

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHINESE LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT OF GRADE 7 STUDENTS USING CHINESE OR THAI AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN CHINESE LANGUAGE CLASS AT WAT SUTHIWARARAM SCHOOL IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

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Abstract: This study was conducted to identify whether there was a significant difference in the gain in Chinese learning achievement between Grade 7 students using Chinese as a medium of instruction in a Chinese language class and those using Thai as a medium of instruction at Wat Suthiwararam School in Bangkok, Thailand. The study duration was two months. Seventy students were targeted in this study, conducted during the academic year 2020-2021. In the experimental group, 36 students used Chinese as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class. The researcher, as a teacher, taught the experimental group. And the control group, taught by a Thai teacher and 34 students in total, used Thai as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class. The results of research carried out on Jan. 2021. The data collected were analyzed by a statistical software program. According to the purpose and hypotheses of the study, different statistical methods were used to analyze the data (e.g., means, standard deviations, dependent samples *t*-test, independent samples *t*-test). The study showed the level of learning achievement of Grade 7 students using Chinese as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class was very good. The class was very good for Grade 7 students using Thai as a medium of instruction in a Chinese language. The results showed no significant difference in Grade 7 students using Chinese or Thai as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class at Wat Suthiwararam School in Bangkok, Thailand.

Keywords: Chinese as a foreign language, Chinese or Thai as a medium of instruction, learning achievement, Wat Suthiwararam School

Introduction

In teaching Chinese as a foreign language, more and more teachers are

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beginning to realize that using medium language is very important. It is necessary to use it in place and grasp the degree of application. Many teachers of Chinese as a foreign language choose not to use intermediary language when they teach the first phonetic lesson to students without any foundation. Although this will quickly allow students to adapt to the Chinese language environment, for students who have never had a basic knowledge of Chinese, not using a medium language will cause their enthusiasm for learning Chinese to drop sharply, and even think that Chinese is difficult to learn. Therefore, in the face of zero-foundation students, we will still emphasize using certain mediums for teaching. First, it can fully mobilize the enthusiasm of students who have never interacted with the Chinese language. Second, because the study of Chinese phonetics is the focus of Chinese learning, it is often difficult for foreigners to learn Chinese. Therefore, the medium language must be used appropriately when teaching Chinese as a foreign language with zero foundation. However, many teachers of Chinese as a foreign language often fail to grasp the degree of medium language use. For example, students have studied more than 60 hours of courses; what students at this stage need are more oral Chinese practice and improvement in Chinese listening comprehension. In this teaching stage, teachers of Chinese as a foreign language are still using many mediums to teach; this will not only cause students to rely too much on the medium for learning but also affect the teaching progress and quality of teachers. Therefore, the medium language teaching Chinese as a foreign language is a double-edged sword. Whether it is used well or not, it is directly related to the quality of teaching Chinese as a foreign language and the ultimate goal of teaching. (Beijing Anyway Chinese Institution, 2013)

The medium of instruction refers to the language teachers use in classroom teaching and is an important parameter of foreign language teaching methods. To facilitate classroom communication, the medium language is sometimes the student's mother tongue, sometimes it is not, but it is an auxiliary language that both teachers and students can use. English is a commonly used medium in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. In the long-term practice of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, academia has two completely different views on whether or to what extent medium language should be used. One view is that teaching Chinese as a foreign language should create a pure Chinese language environment, should not use other languages, and teach Chinese in Chinese; another view is to reduce the barriers to language communication and help students quickly understand the content of the teaching. In the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, teaching with a language that both parties can understand can achieve a multiplier effect. It is very important to use Thai to assist Chinese teaching, especially for beginners.

Thai students are unlike Chinese students who will take the initiative to adapt to foreign teachers. Thai students hope their teachers will adapt to them. Therefore, Thai students hope that their teachers can speak Thai. This way, they will accept you more emotionally, like you, and are more willing to communicate with you. Go up and agree to accept you. Most Thai students learn Chinese in the classroom, and the emotional interaction between learners and teachers affects classroom activities. In the process of language learning, the role of teacher's assistance and guidance is particularly important. Suppose students reject teachers in the language (many students do not have a good Chinese foundation and cannot complete classroom interaction with teachers in Chinese), have language barriers, and cannot cooperate with the teacher's instruction. In that case, these will make students in the process of learning Chinese. There is an emotional crisis in the process, which determines students' attitude in learning Chinese. Suppose students cannot complete smooth language communication with teachers during a long study period. In that case, they are prone to the "anxiety" emotions proposed in the second language acquisition theory. (Cai, 2016)

Objectives

The following researcher objectives were developed for this study.

1. To determine the level of Chinese learning achievement of Grade 7 students before and after using Chinese as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class at Wat Suthiwararam School in Bangkok, Thailand.
2. To determine the level of Chinese learning achievement of Grade 7 students before and after using Thai as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class at Wat Suthiwararam School in Bangkok, Thailand.
3. To determine whether there is a significant difference in Chinese learning achievement from the pre-test to the post-test of Grade 7 students using Chinese as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class at Wat Suthiwararam School in Bangkok, Thailand.
4. To determine whether there is a significant difference in Chinese learning achievement from the pre-test to the post-test of Grade 7 students using Thai as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class at Wat Suthiwararam School in Bangkok, Thailand.
5. To determine whether there is a significant difference in the gain in Chinese learning achievement between Grade 7 students using Chinese as a medium of instruction in a Chinese language class and those using Thai as a medium of instruction at Wat Suthiwararam School in Bangkok, Thailand.

Hypotheses

The following research hypothesis was developed for this study. There is a significant difference in the gain in Chinese learning achievement between Grade 7 students using Chinese as a medium of instruction in a Chinese language class and those using Thai as a medium of instruction at Wat Suthiwararam School in Bangkok, Thailand, at a significant level of .05.

Conceptual Framework

The following objectives were addressed in this study.

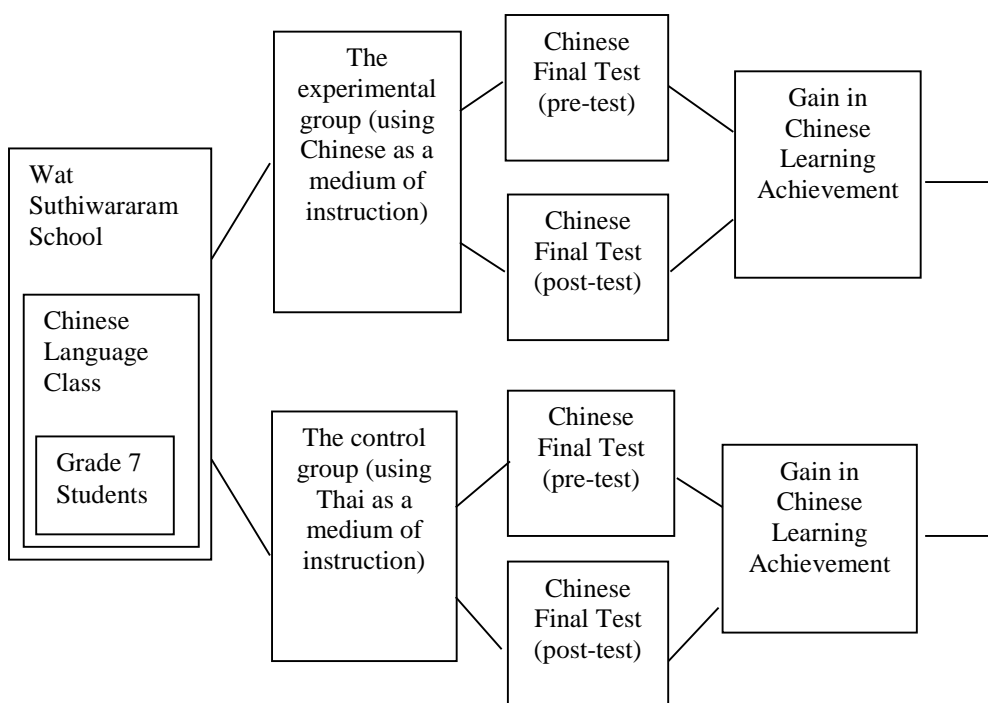


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of this Study

Literature Review

Comparative analysis hypothesis

Lado (1957) believes acquiring a second language also forms habits through stimulation, reaction, and reinforcement. But different from the first language acquisition, when the second and first languages are different, learners will resort to some rules of the first language, which will produce a negative transfer effect, also known as interference. Moreover, Lado believes that the most different parts of the two languages are the most difficult for students to master, while the same and similar parts are easier to master. Therefore, Lado advocates a synchronic comparison between the first language and the target

language in phonetics, grammar, and other aspects, to determine the similarities and differences between them and predict the possible mistakes of students.

Interlanguage Hypothesis

Selinker (1969), an American linguist, put forward the concept of Interlanguage in 1969. The so-called second language or foreign language learner is an independent language system structurally in the middle of the mother tongue and the target language. It refers to the transitional language constructed by the second language learners, which is between the mother tongue and the target language. It is in continuous development and change and gradually approaches the target language. It is an independent language system of second or foreign language learners in the intermediate state between the mother tongue and the target language in structure.

Five Hypotheses of Krashen

In 1985, in Krashen's book *input hypothesis: Theory and enlightenment*, Krashen formally summed up five hypotheses: acquisition and learning hypothesis, natural order hypothesis, monitoring hypothesis, input hypothesis, and affective filter hypothesis, which are collectively called input hypothesis theory.

Cultural Adaptation Hypothesis

Schumann(1978). John Schumann founded the theory of acculturation in the late 1970s. From the perspective of social environment factors and learners' psychological factors, it makes a unique explanation of the dynamic mechanism of second language acquisition and the Pidgin phenomenon of learners' language. It provides a theoretical basis for learners to deeply understand the laws of second language acquisition and create a favorable internal and external acquisition environment.

Methodology/Procedure

Research Instrument

Chinese final test was used to measure the levels of Chinese learning achievement of Grade 7 two groups of students at Wat Suthiwararam School in Bangkok, Thailand. The school uses the Thai government curriculum to assess students' Chinese learning achievement; the Chinese final test is typically used to assess Grade 7 students.

All the questions are multiple-choice, and the exam's content is Lesson one to Lesson four of the textbook learned by the students. Pinyin, vocabulary,

numbers, strokes, and writing orders of Chinese characters were tested. A total of 40 questions, with a total score, is 20 points, and the test time is 30 minutes.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure face validity, content validity, and construct validity. The researcher created the test, and two other Thai teachers who teach Chinese from Wat Suthiwararam School revised it and helped to translate the questions of these tests into Thai. The two Thai teachers have checked and approved the content validity of the test.

Regarding the test reliability, two homeroom teachers of two groups helped to monitor the test together. And the research instrument to be used in this study has been frequently administered through the years as an assessment method at Wat Suthiwararam School for Grade 7 students. Therefore, these instruments can be considered reliable for the Chinese learning achievement of Grade 7 students at Wat Suthiwararam School.

Findings

Research Objective 1

The mean score of the Chinese learning achievement of Grade 7 students before using Chinese as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class was interpreted on average, and the exam score was very good.

The mean score of the Chinese learning achievement of Grade 7 students after using Chinese as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class was interpreted on average, and the exam score was very good.

Research Objective 2

The mean score of the Chinese learning achievement of Grade 7 students before using Thai as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class was interpreted on average, and the exam score was very good.

The mean score of the Chinese learning achievement of Grade 7 students after using Thai as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class was interpreted on average, and the exam score was very good.

Research Objective 3

The analysis of the results showed no significant difference in Chinese learning achievement from the Pre-test to the Post-test of Grade 7 students using Chinese as a medium of instruction.

Research Objective 4

The analysis of the results showed a significant difference in Chinese learning achievement from the Pre-test to the Post-test of Grade 7 students using Thai as a medium of instruction.

Research Objective 5

There is no significant difference in the gain in Chinese learning achievement between Grade 7 students using Chinese as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class and those using Thai as a medium of instruction at Wat Suthiwararam School in Bangkok, Thailand.

Discussion

Based on the findings obtained by the current study, this section discusses the relationship between the findings of the current study and of previous research studies.

Medium of Instruction

In the experimental group, students used Chinese as a medium of instruction in Chinese language classes. The researcher, as a teacher, taught the experimental group. And the control group, students used Thai as a medium of instruction in Chinese language class.

When did we use medium language in class? 1. Classroom instruction and classroom management are the most common. Classroom instruction depends on the teacher's habits at the beginning. Once it is cultivated, there will be no problem later. If the Thai language is used in the classroom management part, they can understand it better. This is not easy for Chinese teachers. On the whole, foreign students are not as quiet as domestic children. 2. Some teachers can use the translation method to explain new words and grammar words, but the effect is not good. Because the connection is too weak and students are easy to forget. Grammar is often not a one-to-one correspondence. Thai language interpretation will cause some problems. 3. Communication between teachers and students sometimes can be heard to ask students in the Thai language whether they understand or have finished their homework. 4. If the teacher is speaking and the students are listening, it is almost impossible to avoid the intervention of medium language. In this case, the teaching mode needs to be changed (TCEL training website, 2017).

Chinese Learning Achievement

There is no significant difference in the gain in Chinese learning achievement between Grade 7 students using Chinese as a medium of instruction in a

Chinese language class and those using Thai as a medium of instruction at Wat Suthiwararam School in Bangkok, Thailand.

Six factors are affecting students' learning achievement. The first is study habits. Education is to cultivate habits. The second is learning ability. Students with strong learning abilities are bound to learn easily and get better grades. The third is learning the mind. Students who can effectively manage their emotions have good learning achievement, while students who can't control their emotions have large fluctuations in learning achievement. The fourth is learning methods. To do everything, we need to talk about methods, and learning is no exception. Rote learning has long been criticized. Learning how to learn, review, remember and innovate is an effective way to improve academic performance. The fifth is learning motivation. The problem of learning motivation is easy to be ignored by most parents. Their idea is that middle school students are learning. It is easy for students to fall into the situation of learning for learning and eventually fall into weariness and tiredness. The sixth is the educational environment. This problem is more complex because many environmental factors affect students' learning achievement; most parents regard the learning atmosphere as the most important environmental factor that affects students' learning achievement (Zheng, 2019).

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher would like to propose some recommendations to Chinese teachers and future researchers.

For Chinese Language Teachers

Chinese teachers could use medium language more effectively in Chinese language class; Chinese teachers could combine other teaching methods to teach Chinese; Chinese teachers could create more class activities; Chinese teachers could encourage students to learn Chinese; Chinese teachers could increase students' interest in learning Chinese.

For Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and instruction could be written on how to use classroom language in teaching Chinese; Curriculum and instruction could provide other teachers' teaching experiences sharing comments to guide teachers on how to teach in the Classroom; Curriculum and instruction could create more class activities in school in order to students using Chinese frequently.

For Future Researchers

Future researchers could increase the number of participating students to

obtain more accurate data; Future researchers could expand the range of participating students to obtain rich data; Future researchers could explore more teaching methods for improving Chinese learning achievement.

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