

SYNTHESIS OF COMPONENTS OF CHINESE LANGUAGE TEACHER'S FUNCTIONAL COMPETENCIES

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Abstract— The research aims to synthesize components of Chinese language teacher's functional competencies. Content analysis technique is used for analyzing the data. This form consisted of 3 steps flows of activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing / verification. The findings were as follows. The 7 components consist of 1) Chinese curriculum and curriculum development; 2) creation of conducive classroom environment; 3) psychology of learning; 4) development of teacher professionalism; 5) communication skills and knowledge; 6) understanding of multiculturalism; and 7) instructional media innovation and technology. It was also found that the development of Chinese language teachers requires the clear identification of capabilities in order to create tools, guidelines or patterns that enable teacher the activities to improve professional capacities of Chinese language teachers to cover all dimensions, starting from recruitment to development and retention.

Keywords—functional competencies, Chinese language teacher

Introduction

Background and Significance of the problem

The functional competencies are specific knowledge or skill area that relate to successful performance in the job. As Babu and his colleagues once mentioned they were the most powerful influences on student success (Babu & Mendro, 2003; Sanders & Rivers, 1996) which separate effective teachers from ineffective ones. In addition, studies showed that part of high students' achievement were a result of qualified teacher with functional competencies. In Thailand, all teachers are required to have qualifications which include competencies for teaching in schools. All of those competencies are well defined by the regulations issued by Office of the Basic Educational

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Commission, Ministry of Education of Thailand. It is common that the teachers are prepared from higher education level in order to gain such needed competencies for being qualified teachers.

However, when it comes to language teaching, in particular Chinese language teaching in Thailand, it was found that more competencies are required especially functional competencies in order to meet the need of students in classroom. Nevertheless, there is not sufficient evidence clearly stating about many dimensions.

In addition, there have already been various studies focusing on teacher's functional competencies for different disciplines except Chinese language teacher for instances, see, e.g., Niss (2003) studied about Mathematical competencies and the learning of Mathematics, Lengkenawati, N. S. (2005) have researched about EFL Teachers' Competence in the Context of English Curriculum and Sysoyev, P. V., & Evstigneev, M. N. (2011) Foreign language teacher's ICT competence. In fact, Chinese language has been taught in Thailand several decades in both informal and formal education. In the past, the majority of teachers were imported from Republic of China and some of those teachers finally moved to settle in Thailand permanently. Later, due to the influence and power of Chinese industry and economy. Chinese language has been caught a lot of attention; thus, it has gained popularity among students to choose as a program of study or an alternative course for understanding Chinese language at a certain level (Office of the Education Council Ministry of Education, Thailand, 2016). Therefore, the demand of Chinese language teachers in Thailand are getting higher and higher. It appears that the number of Chinese language teachers have been higher than expected. This has become a concern for the quality of teaching Chinese in Thailand since there is not yet a well-defined study of what the functional competencies of Chinese language teacher are. Although, a study from Yan Ye (2017) indicated that Chinese language teaching and learning in Thailand suffer from a lack of qualified teachers; the focus on grammar not communication; the inadequacy of the curriculum; and the lack of localized materials, such the study did not state what the functional competencies of Chinese language teachers must be. Therefore, this research objective was to synthesize the components of Chinese language teacher's functional competencies.

Research Objective

The objective of this research was to synthesize components of Chinese language teacher's functional competencies.

Literature Review

Teacher Competencies

Teacher's competencies refer to the skills and knowledge that enable a teacher to enhance and maximize student learning (Jackson, 1990). In other words, they are the abilities of a teacher to deal adequately with the demands of the teaching profession using an integrated set of knowledge, skills and attitudes as manifested in both the performance of the teacher and reflection on his or her performance (Nijveldt, Beijaard, Brekelmans, Verloop & Wubbels, 2005). Karababa (2013) also added that teacher competencies are knowledge and skills related to attitudes and values in addition to the aforementioned general professional qualifications. Therefore, the teacher's competencies is defined as an integrated set of personal characteristics, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are needed for effective performance in various teaching contexts.

Teacher Competencies in Thailand

There have been attempts to announce the standards teacher competencies in Thailand in order to ensure the quality of national education since teachers are believed to be the key success for students' achievement. In 2005 The professional standards of teaching profession in Thailand (2005) was written as a professional guideline, consisting of nine areas of competence; language and technology for teachers, curriculum development, and psychology for teachers, educational measurement and evaluation, classroom management, educational research, educational innovation, information technology and teachership. In 2010, Office of the Basic Educational Commission, Ministry of Education of Thailand (2010) stated two types of competencies; core competencies and functional competencies. The first refers to a set of generic skills teachers should possess. The latter means specific competencies concerning the operation of the personnel in each position, such as administrators, teachers and educational supervisors, which allows personnel in each particular position to succeed in working in order to accomplish goals.

Functional competencies of Thai teachers include the following competencies: Curriculum and Learning Management: these competencies include the capabilities of creating and developing curricular, concurrently and systematically designing the learning, learning management with the focus on learners, using and developing innovative technology materials, and measuring and evaluation of learning outcomes.

Student Development: this competency includes the capabilities of implanting ethicality; developing life skills, physical health and mental health,

democracy, pride of Thai identities, setting the systems to assist and develop quality of learners.

Classroom Management: this competency includes the management of learning ambience, making of information and document for class/subject, the supervision of each class/subject for promoting happy and safe learning for learners.

Analysis & Synthesis & Classroom Research: these competencies include the capabilities of understanding, sorting an issue into sub-issues, collecting and processing data, information to make conclusion in the systematic manner, applying the knowledge to researching for developing learners, analyzing the overview of organization or work and solving problems in order to systematically develop the work.

Teacher Leadership: this competency includes teachers' characteristics and behaviors that reflect personal relationships and mutual exchange and learning inside and outside classrooms without the intervention from the administrator of the institute, which lead to the power of learning for developing learning arrangement (Relationship & Collaborative – Building for Learning Management). It is the synergy of collaborations in order to build good relations and networks with parents, communities and other organizations in public and private sectors in order to support learning arrangement. (Office of the Basic Educational Commission, Ministry of Education of Thailand ,2010)

Competencies of Chinese Language Teachers

Regarding International Standards for Chinese language teachers, in the year of 2007, Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) developed the standard for international Chinese language teachers in order to promote the professional quality and teaching level of international Chinese language teachers. This action is to satisfy the ever-growing demand for Chinese language learning in other countries. The standard includes: 1) linguistic knowledge and skills; 2) cultures and communications; 3) theory of the second language acquirement and study strategy; 4) teaching methodology and 5) overall quality (Office of Chinese Language Council International, 2019). Furthermore: Zhu Chen (2015) suggested that, competencies of new Chinese language teachers are 1) different educational culture; 2) Motivation of the students; 3) understanding of multiculturalism; 4) Understanding about Students; and 5) Time Management. However, since most schools in general allocate time for Chinese language learning, which has a lot of contents, to be in less hours than English language subject. Therefore, teachers should manage time in order to include teaching, examination and evaluation without

causing effects on learners' learning. Moreover, Livaccari (2019) pointed out that in fact Chinese Language teachers need not only their own core competencies but also the global competence, a new set of standards that go beyond language proficiency that include the ability to teach students about : 1) the structure of the Chinese language, as it relates to other world languages, including the unique characteristics of tone, characters, and particles; 2) the latest developments and contemporary trends in Chinese culture and society, including the arts, film, literature, economics, politics, technology, education, etc.; 3) the regional and cultural diversity of China, including geography, dialects, and minority groups; and 4) Chinese cultural history, including both high culture and folk culture.

Since, there is not yet a study or a well-written document on the qualifications of Chinese language teachers' functional competencies especially, in Thailand where there is high demand of Chinese language learning, this research attempted to find out which components of functional competencies of those Chinese language teachers are needed to help improve the process of recruiting the qualified teachers as well as the students' achievement at the end.

Methodology

This study used content analysis to synthesize the components of Chinese teacher's functional competencies from the previous studies as well as academic papers. This study was done using data recording form adapted from the data recording form for the synthesis (Miles, M. B., Huberman, 1994). This form consisted of 3 steps outlining a view of the general ideas of qualitative analysis with three concurrent flows of activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

The 3 steps were as follows:

Step 1: Data Reduction

The studies containing competencies of Chinese language teachers were examined with the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data into a specific group of the same genres or types of the functions. The sources for gathering the data are vital as they must be reliable; the researcher thus examined only the data from the databases of Scimago Journal of & Country Rank (SJR) and Thai Journal Citation Index (TCI), and on the websites of educational organizations of China which were investigated of their trustworthiness.

Step 2: Data Display

This step was to display the synthesized information gathered in the first stage in a well-organized and compressed form. The data were shown in form of the concise groups of meaning representing strong relationship and connection within the groups. The reliable sources for synthesizing this work was shown in Table 1 including the studies and official papers of Yan Ye (2017); Office of Chinese Language Council International (2007); Wanlapha Phongphan (2015); Zhu Chen (2015); Certificate for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (2019); Li Juan (2014); Chris Livaccari (2019).

Table 1. *Data display: Components of Chinese language teacher's functional competencies*

Components	Sources
Preparation and planning, presentation, teaching and learning Chinese, local curriculum development, research skills and classroom activities development	Yan Ye (2017); Office of Chinese Language Council International (2007); Wanlapha Phongphan (2015)
School support, time limitation, classroom management	Yan Ye (2017); Zhu Chen (2015); Certificate for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (2019)
Students' diversity, unmotivated learners	Yan Ye (2017); Zhu Chen (2015)
Professionalism, overall quality, professional ethics, classroom research, a positive 'teacher attitude, human relations and personality	Office of Chinese Language Council International (2007); Certificate for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (2019); Wanlapha Phongphan (2015); Li Juan (2014)
Linguistic knowledge and skills, communication, Theory of the second language acquirement, teach basic Chinese, teaching about the basic sentence structure of Chinese, knowledge, Chinese for communication	Office of Chinese Language Council International (2007); Certificate for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (2019); Chris Livaccari (2019); Wanlapha Phongphan (2015)

Components	Sources
Chinese cultures, Understanding cultural differences, multiculturalism, to teach students to understand deeply the target culture in all its diversity, including both traditional and contemporary components, Teach students about the regional and cultural diversity of China, including geography, dialects, and minority groups, Teach students about Chinese cultural history, including both high culture and folk culture	Office of Chinese Language Council International (2007); Certificate for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (2019); Zhu Chen (2015); Chris Livaccari (2019)
Information Technology, teaching technique and instruction material development	Li Juan (2014); Wanlapha Phongphan (2015)

Step 3: Conclusion, Interpretation and Verification:

The third stream of analysis activity was to draw the conclusion and verify the data again. At this stage, the data entries which were clarified, coded and categorized by analyzing their regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions were reexamined in order to ensure the correct groups of each category and to avoid repetitiveness. Then the verification process was done in order to gain the overall accuracy and trustworthiness.

Findings

The findings of this study were presented below.

The data were synthesized to determine the components of functional competencies of Chinese teachers in Thailand; and the following 7 components were discovered: 1) Chinese curriculum and curriculum development; 2) creation of conducive classroom environment; 3) psychology of learning; 4) development of teacher professionalism; 5) communication skill and knowledge; 6) understanding of multiculturalism; and 7) instructional media innovation and technology, as shown in Fig. 1

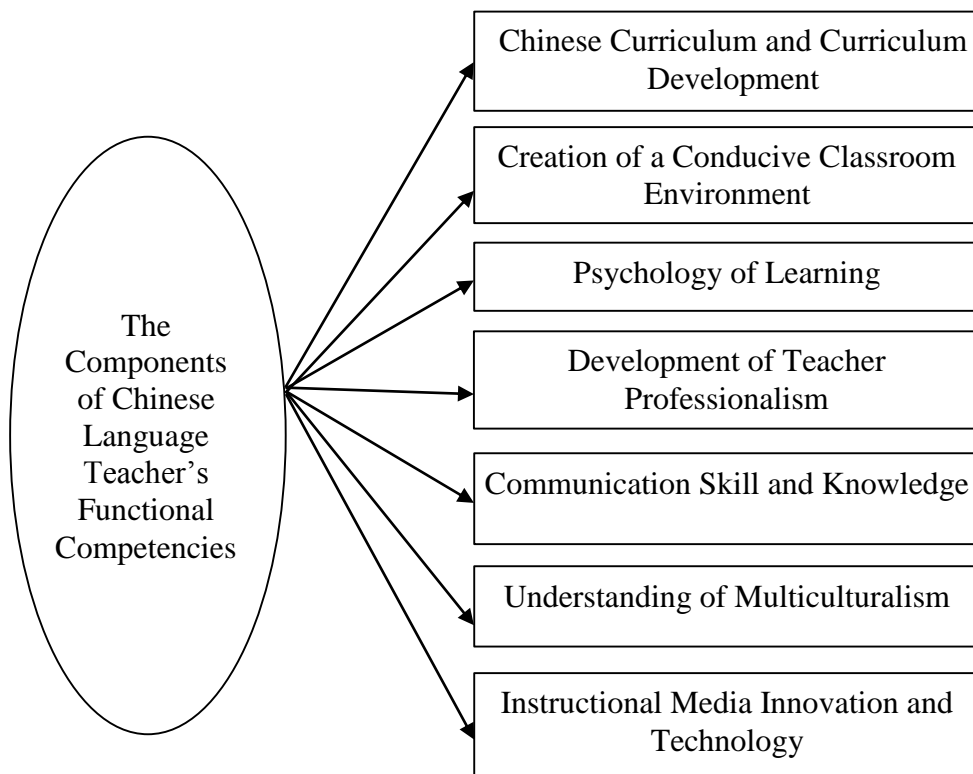


Figure 1. Components of Chinese language teacher's functional competencies

Discussion and Conclusion

The functional competencies of Chinese language teachers in Thailand consist of 7 components, as follows:

1. Chinese Curriculum and Curriculum Development

These components include improvement and change of purpose, contents, teaching and learning activities, and evaluation of Chinese language curriculum. In other words, they start from targeting goals, and selecting and organizing content and guidelines for measuring to evaluating the curriculum. Evaluation results are applied to the improvement of the Chinese language curriculum. This was consistent with The Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) The standard includes linguistic knowledge and skills, cultures and communications, teaching methodology and Carl, A. E. (2009) found out that teachers involving in curriculum organization have many roles and responsibilities. Teachers want to enjoy teaching and watching their students develop interests and skills in the areas of their interest. Teachers may

need to create lesson plans and syllabi within the framework of the given curriculum since the teacher's responsibilities are to implement the curriculum to meet student needs.

To sum up, the Chinese Curriculum and Curriculum Development competencies contain the knowledge about curriculum philosophies and skills in curriculum development, curriculum design. Components of the curriculum development, models of curriculum development, approaches of designing curriculum development, curriculum development process, selecting and organizing the content, planning the teaching and testing conditions and preparing research for Chinese curriculum development.

2. Creation of Conducive Classroom Environment

To create and to maintain conducive environment inside and outside a classroom consists of 1) preparation, 2) planning for teaching and learning, and 3) execution in classroom. The settlement of agreements, rules, regulations and policies can facilitate the teaching and learning to go on smoothly. Interaction between teachers and students, provision of learning equipment and maintenance such equipment to be in usable conditions, and decoration of classrooms with information and data can facilitate learning. Diversified activities can motivate learners to learn and make the learning and teaching objectives become accomplished. This is consistent with the Certificate for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (2019) that assesses the abilities of Chinese language teachers in the domains of Instructional Design and Classroom Management. It can be said that the creation of conducive classroom environment is becoming more and more important. As the research stated that suitable classroom environment can result in students' achievement (Findley, B., & Varble, D, 2006)

3. Psychology of Learning

This is the process to build experiences which lead to behavioral changes or increase of people's capabilities in the respects of knowledge, understanding and skills from practice and the experiences in learning, with the focus on the setting of objectives, promptness, situations and construction, on the bases of past experiences, which will be transformed to perception, response and consequences. Aksoy, K. (2016) found out that, knowledge of psychological factors involved in the process of language learning and teaching are indispensable for teachers who teach languages. Such knowledge is especially crucial for many novice teachers. Therefore, resources that can help new teachers gain such insights always prove useful and needed in the field. Zhu Chen (2015) studied about challenges of Teaching Chinese in Australian Schools and found that psychology of learning played a vital role in learning

language effectively and also reported that the use of correct language based on understanding about students is highly relevant to the production of clear teacher instruction understandable to students.

4. Development of Teacher's Professionalism

This component is related to different activities that develop teachers in terms of their knowledge, skills and properties that lead to the capacities that are necessary for career and profession, with planning, determination of processes, building of networks of collaborations, determination of various patterns and methods of development, and systematic evaluation with the emphasis on the shift of professional paradigm that is agreeable to advancement and technologies so that the Chinese learning and teaching will be efficient (Goroizidis, G., & Papaioannou, A. G., 2013). Development of teacher's professionalism is thus an important aspect in the life of a teacher. As the development of teacher's professionalism is strongly coupled with the lives of teachers, it is inevitable that it is also entangled in the complexities of school, people, policies and practices.

5. Communication Skill and Knowledge

This components consists of knowledge related to structure of Chinese language in the matter of parts of speech in Chinese language, which are incorporated in the basic sentences structure, Pin-yin sound, alphabets and vowels, intonations and word combination with Pin-yin, which lead to interact of Chinese language for communication on daily life, starting from listening skill to speaking, reading and writing skills, respectively, as well as knowledge of China in terms of location, populations, capital, governance, national flag, religions, currency, history and climate. Language also reflects the culture. It is impossible to learn the target language without connection with the target culture. Livaccari (2019) explained that Chinese Language Teachers need to add a new set of standards that go beyond language proficiency, especially Chinese communication skill and culture knowledge. Hence, teachers should correct grammar errors to improve learners' communicative ability, rather than focusing on the correction itself (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). If teachers want to develop their ability to interact with others in the community of the target language and culture, they need to expand not only linguistic knowledge but also pragmatic understanding.

6. Understanding of Multiculturalism

This component refers to the capabilities of knowledge extension, construction and expansion based on attitudes and cultural skills. Such as, traditions, customs, language, religion, beliefs, costumes, way of life, way of thinking, interactions, communication, and people of the same background or share

common identities, with rationality that enables people to adjust themselves, accept and respect one another in the environs of diversified values, beliefs and culture on the basis of mutual understanding so that the learning and teaching Chinese can integrate contents and knowledge in order to develop knowledge and understanding of cultural difference. This will help reduce racist bias. The teaching Chinese should be adherent to the principles of justice and appropriate implementation. In the same way, schools are not the only social sites for cross-cultural engagement. For young people and their families, they are arguably the most significant social institutions shaping the formation of identities, perspectives and capacities. As such, it is not difficult to imagine a role for policy in strengthening their capacity for infusing the values and abilities required of future multicultural citizens. (Ho, C., 2011)

7. Instructional Media Innovation and Technology

This element consists of tools or channels that are generated from the implementation of principles, approaches, techniques, knowledge and methodologies to the development of concepts, methods, guidelines, systems, patterns or equipment that deliver the teachers' teaching to learners, as tools for facilitating the learning with the objective to train teachers on skills of language literacy and dissemination of Chinese language knowledge to learners, in order to boost effectiveness of Chinese language teaching and enable learners improve their learning effectiveness and achieve their learning goals in the efficient manner by making materials that help learners learn the language, as well as accent and intonation. This idea is in line with the discovery by Li Juan (2014) who found out that teaching Thai students in Chinese language helped students learn the accent of the original natives of the Chinese language as they heard from them directly. Therefore, Instructional media Innovation and technology can enhance student's private study and creative thinking as students can operate the computer and get the information they desire.

In conclusion, This Study of Synthesis Components of Chinese Language Teacher's Functional Competencies lead to the following main points. Functional competencies of Chinese language teachers in Thailand include: 1) Chinese curriculum and curriculum development; 2) creation of conducive classroom environment; 3) psychology of learning; 4) development of teacher's professionalism; 5) communication skill and knowledge; 6) understanding of multiculturalism; and 7) instructional media innovation and technology. This can reflect that the development of Chinese teachers requires the clear identification of capabilities in order to create tools, guidelines or patterns that enable the activities to improve professional capacities of Chinese language teachers to cover all dimensions, starting from recruitment to

development and retention. Therefore, the findings from this study can be implemented to the designing and creation of manuals or patterns of development to achieve goals and effectiveness of teachers, learners and institutes.

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