชาวจีนบางคนไม่สันถดี หลักสูตรไม่เหมาะสม และ นักเรียนอายุน้อยเกินไป จากการศึกษาพบว่า การเรียนภาษาและวัฒนธรรมจีนของห้องเรียนขงจื้อ ประสบความสำเร็จในระดับมัธยมศึกษามากกว่าระดับประถมศึกษา เพื่อให้เรียนวัฒนธรรมจีนได้ดีขึ้น ห้องเรียนขงจื้อจัดกิจกรรมต่างๆ จัดการแข่งขัน การสอบวัดระดับภาษาจีน 'HSK' และโครงการอื่นๆ นักเรียนจำนวนมากชอบเข้าร่วมกิจกรรมของห้องเรียนขงจื้อ แต่บางคนได้คะแนนในการทดสอบวัฒนธรรมจีนไม่ดีขึ้น เนื่องจากกิจกรรมบางกิจกรรมไม่มีประสิทธิภาพ และไร้ความหมาย

ในส่วนของการแลกเปลี่ยนวัฒนธรรมและความเข้าใจระหว่างสองประเทศ พบว่าครูไทยและครูอาสาสมัครชาวจีนสามารถแลกเปลี่ยนความรู้และประสบการณ์การสอนซึ่งกันและกัน ซึ่งครูจีนสามารถเข้าใจภาษาไทยและวัฒนธรรมไทยได้ดียิ่งขึ้น ในอีกด้านหนึ่ง ครูไทยหรือนักเรียนไทยก็มีโอกาสพัฒนาภาษาจีนและได้ความรู้เกี่ยวกับประเทศจีนมากยิ่งขึ้นเช่นกัน

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JIAQI SONG: HANBAN CONFUCIUS CLASSROOMS AND THE LEARNING OF CHINESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THAI SCHOOLS. ADVISOR: PROF. AMARA PRASITHRATHSINT, Ph.D., 129 pp.

Confucius Classroom is an educational institute established in primary and secondary schools in various countries including Thailand to spread Chinese culture and language. At present, research on Confucius Classrooms in Thailand is little, so this study attempts to examine the approaches used by Confucius Classrooms in teaching Chinese language and spreading Chinese culture in Thai schools and to what extent they contribute to mutual understanding between Chinese and Thai teachers.

Data collection was done at Confucius Classrooms in four sample schools by in-depth interviews, questionnaires and tests. The respondents included the Chinese heads of Confucius Classrooms, Thai teachers and leaders, Chinese volunteer teachers and Thai students.

The findings show that Chinese volunteer teachers use various methods in Confucius Classrooms: five-step method, audio-visual method, classroom activities, playing games, grammar-based method, task-based method and audiolingual method. Some obstacles of using those methods are, for example, improper textbooks, unqualified Chinese volunteer teachers, unreasonable curricula, being too young to learn. It is found that the teaching approaches are more successful in secondary schools than primary schools. To spread Chinese culture, Confucius Classrooms organize many cultural activities, competitions, HSK tests, and other projects. Many students like to take part in the activities but not all of them get good scores in culture tests because not all the activities are effective and meaningful.

In terms of cultural exchange and mutual understanding, Thai teachers and Chinese volunteer teachers can exchange teaching experience, and learn from each other. Chinese volunteer teachers have improved their Thai language and understood Thai culture better. On the other hand, Thai teachers and students also have chance to improve their Chinese and gain more knowledge of China.

Field of Study: Southeast Asian Studies

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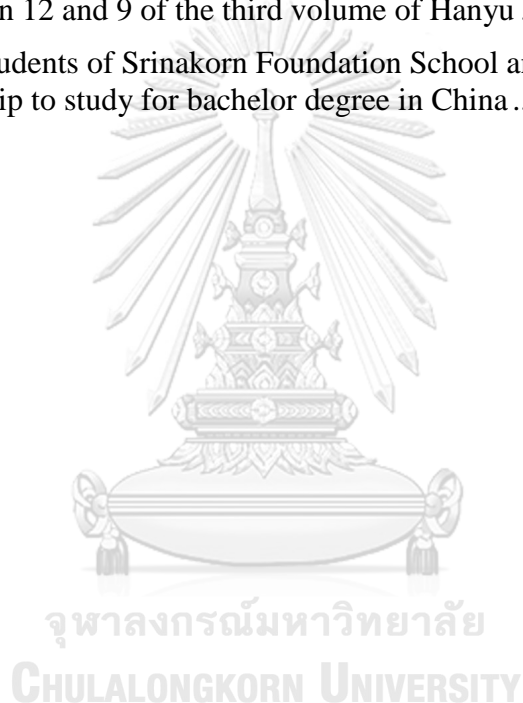
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

In 1949, a form of Mandarin, also known as Putonghua (the common language) based on the Beijing dialect, was legitimized as the official language of the People's Republic of China (Kane 2006). Since then Mandarin has been a language learned worldwide and the number of people who learned it has been increasing. Almost all people who learn Chinese choose to learn Mandarin (Kane, 2006; Nayar, 1997).

Mandarin or Chinese language has become more and more important. "Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) emerges as a subject for research as well as an educational market" (H. Zhao & Huang, 2010). Teaching CFL has become a specialized subject and developed very rapidly (Everson, 2009).

Because of "Chinese fever", Chinese government established Hanban in 1987. The name "Hanban" is the colloquial abbreviation of the Chinese word "汉办", meaning the Office of Chinese Language Council International. It is a public institution affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education. It is governed by a group made up of members from state ministries and other organizations including the State Council, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Culture (Paradise, 2009). The responsibility of Hanban is to specialize in the policy and practice of developing Chinese as a foreign language (Kane 2006). Officials say Hanban has three functions: 1) to make policies and development plans for promoting Chinese language internationally; 2) to support Chinese language programs at educational institutions of various types and levels in other countries; 3) to draft international Chinese teaching standards and promote Chinese language teaching materials (Hanban, 2017).

As China's economy and exchanges with the world have seen rapid growth, there has also been a sharp increase in the world's demands for Chinese learning. To meet the demands, Confucius Institute came out. Confucius Institute has been established by the Chinese government which operates it in collaboration with foreign universities and educational institution (Ren, 2012). It is a non-profit public educational organization and is overseen by Hanban (Sahlins, 2013). The aim of Confucius Institute is to promote Chinese language and culture, support local Chinese teaching internationally and facilitate cultural exchanges. Confucius Institute makes Chinese learning more accessible and easier, and attracts more foreigners to learn Chinese.

In 2004, the first fully mature Confucius Institute was opened in Seoul, South Korea on November 21st, 2004 which marked the beginning of the implementation of Confucius Institute program. After that, many countries also established Confucius Institutes in their universities one after another.

Hanban is responsible for the administration of the Confucius Institutes, the supply of teachers, and the development and distribution of teaching materials. Furthermore, it coordinates the cooperation between partner institutions in China and abroad that run Confucius Institutes, and provides funding (Hartig, 2012).

China plans to set up 1,000 Confucius Institutes around the world by 2020 to satisfy a rapid increase in demand for learning of the Chinese language and enhance understanding of Chinese culture in other countries. China also sees Confucius Institutes Headquarter as a part of its effort to help construct a harmonious world (Hanban Official Website).

To spread Chinese culture and language more widely, Hanban also launched the Confucius Classroom program which in essence is similar and linked to Confucius Institute, but located in primary and secondary school (Hubbert, 2014). On 16th November 2006, the first global Confucius Classroom at Traimit Wittayalai High School in Bangkok Thailand was established. After that, Confucius Classrooms started to be established in many countries. It brought Chinese culture and language to foreign children and youth, which can help them to lay a good foundation of learning Chinese from their early age. Because of more relaxing and active teaching style, Confucius Classrooms are deeply loved by the foreign students.

The latest data of Hanban in 2017 shows that, until 31st December, 2017, there are 525 Confucius institutes and 1113 Confucius Classrooms in 146 countries and regions. Among them, there are 118 institutes in 33 countries and regions of Asia; 54 institutes in 39 countries of Africa; 173 institutes in 41 countries of Europe, 161 institutes in 21 countries of America, and 19 institutes in 4 countries of Oceania. As for Confucius Classrooms, there are 101 classrooms in 21 countries of Asia, 30 classrooms in 15 countries of Africa, 307 in 30 countries of Europe, 574 classrooms in 9 countries of America, and 101 classrooms in 4 countries of Oceania. During the past 13 years, Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms have totally trained various types of more than 7 million people (Hanban Official Website).

Compared with 2016, in 2017, there was an increase of 14 Confucius Institutes and 40 Confucius Classrooms worldwide (Edition, 2018). It demonstrates that the number of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms is rising and that they are still accepted by foreign people in many countries. It may also imply that many people are enthusiastic to learn Chinese.

For more than ten years, Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms have been receiving important value from both Chinese and other countries' leaders. To some

extent, Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms play a role on cultural diplomacy. Chinese leaders like to visit and inspect the works of Confucius Institutes when they visit other countries. Chinese leaders have visited several Confucius Institutes in ASEAN countries. For example, on 24th November 2011, Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping visited Confucius Institute at Chulalongkorn University and pointed that cultural communication was an important tie for promoting mutual understanding among nations all over the world. He said, as platforms of cultural communication, Confucius Institute at Chulalongkorn University and Confucius Institutes at other Thai universities should give full play to the role of exchanging culture and thoughts, enhancing mutual understandings, strengthening friendship between Thai and Chinese people, and should cultivate more Chinese language talents for promoting cooperation in various sectors of society between two countries (Lai, 2017).

In late 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced a pair of new development and trade initiatives: the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and the “Twenty-First-Century Maritime Silk Road”, with the aim of building a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along the ancient trade routes, together known as “One Belt, One Road” or “The Belt and Road”. After Xi Jinping put forward, the initiative has received a lot of attentions from many countries along the route.

The Belt and Road Initiative regards “peace, cooperation, development and win-win” as its core concepts and takes “policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-people bond” as key points of cooperation, to promote the interconnection and coupling of development strategies from countries along the Belt and Road, enhance different civilizations’ cultural exchanges and mutual learning and create a community of shared future for mankind (H. Li, 2017).

Under the background of the Belt and Road, the relationship between China and the countries along the route is increasing closely. More and more Chinese enterprises are established in these countries and various cooperation projects carried out successfully. The increasing exchange and cooperation among China and the countries along the route definitely require a lot of talents who are good at Chinese and have the ability to communicate with Chinese people. Therefore, for many young foreigners, mastering Chinese language well can make them get more job opportunities and have better prospects for themselves. Hence, more and more young foreigners choose Chinese as their major and become interested at Chinese culture. Certainly, the demand for learning Chinese worldwide is also growing.

At present, more than 170 countries have opened “Chinese Mandarin Course” in some schools or have set up a Chinese major in some universities for students who are interested in Chinese. And 67 countries incorporated “Chinese Teaching” into their national education systems through promulgating decrees or other ways. They opened Chinese courses in every grade of all schools (Xinhua News Agency, 2017).

Among all countries along the route of the Belt and Road, ASEAN countries are extremely important. ASEAN countries and China have close relationships in history, geography, culture, and humanities, so ASEAN countries are always an important region for China in cooperation of politics, business trades, education, and so on. Chinese language is also important and popular in Southeast Asia region. Until the statistical date of the end of 2017, in nine countries of ASEAN (except Brunei), there were 32 Confucius Institutes and 20 Confucius Classrooms in total, however Thailand accounted for more than half of them. At present, Thailand has 16 Confucius Institutes and 11 Confucius Classrooms. We may say that among ASEAN countries, Thailand is most special and Thai people has the highest enthusiasm of learning Chinese. It is a fact that Thailand has had many Chinese immigrants and good relationship with China since ancient times, that Chinese language teaching and learning in Thailand is so popular is not a surprise.

Concerning Confucius Classrooms in Thailand, based on the survey, the 11 Confucius Classrooms are in eight provinces (Bangkok, Phitsanulok, Lampang, Nonthaburi, Rayong, Pattaya, Phuket, Hatyai) which are located in different regions of the country. Hanban attaches great importance to the development of the 11 Confucius Classrooms. Hanban sends volunteer teachers to every Confucius Classroom every year and provides funding to support the various activities of Confucius Classrooms. Not just Hanban, Chinese government also think highly of Chinese teaching and learning in Thailand. Apart from Chinese volunteer teachers from Hanban, every year, Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council will select and send high-qualified professional teachers in primary and secondary schools across China to teach Chinese language in Confucius Classrooms and other outstanding schools in Thailand.

On Thailand side, the Ministry of Education of Thailand also strongly support the development of Confucius Classrooms and the Chinese teaching and learning in Thai schools. In 1988, the Ministry of Education approved a policy that Chinese language is one of the foreign languages of entrance examination of universities. Students who want to learn majors related to Humanities, Liberal Arts, Social Science, etc., they can take Chinese examination instead of French, German or other languages. This policy shows that Chinese language has become one of main foreign languages in Thailand.

According to rough statistics, at the end of 2010, the number of primary and secondary schools that have opened Chinese course has reached 1393 in Thailand. Among these schools, 1020 are government schools and 373 are private schools. Chinese teaching and learning became more and more popular in Thai schools. Apart from the regular schools, since 1990s, various Chinese language training institutes also emerged quickly in Thailand. The largest one is School of Oriental Culture Academy in Bangkok. It provides different kinds of Chinese courses like conversation course, reading course, translation course, business course, Chinese calligraphy course etc. to meet different

demands of people. During the golden age of this institute, the number of learners was more than 20000 (T. T. J. Zheng, Y.J. & Chen, R.L., 2014).

With the wide spreading of Chinese language and culture in the world, Chinese Fever has become a phenomenon that cannot be ignored, so this phenomenon attracted both eastern and western scholars' attentions. Up to now, many Chinese and foreign scholars have done research about Confucius Institutes in various aspects. Most Chinese scholars have researched Confucius Institutes on aspects of language and culture. For example, H. Zhao, & Huang, J. (2010) concentrated on China's policy of Chinese as a foreign language, foreign learners, cross-cultural communication, the management of Confucius Institutes, etc. Scholars from Mainland China, as well as from Taiwan also did research on Confucius Institutes. For instance, Lin (2016), an associate professor in National Taichung University of Education, did a research on the origins of Confucius Institutes' establishment, purpose, organizational structure, administration model, and state of their development. His studies also cover the problems that Confucius Institutes are facing.

However, western scholars as Hartig (2015), Hughes (2014) and Hubbert (2014) tend to adopt a political perspective in looking at Confucius Institutes. They thought the birth of Confucius Institutes has a close relation with the rise of China. Hartig (2015) claimed that Confucius Institute is partly political and they considered Confucius Institutes as the tool of Chinese government to spread their influence and power to the world. According to them, Confucius Institute is not simply a cultural institution but an institution with political purpose, so Confucius Institutes have met challenges and suffered from disputes in some western universities. To summarize, Confucius Institutes are controversial in western countries.

In addition, many scholars in Southeast Asia, such as Van Chinh (2014), did research on Confucius Institutes on the aspect of national relationship. The author tried to find

the reasons why Confucius Institutes can achieve big success in this region. Most of them think that the close relationship between China and ASEAN countries is an important reason. China and ASEAN countries have frequent communications in many fields which make Chinese language more important and popular in this region. They also think that it is because many Chinese immigrants living in Southeast Asia have made the culture of China and that of Southeast Asia closer and similar in some ways.

As mentioned above, Confucius Institutes are considered much more than Confucius Classrooms. There have less studies that focuses particularly on Confucius Classrooms. However, in the aspect of spreading Chinese culture and language, Confucius Classroom is also an important force that cannot be ignored. Confucius Classroom has done many efforts to spread Chinese language and culture and it has become a bridge to deepen the relationship between China and other countries. Hence, the author would like to do research about Confucius Classrooms. And because Thailand has the most Confucius Classrooms in Southeast Asia region, and in whole Asia, the number of Confucius Classrooms in Thailand is the second rank, only behind of Kyrgyzstan which has 12 Confucius Classrooms, therefore, Thailand is the best country to do the research. Besides, the author used to work in a Confucius Classroom for one year, so it is also an advantage to do the research of this topic.



1.2 Research objectives

- (1) To provide a historical background of Confucius Classrooms in Thailand.
- (2) To analyze the approaches used by Confucius Classrooms in teaching Chinese language and spreading Chinese culture in Thai schools.
- (3) To assess, on a preliminary basis, the extent to which the Confucius Classrooms have contributed to mutual understanding between Thai and Chinese people.

1.3 Research questions

- (1) When was the first Confucius Classroom established in Thailand? Since then how have Confucius classrooms spread in Thailand?
- (2) What methods do Confucius Classrooms use in teaching Chinese language and spreading Chinese culture in Thai schools?
- (3) To what extent do Thai teachers and students involved in Confucius Classrooms learn about the Chinese language and culture? To what extent do Chinese volunteer teachers involved in Confucius Classrooms learn about the Thai language and culture?

1.4 Hypotheses

- (1) It has been more than 10 years since the first Confucius Classroom was established in Thailand with the support of Hanban and the Ministry of Education of Thailand. Since then the number of Confucius Classrooms has increased quickly. This helps strengthen Chinese influence in Thailand.
- (2) Confucius classrooms use various methods in teaching Chinese language, e.g., translation method, direct method, situational method, audio-visual method. They also organize activities regularly to introduce Chinese culture, such as Chinese traditional festivals, to Thai students.
- (3) Confucius Classrooms have made some success in promoting mutual understanding between Thais and Chinese. A number of Thai students and Thai teachers who are involved in Confucius Classrooms have been successful in learning the Chinese language and culture. In addition, most Chinese teachers in Confucius Classrooms have more knowledge about Thailand and its people than they did before they came to Thailand. Moreover, Confucius Classrooms give more opportunities for Thai people in general to learn Chinese language and know Chinese culture, which can also enhance Thai people's understanding towards China.

1.5 Significance and usefulness of the study

- (1) The study will provide objective information about the spreading of Chinese language and culture in Thailand.
- (2) The findings of this research will also provide suggestions to solve existing problems Confucius Classrooms faced Thailand.
- (3) This study will promote social and cultural relationship between Thailand and China.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, I will present the summary of a review of past studies related to the content of this study. It is divided into 8 parts. The first part summarized the significance and effort of Confucius Institutes worldwide. The second part pointed out the issues, problems and the challenges that Confucius Institutes have, and in the third part, some scholars gave the suggestions for Confucius Institutes to solve the existing problems. The fourth part talked about the Confucius Institutes in western countries. In the developing process, Confucius Institutes encountered difficulties and caused controversy in some western countries. Some western scholars thought Confucius Institutes had strong political color. The fifth part described the situation of Confucius Institutes in Southeast Asia. Among Southeast Asian countries, Chinese language is especially popular in Thailand. Some scholars have done researches about the Chinese education in Thailand. The sixth part summarized kinds of information and results about Chinese teaching and learning in Thailand. The seventh part summarized some of the existing studies about Confucius Classrooms worldwide. Lastly, the eighth part concluded the studies about Hanban's volunteer teacher.

2.1 The significance and effect of Confucius Institutes

Guo (2009) introduced the construction background of Confucius Institutes and its strategic significance in the paper "The development Issues and Management Innovation of Confucius Institutes". He summarized three significances of Confucius Institutes: 1) Confucius Institutes pushed "Chinese Fever" and promoted international status of Chinese language; 2) Confucius Institutes expanded the influence of "China Soft Power"; 3) Confucius Institutes helped China to build a good image in the international community.

From cultural diplomacy aspect, Cui (2008) published a paper named "From 'Confucius Institute' to see China's cultural diplomacy". In the paper, they mainly

talked about the effects of Confucius Institutes to promote China's cultural diplomacy and the potential problems of Confucius Institutes. Through the research, the authors found that there were many positive effects of Confucius Institutes, which can be summarized into three aspects. The first effect is that Confucius Institutes provide overseas cultural base for interpersonal communication between China and foreign countries. Confucius Institutes not only teach Chinese language and spread Chinese culture, but also offer multifaceted exchange platform for foreign people. The second effect is that Confucius Institutes can dissolve the misunderstanding of "Theory of China Threat" and enhance China's international image. The third effect is that Confucius Institutes can provide a carrier for spreading Chinese culture and language. Foreigners have more direct contact with Chinese culture, which greatly promote China's cultural diplomacy.

G. H. Chen (2008) studied the modes and approaches of cultural transmission of Confucius Institutes. In the paper "From the perspective of cultural transmission to see the significance of Confucius Institute", Chen Guanghua found that Confucius Institutes spread cultural information by interpersonal medium, printed medium, and electronic medium. The author also concluded the function and significance of Confucius Institutes in the aspect of cultural transmission. The main function of Confucius Institute in the aspect of cultural transmission was social communication. Confucius Institute was a bridge to connect Chinese culture and foreign culture which could greatly help resolve misunderstandings and strengthen cooperation among China and other countries.

2.2 Issues and challenges of Confucius Institutes

Inevitably, Confucius Institutes also face some issues and challenges. H. Q. Zhao (2009) indicates that the most immediate issue is the shortage of teachers and teaching materials. In addition, the mode of Chinese curriculum cannot well suit to local culture in some countries and some Confucius Institutes encounter some resistance and cultural clash, which is also a big issue.

What is more, Cui (2008) state that while Confucius Institutes achieve success and promote China's diplomacy, Confucius Institutes also need to pay attention to the potential problems. The first problem is that "Theory of China Threat". Some American and European politicians always remain conscious and watchful of China's rise and agitate for "Theory of China" which damage China's international image to some extent. Hence, Confucius Institutes should refrain from making a showy display of Chinese culture and keep a low profile. And, although now Confucius Institutes have good developments, we cannot be over optimistic about this situation. After all, Chinese culture is not strong culture like western culture. English truly is the global language. And China does not have enough cultural products like American movies, Japanese animation, Korean TV series which are cultural symbols of a country. Therefore, China and Confucius Institutes must find more Chinese specific symbols for introducing to foreigners.

In the paper "Development of Confucius Institutes: Status Quo, Problems and Future Trends", Xu (2008) briefly introduced the development status of Confucius Institutes worldwide, including the number, working performance, working content, duties, activities, examinations, etc. Xu Lihua also pointed out the problems and challenges that Confucius Institutes face which can be summarized into four aspects: 1) the problem of funds, place of work, staff; 2) the problem of how to deal with the relationships between Confucius Institutes and the Chinese major or Chinese faculty which have been set up already in the foreign host universities; 3) the problem of teachers; 4) the problem of market operation.

2.3 Suggestions for Confucius Institutes

H. Zhao, & Huang,J. (2010) suggested that the issues of lacking qualified teachers and suitable textbooks can be resolved by training more qualified teachers and compiling textbooks which can adjust to diverse culture. As for the issue of cultural resistance, Confucius Institutes and host countries may require more mutual understanding and respect. By 'Chinese as a Foreign Language' through Confucius Institutes, China and other countries can enhance communications from many aspects, which can make the world more united and harmonious.

Xu (2008) also put forward some suggestions to Confucius Institutes: 1) Confucius Institutes should pay attention to the method of popularizing Chinese language and culture; 2) Confucius Institutes must emphasize on cultivating teachers and compiling appropriate textbooks; 3) Confucius Institutes should organize influential and distinctive cultural activities; 4) Confucius Institutes should actively conduct cooperation with host universities and other outside institutes; 5) Confucius Institutes should plan their daily work rationally.

2.4 Confucius Institutes in Western countries

The development situations of Confucius Institutes are different in different region of the world. Western people's attitudes and Eastern people's attitudes towards Confucius Institutes and China's soft power are different to some extent.

Starr (2009) talked about the spread of Confucius Institutes and Chinese language teaching in Europe in his paper "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes". He introduced the number and development situation of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in the main European countries like the UK, Russia, Germany, France, etc. He pointed out the criticism of Confucius Institutes in Europe. He found that the criticism could be divided into two categories: 'insiders' with practical concerns and 'outsiders' with ideological concerns. The practical concerns focus on finance, academic viability, legal issues, relations with the Chinese partner university and long-term support from their own institutions (Don Starr 2009). And the political concerns have been raised, primarily by those not involved in the Confucius Institutes, over the presence of a Chinese government-backed institution on Western university campuses. What is more, the author (Starr, 2009) said the issue of academic interference was also raised. Some western universities thought that Confucius Institutes damaged their academic freedom. For example, in Sweden, some scholars said the Chinese Embassy in Stockholm was using the Confucius Institute to carry out political surveillance, covert propaganda and inhibit research on sensitive areas of China such as the Falungong. During June 2008, there was an on-line debate on H-Asia (a member of H-Net Humanities & Social Sciences Online) about the threat to academic

freedom posed by Confucius Institutes. Although Chinese language became more and more important and popular in Europe, and Confucius Institutes also developed quickly in Europe, there were still many obstacles and we could not underestimate them (Starr, 2009).

Hartig (2012) introduced Confucius Institutes as a tool of China's public/cultural diplomacy, which China used to shape its global image. In the paper "Confucius Institutes and the Rise of China", he took Confucius Institutes in Germany as an example to analyze the structure, finances, activities, and the criticism and problems Confucius Institutes facing. There were two main problems that the official of Hanban, Xu Lin pointed out: the shortage of teachers who were proficient with local language; insufficient supply of tailor-made teacher materials. Apart from these, Falk Hartig also found that another raised issue was that institutes in Germany should cooperate more closely to use resources more efficiently. And he also compared Confucius Institutes with other culture institutes to argue that Confucius Institutes were to some extent in service of China's foreign policy goals.

In the article "The Evaluation of the Public Opinion Environment of Confucius Institutes in the United States", the authors K. S. D. Li, C.Z. (2011) talked about the Americans' evaluations about Confucius Institutes. International public opinion view was an important factor that restricts the development of overseas Confucius Institutes, but there were not many systematic studies on this field. The United States had the most Confucius Institutes in the world. The authors used the method of Content Analysis to estimate the public opinion environment of Confucius Institutes in the United States. They said that since 2005, negative evaluation has been on the rise. However, there was also positive evaluation related to economy. For example, to some extent, Confucius Institutes could increase the opportunities of business between the United States and China. What is more, Confucius Institutes can enhance the mutual communications, understanding and cooperation. In addition, in the mind of some Americans, learning Chinese in Confucius Institutes was a popular and fashionable thing.

However, the main reasons that led to the negative evaluation were always related to politics. For example, many Americans were afraid that Confucius Institutes would be a China's political tool. In the mind of the Americans, "Communism" was a negative word. They thought that Confucius Institutes were the tools of China's government to disseminate Communism. For a long time, they have had prejudice against Communism. They always connected China to communism. The authors said that Confucius Institute was a direct image of China in American people's eyes. The way American people evaluated Confucius Institutes depended on their general views of China.

2.5 Confucius Institutes in Southeast Asia

In Southeast Asian region, because of the quick development of Confucius Institute and Confucius Classroom in this region and the close relationship between China and ASEAN countries, the research area about Confucius Institutes and Classrooms attract some scholars' attentions.

Taiwanese scholars Hsiao (2014) wrote a paper named "Differentiating the Politics of Dependency: Confucius Institutes in Cambodia and Myanmar". In the paper, the authors first introduced the history and relationship between China and Southeast Asia from the aspect of politics and economics to pave the way to talk about the development of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in Southeast Asian region. The authors said the development of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in Southeast Asia corresponded to developments in China's good neighbor diplomacy. The main reason why Thailand had the most Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in Southeast Asia was the good relationship between Thailand and China. Thai government officials and members of the royal family also supported Chinese language training programs, so that in Thailand, the work of the Confucius Institutes was sometimes political. However, the case of Vietnam is very different from Thailand. Because of political leaders of Vietnam were highly suspicious of China's propaganda and they thought Confucius Institute program was part of China's political conspiracy, there was just one Confucius Institute in Vietnam. Among Southeast Asia countries,

Thailand and Vietnam represented two extreme positions for and against the rise of China and its soft power initiatives.

After that, this article further scrutinized the cases of Cambodia and Myanmar. The performance of the single Confucius Institute in Cambodia illustrated the success of China's soft power initiatives in Cambodian society, but the case of Myanmar was very different although the relationship between China and Myanmar was similar to the relationship between China and Cambodia. The authors argued that three factors determined the politics of dependency between China and the Southeast Asian countries which were also factors that had a direct impact on the Confucius Institute project in both Cambodia and Myanmar. The three factors were: 1) the strategy of the dominant country, that is, how China used its good neighbor diplomacy in dealing with Southeast Asia; 2) the attitude of the dependent countries, namely, how southeast Asian countries responded to China's strategy; 3) the role of overseas Chinese as mediators.

Through analyzing by the authors, they found that the politics of dependency between China and Myanmar were supported by their economic and political cooperation which did not make the political leaders of Myanmar suspicious of China's organized 'cultural communication' and China's 'great external propaganda'. On the contrary, Cambodia has embraced China's soft power initiative and saw Confucius Institutes as an opportunity to promote its economic and political ties with China.

2.6 Confucius Institutes and Chinese teaching and learning in Thailand

To study the typical model of Confucius Institute in Thailand, J. Chen (2011) found that the Confucius Institute was the center for Chinese teaching, training teachers, and organizing HSK (Chinese Proficiency Test). And Confucius Institutes exerted influence on the primary schools, middle school and universities nearby while integrating the related resources and spreading Chinese culture and language. This was the typical model of Confucius Institutes in Thailand. Apart from focusing on Thailand, the author also gave the suggestion to improve the model of Confucius Institutes worldwide. Chen Junyu said, the model of Confucius Institutes needed to accommodate the local countries' requests and different national conditions. Because Thailand had a good

relationship with China in many aspects especially culture and economics, this model of Confucius Institutes achieved a big success in Thailand. But we are not sure if this model will be successful in other countries. We cannot mechanically copy this model to apply to other countries. Every Confucius Institute needs to find a suitable model according to the real situation and the national conditions of host countries.

In Thailand, “Chinese fever” arise quickly due to Sino-Thai cultural communication. Many Thai universities have opened Chinese major in undergraduate and higher level. In the paper “The Study of Thailand Chinese Teaching Policy in Chinese Teaching of the Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University”, Wuttiphan (2013) took foreign teaching program of Khon Kaen University as the research object to analyze the background, basic content, existing issues and countermeasures of Chinese teaching program in Khon Kaen University, which also gave references and suggestions to other Thai universities to make their Chinese program develop better.

On 3rd, August, 2006, Khon Kaen University established Confucius Institute with the cooperation of Southwest University in China (Hanban Thai Official Website). At the beginning of 2007, the Faculty of Education of Khon Kaen University opened a foreign Chinese language professional (Wuttiphan, 2013). Through the research of Narueporn Wuttiphan found that there were some Chinese language teaching policy issues in the Faculty of Education of Khon Kaen University. The author found one of the big issues was that Khon Kaen University did not have enough qualified teachers to organize Chinese activities. Because they had many Chinese activities inside and outside the university, the current teachers needed work excessively. And the teachers' quality was not high. There were only few doctoral degree teachers who majored in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. For these issues, the two authors gave their recommendations to promote the foreign language policy in the Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University.

They suggested to set up a Chinese teacher training center in Faculty of Education to cultivate more domestic qualified teachers and provided advanced teaching equipment which also made Faculty of Education become a comprehensive learning center in the

university. And they suggested that the university and faculty needed to expand publicity by modern media to attract more Thai university students' attentions. They also thought that teachers and university needed to have a Chinese Club and extracurricular activities for students to promote the language program.

In the paper "Chinese Language Teaching in Thailand at the Primary and Secondary Education Levels", the author Ronnaphol Masutisuk (2013) briefly introduced the history of Chinese teaching in Thailand from ancient time to the present. The author summarized the main five problems and difficulties that Chinese language teaching and learning faced in Thailand. The first problem was that there was a high demand of learning Chinese in Thailand. The second was that although Thai students could accept Chinese language learning in schools, they could not apply Chinese language to the daily life, so to some extent, Chinese teaching in schools was ineffective. The third problem was the shortage of teachers. The fourth problem was the inappropriate textbooks used in Thai schools. And the last problem was that many Chinese teachers did not have competence in teaching and could not arouse the enthusiasm of students to learn Chinese. To give suggestions for solving the above problems and contribute to the effective development of the Chinese teaching in Thailand, the Chinese Studies Center of the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University conducted a research project entitled "Chinese Language Teaching in Thailand" in 2008 with support from Bangkok Public Company Limited.

Apart from the above, Ronnaphol Masutisuk (Masuntisuk, 2013) mainly introduced the situation of Chinese language teaching in Thai primary and secondary schools from five aspects of schools which opened Chinese courses and number of students who learned Chinese language; the information of Chinese language teaching curriculum in Chinese school, public school and private school; the functions and disadvantages of the Chinese textbooks which were used in Thai schools; the information of Chinese language teachers: number, qualification, and education background; the output of Chinese language teaching (students' knowledge estimation).

The author (Masuntisuk, 2013) found that in Thailand there was no standard Chinese curriculum, and each school could make their own curriculum autonomously which

caused a lot of inconsistencies and incompatibilities. And some schools did not have adequate expertise to offer Chinese lessons. To solve these issues, the author (Masuntisuk, 2013) came up with some suggestions. The first suggestion was developing curriculum, textbook and media. Thai schools needed to make a standardized Chinese curriculum system, standardized textbooks, effective evaluation method and system. The second suggestion was that schools needed to recruit highly qualified teachers and provided them with job security. And the last suggestion was improving administration and management. A committee on Chinese language teaching should be established to coordinate between teaching quality development units. Local Chinese language teachers needed to improve their quality. Schools should emphasize quality over quantity.

In the paper “The Current Situation of Chinese Teaching in Thailand”, Chen Jiyun (2006) introduced the whole situation of Chinese teaching from universities, Chinese schools, commercial schools, language centers, Chinese branch universities which were set up in Thailand. The author described the history and current situation of these kinds of schools. Then, J. Chen (2011) pointed out the shortages of Chinese teaching in Thailand: 1) The Ministry of Education of Thailand still had some restrictive policies to Chinese schools; 2) The teaching time of Chinese language was not enough in Thai schools; 3) The treatment of Chinese language teachers was not fair, poor in salary so that qualified teachers were not enough; 4) The textbooks were outmoded and the contents were not practical; 5) The teaching methods lagged behind, and teaching style was blank.

2.7 Studies on Confucius Classrooms

Studies about Confucius Institutes are more than Confucius Classrooms although Confucius Classrooms are also important in spreading Chinese culture and language.

Yin (2016) pointed out that at present, there were less research focused on Confucius Classrooms. Studies on Chinese for international communication mostly concern Confucius Institutes, but Confucius Classrooms are also worth studying. She demonstrated necessity and possibility of carrying out research in Confucius

Classrooms and explored further research contents in her paper “Current Situation and Development Trend of research in Confucian Classroom”. The areas and topics of Confucius Classrooms that are worth researching could be summarized into six parts: 1) the research of the development status of Confucius Classrooms; 2) the research of Confucius Classrooms’ teachers’ intercultural adjustment; 3) the research of the cooperation of Chinese teachers and local teachers; 4) the research of comparing the operation effects among Confucius Classrooms; 5) the research of the duties of Chinese side and local side; 6) the research of the system construction of Confucius Classrooms.

B. Li and Chen (2016) said Confucius Classroom had become an important window for the world to understand Chinese language and culture. Confucius Classroom was a platform to promote cooperation and understanding between China and other parts of the world.

In the paper “On the Integrated Development of Confucius Classrooms in Italy”, B. Li and Chen (2016) (B. Li & Chen, 2016) introduced the current situation of Confucius Classrooms in Italy. In Italy, there were 34 Confucius Classrooms throughout whole country from South to North. The distribution was very rational. According to the organizational form of Confucius Classrooms, all the Confucius Classrooms in Italy could be divided into two types. One type was independent Confucius Classroom which directly cooperated with a Chinese school. This type is similar with Confucius Institutes. Another type was subsidiary Confucius Classroom which was under the management of a Confucius Institute. This kind of Confucius Classroom was a component part of a Confucius Institute.

Then, they (B. Li & Chen, 2016) analyzed the current existing issues of Confucius Classrooms in Italy: 1) the relatively old development notion; 2) the serious shortage of local teachers; 3) the insufficient local teaching materials; 4) the simple teaching methods 5) the unsatisfactory teaching cooperation between Chinese teachers and the local teachers.

To solve these problems, the authors gave some simple solutions: 1) to build the notion of integrated development; 2) to localize teachers, textbooks and teaching methods; 3) to promote qualifications of the local Chinese teachers; 4) to promote the communication between local teachers and Chinese teachers; 5) to issue the standardized assessment and evaluation of Confucius Classrooms worldwide.

2.8 Hanban's Volunteer Teacher Program

Hanban's Volunteer Program is very successful in Thailand and it helps to fill the gap of lacking teachers. Some scholars also pay attention to this group: Hanban's volunteer teachers. As early as 2007, Wu and Guo (2007) did a research about Hanban's volunteer program in Thailand named "A Research Report of Chinese Language Teaching Volunteer Program in Thailand". Through the questionnaire research, meetings, interviews with individual volunteers, the authors got the basic information about the volunteers: their attitudes towards Hanban Volunteer Program; their teaching situation; their living conditions; their social interaction with local people; their psychological status; their suggestions and opinions to Hanban. Through the research, the authors got the six conclusions and some suggestions from volunteer teachers to Hanban Volunteer Program.

The six conclusions are: 1) Most of the volunteer teachers really support Hanban Volunteer Program; 2) There is a big difference of Chinese teaching times in different schools. Some volunteer teachers have heavy workload and some volunteers have very easy work; 3) Most of volunteer teachers have ability to complete work independently but the volunteer teachers' integral level still need to improve; 4) Most of the volunteer teachers can adapt to the climate, diet and social culture of Thailand; 5) Most of the volunteer teachers have psychological health, but just 1-2% of the volunteer teachers feel depressed and oppressive; 6) Most of the volunteer teachers have normal social communication and just 4% of them almost have no friend.

The scholar (Wu, 2007) collected the suggestions and opinions of the volunteer teachers. The volunteer teachers suggested that Hanban should set up a website for volunteer teachers to give them a platform to exchange feelings and experiences. Chinese

government should give volunteer teachers more preferential policy in their working and learning after they return to China.

As can be seen from the review of past studies presented above, no study has been done on Confucius Classrooms in Thailand. Therefore, to fill the gap of knowledge, this study aims to provide a historical background, overall picture of Confucius Classrooms in Thailand and explore the teaching methods of spreading Chinese language and culture that Confucius Classrooms and Chinese volunteer teachers use. Moreover, the study also tries to evaluate the teaching achievements of Confucius Classrooms in teaching Chinese and contributions of Confucius Classrooms in promoting mutual understanding between Thai people and Chinese people.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In general, my study is both quantitative and qualitative. The procedures consist of four steps. Firstly, I reviewed related researches about Confucius Institutes, Confucius Classrooms, Hanban, Chinese teaching and learning, to get a whole picture of this field. The second step was to select sample Confucius Classrooms for data collection. Finally, I chose 4 schools with their Confucius Classrooms as my field research places. The third step was doing field research, I collected basic information by visiting the schools and Confucius Classrooms, experiencing the cultural activities and observing the Chinese classes, and conducting interviews. The interviewees were Thai teachers who taught Chinese language, Chinese volunteer teachers, and Thai students. The purpose of interviewing Thai teachers was to know the development of the school, the development process of Chinese language teaching and learning in school, and to know their attitudes and suggestions about Confucius Classrooms, and what they got and learned from Confucius Classrooms. Interviewing Chinese volunteer teachers was to get the information about teaching approaches, methods they used, their feelings about Thailand and what they had learned about Thai language and culture. Interviewing Thai students was to assess their knowledge about Chinese language and culture, their attitudes and suggestions about Confucius Classrooms, which could provide me the teaching achievements of Confucius Classrooms. The last step, which was the most important, was analysis. I analyzed all the data I had obtained from the field work and presented the results of the analysis according to the two main objectives of this study, i.e., the approaches and methods used by Confucius Classrooms in teaching Chinese language and culture to Thai students and the contributions of Confucius Classrooms to the mutual understanding between the Chinese and Thai teachers.

3.1 Sampling of data sources

In Thailand, there are 11 Confucius Classrooms. I could not study all of them. Therefore, I selected 4 Confucius Classrooms as samples to examine. Before selecting, I got data about the year of establishment, location, the general development situation of all 11 Confucius Classrooms from Hanban Website, journals, news, previous theses, etc.

Below is the basic information of the 11 Confucius Classrooms in Thailand.

Table 3. 1 The location of Confucius Classrooms in Thailand

No.	Name	Month/Year of establishment	Province	Region
1	Confucius Classroom at Xingmin School	03/2009	Phisanulok	North
2	Confucius Classroom at Lampang Kanlayanee School	03/2009	Lampang	North
3	Confucius Classroom at Sawang Boriboon Wittaya School	03/2009	Chonburi	East
4	Confucius Classroom at Rayong Wittayakhom School	07/2009	Rayong	East
5	Confucius Classroom at Trimit Wittayalai High School	11/2006	Bangkok	Central

6	Confucius Classroom at Chitralada School	06/2009	Bangkok	Central
7	Confucius Classroom at Suankularb Wittayalai School	03/2009	Bangkok	Central
8	Confucius Classroom at Assumption Commercial College	08/2009	Bangkok	Central
9	Confucius Classroom at Horwang Nonthaburi School	07/2009	Nonthaburi	Central
10	Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School	03/2009	Songkhla	South
11	Confucius Classroom at Phuket Wittayalai School	07/2009	Phuket	South

Source: <http://www.hanbanthai.org>

The related information about Confucius Classrooms I found can help me to provide a historical background of Confucius Classrooms and summarize the spreading process, development process and current situation of Confucius Classrooms in Thailand.

To fetch more complete and representative information and findings, I choose these 4 Confucius Classrooms as samples representing Confucius Classrooms in Thailand.

Below are the four schools and their Confucius Classrooms:

- 1) Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School in Hatyai, Songkhla
- 2) Confucius Classroom at Xingmin Phitsanulok School in Phitsanulok
- 3) Confucius Classroom at Lampang Kanlayanee School in Lampang
- 4) Confucius Classroom at Rayong Wittayakom School in Rayong

These 4 schools are chosen according to certain criteria so that they will be good representatives of Confucius classrooms in Thailand. The criteria for choosing these 4 schools are as follows.

The 4 schools were chosen to cover two types: private school and government school. Xingmin School and Srinakorn Foundation School are private schools, which were established by previous Chinese immigrants in Thailand. Xingmin School in Phitsanulok was established in 1923, and it has more than 90-year history. The Srinakorn Foundation School in Hatyai was established in 1925, and it was suspended for some years because of Thai policy for banning Chinese teaching and learning in special period, and started again in 1970. The two schools have Chinese background and rich experiences in Chinese teaching and learning.

As for Lampang Kanlayanee School and Rayong Wittayakom School, they are Thai government schools which are good at teaching Chinese. Especially Rayong Wittayakom School is very prominent in this field. Lampang Kanlayanee School and Rayong Wittayakom School have opened Chinese course since 2004. Over more than a decade for developing Chinese teaching and combined with the works of Confucius Classrooms, now these two schools have become important force of improving Chinese teaching and learning in local areas.

The 4 schools were chosen to cover both the primary and secondary levels. Xingmin School is a primary school (grades 1 through 6) consisting of kindergarten. It is the only primary school in Thailand that has Confucius Classroom. Srinakorn Foundation School has a complete school system: from kindergarten to high school. As for government schools, Lampang Kanyalanee School and Rayong Wittayakom School are secondary schools from grades 7 through 12.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

I spent about 5 days in each school to visit their Confucius Classrooms in person. At schools, I used various methods to know the information about schools and their Confucius Classrooms.

For example, firstly, I found out Chinese elements in schools such as Chinese logo, Chinese signs, Chinese-style buildings, Chinese decorations and so on. I took photos to collect this kind of information. Then, I read some documentaries about the history and developing process of schools and Confucius Classrooms which were collected in schools. And, I also took part in some Chinese cultural activities which were held by Confucius Classrooms. What is more, I also attended some Chinese volunteer teachers' classes to observe how they organize class, what teaching methods they use and observed the performance and behavior of Thai students when they were learning Chinese.

However, my main research method is in-depth interview including questionnaire. After I had a general overview of these schools and their Confucius Classrooms, I conducted interviews. The respondents in each school were divided into three groups. The first group was composed of Hanban's Chinese volunteer teachers and the Chinese head of Confucius Classrooms. The second group was composed of Thai leaders and teachers in schools, such as headmaster, administrative teachers, and teachers who teach Chinese courses. The third group was composed of some selected Thai students.

In Xingmin School, I interviewed the Chinese head of Confucius Classroom, all Chinese volunteer teachers (3 people), the headmaster of school, 2 Thai teachers who teach Chinese course and 10 students.

In Srinakorn Foundation School, I interviewed the Chinese head of Confucius Classroom, all Chinese volunteer teachers (11 people), the headmaster of school, 5 Thai teachers who teach Chinese course and 20 students.

In Lampang Kanlayanee School, I interviewed the Chinese head of Confucius Classroom, all Chinese volunteer teachers (2 people), the head of Chinese teaching group, 2 Thai teachers who teach Chinese course and 10 students.

In Rayong Wittayakom School, I interviewed the Chinese head of Confucius Classroom, all Chinese volunteer teachers (3 people), the head of Chinese teaching group, 2 Thai teachers who teach Chinese course and 10 students.

Totally, I interviewed 4 Chinese heads of Confucius Classroom, 19 Chinese volunteer teachers, 15 Thai teachers including the headmasters, and 50 Thai students.

As for the first group: the Chinese heads of Confucius Classrooms and the Chinese volunteer teachers, I divided the process of data collection into two steps: in-depth interview and questionnaire. The purpose of in-depth interview was to find the answer of my research question: ‘What methods do Confucius Classrooms use in teaching Chinese language and spreading Chinese culture in Thai schools?’ The specific interview questions were in *Appendix A*. The purpose of the questionnaire for Chinese volunteer teachers was to find the answer of my research question: ‘To what extent do Chinese volunteer teachers learn about the Thai language and culture?’ The complete questionnaire was in *Appendix B*. Even though these questions were prepared in advance, there were space and time for the respondents to elaborate these questions, talk about more topics and express their feelings about Confucius Classrooms and Thailand.

As for the second group: Thai leaders and Thai teachers who teach Chinese language in schools, I designed interview questions which enabled me to get the information of history and current situation of Chinese teaching in schools, their suggestions, evaluations and attitudes towards Confucius Classrooms and what they were influenced by Confucius Classrooms. The specific interview questions were in *Appendix C*.

The third group were Thai student. I randomly selected students in each school and interviewed them one by one. The process of collecting data from students was divided into two steps: in-depth interviews and tests. The purpose of the in-depth interviews was to know students' background, brief information, their attitudes towards Chinese teachers, Confucius Classrooms and so on. I talked with some students in Thai language, because they expressed their opinions more easily and clearly in their native language, but as for those who were good at Chinese, I talked with them in Chinese. The specific questions of the in-depth interview were in Appendix D. The purpose of test was to assess their Chinese proficiency and knowledge about Chinese culture. I asked them eleven Chinese cultural questions in Chinese, and they must answer me in Chinese so they could get the full score. When they could not understand the questions, I translated the questions into Thai. The eleven questions of the test were in Appendix E.

Concerning the test part, through the students' answers, I evaluated their Chinese proficiency and knowledge of Chinese culture into three levels: poor, intermediate, and good. Below was my evaluation criteria.

1) Evaluation criteria for cultural part:

The maximum score for cultural part was 30. Score for each question was in the bracket. From No.1-No.10 questions, there were standard answers, so that how many right answers students gave, how many scores they got. Actually, at first, I would like to talk with students just in Chinese, but I found that some questions they could not understand or answer in Chinese, but they knew the right answer. Hence, if they could not understand the questions, I translated the questions into Thai. No.11 question required students to organize their language and tell more information, so I gave scores according to their contents. The main elements of the good content would include: the name of this historical tourist attraction; its place (which city, which province); its history; its appearance; its historical significance. If students could mention all these important elements, they would get 5 points. Otherwise, how many important elements they described, how many points they got.

Table 3. 2 The criterion for dividing the students' performance into three levels of knowledge of Chinese culture

Level	Poor	Intermediate	Good
Score	0-10	11-20	21-30

2) Evaluation criteria for language proficiency

I evaluated students' knowledge of Chinese language by using these four criteria: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and fluency. I listened carefully when they answered each question.

As for the pronunciation part, there are common mistakes of Mandarin that foreign students often make: four tones plus one neutral tone (or called "no tone"), level-lingual and cacuminal (z c s, zh, ch, sh), and the retroflex consonant: r. During students' talking, I noted their mistakes and counted one mistake as one point, which would be used later to determine their level of Chinese language.

As for the vocabulary part, I focused on nouns, adjectives, verbs (transitive verbs and intransitive verbs), function words, prepositions and the fixed collocation of associated words like "虽然,但是"(although, but), "因为,所以"(because, so) etc. In Mandarin, a word can have different word formations. There are many regular collocations that we cannot disassemble. Moreover, the emotional meanings of words are also difficult to distinguish for foreign students. During students' talking, I noted their mistakes and counted one mistake as one point, which would be used later to determine their level of Chinese language.

As for the grammar part, I focused on their sentence structures and word order. Although Chinese grammar is most like Thai grammar, they are also not identical. Hence, what I mainly focused were the dissimilarities.

For example, Chinese standard sentence structure is: (attribute)+subject+(adverbial)+predicate+ object+(complement). However, Thai standard sentence structure is: subject+(attribute)+predicate+ object+(attribute)+ (adverbial or complement). Although Thai grammar is not very different from Chinese grammar, Thai students often make mistakes unconsciously. For example, the sentence “I learn Chinese at Confucius Classroom”, the right Chinese sentence is “我(subject)在孔子课堂(adverbial)学(predicate)汉语(object)”. However, Thai students often said “我(subject)学(predicate)汉语(object)在孔子课堂(adverbial)”. Their mistake was saying predicate before adverbial. Moreover, Thai language and Chinese language also have some differences in the order of word and phrase. For example, in Thai language, central word is before modifier. However, in Chinese language, modifier is before central world. For example, when Thai students mentioned the Chinese food “spicy hotpot”, some of them said “火锅(central word: hotpot)麻辣(modifier: spicy)”, but the right phrase order is “麻辣(modifier: spicy)火锅(central word: hotpot)”. I noted their mistakes and counted one mistake as one point, which would be used later to determine their level of Chinese language.

As for the fluency part, if students could not have connected speech and spoke with long pauses (more than 5 seconds), I counted every long pause as one point.

Finally, I figured out the total mistakes that each student made in these four aspects to determine their level of Chinese language.

Table 3. 3 The criterion for dividing the students’ performance into three levels of Chinese language

Level	Poor	Intermediate	Good

The number of mistakes that they make	More than 20	11-20	0-10
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To get more overall information about Thai students' Chinese level, I also asked them to read one paragraph and vocabulary of their Chinese textbook. I combined the results to evaluate Thai students' knowledge about Chinese culture, language, and the Chinese teaching and learning in Thai schools.

3.3 Limitations

Before conducting the research, I had prepared everything well, but during the field work, some unforeseen problems occurred and seemed to affect the data collection.

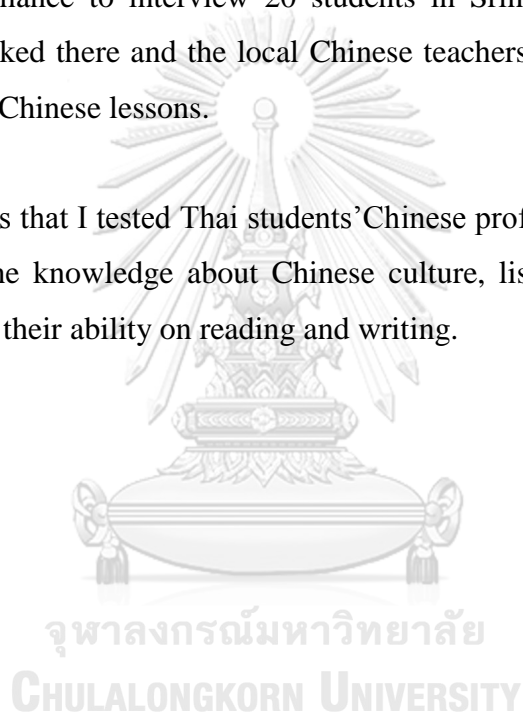
Firstly, there are 11 Confucius Classrooms in Thailand. However, I was able to choose to study only 4 of them due to the time limitation.

Secondly, before I visited the schools, I had contacted the Chinese head of Confucius Classrooms to get permission for visiting and interviewing. I contacted with Miss Jiang Aichun, Miss Zheng Yaxun, Miss He Jing and Miss Liu Saichao, the Chinese heads of these 4 Confucius Classrooms. However, I did not contact with Thai leaders of the schools before went there. Actually, I also needed to contact Thai leaders of the four schools firstly to get their permission but I could not do that.

Moreover, because of trust issues, I think some respondents including teachers and students did not express their true thoughts. Everything has a good side and bad side, but some of the interviewees told me only the good side of Confucius Classrooms. I think they might worry that if they said about the negative side, it would bring trouble to their work. However, some interviewees did express their thoughts and suggestions fairly.

Thirdly, when I interviewed Thai students, I found the time I used was too long. It took about 30 minutes for each student, so some students were likely to lose patience and answer casually. What is more, because the interview was too long, I could not do it during a break so that I had to wait for them after school or during the afternoon break. At first, I planned to interview at least 10 students in each school, because I thought if I could interview more students, the results would be more accurate. However, because of the long interview, I did not have enough time to interview more than 10 students in Xingming School, Lampang Kanlayanee School and Rayongwittayakom School. However, I had chance to interview 20 students in Srinakorn Foundation School, because I had worked there and the local Chinese teachers let me interview students during the time of Chinese lessons.

Lastly, the contents that I tested Thai students' Chinese proficiency mainly focused on communication, the knowledge about Chinese culture, listening and oral speaking, while I cannot test their ability on reading and writing.



CHAPTER IV

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CONFUCIUS CLASSROOMS IN THAILAND

This chapter deals with the first objectives of the thesis, that is: to provide a historical background and the spreading process of Confucius Classrooms in Thailand. First, I will provide a profile of current situation of Confucius Classrooms in the world. Then, I will give a description of the development and current situation of Confucius Classrooms in Thailand with a focus on the four sample schools with Confucius Classrooms.

4.1 Profile of the Confucius Classroom

The Confucius Classroom is a non-profit education institute which concentrates on meeting the demand of learning Chinese abroad, deepening the understanding between China and other countries, strengthening the educational and cultural cooperation between China and other countries, developing the friendly relationship between China and other countries, building a harmonious world and so on. Up to 31st December, 2017, there are 1113 Confucius Classrooms in 79 countries (regions) all over the world.

Simply put, Confucius Classroom is similar to Confucius Institute. It is established in primary and secondary schools, while Confucius Institute is established in University. They focus on Chinese teaching, and cultural exchange. They provide various services, such as teaching Chinese language, training local Chinese language teachers, providing Chinese teaching materials, organizing Chinese proficiency tests, providing service of information consultants about Chinese education and culture, and organizing language and cultural exchange activities.

Confucius Classrooms organize various cultural activities according to different local culture. Each Confucius Classroom has its own distinguishing features and gradually become the important sites to learn Chinese language, understand Chinese culture and contemporary China for foreigners in other countries.

4.2 The First Confucius Classroom in Thailand

With the cooperation between Hanban and the Ministry of Education of Thailand, in the end of 2006, the first Confucius Classroom was established at Traimit Wittayalai School in Bangkok (See Figure 4.1). The cooperation school of this Confucius Classroom in China is Tianjin Experimental High School. Confucius Classroom at Traimit Wittayalai School is not only the first Confucius Classroom in Thailand, but also the first Confucius Classroom in the world.



Figure 4. 1 Confucius Classroom at Traimit Wittayalai School.

Source: <https://goo.gl/images/1GvnDU>

After being established, Confucius Classroom at Traimit Wittayalai School has maintained steady and rapid development. It has many projects to promote Chinese language and culture. For instance, Confucius Classroom offers special Chinese course like Chinese Kong Fu course, Chinese Drama course and other cultural courses to stimulate Thai students' interests of learning Chinese. What is more, every year, it also holds a 2 or 3-week "Chinese Culture Camp", a travel-study program, which gives Thai students an opportunity to travel and experience Chinese culture in China, while cultivating students, Confucius Classrooms also pays attention to training and strengthening local Chinese language teachers. Hence, it holds regular training courses for training local teachers who teach Chinese courses in order to promote their knowledge about Chinese language and culture, correct their pronunciation and grammar, improve their teaching skills, enhance their talents such as calligraphy, paper-cutting, traditional painting and so on.

Every year, the teachers in this Confucius Classroom give lectures about Chinese teaching and conveying teaching experiences in almost 40 primary and secondary schools in Thailand. Beyond that, the Confucius Classroom has edited and published 18 Chinese textbooks that has both Chinese language and Thai language for students who are in primary and secondary schools. This series of Chinese textbooks is very popular and successful. More than 200 primary and secondary schools in Bangkok are using this series of Chinese textbooks.

Besides, this Confucius Classroom also organizes an international Chinese Competition named "Chinese Bridge-Baoshiwang Cup Chinese Competition (การแข่งขันภาษาจีนเพชรยอดมงกุฎ)". The founder of this competition is the famous and respectable monk—Phraprommangkalachan (เจ้าคุณทรงชัย ธรรมโชติ). For nearly twenty years, he has dedicated himself to spread Chinese language and culture in Thailand. Confucius Classroom at Traimit Wittayalai School located in Wat Traimit, which is the temple where Phraprom mangkalachan work. In Traimit Wittayalai School, Phraprommangkalachan found that there are many Chinese-Thai students, so he thought he had to pay more attention to popularize Chinese language. Because of this idea, the "Chinese Bridge-Baoshiwang

Cup Chinese Competition” was born. Phraprommangkalachan is very proud of this famous international competition. On 6th August 2017, the 14th session of this competition was held. 4271 students attended this competition. The scale of the competition was very big. The excellent contestants had chance to study in China.

Phraprommangkalachan said that Confucius Classrooms and Confucius Institutes in Thailand are the important bond that connects Thai people with Chinese culture. The way to let Thai people know better about China is just learning Chinese language. But the existing Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms are not able to meet the increasing demand of learning Chinese language for Thai people. He hopes in the future, more Thai schools and universities can cooperate with China (Daily, 2016).

4.3 The Development Process of Confucius Classrooms in Thailand

After establishing the first Confucius Classroom at Traimit Wittayalai School, with the strongly support of the Princess Sirindhorn, the Ministry of Education of Thailand, and Hanban, ten more Confucius Classrooms were established successively. Apart from Traimit Wittayalai School, the other 10 Confucius Classrooms were all established in 2009. After 2009, there have been no new Confucius Classrooms in Thailand. Among 11 Confucius Classrooms, 6 are established at government schools under the Basic Education Commission of Thailand, and 5 are established at private schools under the Private Education Commission of Thailand.

Among all Confucius Classrooms, there is a relatively special one that is Confucius Classroom at Chitralada School. Confucius Classroom at Chitralada School is the first Confucius Classroom in the world that is established in a royal palace and with the significant support from the Thai royal family. On 12th June, 2009, it was inaugurated by the Princess Sirindhorn (See Figure 4.2). Now, it has become the core demonstration site of Chinese teaching and learning in Thailand.



Figure 4. 2 Princess Sirindhorn unveiled the plaque to open Confucius Classroom at Chitralada School

Source: <http://www.hanbanthai.org/kongziketang/ccld/>

Confucius Classroom at Chitralada School offers Chinese courses for more than 1000 students at this school and provides interesting classes for the staff at school. It regularly organizes various kinds of cultural activities and offers training courses before HSK and YCT tests. Because of the big influence of these featured activities, attention from many medias was attracted. Xinhua News Agency, China News Service, China Radio International, National Broadcasting Services of Thailand, and the Asahi Shimbun of Japan have reported the activities of Confucius Classroom at Chitralada School many times.

Because Confucius Classroom at Tramit Wittayalai School is located in a temple school, and Confucius Classroom at Chitralada School is located in a royal palace school, we can see that Confucius Classrooms in Thailand have integrated with local culture. Actually, each Confucius Classroom has its own distinctive characteristics, featured activities, and teaching goals based on the local environment and different demands of students. Although they have different parts, their objectives are the same,

which enhance the Thai students and teachers' understanding of Chinese culture and contemporary China, promote the development of Chinese teaching and learning in Thai schools and boost the friendly relationship between Thailand and China.

Beyond that, Confucius Classrooms also have another important role, that is, it serves as “Chinese Language and Culture Center” in each region of Thailand. Because Confucius Classrooms not only focus on the development of Chinese language and culture in their own school, but also greatly promote the Chinese teaching and learning in the whole region. That is one reason why Confucius Classrooms are found in different regions across the country. For example, Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School often organizes cultural activities and competition which face the whole southern region of Thailand. Confucius Classroom at Xingmin School often donated Chinese books to neighboring primary schools. Confucius Classroom at Rayongwittayakom School often organizes free Chinese courses for the local people at night and weekends. Confucius Classroom at Lampang Kanlayanee School often organizes training courses for local Chinese teachers from neighboring provinces. We can say that each Confucius Classroom is a “Chinese Language and Culture Center” which uses its own resources to help other schools and students.

In the central region of Thailand, there are 5 Confucius Classrooms, more than in other regions. This is because there is a bigger demand of Chinese teaching and learning in the capital city and its surrounding areas than other places. In the northern region, eastern region and southern region, each region has 2 Confucius Classrooms. In the northeastern region, there is no Confucius Classroom, but there are two Confucius Institutes at Mahasarakham University and Khon Kaen University, which compensate for the lack of Confucius Classrooms. These Confucius Classrooms and Confucius Institutes play the role of promoting Chinese teaching and learning in each region of Thailand.

According to the statistical data of Hanban in 2003 and 2012, during the past decade, there was an obvious increasing trend of Chinese teaching and learning in Thailand.

Below (Table 4.1) is the detail about the information of Chinese teaching and learning in 2003 and 2012 (Y. P. Zheng, 2014).

Table 4. 1 Chinese teaching and learning in Thailand in 2003 and 2012

	Number of Schools which open Chinese courses		Number of Students who learn Chinese	
	Year: 2003	Year: 2012	Year: 2003	Year: 2012
Government School	100	1546	50000	488000
Private School	121	1041	30000	268000
Higher Education Institute	21	227	500	26000
Vocational School	0	192	0	18300
Total	242	3006	80500	800300

The statistical data clearly show that during the recent decade, in Thailand, more and more schools open Chinese courses and more and more students choose to learn Chinese. The number of schools which open Chinese course in 2012 is 12 times more than that in 2003 and the number of students who learn Chinese in 2012 is 10 times more than that in 2003. This illustrates that Chinese teaching and learning has become one of the most popular foreign languages in Thailand.

4.4 The four sample schools and their Confucius Classrooms

Through field trip to the 4 Sample Confucius Classrooms, the author interviewed the school principals and the leaders of Confucius Classrooms to get a lot of information about the conditions about the schools and their Confucius Classrooms.

4.4.1 Srinakorn Foundation School and its Confucius Classroom

Srinakorn Foundation School

Srinakorn Foundation School has a very long history. It is a Chinese private school. It is located in Hatyai, Songkhla Province. With almost 100-year development, now it has become one of the most famous Chinese private school in Thailand, especially its Chinese teaching.

The predecessor of this school can be tracked back to 1920s. In 1924, the local philanthropist Xu Jinrong who was a rich Chinese immigrant, donated a plot of land to local overseas Chinese immigrants for establishing an educational place. Therefore, the local overseas Chinese set up a special management committee to prepare for the establishment of a school. In 1925, the school started to enroll students. This is the earliest history of the present Srinakorn Foundation School. In 1938, because of the restrict policy of Thai government, all Chinese schools in Thailand were closed. In 1945, after the end of the Japanese War, Chinese teaching and learning in Hatyai emerged again in the form of evening classes. After a while, the local Chinese immigrants petitioned the government to open the Chinese school again which could teach during the day and this request was successful. The school attracted more and more people's attention and the number of registered students increased a lot, so the previous place was not big enough. The philanthropist Xu Jinrong donated a plot of land again to expand the scale of the school. This plot of land is the present campus of Srinakorn Foundation School. The new school taught Chinese language under the regulations of the Ministry of Education of Thailand about teaching foreign languages. However, in 1953, because the school contravened the regulations of the Ministry of Education, it was closed again. In 1987, Mr. Fang Zhixiong who was the chairman of the board of the Srinakorn Foundation School, prepared all projects of reconstruction of the school. In 1991, the charity of education of Srinakorn Foundation School was established. After that, Srinakorn Foundation School's development was getting better and has become the model school of Chinese teaching and learning in southern Thailand.

Now, Srinakorn Foundation School has a complete education system with a kindergarten, primary school, middle school and high school sections. Chinese teaching and learning is one of the most important tasks of this school. From Monday to Friday, all classes have at least one Chinese language lesson, and every level has one experimental class which has two Chinese language lessons for one day. High-intensity learning needs enough qualified teachers and teaching materials. The school has a Chinese department which consists of 11 local Chinese teachers. They take responsibility for both teaching Chinese language and assisting the works of Confucius Classroom.

Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School

Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School was inaugurated on 6th March 2009. It is the first Confucius Classroom in Southern Thailand. This Confucius Classroom is the largest in Thailand with the most teachers from China. This year, there are 11 Chinese volunteer teachers. Taking into account the other Chinese teachers such as teachers from Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of The State Council, there are more than 20 Chinese teachers in Confucius Classroom. Hanban and Chinese government strongly support the development of this Confucius Classroom, so that they send most outstanding Chinese teachers to this Confucius Classroom every year with the local Chinese language teachers in, there are more than 30 Chinese language teachers in Srinakorn Foundation School. The number of Chinese language teachers is more than in any other school in Thailand.

Every year, the Confucius Classroom holds various cultural activities and competitions. The most famous competition is “Chinese Bridge-Guoguang Cup”(See Figure 4.3), and every year this competition attracts more than 2000 students who are from Chumphon, Trang, Satun, Yala, Pattani, and other southern schools taking part in it.



Figure 4. 3 The seventh “Chinese Bridge-Guoguang Cup” Competition on 25th, Nov. 2017

Source: <http://songkhla.chineseconsulate.org/chn/xwdt/zlgxw/t1514319.htm>

Apart from organizing the competition, the Confucius Classroom is also a Chinese test center in southern region permitted by Hanban and Confucius Institute Headquarter. It regularly organizes HSK (Chinese Proficiency Test) and YCT (Youth Chinese Test) tests several times a year.

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High-quality Chinese teaching and top-class Chinese learning environment make the school and its Confucius Classroom more and more famous. They attracted more attention from society. Some Chinese enterprises, Chinese immigrant organizations, and even Consulate-General of the People’s Republic of China in Songkhla have offered much support and assistance to promote the development of Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School. Nearly a decade after the establishment of Confucius Classroom, this school has become one of the most famous schools in Thailand.

4.4.2 Xingmin School and its Confucius Classroom

Xingmin School

Xingmin School is a famous Chinese private school with a long history in northern Thailand. It consists of kindergarten and primary school. It was established by Chinese immigrants Zhuo Chengye, Lin pingbo, Zhang Jianchu, and others in 1922. During its early years, the school got much support from the local Chinese immigrant communities and developed quickly. However, in August 1939, the school was closed and in 1946 it was opened again. After June 1948, the school was strict with the regulations about private school and teaching foreign language of the Ministry of Education. Since 1980s, the Ministry of Education relaxed restrictions about Chinese language education, Xingmin school had more space and freedom than old days to develop their Chinese teaching and learning in school.

To improve the quality of Chinese education, the local Chinese teachers compiled teaching materials and organized various Chinese cultural activities and Chinese language competitions. What is more, the school also engaged Chinese people to teach Chinese lessons which can make students contact the real Chinese culture. The constant development of the school attracted more and more students. Now, the school has 29 classes and nearly 900 students.

Through several decades of development, now Xingmin School has made achievements in teaching Chinese. In 2013, Xingmin School was rated as ‘Model School of Chinese Education’ by Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of The State Council (Overseas Chinese Language and Culture Education Online 2014).

Confucius Classroom at Xingmin School

Confucius Classroom at Xingmin School was inaugurated on 26th March 2009, and it is the only Confucius Classroom which is established in primary school in Thailand (See Figure 4.4).



Figure 4. 4 Bronze statue of Confucius at Confucius Classroom at Xingmin School
Source: This picture was taken in September 2017 at Xingmin School Phitsanulok by the author

This Confucius Classroom is divided into three areas: work area, teaching area, and activity area. It also has four Chinese cultural experience centers (See Figure 4.5) and was equipped with ten sets of multimedia teaching equipment and more than 3000 Chinese books. All these offered a good learning condition and created a dense Chinese cultural atmosphere for students.



Figure 4. 5 Chinese language and culture center of Confucius Classroom at Xingmin School

Source: This picture was taken in September 2017 at Xingmin School Phitsanulok by the author

Xingmin School has 9 local Chinese language teachers and Confucius Classroom has 5 Chinese volunteer teachers, and 2 Chinese teachers who were sent here by Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council. The number of Chinese language teachers is also relatively more than that in other schools. Because this school is primary school, this Confucius Classroom mainly focuses on helping students to build up interest towards Chinese language and culture. It regularly organizes YCT test for primary students in northern region.

The Confucius Classroom also actively conducted cooperation with schools in China to exchange students and teaching experiences. Xingmin School as a Chinese private school, which gives priority to teaching Chinese language, and with the development of its Confucius Classroom, the school becomes better and spurs the growth of Chinese education in Northern Thailand.

4.4.3 Lampang Kanlayanee School and its Confucius Classroom

Lampang Kanlayanee School

Lampang Kanlayanee School is an excellent school with a long history in northern Thailand. It was established in 1915 and now it has 103-year history. It was a government secondary school. Language teaching is the strength of this school. Besides English language as a compulsory course, students can choose another language as elective course. The school offers Chinese language, Korean language, Japanese language and French language courses, etc.

As for the Chinese language course, it was opened in 2003, and until now it has 15 years of experience. Now this school has a Chinese department which consists of 4 local Chinese language teachers. The school is divided into two sections: middle school, and high school sections. The two sections are different in foreign language teaching.

As for the 7th grade students, Chinese course is compulsory. For the 8th grade students, Japanese course is compulsory, and for 9th grade students, Korean course and French course are compulsory. But the students can still choose Chinese language as their elective course. I think this arrangement has both advantage and disadvantage. Firstly, it is not reasonable, because it breaks the continuity of learning a language. However, it can also help students become used to more languages and cultures during the period of middle school, which can help them determine what language they are interested in most. The arrangement of high school is different from middle school, because students can choose any foreign language as their major by themselves. In recent years, more and more students choose Chinese language as their major when they come to high school. Now, the high school department has four Chinese major classes. The quick development of Chinese teaching and learning in this school got more support from the Basic Education Commission of Thailand.

Confucius Classroom at Lampang Kanlayanee School

Confucius Classroom at Lampang Kanlayanee School was inaugurated on 31st March 2009. It has an independent multi-media classroom, Chinese books, Chinese musical

instruments, etc. Now, the Confucius Classroom at this school has 3 Chinese volunteer teachers.

Since the establishment of Confucius Classroom, Chinese teaching and learning in this school developed very fast. The teachers concentrate on compiling textbooks which is suitable for students at different levels. Every year, Confucius Classroom organizes activities like “Chinese Drama Festival” (See Figure 4.6), study-travel programs, and competitions for middle school students and high school students in northern Thailand, which to some extent help promote the Chinese teaching level in northern Thailand and mobilize the students’ enthusiasm in learning Chinese language. In addition, this Confucius Classroom is also a Chinese test center that can organize HSK test, permitted by Hanban and Confucius Institute Headquarter.



Figure 4. 6 Poster of “Chinese Drama Festival” at Confucius Classroom at Kanlayanee School

Source: This picture was taken in January 2018 at Lampang Kanlayanee School by the author

4.4.4 Rayongwittayakom School and its Confucius Classroom

Rayongwittayakom School

Rayongwittayakom School is a very outstanding and famous government secondary school in eastern Thailand. It is one of top 100 from over 2900 secondary schools in terms of academic results in Thailand. It was established in 1899, formerly known as Rayongmitr Uppatham. At that time, it was a boy's school. In 1971, this school merged with the neighboring girls' school named Satee Boonsiribampen (since 1920) at TaksinMaharaj Road. It then became a co-educational secondary school. It was renamed "Rayongwittayakom School". At present, the school is equipped with high-quality educational resources, complete facilities, etc. and is trying to expand students' horizons towards the world, which would make this school become one of the most popular schools in Thailand.

Chinese language courses were started in 2004 and it has been 14 year since then. In the first year, the school just hired teachers who taught Chinese language from some language training institutions outside school. In 2005, the school started to use Chinese volunteer teachers from Hanban, which sent only one volunteer teacher to this school. In 2008, the school hired local Chinese language teachers and Hanban sent two volunteer teachers there. Because teacher resource gradually developed, the Chinese teaching and learning also gradually improved in this school. In 2008, Rayongwittayakom School was judged as one of the 20 "Chinese teaching centers" in Thailand. After that, the school requested for the Ministry of Education and Hanban to establish a Confucius Classroom. The Ministry of Education shortly after that, the request was approved, and then, the Chinese teaching and learning in this school entered a new phase.

Confucius Classroom at Rayongwittayakom School

Confucius Classroom at Rayongwittayakom School was inaugurated on 28th July 2009. Now it has 4 Chinese volunteer teachers, 4 local Chinese teachers and 7 teacher trainees. The Chinese teaching and learning in this school has developed very rapidly since the establishment of Confucius Classroom and has got a lot of prizes. (See Figure 4.7)

In the 7th grade, Chinese course is compulsory. Students learn Chinese course once a week. For the 8th and 9th grade students, Chinese course is elective. For high school students, Chinese course is also elective. Because of the establishment of Confucius Classroom, the Chinese cultural atmosphere in this school has become stronger, which made more and more students interested in Chinese language and culture. Now, in high school, there are two Chinese major classes in every grade. The students in Chinese major classes take Chinese lessons six times a week.



Figure 4. 7 Trophies of Chinese teaching and learning at Confucius Classroom at Rayongwittayakom School

Source: This picture was taken in January 2018 at the office of Confucius Classroom at Rayongwittayakom School by the author

The Confucius Classroom has not only improved the level of Chinese teaching and learning in Rayongwittayakom School but also influenced schools of the whole eastern part of Thailand. It provided Chinese teaching materials to other schools, trained local Chinese language teachers in Rayong Province, and organized various activities and competitions for students in the eastern region.

4.5 Summary of the Chapter

In the past decade, the Ministry of Education of Thailand and China Hanban have collaborated to establish 11 Confucius Classrooms in Thailand. The first overseas Chinese Confucius Classroom was therefore established in Thailand in 2006. Since then, there have been 10 Confucius Classrooms established successively. In Asian countries, the number of Confucius Classrooms in Thailand is the second biggest. All these can show that Chinese teaching and learning in Thailand is very popular.

For the last 12 years, Confucius Classrooms have got support from various circles of society, such as overseas Chinese communities, all kinds of enterprises, Thai people and so on. Besides, the support from Thai royal family, Princess Sirindhorn, and the Thai government are very essential. Their support provides the basis for the development of Chinese teaching and learning in Thai society.

In the Northeastern region, there is no Confucius Classroom. However, there is a large-scale secondary school named Kaennakhon Witthayalai School which is very good at teaching Chinese. The school pays great attention to Chinese teaching and also uses Chinese as instructional language to teach other courses. The excellent achievement of teaching Chinese attracted attention and support from Chinese side. Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Khon Kaen provided 1.8 million Thai Baht in funding to set up "Chinese Media Lab" in Kaennakhon Witthayalai School. On 8th June 2017, Ms. Li Xiuhua, China's deputy consul general in Khon Kaen, attended "The Ceremony of Chinese Media Lab Donation Kaennakhon Witthayalai School by Chinese Consulate General in Khon Kaen" (MGR Online, 2017). Ms. Li Xiuhua and the leaders of the school emphasized that China and Thailand were sincere friends, and "China and Thailand being the members of one family" has become the common aspirations of the two people, so that learning Chinese was important and hopeful for Thai students. Moreover, on 23rd August 2016, the school signed a memorandum with Chinese Consulate General in Khon Kaen to develop international exchanges and cooperation (Official Website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2016).

Apart from the cooperation with Chinese consulate, in addition, Kaennakhon Witthayalai School also has kinds of good cooperation with Confucius Institute at Khon Kaen University. For example, Kaennakhon Witthayalai School signed the agreement with Confucius Institute at Khon Kaen University to set up test site of HSK and YCT, open “YCT Chinese Wisdom Class” and carry out various Chinese cultural activities such as “Chinese Day” (Website, 2018).

Hence, in Northeastern region, Chinese is also popular and valued at Thai schools. Although there is no Confucius Classroom, to some extent, Kaennakhon Witthayalai School has replaced the role of a Confucius Classroom.

After 2009, there has been no new Confucius Classrooms established in Thailand. With more and more Thai people wanting to learn Chinese, the existing Confucius Classrooms cannot meet their demand very well. The existing 11 Confucius Classrooms have grown rapidly and Chinese teaching and learning in Thailand have developed much better after the establishment of Confucius Classrooms. Hanban and the Ministry of Education of Thailand should select more outstanding schools to establish as new Confucius Classrooms. The new Confucius Classrooms must inject vitality into the Thai primary and secondary schools and push Chinese teaching and learning in Thailand into a higher level.

From the survey of the 4 sample Confucius Classrooms, I found the Confucius Classrooms have a lot in common and only few differences. Firstly, these 4 Confucius Classrooms are all established for the same reason and have become influential to the schools they are in. They and the schools can rely on each other and influence each other.

As for the responsibilities of Confucius Classrooms, apart from teaching Chinese lessons in schools, they are responsible for organizing various activities to spread Chinese culture. The activities are diversified, but all Confucius Classrooms have a common program; that is, to provide opportunities for Thai students to study and travel

in China. This activity can demonstrate that Confucius Classrooms think highly of providing the chances for students to experience real Chinese culture. Besides, each Confucius Classroom has at least one golden project or competition which applies to the whole region. In addition, each Confucius Classroom also pays attention to the construction of local Chinese teacher teams. They hold training courses every year to promote the local Chinese teachers' language skills and teaching skills. Chinese teachers and Thai teachers can exchange teaching experiences and take advantages of each other.

What is more, all Confucius Classrooms not only focus on their own school but also influence and improve the development of Chinese teaching and learning in other neighboring schools, which can be considered as "Chinese language and cultural Center" in surrounding areas.

However, different Confucius Classrooms also have some different places. From the arrangement of Chinese courses, it is obvious that Chinese private schools pay more attention to Chinese teaching and learning than government schools. Chinese courses in Chinese private schools are compulsory, and every student must learn, however, Chinese courses in government school are just elective. Hence, the Confucius Classrooms in Chinese private schools work more. The number of Chinese volunteer teachers can reflect this phenomenon. Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation has 11 Chinese volunteer teachers from Hanban while Confucius Classroom at Lampang Kanlayanee School just has 3 volunteer teachers. This is a reason that results in the development imbalances of Confucius Classrooms.

What is more, the teaching goals of different Confucius Classrooms are different. And they use different textbooks. For example, Xingmin School is a primary school, so the students are still children and their age is between 6-13. According to the characteristics of children, its Confucius Classroom mainly focuses on organizing interesting cultural activities to stimulate the students' interest and create an activity, fun atmosphere for students. However, like Lampang Kanlayanee School and Rayongwittayakom School, because they are secondary schools and students have academic pressure of entering

higher education, the Confucius Classrooms pay more attention to promoting the language skills, such as grammar, reading, writing, etc. The activities that they hold are often related to language and culture skills. As for Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School, its activities are always separated according to students' ages.



CHAPTER V

THE APPROACHES AND METHODS OF TEACHING CHINESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THAI SCHOOLS

It is crucial for Chinese language teachers to know how to improve their teaching efficiency and make Thai students be interested in Chinese culture. Therefore, to find out the teaching approaches and methods which are suitable, easy to follow, and can stimulate students' enthusiasm is important and worth working for. Because Chinese language is a foreign language for Thai students, Chinese teaching in Thai schools is also in accord with the general rules of foreign language teaching. The main and popular teaching approaches in the field of foreign language teaching are communicative approach, natural approach, learner-centered approach, etc. Regarding the teaching methods, they can be various and be designed according to specific teaching content.

Data on the teaching approaches and methods used in Confucius Classrooms was obtained by interviewing the teachers, students and observing their Chinese classes.

5.1 Methods used in teaching Chinese language in Thai schools

Chinese language teaching in Thai schools is in accord with the general rules of foreign language teaching. The communicative approach, the natural approach and the learner-centered approach are also main approaches which are supported and agreed by the Chinese language teachers. These approaches are the leading ideas and the teachers will use more teaching detailed methods in their class.

As for the different situation and the different level of students, in the real classes, the teachers employ different methods flexibly in classes. The teaching methods that Chinese volunteer teachers like to use for primary school students and secondary school students are different as well.

5.1.1 Teaching methods used in Chinese classes of primary schools

Through the interview of Chinese volunteer teachers who teach primary school students, the author found that Chinese volunteer teachers liked to use various teaching methods in classes. The ages of primary school students were generally low, so to cultivate the students' interests towards Chinese language and culture, was to make the classes active and enjoyable, helping students lay a good foundation in Chinese. The teaching methods found to be used belong to the communicative approach.

Five steps teaching method

In Chinese class, it is an important for a successful class to focus on designing the teaching process. As for teaching Chinese in overseas schools, there is a common method that is “five steps method”. It is popular in both primary school and secondary school. Through the interviews of 19 Chinese volunteer teachers, all of them mentioned this method and they thought this method was the most common in their Chinese classes. The Chinese volunteer teachers said, before they came to Thailand, they have been trained how to organize classes successfully. All of them have learned the five steps method from training courses, and applied it in their classes. The five steps teaching method, as the name implies, consists of five steps in teaching: revision, presentation, drilling, practice, consolidation.

The first step is reviewing the last class's content to make students recall the old knowledge quickly and solve the residual problem. In this section, the teachers often use the way of asking students questions or playing some small games to drive up the learning atmosphere. The time in this section is about 5-10 minutes.

The second step is presentation. In this section, the teachers put new content into students' heads. The main contents typically includes new words and sentences. The teacher often reads first and asks students to read after him or her. Then, the teacher explains the new content using various methods like translation, demonstrations to make students understand. In this section, the teacher is the major role, who must make

the students have new knowledge successfully. She often needs teaching aids like videos, images, animations, cards, etc. and the movements of the body and expressions of the face to vividly express and enter the new content into students. This section often takes about 10-15 minutes.

The third step is drilling. This section is focusing on mechanical drills to strengthen students' memory, and help them absorb new knowledge quickly. Normally, the teacher asks students to read after the teacher again and again. And, the teacher often divides the students into two big groups. The students on the right hand side speak Chinese, while the students on the left hand side speak Thai, and vice versa. Pair-work is often used in this section. Students drill words, sentences with their desk-mates by asking each other. Actually, to avoid monotony and boredom, the teachers usually organize games to liven the class and make students more involved. This section is also a section of input which focuses on intensifying absorption of new knowledge. This section often takes about 15 minutes.

The fourth step is practice. This section is a section of output. Teachers and students will switch the roles. That means the students become the major and central role. In this section, students need to present what they have learned. For example, teachers will ask students make role-play with their pairs. The teachers often set a scene and ask students to perform by using what they have learned. What is more, the teachers also organize some competitive games to practice in this section. It often takes about 10 minutes in this section.

The fifth step is consolidation about 15 minutes. This section focuses on checking the learning results. The teachers often check the results through asking questions, dictation, quizzes and inquiring students if they still have unclear questions. If there is nothing to deal with, the teachers will assign homework to finish this class.

Those are the five steps of the teaching method which is popular and standard in the field of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. All the 19 Chinese volunteer teachers

said according to these five steps, the class will be methodical and the teaching objective will be easy to finish.

Audio-visual method

The audio-visual method makes use of films, slides, videos, pictures, etc. to combine the audition and vision at the same time. It is suitable to teach students everyday language at the early stage of foreign language learning.

Chinese volunteer teachers often use this method in primary schools because this method can make students memorize words better and not feel bored. In general, textbooks for primary school teach a lot of nouns in Chinese. Most of the nouns represent things that are easy to find in daily life. When the teachers taught these nouns such as *apple, banana, cat, dog, desk, book, chair* and so on, they would prepare the pictures corresponding to those words or they can use real objects represented by those nouns. Compared with the translation method, the audio-visual method has more advantage in using pictures and objects. It is more active, dynamic and interesting. The Chinese volunteer teachers found that the majority of Thai primary students were very good at painting, singing, dancing and handwork. Hence, they tried to combine the teaching content and the students' hobbies together.



Figure 5. 1 Chinese volunteer teacher's visual aids

Source: This picture was made by the author in June 2018 in Bangkok

The use of pictures enables students to be possible to feel intuitively. For example, because Thailand is a tropical country, it is hard for primary students to imagine the four seasons of China. If teachers can use picture to show the four seasons, students can understand easily and find out the differences among the four seasons. (See Figure 5.1)

Apart from preparing pictures, some teachers who are good at painting also paint in classes. For example, if the theme of today's teaching content is animals, the teachers can paint animals in cartoon images and let the students follow them and guess what it is (See Figure 5.2). Painting is similar to preparing pictures but this way can involve all the students in the classrooms, and when the students paint after the teachers, they will not lose their focus. However, compared with preparing pictures, painting in classrooms takes more time and if the teachers cannot control the time well, the Chinese language class will become a painting class, which will digress from the point. Hence, painting in classes may be used when the content is easy to draw.



Figure 5. 2 Chinese volunteer teacher was teaching primary students animal words
Source: This picture was taken in December 2017 at Srinakorn Foundation School by the author

What is more, the teachers also show students related videos in classes. The teaching video resources of Chinese language are easy to find in the internet and before the volunteer teachers came to Thailand, Hanban had given them kinds of teaching resources including videos, films, instruments and other audio-visual aids. Showing videos to students and asking them to speak following the videos is like putting them into real situations, and they will perceive the usage of the language better. After watching videos, the students need to practice the content and communicate with their classmates in Chinese.

In addition, the audio-visual method can also relax the students and adjust the atmosphere of classes. For example, if the teachers teach cultural matter they can show some cultural videos or films like Chinese Kong Fu, Beijing Opera, Tai Chi, etc. to the

students so that they can get more intuitive feeling, when the course tasks are not heavy, some teachers also show some Chinese cartoons, Chinese kids movies to relax students, cultivate their interests and practice their listening comprehension.

The audio-visual method is an interesting method that combines language and images together, put the language in a specific situation, which can improve the students' ability of perceiving and understanding Chinese language and enhance their ability to use Chinese. The teachers said, using this method made students generally feel excited.

However, the audio-visual method requests the technique of modern teaching equipment, although the 4 sample schools have good conditions and Hanban also supplied several multimedia teaching equipment such as instructional televisions, projecting apparatuses, computers, CDs, there are still schools that do not have this condition.

The audio-visual method also has disadvantages. This method mainly focuses on training listening and speaking, and neglects reading and writing. It seems to focus on the overall perceptions but ignores language knowledge like grammar, language structure, etc. In addition, the volunteer teachers also reflect that sometimes, using the audio-visual method cannot control the time and classroom discipline well, because students really like this method, they often ask for teachers to show videos, movies to them. Therefore, in common classes, when the teachers just lecture and translate, the students tend to get bored.

Classroom Activities

Organizing suitable classroom activities is an effective way for students to develop their creating thinking and get Chinese knowledge. The forms of classroom activities are various such as playing games, role-play, dictation, singing songs, group work, competition and so on.

Playing games is a very popular method in foreign language classes whether in primary schools or secondary schools, but it is more applied in primary schools. Playing games

can increase students' motivation, make students more active and have fun. Through interviewing the Chinese volunteer teachers, I summarize the common games used in Chinese classes of primary schools as follows.

The first popular game is “You act I guess” or “You describe I guess” (See Figure 5.3). The game is suitable to review new words. The teachers prepare word cards before class, and divide all students into several groups. One group select one student to act or describe the word in front of all classmates, and other group members guess what the word is. Within the stipulated time, the group which correctly guess most words wins. During the game, students need to use Chinese language to describe and answer. This games can be played between teacher and students or among groups of students in the form of competition. The winning group will get rewards. The types of rewards are also various. Some teachers say they like to put a stamp on students' notebooks, and when the stamps reach a certain number like 10, the students can exchange for a gift such as a notebook, a pencil, or some small gifts that teachers brought from China.



Figure 5. 3 Students were playing game “You act I guess” or “You describe I guess”
Source: http://www.hanban.edu.cn/article/2017-08/14/content_696224.htm

The second popular game is “Drum and Pass”(See Figure 5.4). The game needs two props. One of the props is used to beat the blackboard, such like a blackboard eraser or teaching stick. Another prop is a small thing which is easy to pass among students. Teachers choose one student and let him or her stand in the front of the classroom. When this student starts to beat the blackboard, the classmates will start to pass the props, one by one, to the others in class. When this student stops beating, the classmate who has a prop in his hand needs to practice a dialogue with the student in the front of the classroom, or answer some questions, or gives a performance about Chinese culture and language such as telling a short story or joke in Chinese, singing a Chinese song, and so on. The Chinese teachers said, this game could be played in many cases, and that the students liked it very much. Every time they played this game, they became well behaved and enthusiastic to participate. Because this game needs all students to join, it can promote their concentration. When playing this game, the classroom atmosphere is very active.



Figure 5. 4 American Students were playing game “Drum and Pass” at Confucius Classroom

Source: http://www.hanban.org/article/2015-11/04/content_621549.htm

The third popular game is megaphone game. The teachers divide students into several teams according to their seats. The students who are in the same line are in the same team. The first students of each line come to the platform together and the teachers will tell them in a sentence or a short story and let them remember it. Then they go back to their seats. When the teachers say “Start!”, the first students of each team will tell this sentence or story to the next student in a low voice, and the student tell that to the next student. The last student of each team needs to run to the platform and tell the content to all the students. Whichever team is the fastest and has passed the correct content will win and get a score. This game can let every student have chance to practice speaking, memorizing, and expressing himself. If one student in the team cannot say anything and express well, it will make the last student receive wrong information and the team cannot win. The teachers reflect that everyone in this game has strong responsibility and try hard to listen and speak Chinese. The teachers said that if the content was a sentence, the game would be easier than the content was a short story. Those who play this game must have ability to listen, understand, and organize language and express themselves. If they cannot understand the content, they will pass wrong information to the next student. If they know the content correctly but cannot express it exactly, the next students can also receive the wrong information. The information that reaches the last student may be very different from the original information. Hence, it will be quite difficult to win. It is a good exercise that aims at the students’ comprehensive language skills.

Students like playing games in Chinese language classes, and the method of playing games is an effective way to improve the students. Games can be used in different stages of learning. Some games can elicit the new content, and some games can help students practice and strengthen new content. Some games can help students review the content they have learned. Different games have different emphasis, which requires that teachers have enough preparation and good ability to organize suitable games for students. Before playing games, the teachers need to have specific objectives and goals. The design and implementation of games normally focus on the acquisition of Chinese language or culture. Without objectives and goals, the games will be meaningless. However, playing games tend to make the classroom chaotic, especially the primary

students because they are at active ages. The volunteer teachers said, when the students were disobedient, Thai teachers would come to help them manage students.

Role-play is a popular activity in Chinese classes as well. In most cases, this activity is used for practicing dialogues, improving communicative skills. The forms of role-play are various. For example, the common one is letting students play the roles of certain characters in textbooks. Most of the time, the teachers just ask two students to read dialogues and they will focus on their pronunciation and correct mistakes of pronunciation. This is the easiest and most common form of role-play. Sometimes, to increase difficulty, students need to remember the content of dialogues and practice dialogues without reading textbooks. Sometimes, to promote the ability to apply the language, the teachers will create a new situation and give a new identity for students, and ask them to organize the language and perform with the contents that they have learned.

Apart from playing games and role-play, the Chinese volunteer teachers also teach students to sing Chinese songs, and play Chinese music in class. Several studies have found that singing has positive effects on language learning (Alisaari, 2017). Singing facilitates learning words and phrases more effectively than traditional teaching techniques (Legg, 2009). As early as the 1980s, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language stated in their guidelines for language teaching that singing popular songs was an appropriate technique for practicing speaking for students at different levels of language proficiency (James, 1985). Music is magical, because it can lower students' affective barriers and increase their motivation. What is more, research claims that rhythm, melody and rhyme can improve the students' ability to remember language (Graham, 1996).

The Chinese volunteer teachers often teach students to sing Chinese children's songs. They said, they liked to choose the songs which have common words, lively melody, are simple, and relaxing. Because this kind of songs is suitable for primary students and it makes them remember words quickly.

Group work is also important in Chinese language class, because students can help each other and make progress together. The Chinese volunteer teachers reflect that there is a common phenomenon in Chinese private schools; that is, the levels of proficiency in Chinese are different between Chinese-Thai students and Thai students. There are many ethnic Chinese students whose ancestors migrated into Thailand from China. Most of the students who are from Chinese immigrant families are likely to have a better ability to use Chinese language, and Chinese culture still exists in their family. They grew up in Thai and Chinese culture, so they have more advantages in learning Chinese language and culture than native Thai students. However, not all Chinese immigrant students are good at Chinese. Some of them are similar to Thai students, because they do not speak Chinese with their family at home. The Chinese immigrant students who are really good at Chinese are minority. Every class just has about 4 or 5 students who can communicate with the volunteer teachers in Chinese fluently.

The Chinese volunteer teachers said they liked to organize group work for students. They divided students into several groups and made sure that every group had at least one Chinese immigrant student who was good at Chinese. This Chinese immigrant student was the group leader and was responsible for helping other students to complete tasks. The teachers said, this method was always used when reviewing the contents. For example, before dictation or quizzes, the teachers would organize group work and let them review together. This form made the Chinese-Thai more active, because they already had basic knowledge of Chinese. If they reviewed the content by themselves, they would feel bored. However, in group work, they were the leaders and have responsibility to help other students. This could make them raise a spirit of responsibility, and be willing to help others which could also increase their knowledge.

What is more, dictations, quizzes, competitions are often used in Chinese classes. The purpose of these activities is to get the knowledge of how students learn and help students to strengthen the new knowledge.

5.1.2 Teaching methods used in Chinese classes of secondary schools

Students in secondary schools are different from primary students and study harder than they do. In Chinese private schools, like Srinakorn Foundation School, Chinese class is compulsory for middle school students and high school students. However, in government schools like Lampang Kanlayanee School, and Rayongwittayakom School, Chinese course is not compulsory for every student. Both of the two schools have 2 Chinese major classes in each grade of high school. The Chinese volunteer teachers said that most students in Chinese major classes in high school wanted to take Chinese examination as their foreign language examination when they took university entrance examinations, because they liked Chinese language and wanted to major in Chinese or Chinese studies at a university. Some of the students plan to go to universities in China. These students choose Chinese language as their voluntary choice rather than a forced situation, so they have clear goals and great enthusiasm and motivation in learning Chinese. Their Chinese level is also quite good.

The Chinese volunteer teachers said that the common teaching method in normal class was also the five-steps method. They focused on sections of drilling and practice. They said the students were mature with their own ideas and the teachers did not have to be strict with them, so the teachers preferred to give more time to the students to practice. Students had more opportunities to do individual learning.

Apart from the common method, other popular methods used in Chinese classes of secondary schools are task-based method, grammar translation method and audiolingual method.

Task-Based Method

Task-based method includes five teaching concepts. The first one is that the language activity must be real. The teachers must provide specific and real language information. The situation and form of the target language must be closer to real life for students to learn, use and master the language. They can also perceive the meaningful language naturally.

The second idea of this method is “learning by doing”. Students acquire language during the process of doing tasks. The tasks must be non-mechanical, and active. The students can engage in naturalistic learning through experiencing and exploring language. Learning by doing can also fully mobilize the enthusiasm and the initiative of students.

The third idea of this method is that the tasks must be systematic. The students will complete a series of tasks to learn language, and there are kinds of relations among these tasks. The contents of these tasks link to each other, and they have the same goal. The fourth idea of this method is that the tasks must be interesting. Because the interesting tasks can stimulate students’ interest and arouse their motivation to complete tasks.

The last idea of this method is there must have a definite result of the task. In general, the definite results may include oral presentation about what the students do and what they get, the written papers about their process and result, etc.

The Chinese volunteer teachers in Rayongwittayakom school and Lampang Kanlayanee School say in Chinese classes, task-based method is commonly used and they give some examples. In class, they have a topic and the task needs to revolve around the topic. For instance, the topic of this class is about shopping, and the goal of this class is to train the students’ speaking ability about enquiring price, quality, usage, bargain, modes of payment, etc. Before starting the task, the teachers will teach the words, sentences that may be used in shopping. The task is buying a thing from their pairs, and finally some groups need to show the process of shopping to classmates. The teachers divide students into several pairs and give them some time to discuss the contents and design their conversation. If they have to use the words or sentences that they have not learned, they are allowed to search from dictionary or mobile phone, and they can also ask the teacher. During the discussion, they need to write down all the contents as their paperwork, including the assumptive place, time, allocation of roles, and the dialogue contents. Then, the teachers will interact with students and ask them if they have problems or difficulties during discussion. Then, the students have time to

practice situational dialogues. Finally, it is the time to check the results. The teachers will ask students to perform without notes in front of classmates, and give them scores based on their performance, pronunciation, and paperwork.

Grammar Translation Method

Grammar translation method was the oldest teaching method in foreign language teaching. This method is translating the target language to native language to develop students' ability to read and write. Using this method, the teacher and students will analyze the grammar of the target language first. Then they need to compare the two languages and translate words by words, sentences by sentences. The teachers will explain the grammar and words in detail so that students can learn the structure of the language. This method focuses on grammar, reading and writing, not on speaking and listening.

However, the Chinese volunteer teachers say that to explain the grammar very clearly, using Chinese language as the instructional language cannot reach the goal. Students cannot understand the complex grammar language in Chinese, and the teachers also cannot use Thai language to explain the complex Chinese grammar for high school students. Knowledge of grammar is very important. In Thailand, there is a test named PAT, and its full name is "Professional and Academic Aptitude Test" which measures students' language ability. And the examination result will be an important certificate to go to universities. PAT test has six languages to choose, that is PAT 7.1 French, PAT 7.2 German, PAT 7.3 Japanese, PAT 7.4 Chinese, PAT 7.5 Arabic and PAT 7.6 Pali. The Chinese volunteer teachers say the students they teach would take PAT 7.4 test, because Chinese language is their main foreign language in high school. However, the PAT 7.4 is difficult and grammar makes up a large proportion in this test. Hence, teaching grammar is an important task for teachers. The Chinese volunteer teachers in both schools say the local Chinese teachers and the Chinese volunteer teachers have different teaching assignments. The local Thai teachers take the responsibility of teaching grammar, reading and writing. And the Chinese volunteer teachers take the responsibility of teaching speaking, listening and cultural matter. Hence, although Chinese volunteer teachers do not use grammar teaching method, the local Chinese

teachers like to use this method to teach students grammar. If The local Chinese teachers use Thai language as the main instructional language, without the barrier of language, the students would get a better learning result. This method is traditional, but it is necessary and still popular in Chinese teaching of Thai high schools.

Audiolingual Method

Audiolingual method, as the name implies, emphasizes listening and speaking. This method claims that listening and speaking abilities are the basis for all language activities, so cultivating the abilities of listening and speaking should be put in the first place in foreign language teaching.

What we mention above is that the Chinese volunteer teachers take the main responsibility of teaching listening and speaking, so they often use audiolingual method in their Chinese classes. When they teach the new contents, they will read first and ask students to read after them. Apart from new words, the sentence patterns are also important contents. The teachers ask students to drill and practice sample sentences many times to remember the usage of sentence patterns. Because this method emphasizes cultivating students' oral ability, in class, the teachers give students enough time to practice speaking and let every student speak. When discovering mistakes, the teachers will correct them promptly. Apart from listening to the teachers' pronunciation and speaking, sometimes, the teachers also show movies, TV shows, records to students to feel and improve their sense of Chinese language.

5.2 Methods to spread Chinese culture in Confucius Classrooms

Through interviews with the leader of Confucius Classrooms and the Chinese volunteer teachers, the author finds that spreading Chinese culture in Thailand has two main methods. There is no big difference between primary schools and secondary schools. The first method is spreading Chinese culture through the Chinese volunteer teachers in normal classes and the second method is through the various cultural activities of Confucius Classrooms.

The Chinese volunteer teachers have responsibilities of teaching Chinese language and spreading Chinese culture. In their normal classes, beside teaching Chinese language, they also bring Chinese culture to classes. The ways of spreading Chinese culture in classes are various. For example, Chinese volunteer teachers can organize culture experience lessons. In culture experience lessons, teachers do not focus on improving students' Chinese language, but introducing Chinese culture to students. The Chinese volunteer teachers reflect that students like cultural experience lessons very much, because they show great enthusiasm in Chinese culture. In general, the teachers organize cultural classes about 5 times in one academic term. The topic of culture can be decided by teachers and students. After they have decided the topic, the teachers prepare all the teaching aids. The common topics are Chinese paper-cut, weaving Chinese knots, Chinese calligraphy, Beijing opera, Tai Chi, operatic face painting, Chinese traditional painting, watching Chinese movies, learning Chinese songs, shuttlecock kicking, etc. Because the contents are various, teachers and students can discuss and decide a topic. Before the Chinese teachers came to Thailand, Hanban gave every volunteer teachers a cultural pack which included many cultural teaching aids such as Chinese writing brush, Chinese rice paper, Chinese ink, shuttlecock, colorful strings, cucurbit flute and so on. The Chinese volunteer teachers can use these aids and materials to organize cultural experience class for students. For example, if they want to learn how to weave Chinese knots, firstly, the teachers will introduce the information about Chinese knots, like its origin, development process, and implied meaning. The teachers can show some finished Chinese knots to students. Then, the teachers give students colorful strings and teach students how to do it. Finally, the teachers will check the works of the students and let students keep them.

Spreading Chinese culture in normal class is an effective way for students to touch Chinese culture. The Chinese culture classes make the atmosphere of learning Chinese more active and interesting, so students are willing to join and they can get the knowledge about Chinese culture easily.

As Chinese culture center, the main responsibility of Confucius Classrooms is spreading Chinese culture, and Confucius Classrooms have indeed made contributions

to spread Chinese culture to Thai students. The forms of spreading Chinese culture are diverse. Through the interviews, the author finds that although the 4 sample Confucius Classrooms have some differences, they have the same main projects.

Festival Activity

Confucius Classrooms usually organize Chinese cultural activities at every Chinese traditional festival, like Spring Festival, the Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, and the Mid-Autumn Festival. On that day, Confucius Classroom will organize a big activity for all Thai students who are interested in it. There will be an introduction of the festival and interesting experiencing events. For example, on Dragon Boat Festival day (See Figure 5.5), students can experience wrapping up Zongzi (See Figure 5.6), which is a traditional Chinese food made of sticky rice and fresh bamboo leaves, because Chinese people have the custom of eating Zongzi on this day. At the Mid-Autumn Festival, teachers in Confucius Classrooms prepare mooncakes for Thai teachers and students. Sometimes, on Chinese festival day, Confucius Classrooms also organize some small competitions themed with the festivals in school. For example, they often hold drawing contests, Chinese speech contests, and Chinese compositions on the festival day. The topic of the entries must be related to this festival and the outstanding participants can get prizes.



Figure 5. 5 Students were taking part in “Dragon Boat Races” at Confucius Classroom at Xingmin School

Source:<http://www.hanbanthai.org/kongziketang/ccxm/news/2014-06-04/3165.html>



Figure 5. 6 Students were learning how to wrap Zongzi at Confucius Classroom at Lampang Kanlayanee School

Source: http://www.hanban.org/article/2015-06/16/content_605106.htm

Spring Festival is the biggest festival in China. Hence, the activities to celebrate Spring Festival in Confucius Classrooms are also most swinging and attractive. On that day, the whole school do not have classes. Teachers and students are willing to celebrate Chinese New Year together. The activities on this day include kinds of games, competitions, making dumplings, and some students and Chinese teachers also show performances to Thai teachers and other students. On Spring Festival days, some of the Thai teachers also wear Chinese traditional clothes like cheongsam and Tang suit.

In Chinese private schools, the celebrations tend to be more ceremonious. For example, in Srinakorn Foundation School, the volunteer teachers of Confucius Classroom and Thai teachers will co-organize an event which is open to the public (See Figure 5.7,5.8,5.9) The people who are interested in Chinese culture can take part and enjoy

the Chinese performance. The celebrations will continue for several days, and Confucius Classroom also invites the Chinese art troupes to perform (See Figure 5.10). Every year, the Chinese celebrating activities attract many people, and Thai TV stations also report the event.



Figure 5. 7 Chinese New Year Celebration of Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School in 2018

Source: Provided by official wechat account of Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School



Figure 5. 8 Thai students and their family were learning Chinese calligraphy in Chinese New Year Celebration of Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School in 2018

Source: Provided by official wechat account of Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School



Figure 5. 9 Thai student was giving “Gu Zheng” performance in Chinese New Year Celebration in 2018

Source: Provide by official wechat account of Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School



Figure 5. 10 Chinese Culture Land-Talented Youth Troupe were giving “culture interchange performance” at Srinakorn Foundation School
Source: Provided by Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School

In addition to organizing activities on Chinese festival days, Confucius Classrooms also hold some activities on Thai important festival days to deepen the mutual understandings. For example, on the Father’s Day of Thailand, Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School organized drawing competition. The paints must reflect the good relationship between Thailand and China (See Figure 5.11). Through these kinds of interesting activities, more and more students participate in Confucius Classrooms and the Chinese cultural atmosphere in schools seem to become stronger and stronger.



Figure 5. 11 Thai students' paints

Source: The picture was taken in December 2017 at Srinakorn Foundation School by the author

Chinese competitions

Confucius Classrooms spread Chinese culture and expand the influence by organizing big Chinese language and culture competitions for the Thai students. The competitions are for all the students who like Chinese language and culture. The competitions have become golden events of every Confucius Classroom.

In Srinakorn Foundation School, there is a “Srinakorn-Cup” and “Chinese Bridge” (See Figure 5.12) Chinese language and culture competition which opens to all students in southern Thailand. In Xingming School, there is a “Chinese Bridge” competition which is for the students in northern Thailand. In Rayongwittayakom School, they organize “Shamei-Cup” Chinese language and culture competition for students in eastern Thailand. In Lampang Kanlayanee School, they have “Chinese Drama Festival” and composition contest for the secondary school students in northern Thailand.



Figure 5. 12 A Thai student was performing Chinese traditional dance in the 8th Chinese Bridge Chinese competition at Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School

Source: Provided by Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School

Apart from those competitions, some Confucius Classrooms also provide “Chinese Camp” activities which open to the schools in the regions, and the contents include Chinese cultural experiences, games, performances and so on. Confucius Classrooms usually invite other schools to join together.

These golden projects greatly promote the influence of Chinese language and culture. Confucius Classrooms can be considered as the Chinese center and leader in different regions and contribute to the development of Chinese language teaching and learning in Thailand.

Study&Travel in China

All the 4 sample Confucius Classrooms have the program for study and travel in China every year (See Figure 5.13). The Confucius Classrooms have the Chinese partner

schools and institutes, so that every year the Chinese partners provide supports to exchange students. In general, the time of the program is about 2 weeks. Students who are interested in this program can take part. They need to pay for some portion of the costs. Students can go to China to travel, take Chinese classes in Chinese schools, and make friends with Chinese students. Study & Travel program is a popular program that attracts more and more students. Confucius Classrooms provides good opportunities for them to touch real China, communicate with more Chinese people and directly feel Chinese culture. In China, students can use what they learned in Chinese classes and gain new knowledge about China which cannot be found in the textbooks.



Figure 5. 13 Thai students were traveling in Beijing, China

Source: Provided by official wechat account of Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School

Confucius Institutes also provide scholarships for Thai outstanding students to learn in China. There are many types of scholarships including short-term and long-term kinds. Students can apply for the scholarship according to their personal condition. Confucius Classroom is a platform and channel for students to get the information and help students to apply. Every year, the Confucius Classrooms select excellent students and

recommend them to learn at certain Chinese universities with full scholarship of a 4-year bachelor degree.

HSK, HSKK, YCT Training and Test

HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi) is China's only standardized Chinese proficiency test for non-native speakers. HSKK (Hanyu Shuiping Kouyu Kaoshi) is the Chinese oral test. YCT (Youth Chinese Test) is the Chinese proficiency for primary students and secondary students. In general, the primary students take YCT and secondary students take HSK and HSKK. The score of these test is a very important reference for students to learn in China or prove their Chinese level. If students want to go to universities in China and apply for Confucius Institute scholarship, they must pass a specific level. The language requirements in different universities are somewhat different, but in general, students need to pass HSK 4 or 5. The highest level of HSK is 6.



Figure 5. 14 HSK test at Confucius Classroom at Lampang Kanlayanee School
Source: <http://www.hanbanthai.org/kongziketang/ccglyn/news/2016-12-07/6131.html>

Confucius Classrooms are the test centers, and will organize tests regularly (See Figure 5.14). Before taking tests, Confucius Classrooms will arrange and conduct the training courses. The volunteer teachers and local Chinese teachers will coach students together. The coaching contents include vocabulary, grammar, sentences, listening skills, reading

skills and writing skills. Confucius Classrooms will provide model tests to help students adapt to the tests and get the higher scores.

5.3 The evaluation of teaching results

Although Chinese volunteer teachers use various teaching methods to teach Chinese language and Confucius Classrooms organize various activities to spread Chinese culture, however, it is also important to assess their teaching results.

I selected 50 Thai students randomly from the 4 sample schools to test their Chinese level and knowledge about Chinese culture. The results can be used to assess the teaching achievements of Chinese volunteers and Confucius Classrooms. Among these 50 students, there were 20 primary students of 4th grade to 6th grade and 30 senior students of high schools. Among the 20 primary students, there were 7 Thai Chinese students. Because Srinakorn Foundation School and Xingmin School are Chinese private schools, there are more Thai Chinese students than in other schools.

I asked them 11 Chinese cultural questions in Chinese, and they had to answer me in Chinese. The questions referred to various aspects of China, such as geographical knowledge, historical knowledge, cultural knowledge, folk knowledge and so on. Through their answers, I evaluated their knowledge of Chinese language and culture into three levels: poor, intermediate, and good. In the process of culture evaluation, I focused on their answers. In the process of language evaluation, I focused on their pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and fluency. The detailed criterion has been described in the third chapter. Below is the result of the Chinese language and culture test.

Table 5. 1 The result of testing primary students' Chinese language level

Chinese Language Test			
Level	Poor	Intermediate	Good
Number	11	3	6
Percentage	55%	15%	30%

Table 5. 2 The result of testing primary students' knowledge about Chinese culture

Chinese Culture Test			
Level	Poor	Intermediate	Good
Number	13	4	3
Percentage	65%	20%	15%

It is obvious that according to the evaluation criteria, most primary students' level of Chinese language and culture is poor. As for the language test, there are 30% of the students who can get good level. Only 15% of students get the good level in the culture test. Altogether, there are just 3 students who are good at both Chinese language and Chinese culture. All of them are Thai Chinese, and one of whom is Malaysian Chinese but grew up in Thailand. At home, they speak both Thai and Chinese with their families, who still maintain Chinese traditional customs. Although they do not consider themselves as Chinese people, it is an undeniable fact that they are related to China and have obtained some knowledge of Chinese language and culture before they came to the school. After they come to the Chinese private schools, they have more opportunities to learn Chinese language and contact with Chinese culture, so that their Chinese level is becoming higher. They have more advantages than other Thai students

in learning Chinese language and culture. It is not surprising that they are good at Chinese language and culture.

The students who get good level in Chinese language test and intermediate level in Chinese culture, two of them are Chinese-Thai and another one is Thai. They can speak Chinese well but they did not have enough knowledge of Chinese culture.

One of the 3 students who get intermediate level of Chinese language also get intermediate level of Chinese culture and other 2 students get poor level of Chinese culture. And the rest of the students are poor at Chinese language and culture. They accounted for a large proportion.

From the data, we can say that, in general, the level of Chinese language is positively correlated with the knowledge of Chinese culture. The students who are good at Chinese language also have good knowledge about Chinese culture. But as for those primary students, Chinese culture is more difficult than Chinese language, and Chinese background is an important factor that need to be considered. Thai Chinese students generally have higher level of Chinese language and culture than other Thai students. This phenomenon is related to their growing environment and family education. The result also shows that among primary students, most of them do not have a good command of Chinese language and have not accumulated enough knowledge of Chinese culture. It is easy to understand that primary students are too young and that they are still on the entry stage of learning Chinese language and culture. In primary schools, the most important task of Chinese teachers is to stimulate students' interests in Chinese language and culture and help them to have a good foundation of Chinese.

As can be seen above, concerning the primary school students, the result shows that most of them get low scores in the test. I thought that the test might be more difficult for primary students. Therefore, I asked them to read Chinese books after the interview. I chose the contents of Chinese textbooks randomly and asked them to read. The result of the test after that shows that 13 students were able to read fluently but seven of them could not. The small extra test implies that most students can have a good master of what they learn from textbooks, but that they cannot apply the contents that they learned

to real communication. Hence, Chinese volunteer teachers should update their teaching methods to improve students' communicative skills.

Concerning secondary school students, they can choose one foreign language as their major, I just selected senior students who were in Chinese major classes in high schools. Thirty students were selected randomly. Below is the result of testing their Chinese language level and knowledge of Chinese culture.

Table 5. 3 The results of testing secondary students' Chinese language level
Chinese Language Test

Level	Poor	Intermediate	Good
Number	2	18	10
Percentage	6.7%	60%	33.3%

Table 5. 4 The result of testing secondary students' knowledge about Chinese culture
Chinese Culture Test

Level	Poor	Intermediate	Good
Number	5	16	9
Percentage	16.7%	53.3%	30%

From the result, it is obvious that most students have intermediate and good level of Chinese language and culture. Similar to the primary students, these students are found to have more difficulty in Chinese culture than language. The level of Chinese language also positively correlate with the knowledge of Chinese culture. The students who are good at Chinese language also have more knowledge about Chinese culture. What is different with primary students is that for high school students, the grammar,

vocabulary, and sentence structure are better. Some of them can communicate with me fluently and naturally, but with some Thai accent.

For these high school students, it is found that interest and motivation are the most important factors that have influence on their Chinese learning outcomes. Among these 30 students, 23 students have a plan to study at a university in China. They choose the Chinese language as their major in high school because they want to have a good foundation for future studying and living in China. Hanban will provide Confucius Institute Scholarships that they can apply for. That is why they are studying hard to pass HSK tests in order to have an opportunity to further their study in Chinese language and culture. The other seven students are interested in Chinese culture and they want to major in a field related to China at a Thai university. They said learning Chinese well could help them find a good job in the future. These can be considered as their motivation. Because of this motivation, they learn Chinese language and culture harder and harder. Among these students, I am deeply impressed by one of them. She is a Thai girl and has not learned Chinese language before high school. Because she is really interested in Chinese drama, arts and pop stars, she decides to transfer to study in Lampang Kanlaynee School. She says this school has Confucius Classroom which is famous for teaching Chinese in the local area. Within two years of learning at this school, she has a good command of Chinese. In my test, for both Chinese language level and knowledge about Chinese culture, she gets a good level. She also has the plan to study in China after graduating from high school. Hence, interest and motivation are very important in learning a foreign language. With the efforts of Confucius Classrooms, Chinese volunteer teachers, Thai Chinese language teachers and students, Chinese teaching and learning in high school achieve some success.

It should be noted that when testing students' knowledge about Chinese culture, the students are supposed to answer the questions in Chinese. However, in the real test, I find most of the students know the right answer in Thai, but they could not speak out in Chinese because their vocabulary is inadequate. For example, they know that during Spring Festival, Chinese people will worship ancestors. They can answer: ไหว้บรรพบุรุษ,

but they cannot answer: 拜祖先(bàizǔxiān). Hence, Chinese volunteer teachers should increase students' vocabulary and improve their capability of tests.

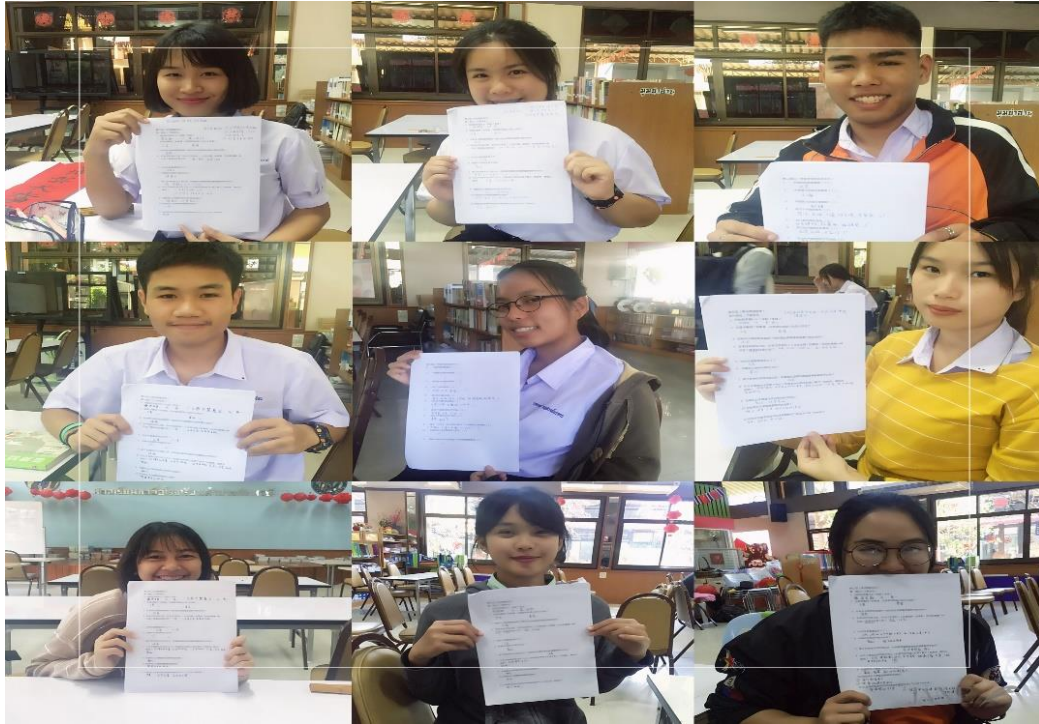


Figure 5. 15 Interviewees at Confucius Classroom at Lampang Kanlayanee School
Source: These pictures were taken by the author in January 2018

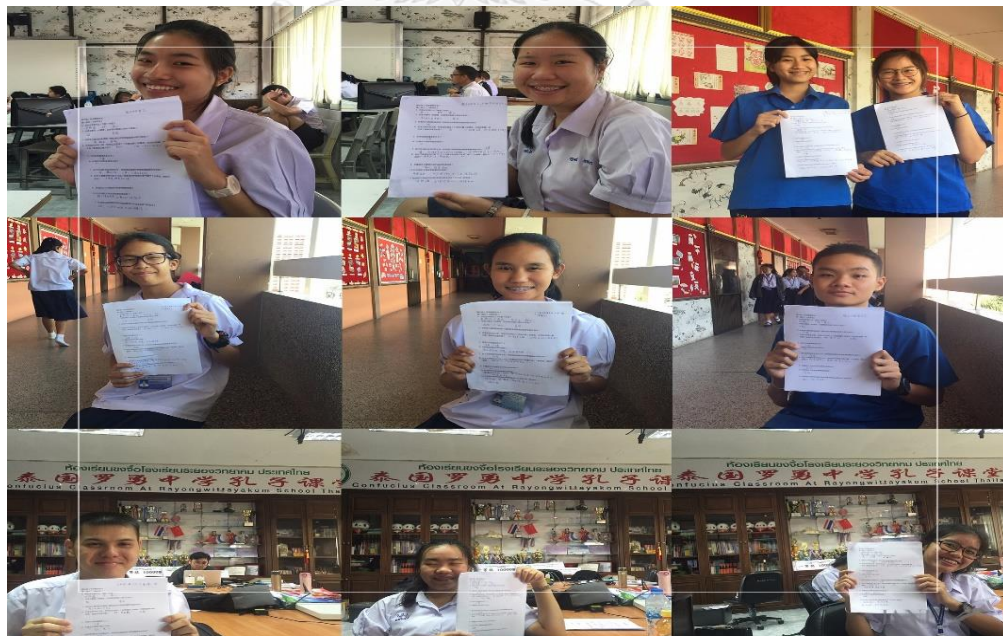


Figure 5. 16 Interviewees at Confucius Classroom at Rayongwittayakom School
Source: These pictures were taken by the author in February 2018

5.3.1 Analysis of the teaching results

Chinese volunteer teachers and Confucius Classrooms always dedicate to improve Thai students' Chinese language level and knowledge about Chinese culture. However, the data seem to show that many students still could not master Chinese well. This implies that there are still some problems to be solved in Thai schools. The problems are probably the main causes of the low proficiency in Chinese in Thai schools.

The problem of Chinese volunteer teachers

Because Chinese volunteer teachers are selected from graduates of universities, and many of them do not major in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Hence, they do not have real teaching experiences and strong teaching abilities. What is more, their ability in classroom management needs to be improved. All the Chinese volunteer teachers are young and most of the students are not afraid of them, so their classes are often chaotic, especially in the primary schools. Thai teachers say sometimes they have to help Chinese volunteer teachers manage classrooms. What is more, Thai teachers also mention that some volunteer teachers are short of senses of conviction and responsibility. For example, when they meet challenges in teaching, they do not pay attention to solving them, and sometimes they slack off at work. However, this is individual phenomena. Only a few volunteer teachers are like this. Most of them are dedicated.

What is more, the short tenure of Chinese volunteer teachers is also a big problem. From the survey of Chinese volunteer teachers, we learn that almost 76% of volunteer teachers just work for one academic year and return to China. Actually, one academic year is about just 10 months. Thai teachers spend some of the time helping new volunteer teachers to familiarize themselves with the life and work in Thailand. Some volunteer teachers need to take about 2 or 3 months to adjust to the life in Thailand, and after the adjustment period, the remaining time is not much. They will go back to China and other new volunteer teachers will come here again. The quick mobility of volunteer teachers lead to some trouble. The most outstanding trouble is that students need to adapt to new Chinese teachers every year, and it is not good for the continuity of learning.

In addition, the medium of instruction is also a problem for Chinese volunteer teachers. Many students reflect that they cannot understand what the Chinese volunteer teachers teach and they prefer Thai teachers' classes. Most Chinese volunteer teachers also reflect that in initial stage, language is the biggest barrier and challenge for them. The volunteer teachers who teach primary students choose to use Chinese as main medium of instruction with a little Thai which is just restricted to some directive words. In primary classes, the content is simple and the teachers do not need to talk much. Therefore, the volunteer teachers use Chinese as the medium of instruction, but after a while, when they have learned more Thai language, they would use Thai as another medium of instruction in classes.

The situation of middle school and high school is different. The content to be learned is more difficult than that of primary school. Especially for the high school students, they need to focus on complex grammar, vocabulary, the usage of expressions, essay writing and so on. Particularly, grammar is a very important and difficult part in Chinese learning. It requires that teachers have a good multilingual ability to explain clearly. Mostly, when the teachers teach the main content, they would like to explain it in Chinese mainly, and with some Thai and English to help students understand more clearly. They find that English cannot be a very efficient intermediate language. It is hard for them to express their knowledge and be understood by Thai students because English is not their mother language and not the mother tongue of Thai students, either. Therefore, the Chinese volunteer teachers need to improve their Thai ability or ask the Thai teachers to help them.

Problems of Chinese teaching of Thai schools

Through the field trip and interviewing the teachers, I summarize that there are two big problems of Chinese teaching in Thailand. The first problem is the lack of systemic teaching materials. At present, the teaching materials are different in different schools. There is not a series of standard Chinese textbooks in Thai schools. The popular textbooks in primary schools are *Easy Chinese*, *You Er Han Yu*, *Han Yu*. The popular textbooks in secondary schools are *Experiencing Chinese*, and *Conversational Chinese 301*.

Because the Ministry of Education of Thailand does not have an evaluation criterion for Chinese teaching and learning, and there are various kinds of Chinese textbooks in the market, the teachers who are in charge of Chinese teaching and learning have the right to choose textbooks for students. This leads to confusion in the teaching materials. Because of the various Chinese textbooks in the market, the teachers may not choose suitable textbooks. There exists a strange phenomenon in some schools. That is, textbooks are not systemic. For example, in Srinakorn Foundation School, the first and second grade students use *Youer Hnayu*, but students beyond second grade use *Hanyu*. Secondary students use *Experiencing Chinese*. Unfortunately, *Youer Hnayu*, *Hanyu* and *Experiencing Chinese* are not in the same series. The confusion of textbooks has the problem in link-up of learning content, which can lead to ineffective process in learning Chinese language.


Moreover, the content of some textbooks like *Hanyu* (See Figure 6.3, 6.4) is outmoded and unpractical. The new words have PinYin but the texts do not have 'PinYin'. It is very inconvenient for primary students to read the texts and pronounce clearly. What is more, the content is not interactive because of lacking of conversation and practice parts. The content of one lesson just has sentence part, text part and word part.

11

我们在海边玩沙子

昨天是星期天，爸爸妈妈不上班。我们全家一起去海边玩。海边的风景美极了！天很蓝，海也很蓝，很多人在海里游泳。

爸爸和妈妈在海边打排球，我和弟弟在海边玩沙子，妹妹在海边晒太阳。这一天好玩极了！



记生词

1. 海 <small>ทะเล</small> hǎi 3	8. 上班 <small>เจ้านาง / เรือนาง</small> shàng bān 10
2. 玩 <small>เล่น</small> wán 2	9. 全 <small>ทั้งหมด</small> quán 11
3. 沙子 <small>ทราย</small> shāzi 2	10. 风景 <small>ทิวทัศน์</small> fēngjǐng 7
4. 工作 <small>ทำงาน</small> gōngzuò 7	11. 美 <small>สวย</small> měi 12
5. ...极了 <small>สุดแล้ว / สุดแล้ว</small> jíle 6	12. 游泳 <small>ว่ายน้ำ</small> yóuyǒng 1
6. 幅 <small>ผ้า</small> fú 4	13. 晒 <small>ตาก</small> shài 13
7. 公司 <small>บริษัท</small> gōngsī 4	14. 太阳 <small>ดวงอาทิตย์</small> tàiyáng 14

qǐng miáo chū hàn zì zhōng de “扌”。

请描出汉字中的“扌”。

把 打 排 操

Figure 5. 17 Lesson 11 of the third volume of Hanyu
 Source: Provided by a Chinese volunteer teacher at Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School

12

小红也学中文

小红是小华的同学，也是小华的好朋友。小华学中文，小红也学中文。他们的爱好也一样，小华喜欢动画片，小红也喜欢。周末他们常常看动画片。




9

小红喜欢看电影

季句子

奶奶喜欢听京剧。
小强喜欢看电影。



姐姐爱唱歌。
弟弟爱吃糖。

妹妹爱画画儿，不爱写字。
爷爷喜欢喝茶，不喜欢喝可乐。




Figure 5. 18 Lesson 12 and 9 of the third volume of Hanyu
Source: Provided by a Chinese volunteer teacher at Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn
Foundation School

In some schools, the students even do not have textbooks. The teachers need to prepare the teaching content by themselves. Some Chinese volunteer teachers do not have enough teaching experiences, so they may not find suitable and effective content for students. Also, the content they find may have been taught by the former teachers. Hence, students have chance to learn very little.

The second problem is unreasonable arrangement of Chinese classes. The Ministry of Education of Thailand does not have a regulation about Chinese teaching time. Schools can arrange a Chinese curriculum by themselves. In Chinese private schools, they pay more attention to the development of Chinese teaching, so they arrange more Chinese classes in schedule and the Chinese course is compulsory. However, in government schools, the Chinese course is just elective. For example, in the middle school department of Lampang Kanlayanee School, students of the 7th grade need to learn Chinese as their compulsory course, and students of the 8th grade need to learn Japanese as their compulsory and students of the 9th grade need to learn Korean and French as their compulsory. I think the arrangement of foreign languages is very unreasonable because learning a language is a long-time process. One language needs more than one year to master. Because the different schools have different arrangement of Chinese courses, students transferred into other schools tend to have trouble in learning Chinese continually.

5.4 Summary of the chapter

The teaching methods of Chinese teaching is indeed various. Different schools can choose particular teaching methods according to their different needs of the different level students. Primary students need to cultivate interests on Chinese language and culture, so that teachers choose to use interesting methods like audio-visual method and organize classroom activities, games for students in class to develop their ability to communicate. Secondary students put stress on entering a higher school, and the

learning contents are more difficult, so the teachers choose to use grammar-based method, task-based method and audiolingual method. In secondary schools, Thai Chinese teachers and the Chinese volunteer teachers have the cooperation. Chinese volunteer teachers are responsible for the verbal communication skills, like listening, speaking and cultural knowledge, and Thai teachers are responsible for the written communication skills like grammar, reading and writing. It is a very reasonable way for both teachers and students.

As for spreading Chinese culture, the Chinese volunteer teachers and Confucius Classrooms have made efforts. The Chinese volunteer teachers organize Chinese cultural classes for Thai students to experience Chinese culture in normal times. Confucius Classrooms hold various kinds of Chinese activities and competitions regularly to influence more students. They provide opportunities for students to travel and study in China which can really benefit Thai students who are interested in China.

However, in Thai schools, there are still some problems which need to be solved. The problems of Chinese volunteer teachers, textbooks, and arrangement of Chinese classes should be attracted attentions. Thai schools and Confucius Classrooms should cooperate to find the solutions.

CHAPTER VI

CONTRIBUTIONS OF CONFUCIUS CLASSROOMS TO MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THAI AND CHINESE PEOPLE

After nearly a decade of development, Confucius Classrooms have made some success in Thailand. The success of Confucius Classrooms is multifaceted. The direct beneficiaries are Thai students because Confucius Classrooms provide more opportunities and learning resources for Thai students to contact with Chinese culture and language. Through various projects of Confucius Classrooms, more and more Thai students become interested in learning Chinese. Confucius Classrooms cultivate their interests, broaden their horizons, enhance their understandings about Chinese culture and improve their ability in Chinese language. Apart from students, Chinese teachers and Thai teachers also know each other's culture better and their relationships are promoted. Chinese teachers can learn Thai language and culture with Thai teachers and Thai teachers also improve their Chinese language level and know more about China in the process of getting along with Chinese teachers. In addition, some activities like Chinese New Year Celebration, exchanging students, etc. also increase mutual understanding between Thai and Chinese people.

6.1 Contributions of Confucius Classrooms to Thai students

Through the interview, I can summarize the contributions of Confucius Classrooms to Thai students into three aspects: improving Thai students' Chinese language ability, helping Thai students understand Chinese culture better, and providing more opportunities for Thai students to contact China.

As for improving Thai students' Chinese language ability, Hanban sends Chinese volunteer teachers to Confucius Classrooms every year. The Chinese volunteer teachers take main responsibility of teaching Chinese language to Thai students. Although some of them lack teaching experience, to some extent, they can make up for a shortage of Chinese language teachers in Thai schools. The Chinese volunteer teachers explore

various and suitable teaching methods to improve Thai students' Chinese language proficiency. Because most of them cannot use Thai language well, they mainly take responsibility of teaching speaking and listening, while Thai teachers teach complex grammar, reading and writing. Thai students learn the standard Chinese pronunciation from their Chinese volunteer teachers and have opportunities to talk with Chinese. What is more, Hanban provides kinds of Chinese books like Chinese-Thai dictionaries, Chinese history books, grammar practice books and other learning resources which can enrich Thai students' knowledge about Chinese culture and improve their Chinese language proficiency.

If Thai students want to go to study in China, they must take these tests provided by Confucius Classrooms: HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi), which is China's only standardized Chinese proficiency test for non-native speakers, HSKK (Hanyu Shuiping Kouyu Kaoshi) a Chinese oral test, or YCT (Youth Chinese Test), the Chinese proficiency for primary and secondary students. Confucius Classrooms serve as test centers which provide big convenience for students, especially those who want to apply for a bachelor's degree study at Chinese universities. Moreover, before taking the tests, Chinese volunteer teachers normally give tutorials to Thai students concerning vocabulary, grammar, sentences, listening skills, reading skills and writing skills. Confucius Classrooms also provide model tests to help students adapt to the tests and get higher scores. The tests and training courses concentrate on improving students' Chinese language proficiency. Among the fifty students I interviewed, forty-six have taken HSK or YCT test. Most of them have taken more than three times. The other four students who have not taken the tests were primary school students at Xingmin School. Below is the statistical result of students' best level of the test.

Table 6. 1 The situation of the highest level that primary school students got in the test "YCT"

Level	YCT 1	YCT 2	YCT 3	YCT 4
Number	0	6	5	5

Table 6. 2 The situation of the highest level that secondary school students got in the test “HSK”

Level	HSK 1	HSK 2	HSK 3	HSK 4	HSK 5	HSK 6
Number	0	2	15	11	2	0

From the data, we can see that the penetration rate of YCT and HSK is very high. Students like to take these standardized tests to assess their Chinese level. The heads of Confucius Classrooms also mentioned that the number of students taking tests kept increasing and they would give students the discount of test fee. The increasing number of test-takers can illustrate that more and more students have confidence in learning Chinese, and want to find their own shortcomings and get progress.

As for helping Thai students understand Chinese culture better, the main efforts of Confucius Classrooms are organizing various activities and competitions. All the fifty students have taken part in the cultural activities of Confucius Classrooms. Most of them said they liked the activities because they could learn new knowledge and have fun. Confucius Classrooms organize the activities regularly and the forms of activities are various. Moreover, Confucius Classrooms also hold Chinese competitions for Thai students to deepen their understanding about Chinese culture. The same competition of the four Confucius Classrooms is the Qualifying competition of “Chinese Bridge-Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign Secondary School Students”. The competition is divided into Chinese speech, Chinese knowledge test, Chinese talent show and so on. What is more, different Confucius Classrooms also have their own gold competitions. The competitions were big and prestigious which attracted many students.

For example, “Srinakorn-Cup” Chinese competition at Srinakorn Foundation School is a very famous competition in Southern region. The competition gets supports from Hanban, and Consulate-General of the People’s Republic of China in Songkhla. Until 2017, this competition has already been held successfully for seven years, and the scale

and the number of takers keep increasing. In 2017, more than 2100 students from 64 schools in 11 provinces of Southern region have taken part in the competition and 220 students got the first prizes. Moreover, after competition, Southwest University and Chinese Language and Culture School of Kunming provided kinds of scholarship opportunities for students who achieved excellent results in the competition. Among the 20 students I interviewed at Srinakorn Foundation School, 13 students have taken part in the competition and 2 secondary school students have gotten first prizes in the events: speech and singing. Students said all the contestants would get kinds of awards, and before competition, Chinese teachers would give them tutorials for about one month. They got new knowledge and progress during the training and became more interested in learning Chinese.

Besides, Confucius Classroom at Rayongwittayakom School has already organized “Samet-Cup” Chinese talent competition for five years. The last competition was held on 11th January 2018, and approximately 400 students from 26 schools in Eastern region have taken part in it. The headmaster of Rayongwittayakom School, Mr. Teerawat Singhabud said “Samet-Cup” has become a brand project of the school, and promoted the development of Chinese teaching and learning in Eastern region. The competition gives students opportunity to show their talents and becomes increasingly popular. The various cultural activities and competitions promoted students’ knowledge about Chinese culture and helped them understanding China better.

Moreover, Confucius Classrooms always focus on providing more opportunities for Thai students to contact China. The “Travel & Study in China” Program is a popular project. Students can go to China to travel with their Chinese teachers about two weeks, take Chinese classes in Chinese schools, and make friends with Chinese students. Confucius Classrooms provide such a good opportunity for them to touch real China, communicate with more Chinese people and directly feel Chinese culture. What is more, Confucius Classrooms also have cooperation with Chinese universities to cultivate Thai students. For example, Confucius Classroom at Rayongwittayakom School has cooperation of language and culture education with Northwest University. Outstanding Thai students have opportunity to learn Chinese language and culture in

Northwest University for one academic term. Besides, Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School also has the similar cooperation with Southwest University. Confucius Classroom at Lampang Kanlayanee School has the cooperation with the Middle School attached to Heibei Normal University. All the time, Confucius Classrooms take their own advantages to positively find and contact Chinese partners to create more opportunities for Thai students to touch with China directly.

In addition, as for students who have a plan to learn at Chinese universities, Confucius Institute would help them to apply for Confucius Institute Scholarship. Every year, some outstanding students get full scholarships of a 4-year bachelor degree at Chinese universities with the help of Confucius Classrooms. Most of the high school students I interviewed said they got broad knowledge about China because of Confucius Classrooms and they would like to apply for learning in Chinese universities through Confucius Classrooms.

In a word, Confucius Classrooms indeed made contributions to Thai students. The activities of Confucius Classrooms are dedicated to serve students. Confucius Classrooms give Thai students more resources and better condition to learn Chinese language and culture, and provide them more opportunities and conveniences to contact China and Chinese people.

6.2 Contributions of Confucius Classrooms to Thai teachers

In total, I interviewed 11 Thai teachers who taught Chinese language in their schools in order to learn about their attitudes towards Confucius Classrooms. All Thai teachers said that their Chinese language and knowledge about Chinese culture improved because of Confucius Classrooms and Chinese volunteer teachers. Confucius Classrooms regularly held training courses for Thai teachers. The contents of training courses included improving teaching methods, intensive language training, Chinese talent and skill cultivating and so on. Confucius Classrooms sometimes invited experts to train them, so that their Chinese language level and knowledge of Chinese culture would improve. In addition, Confucius Classrooms and schools provide opportunities for Thai teachers to train and study in China for a short period to improve their ability

of Chinese language and culture during summer holidays. In common workdays, Thai teachers and Chinese volunteer teachers often had cooperation in teaching. They consulted and worked together. This could also improve the Chinese level of Thai teachers and enhanced mutual understandings between Thai teachers and Chinese volunteer teachers. Especially in Srinakorn Foundation School and Rayongwittayakom School, Thai teachers and Chinese volunteer teachers were in the same office, so they had more opportunities to communicate and increase affection. In Langpang Kanlayanee School and Xingming School, although Chinese volunteer teachers had different offices, they and Thai teachers also had cooperation in organizing activities and exchanging working experiences. Moreover, through organizing and joining the cultural activities of Confucius Classrooms, Thai teachers said they knew better about Chinese culture. They could often get the new knowledge from Confucius Classrooms.

As for the attitudes towards Confucius Classrooms and Chinese volunteer teachers, all Thai teachers generally had a positive attitude, but they also pointed out some problems of them. For the good part, Thai teachers said that before Confucius Classrooms were established, the school did not have enough resources to expand the scale of teaching Chinese language, up to the status of a subject in the school, and that students' enthusiasm of learning Chinese was not high then. After Confucius Classroom was established, the school got support from both Hanban and the Ministry of Education of Thailand in developing Chinese teaching and learning. Hanban provided fund, teaching materials, teaching equipment and teachers. Confucius Classrooms often organized various activities, competitions to spread Chinese culture and improve students' Chinese level. The interesting activities attracted more and more students to take part in, which greatly stimulated students' interest in learning Chinese. The strong atmosphere of Chinese learning also influenced other surrounding schools. Confucius Classrooms helped other schools in developing Chinese teaching and learning through various ways, such as donating Chinese books and teaching materials to them, inviting students and teachers of other schools to join the activities and competitions, helping train teachers of other schools, providing opportunities for students of other schools to learn in China and so on. The efforts of Confucius Classrooms not only promoted the Chinese teaching and learning in their own school, but also made contributions to the

development of Chinese teaching and learning in the whole region. Confucius Classrooms helped enlarge social influence and raised awareness of the school. Therefore, it can be concluded that in general, Confucius Classrooms are indeed helpful in developing Chinese teaching and learning in Thai schools and help make Thai teachers understand Chinese culture better.

6.3 Contributions of Confucius Classrooms to Chinese teachers

In this section, I will present an analysis of the data from the interviews of 19 Chinese volunteer teachers and 2 Chinese heads of Confucius Classrooms at Xingmin School and Lampang Kanlayanee School. The two Chinese heads of Confucius Classrooms were also volunteer teachers but they were responsible for management and did not have teaching tasks. Hence, there were 21 Chinese volunteer teachers who told me how they felt about Thailand, and how much they knew about Thai culture and language they learned.

Through interviews, I found that all of them had more knowledge of Thailand than before they came here. The results of the interviews showed that 20 Chinese volunteer teachers intended to come to Thailand and that only 1 volunteer teacher chose some other country but was transferred to Thailand. Among them, 12 Chinese volunteer teachers said that Thai culture and people were the reason that attracted them to come here and 9 volunteer teachers said, they thought Thai beautiful nature was more attractive than culture. It was clear that almost all Chinese volunteer teachers chose Thailand by themselves and that Thai culture and nature were the main reasons that attracted them to come here. Twelve volunteer teachers said they were very much interested in Thailand before they came to Thailand, so it was a very exciting work for them. And other 9 volunteer teachers said before they came to Thailand, they also felt excited but not so much.

Among these 21 Chinese volunteer teachers, 16 people were new volunteer teachers. There were five people who were not new. Two of them had been volunteer teachers for two years and three of them for three years. Hanban selects excellent graduates from universities to be volunteer teachers and regulates that they cannot be in one place

for more than 3 years. However, if they are outstanding volunteer teachers, they can be promoted to the head of Confucius Classroom. Among the four heads of Confucius Classrooms, three of them are still volunteer teachers. Among the 21 volunteer teachers, after the first academic year, 11 people did not intend to continue working as volunteer teachers in Thailand. Four people have not made decision yet, and 6 people chose to continue being volunteer teachers here. Actually, in the whole team of volunteer teachers, most of them tend to work as a volunteer teacher just for 1 year and go back to China for jobs or further education, and the minority of them work as volunteer teachers for 2 or 3 years.

As for the level of Thai language, only one volunteer teacher said she was good at Thai before she came to Thailand because her major in university was Thai language. Ten volunteer teachers said that they knew a little about Thai language but they could just make easy daily communication with Thai people because they learned Thai in Hanban's training courses before they came to Thailand. Ten more people said their Thai was very poor, because they thought Thai language was very difficult and that they did not get much from training course. After they came to Thailand, they felt that language was a big barrier for them to live well and work well. Some of them learned Thai language by themselves, and others learned Thai language with their Thai colleagues and students. What is more, some Confucius Classrooms also organized Thai language training courses for volunteer teachers to promote their Thai level. Every Chinese volunteer teacher must take Thai language class once a week. And on every Saturday, all the Chinese volunteer teachers got together to review the knowledge they had acquired for the week. In the Thai language environment, with the efforts of volunteers, Thai colleagues, students, Confucius Classrooms, despite all the obstacles, all volunteer teachers thought their Thai language improved. After a few months, most of them could use classroom language well and made simple communication with Thai people in daily life.

As for Thai culture, just 4 people thought they knew much about Thai culture and 17 people said they just knew a little bit about Thai culture from Hanban's training courses. However, after they came to Thailand, they knew Thai culture better from daily life,

Thai movies, news, internet and so on. Living in Thailand, they could get information about Thailand through various channels. Sixteen volunteer teachers said they also made friends with some Thai people outside school. They felt Thai people were nice and warm, so they could keep good relations with their Thai friends, colleagues and students. Most of the volunteer teachers often joined the activities which were held by Thai colleagues, so that they could learn more about Thai culture and the lifestyle of Thai people. Beyond that, the volunteer teachers said they usually posted their life, new things, what they saw and heard, scenic spots in Thailand on social medias. This was also a way to introduce Thailand to their family and friends. All of them said they would like to recommend Thailand as a tourist destination to their family and friends after they went back to China.

Concerning the knowledge of Thai culture that the volunteer teachers had before they came to Thailand, most of them mentioned the same impression about Thailand, as a Buddhist country and “the land of smiles”. Apart from Buddhist culture and warm atmosphere, most of them also mentioned the culture of architecture, food, travel, and gender of Thailand. Every volunteer teacher knew that Thailand was a very famous tourist attraction in the world. They knew that there were many beautiful scenic spots, fresh fruits, seafood and that the temperature was high throughout the year. They had seen the landscape of Thailand on TV, internet, and other social medias. This was the reason why some volunteer teachers were attracted by Thai nature. They also knew in Thailand there were many splendid Buddhism buildings like temples with strong religious features, and traditional pillar-supported dwelling, with strong ethnic characteristics. What is more, they also knew that Thai society was tolerant for transgender people and homosexuals. This openness made Thai society very different from Chinese society. Chinese society was stricter with gender and most Chinese people especially older people could not accept this kind of freedom. Hence, Chinese volunteer teachers felt Thailand was a really tolerant country. As for the lifestyle of Thai people, they got the knowledge from Hanban’s training courses that Thai people liked eating sweet, sour and spicy foods. After they came to Thailand, they said their knowledge about Thai culture became deepened and that they also got more new knowledge about Thai culture and Thai society from their colleagues and students in

daily life. For instance, at school, the teachers would wear clothes with different colors in different days, which made Chinese volunteer teachers feel confused at first. That was the culture of color in Thailand. Also in the schools, there was a day that all the teachers need to wear the Thai traditional clothes or clothes with Thai cultural elements. The Chinese volunteer teachers also needed to wear Thai clothes, so that they got the knowledge about Thai dressing culture. All of them said they liked Thai traditional clothes because they were very distinctive and good looking. In addition, they found that Thai people were very good at handicraft making and artistic creation, which reflected from their students. Thai students liked painting, dancing, singing, etc., and in schools and classes, the atmosphere was more relaxing and free than schools in China. Moreover, some volunteer teachers mentioned that they did not expect that the relationship between Thailand and China were so close. For example, at schools, it was common that students had Chinese descent, although most of them were from the third or fourth generation of Chinese immigrants, also Chinese cultural elements could be found easily here. For example, there were some Chinese temples, Chinese shops in different places, and in Bangkok, Chinese language slogan could be seen in many places and shops. What is more, Thai people also celebrated some of Chinese festivals. What impressed Chinese volunteer teachers most was that Thai people's love and devotion for their King and the royal family. Some volunteer teachers said they could not imagine and feel Thai people's emotion to their King if they had not come to Thailand. What is more, volunteer teachers also got more knowledge about Thai festival culture because Thai teachers invited them to celebrate together. For example, on Loi Krathong Festival, Thai teachers taught Chinese teachers to do water lanterns and took them to the river to celebrate this beautiful festival. All the 21 Chinese volunteer teachers have celebrated this festival with their Thai friends. In addition, some volunteer teachers said they had attended Thai wedding parties, so that they got the knowledge about Thai wedding culture.

Thai culture is rich, colorful and distinctive. During the time in Thailand, Chinese volunteer teachers appreciate some Thai cultures. For example, most of them said they liked Thai Buddhist culture, artistic creations, architecture, positive attitudes toward life, festivals, tolerance and so on. However, Chinese volunteer teachers also have faced

cultural conflict and spent time adapting to the new culture at the beginning. For example, some of them could not get used to eating Thai food, and could not adapt to the hot climate at the beginning. Some of them said that they did not like the transportation in Thailand. Because in China, they used public transportations like bus and subway, but in Thailand, they had to take “tuk-tuk” and “Songthaew” which were difficult for them. The volunteer teachers said they took a while to overcome the difficulties in life and get acclimatized to the new surroundings. During the period of adaptation, Thai teachers and leaders provided much help and care for them.

6.4 Contributions of Confucius Classrooms to Thai and Chinese people in general

Confucius Classrooms were established in schools, so the first and foremost subjects of service would be Thai students. However, after the presentation of “the Belt and Road” of Chinese government, the intercommunication between China and Thailand became more and more frequent. For example, China and Thailand have already launched a cooperation project regarding the use of Chinese technology to build high-speed rail in Thailand.

Moreover, “Thailand 4.0” strategy is highly compatible with the Belt and Road. The governments of two countries have the same aim: “win-win cooperation and connectivity”. “Eastern Economic Corridor” project is an important carrier of Thailand 4.0 strategy which provides a good platform for Thai and Chinese enterprises. Thai-Chinese Rayong Industrial Zone has attracted about 100 Chinese enterprises to invest. Thai government and Chinese government will coincide to each other in development strategy and policy idea in five years. The frequent exchanges and cooperation between two countries necessarily require a lot of talents who are good at Chinese and many common Thai people also want to know about China.

Therefore, as Chinese educational institutes, Confucius Classrooms have the responsibility to spread Chinese culture and language to more Thai people. Confucius

Classrooms actively respond to the call of “the Belt and Road” of Chinese government. In recent years, Confucius Classrooms provided kinds of projects to for Thai people to help them learn Chinese language and understand Chinese culture.

Confucius Classroom at Rayongwittayakom School has held Chinese training courses for the public with the cooperation of Mingfu Shantan (มูลนิธิ สว่างพรกุลศล จังหวัดระยอง). Until 2018, they have cooperated for eight years. Most of the learners are mostly Chinese migrants and some of them were Thais. Most of the Chinese migrant people were the third or fourth generation migrants. Although they have Thai nationality, they still want to learn Chinese language and know more about China. In recent years, the number of learners kept increasing. The learners came from various occupations including entrepreneurs, lawyers, schoolmasters, heads of jewelry shops, photographers, students and housewives. The former director of Mingfu Shantan, Mr. Chen Xikun, said the Chinese language training course seemed to meet the need of learning Chinese among Thai people, and that they would continue to cooperate with Confucius Classroom at Rayongwittayakom School to provide better service for more Thai people who wanted to learn Chinese language and contact Chinese culture in Rayong and surrounding areas.

Besides, Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School has organized “One Belt One Road Business Chinese training course” (หนึ่งแถบหนึ่งเส้นทาง ภาษาค้าก่อน ภาษาจีนธุรกิจ) for the public with the cooperation of Srinakorn Foundation School and Overseas Chinese Service Center in Southern Thailand. The training course has been held successfully for three sessions. They tend to attract many adults and have got good responses. Moreover, Confucius Classroom at Srinakorn Foundation School has also opened an interesting Chinese language training course for Thai children and teenagers whose age is 6-15. The aim of the training course is to cultivate the children’s interest in learning Chinese language and culture.

Furthermore, Confucius Classroom at Xingmin School has organized “Chinese Language Training Course for Citizens of Phitsanulok”, and “Elementary Chinese

Training Course for Soldiers” with the cooperation of Third Army of Royal Thai Army. The training courses seem to attract many Thai people, officials and soldiers. Actually, it is the aim of Confucius Classroom at Xingmin School to bring Chinese language and culture to school, community and society, and open more kinds of Chinese courses to meet the different demands of different people.

Through the kinds of Chinese training courses, Confucius Classrooms has brought Chinese culture and language to more and more Thai people. The work of Confucius Classrooms go beyond the schools into many levels of Thai society. Confucius Classrooms seem to maintain that various language training courses can help Thai people master Chinese language well. They certainly believe that when Thai people have a good command of Chinese language, they will understand Chinese culture better. They will have more accesses to contact with Chinese people and culture. They can watch more Chinese television programs, read more Chinese literary works, travel in China, make friends with Chinese people, work in China, do business with Chinese people or get further education in China. Similarly, with a good command of Chinese language, Thai people can also introduce Thai culture to Chinese people better, which can make Chinese people know more about Thailand. Moreover, because these training courses seem to attract different people, Chinese teachers have good opportunities to contact more Thai people and deepen their understandings about Thai society.

Confucius Classrooms as a cultural platform, provide more chances of learning Chinese for Thai students, Thai teachers and other Thai people. In the process of spreading Chinese culture, Confucius Classrooms also absorbed Thai culture because the cultural exchange is always bidirectional. Therefore, to some extent, Confucius Classrooms have made a considerable contribution to mutual understanding between Thai and Chinese people.

6.5 Summary of the chapter

Over the past ten year, Confucius Classrooms have become important forces in spreading Chinese culture and language in Thai primary and secondary schools. Confucius Classrooms made some contributions to both Thai and Chinese sides. For Thai students, the various kinds of cultural activities seem to stimulate more and more students' interests in learning Chinese. Confucius Classrooms may be considered to be a platform for Thai students to closely contact with China and also a window for Thai students to see China. To Thai schools, Confucius Classrooms have brought more teaching materials, funds, modern equipment, and other support from Hanban and Ministry of Education of Thailand. To Thai teachers, Confucius Classrooms have provided them training courses to improve their quality in teaching and language ability. What is more, working together with Chinese volunteer teachers seems to help improve their communicative skills. To Chinese volunteer teachers, during the period of working in Thailand, they not only get teaching experience, but also obtain knowledge about Thai culture and Thai language. Chinese volunteer teachers and Thai teachers have cooperation in working, which can help them learn from each other and progress together. Furthermore, apart from serving Thai students, Confucius Classrooms also organize kinds of Chinese language training courses for the common Thai people. The training courses attract many people of different social backgrounds. Confucius Classrooms have become a bridge of friendship between China and Thailand and to some extent have created the mutual understanding between Chinese people and Thai people.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary

With the development of bilateral ties between Thailand and China, more and more Thai people realize the importance of Chinese language. At present, Chinese language has become one of the most popular foreign languages in Thailand. The Thai government provides support for Chinese teaching and learning in primary and secondary schools. In the past decade, the Ministry of Education of Thailand and Hanban of China have collaborated to establish 11 Confucius Classrooms in Thailand to popularize Chinese language. All Confucius Classrooms in Thailand have the same goal; that is, spreading Chinese language and culture to deepen the mutual understanding and good relationship between the two peoples. Each Confucius Classroom also has its own characteristics and specific goals depending on different situations of schools and students.

Since 2003, Hanban has been sending Chinese volunteer teachers to Thailand for 16 years. How to teach well and be competent is a big challenge for them. To teach well, the good teaching method can play a pivotal role in class. How to use effective teaching method is the key to improve the teaching quality. In the classes of Chinese volunteer teachers, the teaching methods are various. Chinese volunteer teachers change different teaching methods according to the different needs and characteristics of students. Hence, the teaching methods for primary students and secondary students are somewhat different. But “Five steps method” is a common teaching method used in both primary schools and secondary schools. Beyond that, for primary students, the popular teaching methods are audio-visual method, organizing classroom activities and playing games. For secondary students, the popular teaching methods are grammar-based method, task-based method and audiolingual method. In secondary schools, Thai teachers and the Chinese volunteer teachers cooperate. Chinese volunteer teachers are responsible for

speaking skills, as listening, speaking and cultural knowledge, and Thai teachers of Chinese are responsible for writing skills as grammar, reading and writing.

Besides teaching Chinese language, introducing Chinese culture is also an important task for volunteer teachers. Occasionally, the volunteer teachers organize Chinese cultural experience activities in regular Chinese classes. For example, the volunteer teachers can teach students to experience Chinese calligraphy, sing Chinese songs, draw traditional Chinese paintings, do paper-cutting, play Chinese movies and so on. They believe that to ensure the class efficiency, language teaching and culture teaching must be combined. Beyond that, Confucius Classrooms also provide different cultural activities for students. For example, at Chinese traditional festivals, Confucius Classrooms normally hold activities to celebrate with Thai students and teachers. What is more, various Chinese competitions are also organized to stimulate students' interest in studying Chinese language and culture. The project of "travel and study in China" is also a direct method to introduce Chinese culture to Thai students.

While spreading Chinese language and culture, Confucius Classrooms also keep absorbing Thai culture. Chinese volunteer teachers improved Thai language and enhanced understandings about Thai culture. They would introduce and recommend Thai culture to their family and friends. To some extent, Confucius Classroom is a bridge to promote cultural communication and deepen friendship between Thai people and Chinese people.

7.2 Discussion

With the efforts of all Chinese teachers and Thai teachers, Hanban and the Ministry of Education of Thailand, Confucius Classrooms have achieved some success of spreading Chinese language and culture in Thailand. However, there are, of course, some problems and disadvantages.

7.2.1 Success of Confucius Classrooms in Thailand

Through my interviews of students, I find that all of them have taken part in the activities of Confucius Classrooms, and most of them say they like the activities and

often attend them. The overall attitude and evaluation of students towards Confucius Classrooms are good and positive. Some students say they can get knowledge about Chinese culture and improve language skills from various activities especially competitions. Because every time before competitions, Confucius Classroom would arrange Chinese teachers to train students and those who attend competitions would have various prizes. In this aspect, Confucius Classrooms indeed arouse Thai students' interests and enthusiasm to learn Chinese language and culture. Confucius Classrooms also help outstanding students apply for Confucius Institute Scholarship to study in China (See Figure 7.1). In terms of students, Confucius Classrooms give them more opportunities to touch China.



Figure 7. 1 Thai students of Srinakorn Foundation School and surrounding schools who got Scholarship to study for bachelor degree in China
Source: http://www.hanban.org/article/2015-09/07/content_614792.htm

According to Thai teachers, Confucius Classroom enriches Chinese teaching resources and prestige of school. Since the establishment of Confucius Classrooms, the schools get more attention from Hanban and the Ministry of Education of Thailand than before.

Hanban sends Chinese volunteer teachers to school every year and help to train Thai teachers who teach Chinese courses, which improve the quality of teachers in school. In addition, Hanban provides kinds of Chinese books and funding for Confucius Classrooms to support Chinese teaching and learning in Thai schools. Confucius Classroom as a “Chinese Center” in different region of Thailand, has a leading role to help and promote Chinese teaching and learning in surrounding areas. For example, Confucius Classrooms donate teaching materials to nearby schools, help nearby schools train Thai teachers, help their students apply for scholarships, invite students to join activities and competitions, and use other ways to develop the Chinese teaching and learning in other schools. In terms of Thai schools, Confucius Classrooms promote Chinese teaching and learning and bring more support from Hanban.

As for Chinese volunteer teachers, working at Confucius Classrooms is a valuable experience. They improve Thai language and knowledge of Thai culture a lot. During working in Thailand, they and Thai teachers cooperate in teaching and organizing activities, learn from each other, and exchange ideas. They get new understandings about Thailand from many aspects of life. All of them would introduce and recommend Thailand to their family and friend after they go back to China. Similarly, Thai teachers who teach Chinese also say they can get new knowledge about China from Confucius Classrooms and when getting along with Chinese volunteer teachers, their Chinese ability also improve. Confucius Classrooms provide Chinese volunteer teachers and Thai teachers an opportunity to understand each other. Chinese volunteer teachers not only spread Chinese language and culture to Thai people but also learn Thai language and culture from Thai people. Therefore, to some extent, Confucius Classroom promotes mutual cultural communication between Thai people and Chinese people.

7.2.2 Problems concerning Confucius Classrooms in Thailand

Data from the interviews show that primary students like the activities of Confucius Classroom, but their level of Chinese language proficiency is not high and they also do not gain much knowledge of Chinese culture. In this aspect, we can say that Thai primary students do not really get much knowledge. In other words, some approaches

used in Confucius Classrooms do not work well with primary students. The activities may just focus too much on forms and interest but do not have real content.

What is more, the textbooks used in primary classes have some problems. For example, the textbook *Han Yu* which is used at Xingmin School and Srinakorn Foundation Schools is not really suitable for primary students. The content is old and unpractical. Although students can read the texts, they do not know how to use them in real situations. Hence, Confucius Classrooms should assist schools to choose suitable textbooks or provide extra teaching materials to promote students' communicative skills.

Thai teachers that I interview about disadvantages of Confucius Classrooms point out that Chinese volunteer teachers have problems at work. Almost all Chinese volunteer teachers are fresh college graduates, so they do not have enough teaching experience. They have trouble both in teaching and managing their classrooms. Because most of them could not speak Thai frequently, they cannot communicate with Thai students. Some students reflect that they often fail to understand their Chinese volunteer teachers, and that they prefer Thai teacher. What is more, some volunteer teachers do not dedicate themselves to work. In addition, tenure of Chinese volunteer teachers is short. Most of them just work for one year and go back to China. The short tenure make Thai students to adapt to new teachers every year. Moreover, some Thai teachers also point that Confucius Classrooms do not balance activities and teaching tasks well. Because sometimes they pay more attention to organizing activities, the teachers would not have enough energy to do teaching tasks well.

Concerning this, I have some suggestions. First, Hanban and the Ministry of Education of Thailand should cooperate to compile standard textbooks for primary students and secondary students. The textbooks must be interesting, communicative and practical. Unified textbooks would support the continuity of learning particularly when students are transferred to another school.

Secondly, Confucius Classroom should open feature courses for students to meet the demand of different students. For example, there are some Chinese-Thai students who are good at Chinese, so Confucius Classrooms can design specific courses for them to promote their level and enhance their knowledge. For those who are not good at Chinese, Confucius Classrooms can open some tutorial courses for them. For students who are interested in Chinese culture, Confucius Classrooms can open interesting cultural experience courses. For high school students who will take HSK examination or PAT 7.4 examination, Confucius Classrooms can open training courses for preparing themselves for the tests. In a word, Confucius Classrooms should think highly of the learning needs of different students.

Thirdly, Chinese volunteer teachers need to improve their own especially volunteer teachers who work at high schools. High school students need to focus on complex grammar, vocabulary, the usage of expression, essay writing and so on. These complex contents require that teachers have a good multilingual ability to explain clearly. In Lampang Kanlayanee School and Rayongwittayakom School, Thai teachers and Chinese volunteer teachers cooperate to solve the problems. Apart from improving volunteer teachers' Thai proficiency, they have a clear division of teaching tasks. Thai teachers are responsible for teaching grammar, writing and reading. Chinese volunteer teachers are responsible for teaching speaking and listening. What is more, volunteer teachers should also improve their ability to deal with various students. Hanban should also extend the tenure of volunteer teachers.

Fourthly, Confucius Classrooms should balance the activities and teaching tasks. For organizing activities, Confucius Classrooms need to take care the quality not just the quantity. They should design activities which are really useful and meaningful and students can really get knowledge. In this way, Chinese volunteer teachers will not spend much time in organizing activities and have enough energy for teaching tasks. Lastly, schools and Confucius Classrooms should create the language environment for students, which can make students use what they learned.

Another interesting point that I find is that there is no close relation between learning time and the level of Chinese language. The motivation and interest are more important factors that can promote students' Chinese level than time. Among the high school students, I find that their Chinese level is generally better. Among the students who get the good level of proficiency in my test, some of them have just learned Chinese about 3 years, but they know Chinese culture well and speak Chinese frequently. Conversely, a few students who have been studying Chinese since primary cannot master Chinese as well as the former. According to my analysis, there are two reasons for this phenomenon. The first reason is that in Thai schools, there are problems of arranging Chinese classes and designing Chinese curriculum. Although they learn Chinese many years, they have not gotten the systematic and effective learning. The second reason is from themselves. In primary school stage, because young students' ability of understanding and learning is not high, they may have troubles in learning a new language but the troubles are overlooked. After they come to secondary school, even though they have higher ability to understand and learn, they lose the freshness and patience about learning Chinese because they have been learning it for 6 years or even longer. However, those who have been learning Chinese just 3 years but can speak well have definite motivation and strong interest in Chinese language and culture. For example, some of them have the plan to study in Chinese universities, and others want to apply for Confucius Institute Scholarships, and some of them want to get jobs related to China like working in travel industry, or trade industry concerning Thailand and China.

Apart from motivation, interest is also playing an important role in learning Chinese. Some students are very interested in Chinese traditional culture, Chinese history, Chinese ancient dynasties, and Chinese entertainment such as television drama, film, TV work, pop songs and pop stars. Especially girl students, many of them choose to learn Chinese because they like Chinese actors and actresses and are fascinated by Chinese TV series. Through watching Chinese TV series and films, they know the Chinese culture from real capture and direct images which stimulate their interests. What is more, watching TV series can also help them build up language sense and improve their proficiency in listening and speaking. In the development of young

people in particular in high school stage, most of them idolize celebrities especially actors, actresses and singers. And, the power of idols is huge. Through interview, I find that Chinese stars are very popular among high school students. Almost everyone knows some of Chinese famous stars. They follow the stars' works, and other news. To follow them, some students even download Weibo which is the most popular application which enables stars to share their pictures and videos online. To know and understand the stars more easily, they want to master Chinese language well, so that they choose Chinese as their second foreign language. There is a student in Lampang Kanlayanee School who has been learning Chinese for 2 years, but she can speak very frequently and communicate with me well. Beyond that, her pronunciation is more standard than other students. She says she likes Chinese dramas and stars very much. Through watching the films and TV series, she starts to be interested in China and wants to learn Chinese. She imitates actors' pronunciation when she is watching Chinese movies, and she also find more learning materials from websites in her leisure time. Although the time of learning is not long, she has passed the HSK 4 and she says she is preparing HSK 5 and has the plan to apply for Confucius Institute Scholarship to learn in China next year.

In this aspect, Confucius Classrooms try to organize the activities which cater to students' interest in TV series and films. Chinese Drama Festival of Confucius Classroom at Lampang Kanlayanee is the best example. The head of this Confucius Classroom says every year students keeps high enthusiasm in participating in this activity. Confucius Classroom provides costumes and theatrical property for students. The performance would be made into CDs and give to students as a souvenir. Through performing Chinese famous drama by themselves, interests and practice can be combined well.

Besides, in learning Chinese, cultural background is also an influencing factor but not very important. Thai-Chinese students touch Chinese language and culture earlier than Thai students. And their parents put more emphasis on their learning of Chinese language and culture. What is more, in this kind of Chinese immigrant family, they still maintain some Chinese traditional customs. In addition, some parents can also speak

some Chinese, and they can teach their children at home. However, cultural background is not crucial. Because many students have Chinese background, but they cannot speak Chinese well. They are not different from Thai students whose parents cannot speak Chinese. Hence, it can be concluded that to some extent, family cultural background can influence students' learning of Chinese language, but it is not the determining factor. Motivation and interest are more important.

7.3 Suggestions for future study

There are 11 Confucius Classrooms in Thailand. In my study, I choose only 4 schools and their Confucius Classrooms as samples. Future researchers can choose more schools and Confucius Classrooms, and enlarge the number of respondents to get more information. From my experience in collecting data, I would like to suggest that the researchers need to contact and build a good relationship with the Chinese heads of Confucius Classrooms and Thai leaders of schools or Chinese departments to get support and permission to collect data successfully.

In my study, to examine the teaching achievement of Confucius Classrooms, I make a test for Thai students. Through their answers, I can evaluate their Chinese level according to the judging standard. However, in my research process, I find that the test has some problems. Firstly, because my test is oral test, I can just know their Chinese level of listening and speaking, but I cannot test their abilities of writing and reading. Secondly, because I just make one test and do not divide the primary students and secondary students, in the process of testing primary students, I find the test questions are just suitable for secondary students, because the questions are too difficult to answer for most of the primary students. Most of them could not give the right answers and even could not understand the questions well. Hence, the results of testing primary students are not ideal. In future studies, the researchers should design separate tests for primary students and secondary students. The questions for primary students should be easier. What is more, if the condition permits, the researchers should use separate tests for writing and reading to evaluate their Chinese proficiency more comprehensively.

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*Prepared questions of in-depth interview for the heads of Confucius Classrooms and
the Chinese volunteer teachers*

1. What are the main teaching method(s) the Hanban's Chinese Volunteer teachers use when they teach Thai students in regular Chinese language lessons in this school?
2. What are the main teaching method(s) the Hanban's Chinese volunteer teachers use when they teach Thai students in special training lessons of Confucius Classrooms in this school?

3. What are the teaching materials the Chinese volunteer teachers use in regular lessons and special training lessons? Where are the teaching materials and textbooks from?
4. What Chinese lesson arrangement is used in in this school? How many Chinese lessons are offered for each class per week?
5. Is Chinese language course compulsory in this school?
6. What are other projects of Confucius Classrooms to promote Thai students' Chinese language?
7. What is(are) the main method(s) of spreading Chinese culture to Thai students in the Confucius Classrooms?
8. What Chinese cultural activities do Confucius Classrooms organize for Thai students?
9. How often do Confucius Classrooms organize Chinese cultural activities?
10. Where do the funding and support of holding these activities come from?

The content of questionnaire for Chinese volunteer teachers

1. Why do you choose to teach in Thailand?
 - A. Voluntary choice: _____ (the reason)
 - B. Be transferred
 - C. Other(s): _____
2. What attracts you most in Thailand?
 - A. Thai people and Thai culture
 - B. Thai natural scenery

C. Other(s): _____

3. How many years have you stayed in Thailand as a Hanban volunteer teacher?

A. One year

B. Two years

C. Three years

4. How was your Thai language ability before you came to Thailand?

A. Good

B. Fair

C. Poor

5. Has your Thai language been improved since you came to work in Thailand?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Do not know

6. How much knowledge of Thai culture did you have before you came to Thailand?

A. Much

B. Little

C. Nothing

7. Has your understanding about Thailand become deeper since you came to Thailand?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Do not know

8. Do you have a good relationship with your Thai students?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Do not know

9. Do you have a good relationship with Thai teachers in your school?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Do not know

10. How many Thai friends outside school do you have?

A. Many

B. Few



C. None

11. How often do you attend parties with Thai friends or Thai teachers?

A. Often

B. Occasionally

C. Never

12. Do you intend to continue to be a volunteer teacher in Thailand after the end of your term of service?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Not sure

13. Do you intend to stay in Thailand after finishing the term of service as a volunteer teacher of Hanban?

A. Yes: _____ (what will you do in Thailand)

B. No

C. Not sure

14. Will you introduce and recommend Thailand to your family and friends after you go back to China?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Not sure

15. How much are you interested in Thailand before you came to this country?

A. Much

B. Little

C. None

16. What kind of Thai culture did you know before coming to Thailand?

17. What kind of Thai culture did you learn as new knowledge after you came to Thailand?

18. What kind of Thai culture do you like best?

19. What kind of Thai culture do you dislike most?

20. What efforts have Confucius Classrooms made to improve your Thai language ability and deepen your understanding of Thai culture?

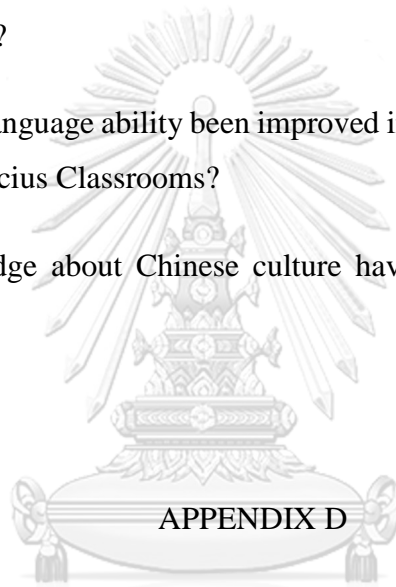
APPENDIX C

Prepared questions of in-depth interview for the leaders and Thai teachers who teach

Chinese course in Thai schools

1. How long has Chinese course opened in this school?
2. How about the developing process of Chinese teaching in this school?
3. What is the current situation of Chinese teaching in this school?
4. What is the managed relationship between school and Confucius Classroom?
5. What is the employment relationship between school and Hanban's volunteer teachers?
6. Does the school have "Chinese Department" which is composed of Thai teachers who teach Chinese language? If so, how do Thai teachers of "Chinese Department" and Hanban's volunteer teachers divide the teaching tasks?
7. Whether the school got supports in developing Chinese teaching from various circles of society or not.
8. What do you think about Chinese volunteer teachers' performance? Which aspects are good and which aspects are unsatisfactory?
9. Can you give some suggestions to solve Chinese volunteer teachers' problems in their work?

10. What do you think about the Confucius Classroom in your school?
11. What has changed in Chinese teaching and learning in your school after establishing Confucius Classroom?
12. How do you evaluate the work of Confucius Classroom? What contributions have they done to the development of the school? What aspects do they require improvement?
13. How much does Confucius Classroom help you know about China and contact Chinese colleagues?
14. Has your Chinese language ability been improved in the Chinese atmosphere which is created by Confucius Classrooms?
15. What new knowledge about Chinese culture have you learned from Confucius Classrooms?



APPENDIX D

Prepared questions of in-depth interview for Thai students

1. What is your name, age and grade?
2. Are you Thai Chinese? If yes, which language do you speak with your family at home?
3. Do you have any relatives who are Chinese immigrants? Do they still have a good command of Mandarin or Chinese dialects like Teochew or Cantonese?
4. Have you learned any Chinese language before you came to study at this school? If yes, which kind of Chinese language did you learn? Mandarin or Chinese dialects?
5. How long did you learn Chinese Mandarin?

6. Do you like Chinese Mandarin and Chinese culture?
7. Apart from studying Chinese in school, do you take extracurricular Chinese language classes after school or hire a tutor to teach Chinese to you at home in your free time?
8. What have you learned from Confucius Classroom in your school? Do you know more about Chinese culture? If so, in what aspects?
9. Do you like the activities that Confucius Classroom have organized for you?
10. Do you think what areas will Confucius Classroom need improvement?
11. What do you think about your Chinese teachers in organizing classes and teaching methods? Are they qualified? How do you evaluate their work?
12. What differences do Chinese teachers and Thai teachers have in teaching style and content? Whose classes do you prefer?
13. How about your Chinese grades every term?
14. Do you have any suggestions for your Chinese teachers?
15. Do you think your level of Chinese Mandarin and knowledge about Chinese culture has improved significantly because of Confucius Classroom and their volunteer teachers?

APPENDIX E

The content of testing Thai students' Chinese proficiency and knowledge about
Chinese culture

Remark: the numbers on the right side are scores for each correct answer and the total score is 30

1. Where is the capital city of China?..... (1)
2. Which is the biggest city of China?.....(1)
3. Which is the biggest province of China?.....(1)
4. Please tell me three cities in China.....(3)
5. Please tell me three kinds of Chinese food.....(3)
6. Please tell me three Chinese historical monuments.....(3)
7. Please tell me three Chinese traditional skills.....(3)
8. Please tell me three Chinese traditional festivals.....(3)
9. Please talk about three things that Chinese people do during one of the important festivals.....(3)
10. What are the four seasons in China?.....(4)
11. Please use about 2 minutes to introduce a famous historical tourist attraction in China.....(5)

VITA

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