# Some Suggestions on Localized Chinese Textbook Compiling: An Analysis of *Basic Chinese*

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## Abstract

*Basic Chinese* is a series of local Chinese textbooks which have been better received than other kinds in Thailand. Through analyzing the sales volume, styles, texts, words, exercises, grammar, culture elements, the advantages and disadvantages of it, this paper offers suggestions in compiling localized Chinese textbooks in Thailand on the following aspects. First, cooperation with the Chinese language teaching experts should be a prerequisite for high-quality local Chinese textbooks. Second, adaptive use of different pedagogies should be used to help teaching. Besides, contrastive analysis of Thai and Chinese may help to reflect the surface features and in-depth features of the localized textbooks in the composing parts of the textbooks. Furthermore, a Thai-Chinese corpus can ensure that localized textbooks are designed with proper difficulty. Also related supporting para-teaching materials should be devised and proper update should be made when new editions of the textbooks come out.

**Keywords:** Basic Chinese, localized textbooks, suggestions on textbook compiling

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# ข้อเสนอแนะต่อการแต่งตำราเรียนภาษาจีนท้องถิ่น: การวิเคราะห์ภาษาจีนพื้นฐาน

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**บทคัดย่อ**

　　　ภาษาจีนพื้นฐานเป็นชุดตำราภาษาจีนท้องถิ่นซึ่งได้รับการตอบรับดีกว่าตำราชนิดอื่นๆ ในประเทศไทย  บทความนี้ได้เสนอคำแนะนำด้านการแต่งตำราภาษาจีนท้องถิ่นในประเทศไทย โดยผ่านการวิเคราะห์ยอดขาย ลักษณะ เนื้อหา แบบฝึกหัด ไวยากรณ์ องค์ประกอบทางวัฒนธรรม รวมทั้งข้อดีและข้อเสียของตำรา ซึ่งมีแง่มุมสำคัญดังนี้ ประการแรก ความร่วมมือกับผู้เชี่ยวชาญ ทางด้านการสอนภาษาจีนเป็นสิ่งสำคัญที่ขาดมิได้สำหรับตำราภาษาจีนท้องถิ่นที่มีคุณภาพสูง ประการที่สอง การปรับใช้วิธีการสอนที่แตกต่างกันเพื่อช่วยในการสอน นอกจากนี้ การวิเคราะห์ เปรียบเทียบระหว่างภาษาไทยและภาษาจีนก็ช่วยสะท้อนลักษณะพื้นฐานและลักษณะเชิงลึกของ ตำราท้องถิ่นในส่วนของการแต่งเรียบเรียงตำรา ยิ่งกว่านั้น คลังคำศัพท์ภาษาไทยและภาษาจีน ยังสามารถทำให้มั่นใจได้ว่าตำราท้องถิ่นถูกออกแบบให้มีระดับความยากที่เหมาะสม อีกทั้งสื่อการสอน ที่เกี่ยวข้องที่ใช้สนับสนุนควรมีการคิดค้นและทำการปรับปรุงให้เหมาะสมเมื่อมีการตีพิมพ์ตำราเรียน ฉบับใหม่

**คำสำคัญ:**  ภาษาจีนพื้นฐาน ตำราเรียนท้องถิ่น คำแนะนำในการรวบรวมตำราเรียน

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# The Research Background

China's fast economic development and its rising international status has facilitated a "Chinese-learning boom" in many places all over the world, and the number of people learning Chinese is continuously increasing. In terms of the international Chinese language teaching, Thailand enjoys several first places in the world. Thailand is the first country which has Chinese language teaching listed in the national education system, the first which invites Chinese language teaching volunteers to its country, the first country which compiles localized basic Chinese textbooks and included them into its national textbook system and syllabus. Besides, it is also the first one to establish the Confucius Classrooms. (Yu Jinghao 2012) According to incomplete statistics of Ministry of Education of Thailand, currently more than 3,000 colleges and schools offer Chinese language courses, with more than 800.000 people learning Chinese. Chinese has become the second largest foreign language after English.

Although Chinese-teaching in Thailand is now in the process of vigorous development, there still exist many problems. Li Mou (2005) pointed out that the Chinese teaching in Thailand faces two major problems: shortage of teaching staffs and the improper selection of textbooks. This paper will focus on the second issue. Although there are various Chinese textbooks in Thailand (including not only those from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, the United States and those co-compiled by both the Chinese and the Thai people, but also those solely compiled by the Thai People), only a few really fit Chinese teaching in Thailand. According to Wei Wanchuan's statistics (2007), 85% of students and 90% of teachers are not satisfied with their Chinese textbooks. Therefore, we can conclude that good textbooks which are able to fit the local needs in Thailand and at the same time can meet the needs of different levels of students are in great shortage.

Among these Chinese textbooks, Basic Chinese, which was compiled chiefly by doctor Prapin Manomaivibool and published by Chulalongkorn University, is one with great influence. Huang Hankun (2005) praised it as the most standard Chinese textbooks. This set of textbook has been reprinted seven times, and its popularity may be found in the following information statistics. From 1994 to 2003, the annual sales of Basic Chinese remained around 1000 volumes. From 2004 to 2005, the average annual sales rose to about 1500. 2006 witnessed a peak in sales, with 3000 volumes printed. In the year of 2007, 3600 volumes were printed, while in 2012, another 1000 volumes were printed. So it can be concluded that in 2008, the annual sales resumed around 1000 volumes, merely remaining the same level as the second half of the last century. However, this number lags far behind the number of new Chinese learners in Thailand in the last decade.

In view of this, this paper makes an in-depth analysis on the advantages and disadvantages of Basic Chinese, in hope of making some suggestions on the compiling of local Chinese textbooks in Thailand.

# Advantages of Basic Chinese

Huang Hankun (2005) pointed out that Basic Chinese has accepted the reasonable parts of many types of textbooks from mainland China, Taiwan and the Western countries. In deed, we can still learn from this set of textbooks even today.

## 1. Application of Psychological Research Results

In compilation of Basic Chinese, learners' needs are greatly valued and psychological factors in learning are considered in compiling.

First, each lesson of Basic Chinese is composed of eight parts (New Words, Dialogues, Sentence Patterns, Explanations, Reviews, Applications, Assignments, and Orders of Strokes in Chinese Character writing). Except the Orders of Strokes, all the other seven parts are provided with accurate Thai translation. For totally new beginners or the learners on the initial stage, this undoubtedly helps reduce their worries about Chinese learning, enhance their self-confidence, reduce their anxiety, and get more effective language input.

Second, acquisition of a linguistic item generally needs to go through the stages of perception, understanding, imitation, memorization, consolidation and application. In Basic Chinese, the first seven parts form an organic whole, fully implementing this whole process. Learners go through the process of perception when they learn new words. Sentence Patterns and Explanations help learners understand the important sentence patterns, words and expressions. In the Review parts, students make sentences with their newly learned words, which enable them to, on the basis of understanding and imitation, skillfully grasp the newly learned knowledge. In the Application parts, students answer questions and give desirable answers, which help them further understand and remember the new words and sentence patterns learned in dialogues. In the Assignment, which consists of Sentence Making, Translating and Question Answering, the learners are provided with a comprehensive platform applying all the newly learned knowledge. In addition, in parts of Reviews and Applications, new words and expressions are frequently repeated, which also plays a very active role in promoting Chinese language learning and also in remembering the language points.

## 2. Distinctive National Characteristics

In Basic Chinese, the principle of cultural localization is implemented to show distinctive Thailand national characteristics.

Li Luxing and Wang Rui (2008) pointed out that there are four surface features in local textbooks: book binding and design; annotation in local national language; some of the texts appropriately related to the circumstances of the country; texts in accordance with the actual situation of the learners of the local country. Basic Chinese excels in the last three aspects.

Considering that most of the users of this set of textbooks are beginners, and almost all of them are learning Chinese in Thailand, the learning materials related to living habits, environments, culture and society etc. are mainly based on realities in Thailand. For example, a lot of Thai place names appear in this set of textbooks, such as Silom Road, Sukhumvit Road, Sathorn Road, Cosmopolitan Hotel, Ayutthaya, Bangkok, Hua Hin, Chiang Mai. Dishes such as cold Thai noodles, fried mustard greens with oyster sauce, hot beef soup, hot and sour shrimp soup are almost known to all the Thai people. The climate in Thailand is of typical tropical monsoon features, annual temperature being less than 18 ?. The season division (A year is composed of the summer and rainy season, etc.) is different from that of China. There is a great variety of fruit in Thailand, and as a result Thai people like to drink fruit juice. All of this above-mentioned background information is reflected in the textbooks. In the vocabulary of the textbook, there also appear a lot of frequently used Thai words, or some expressions typical of the Thai people, such as Buddhist calendar, fruit water, lemon juice, rambutan, durian, and rice noodles soup, etc., which all present distinctive Thai characteristics.

## 3. Important Attachment to Language Skills

In Basic Chinese skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating are highly valued, which is a good handling of the relationship between the knowledge-transfer and the skill-training.

Prapin Manomaiviboolm, the chief compiler of Basic Chinese has clear awareness of the distinction between language teaching and linguistic teaching. In the introduction part, she points that in this series of textbooks, pronunciation and dialogue are of great importance, and there are clear requirements for learners, who are expected not only to practice questions and answers by themselves, but also to work on dialogues with teachers. They should be aware that different ways can be used to answer the same question. Skill training exercises include reading, questions and answers, inter-translation between Chinese and Thai.

Grammar points are displayed with different ways through phrases, sentence patterns, and word explanations. The principle "speak pithier and practice more" is faithfully implemented, i.e. to explain with exact Thai language, and to inspire learners to apply the inductive method to obtain the related Chinese grammatical knowledge through a lot of examples.

## 4. Use of Traditional and Simplified Chinese Characters

Both the traditional Chinese characters and simplified Chinese characters are used in the textbooks, which conforms to the reality of Thailand.

Chinese language teaching began from the Chinese literature education. Chinese language education started in Thailand during the sixty years from 1851 to 1910, and developed from 1910 to 1940. From 1940 to 1990, due to political reasons, Chinese language education in Thailand (Li Mou, 2005) .The historical backgrounds leads to the prevailing use of more traditional Chinese characters are prevalent in Thailand. At present, many Chinese people in Thailand are using the traditional Chinese characters. Among the eight Chinese newspapers, only China Youth Daily is printed in simplified Chinese characters, while most Chinese publications, billboards are also written in traditional Chinese characters.

Since 1990, due to the development of friendly relationship between China and Thailand, there are increasingly close ties between the two countries. Consequently the use of simplified Chinese characters has been gradually expanding. Faced with this reality, Basic Chinese tries to let students have access to both the traditional and simplified characters, with the former playing a dominating role. In this case the introduction of both writing systems in the textbook is undoubtedly suitable for the situation in Thailand.

# Disadvantages of Basic Chinese

Since 2008, the sale of Basic Chinese has dropped because the Thai government has introduced a large number of textbooks from the Chinese mainland. Besides the competition from the introduced textbook, Basic Chinese has its own weaknesses.

### 1. Lack of Contemporary Pedagogic Theories

It fails to take the contemporary pedagogic theories as its guidance. The communicative approach or task-based teaching approach hardly bears any influence to it. Basic Chinese is compiled on the basis of Basic Chinese Dialogues published in 1978. In the 1970s, the prevailing teaching methods were grammar-translating approach and audio-lingual approach. In effect, Basic Chinese has integrated the advantages of these two pedagogical teaching approaches. (For example, it emphasizes on the role of mother tongue in the second language acquisition. It takes Chinese-Thai inter-translation as its primary means of learning. It also pays much attention to the sentence pattern drill sand the training of oral expression ability.) But when the communicative approach and task-based teaching approach later have gradually become the mainstream, Basic Chinese doesn't make the corresponding modifications on its content in its later editions, which has left its obvious flaws.

(1) The set of textbook lacks communicative exercises, and neglects the fact that the language skills should be transferred into verbal communication skills.

The exercises in Basic Chinese generally range in number from two to three, including reading, conversion, replacing, choosing and blank filling, sentence completion, translation, questions, etc. These exercises are mainly mechanical exercises and comprehension check. But verbal communicative skills cannot be acquired by merely understanding the usage of language structures or doing mechanical sentence drills in classroom. Only the practice of language skills in real or semi-real communication environment can lead to the verbal communication skills.

(2) Most of the texts are in question-answer dialogues about made-up scenarios, which perform little communicative functions.

Among the whole 24 ones in Basic Chinese, 19 lessons are in complete and serious form of dialogues, which are barely likely to happen in reality. Role design is another problem with the dialogues. In Lesson 4 of the first volume and Lesson 12 of the second volume, there are three attendants in the dialogues. In Lesson 2, 10, and 11 of the second volume, four attendants take part, with one of them totally inactive in the conversation. In that case, these three dialogues can only be regarded as the conversations made by three persons. The roles appeared in the texts of Basic Chinese are often named as " 人 (Person)"?or their names are just replaced by their mono-syllable surnames. They are typically identified as salesmen, teachers, students, maids, nurses or doctors. Roles repeatedly come up as Wanna (appears 10 times), Miss Wang (6 times) and Wang (6 times), or Mrs. Wang, Yang, Lin, Qin and Liu (Each appears once.), hardly leaving learners any idea about their basic information such as their identity, age, hobbies and other conditions. Learners have no idea about the time and the settings of these dialogues. Neither do they know whether these roles, the things they are talking about, or the scenes they are in are related to each other or not. This type of conversation design only reduces the interest of the texts, but also makes it difficult for learners to apply the sentence patterns to the appropriate situations.

## 2. Teaching Materials' Being Subjective

The arrangement of teaching content such as words and texts mainly depends on teachers' experience and intuition, and difficulty of the contents and the comprehension problems are not taken in to consideration in the arrangement.

As far as the Chinese teaching is concerned, the key indicators of the difficulty of the text include the number of new words, the number of non-commonly used words and the average sentence length. We have made our statistics about Basic Chinese, and the data are as follows:

**Table 1:** Data of the first volume

| Indicators / Lesson | Length of Text (TotalWordNumber) | Number of New Words | Number of Non-commonly Used Words | AverageSentence Length (SentenceNumber) | Difficulty Level[3] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 65 | 39 | 1 | 3.8（17） | 4.8 |
| 2 | 147 | 27 | 0 | 6.1（24） | 6.1 |
| 3 | 131 | 44 | 0 | 6.0（22） | 6.0 |
| 4 | 160 | 49 | 0 | 8.4（19） | 8.4 |
| 5 | 224 | 39 | 2 | 7.2（29） | 9.2 |
| 6 | 198 | 46 | 3 | 12.4（16） | 15.4 |
| 7 | 312 | 43 | 4 | 13.0（24） | 17.0 |
| 8 | 177 | 43 | 5 | 11.8（15） | 16.8 |
| 9 | 209 | 44 | 5 | 7.7（27） | 12.7 |
| 10 | 211 | 48 | 5 | 10.6（20） | 15.6 |
| 11 | 162 | 53 | 3 | 10.1（16） | 13.1 |
| 12 | 330 | 49 | 5 | 10.3（32） | 15.3 |
| Average | 194 | 43.7 | 2.8 | 8.95 | 11.7 |

**Table 2:** Data of the second volume

| Indicators / Lesson | Length of Text (Total Word Number) | Number of NewWords | Number of Non-commonly Used Words | Average SentenceLength (Sentence Number) | Difficulty Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 345 | 51 | 4 | 11.9（29） | 15.9 |
| 2 | 432 | 54 | 6 | 16（27） | 22 |
| 3 | 437 | 63 | 7 | 12.5（35） | 19.5 |
| 4 | 490 | 46 | 4 | 10.9（45） | 14.9 |
| 5 | 481 | 60 | 10 | 13.4（36） | 23.4 |
| 6 | 318 | 50 | 4 | 15.9（20） | 19.9 |
| 7 | 209 | 35 | 2 | 10.0（21） | 12 |
| 8 | 275 | 32 | 7 | 8.1（34） | 15.1 |
| 9 | 385 | 57 | 17 | 8.2（47） | 25.2 |
| 10 | 258 | 61 | 12 | 8.9（29） | 20.9 |
| 11 | 347 | 95 | 29 | 8.3（42） | 37.3 |
| 12 | 311 | 74 | 10 | 13.1（24） | 23.1 |
| Average | 357 | 56.5 | 9.3 | 11.4 | 20.8 |

[3]  Here we take Zhang Ningzhi's way. Difficulty Level Coefficient is the sum of the number of non-commonly used words and the average sentence length.

As can be seen from the above data, the difficulty of the first 5 lessons in the first volume rises gradually without much difference. Compared with the first volume, the length of the text, the number of the new words, the average sentence length and the difficulty coefficient in the second volume are generally longer or higher than those of the first volume. These are very reasonable. However, from Lesson 6 to the end of the first volume, the difficulty coefficients have a sharp increase and do not follow a fixed rule. As far as Lesson 7 and Lesson 12 of the first volume are concerned, the length of the text, the number of the non-commonly used words and the average sentence length all exceed the average levels of the whole book. However, Lesson 7 and Lesson 8 of the second volume should be put in the first volume with regard to both the number of new words and difficulty coefficient. The number of new words in Lesson 11 is 68 percent higher than the average number of the whole volume, which is obviously a big gap. Of course, here we are not to say that the order of the texts should be fully in accordance with the difficulty coefficients. After all, it is somewhat subjective to decide whether a word is a commonly used word or not. Moreover, short texts are not necessarily easy. Other indicators such as the composition of the words and the number of grammatical points should also be considered. Nevertheless, difficulty coefficient really is a very important factor which should be taken into account.

## 3. Non-standard Expression

Some details such as ways of expression or pronunciations need to be standardized.

Yang Defeng (1997) pointed out that standardization is a basic requirement for the texts of textbooks, and whether they are standard or not directly affects students' learning effect. We claim that Basic Chinese needs to be standardized because more work can be done in the following several aspects:

(1) There are a lot of rarely used or inappropriate expressions in Basic Chinese.

In the two volumes of Basic Chinese, most of the questions are raised in the post-ellipsis form of the Yes-or-no questions, and generally two ways of expressions are used, i.e., "VO 不 V" or "VO 没 V". The following are some examples: "您看书不看 (General Meaning: Do you read the book or not?)" " 你给我大表不给? (General Meaning: Do you give me that big chart or not?)" " 你敢去不敢? (General Meaning: Do you dare to go or not?)" " 你喜欢看书不喜欢? (General Meaning: Do you like reading or not?)". Actually, these kinds of expressions are seldom used in modern Chinese.

In Basic Chinese, the negative form of adjectives are often expressed as " 不很 +A", while the form of " 不太 +A" can rarely be seen. However, in authentic Chinese, especially in oral Chinese, the latter form is much more frequently used than the former. The textbook

should give more attachment to the latter or at least introduce both forms rather than repeatedly using one rarely used pattern.

In addition, in Basic Chinese, there appear many incorrect collocations of "V + complement". The following are some examples: " 我说不懂中国话 (I do not speak English very sensibly.)"(P54, Volume 1) " 三个月的时候我可以说好些 (I can speak it well after 3 months.)" (P17,Volume 2), "相信你的阅读能力也会提高得很多的 (I believe that your reading comprehension will improve a lot.)"(P270,Volume 2).

(2) Some Chinese expressions are in fact not culturally or historically authentic.

In some dialogues of the textbooks, the mono-syllable surname of some roles is directly addressed as their names by others, such as Li, Wang, Lu, Liu and so on. This may mislead students to the understanding that Chinese surnames can be used alone. In addition, it is never used in Chinese to directly address them as " 人 (Person)" or " 职员 (Staff Member)".

Expressions against Chinese culture can make its users a joke in real interaction. In Lesson 5 of the first volume, Miss Zhang asks: "我就给二百五，你卖不卖? (I just give you two hundred and fifty. Will you sell it to me?)" In Chinese "two hundred and fifty"is a pejorative slang, generally used to ridicule a silly and reckless person. As a result, in transactions people will generally try to avoid this figure.

Cultural mistakes in grammatically correct disguise may bring greater problems once they are learned and used in real life. In Lesson 4 of the second volume, Wanna says, "If we go together with you, I'm afraid that the food you have brought will not be enough for us to eat." Wang replies, "You can also bring some food with you, and you will eat what you bring, and we will eat what we bring. In that case, none of us will spend extra money." Although Wang's reply is simple and idiomatic in form, the content does not seem quite appropriate to a Chinese. Chinese people are very hospitable, thus going Dutch with friends will generally be discussed and agreed in advance. Hence, it sounds not so real when Wang takes the initiative to invite Wanna, he himself suggests going Dutch with her.

There are also outdated expressions in the textbooks. Another example is about the use of traditional Chinese measurement unit " 尺 (Chi)". Generally this measurement unit is used to describe people's height, such as "a man of seven Chi tall"and "an imposing seven-Chi-tall man". But since metric system was adopted in the period of Republican China, people have gradually got used to describing people's height in metric measurement unit "meter". So, the question and answer on Page 167 of the second volume seem a little inappropriate: "你哥哥（有）几尺高？他六尺多一点儿。(How tall is your elder brother? He is a little more than six Chi.)" Another example is " 那座山有一万二千尺高。(That mountain is twelve thousand Chi high.)

(3) In Basic Chinese, there are some errors both in Chinese pinyin and in Chinese Characters.

Mistakes can be found in the examples as follows:
" 张得一模一样 " (Volume II, P32), the first character " 张 " should be replaced as " 长 " and pinyin for the fourth character " 模 " should be " mú" instead of "mó". In Lesson 11, in the expression " 开房子 "(to give prescription), the second character " 房 " should be replaced as " 方 "; in the expression " 请再来一此 ", the last character " 此 " should be replaced as " 次 "; and in the expression " 我想我也使得了感冒了 ", the fifth character "使 "should be replace as " 是 ".

Concerning the tone sandhi features of the character "八(eight)", quite a lot of scholars believe that it is both acceptable to reflect the tone sandhi in pinyin or not. However, almost in every case in real communication, the tone of " 八(eight)" is not changed. In The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (5th edition), the following note under the entry " 八 (eight)"is also deleted:"Note: …in front of a word with the fourth tone, it should be pronounced with the second tone, such as " 八岁 (eight years old)", " 八次(eight times)". Consequently, in the sentence of the textbook, "我们在那儿住了八个月了。We stayed there for eight months."(P.279, Volume 1), it is worth discussing whether the tone of the character " 八 (eight)" should be the second tone.

## 4. Excessive Use of the Thai Language and pinyin

For the beginners, the use of mother tongue is necessary, and is very useful for them to establish confidence and to understand the difficult Chinese words, expressions and grammatical knowledge. The question is whether it is necessary to translate every word of the first seven parts of the whole textbooks. A significant adverse influence is that the source language can overshadow the target language learning. The excessively detailed translation may mislead the learners to think that they have understood all and thus they have no further interest and motivation to participate in Chinese sentence drills and communicative activities. A further consequence is that they cannot appreciate the specific use of Chinese words and sentence patterns in the process of using Chinese. Deng Enming (1998) also illustrated the disadvantages of excessive use of translation, "Relying on such translations, both teachers and students have ignored that the target language (Chinese) can also play a cognitive function ....Not only will this have a dexterous effect to the cognitive competence of the learners, but also mislead them to think that the Chinese language should be used only when they are doing exercises, while upon really understanding the content of the textbooks, they can only rely on their mother tongue.

It is the same with the use of pinyin. In Basic Chinese Pinyin as a tool in understanding promotion is given too much importance. Even in the second volume, pinyin always appears simultaneously with the Chinese characters of the first seven parts, and even the appendix index adopts the form of pinyin. But in real communication only Chinese characters will be of practical use. In conclusion, the excessive use of pinyin can be a negative influence on the development of students' reading and writing skills.

## 5. Lack of Teaching Resources

Outdated form and content of the textbooks without supporting teaching materials reduce the interest of learners.

There are no primary, intermediate or advanced levels of textbooks which function as the basis or the advancement of Basic Chinese. Besides there are no other matching supporting materials, teacher's books or resource pack, which is a great inconvenience to the learners. In addition, there is no illustrations in the two volumes of the textbooks, and the whole set of the textbooks is printed in black letters. Different parts are distinguished only by different cases and sizes of the Chinese characters, which easily leads to eye fatigue and easily get the learners bored. Later editions did not make significant changes about this. In this aspect, the modifications that Integrated Chinese of the United States has made are worth learning. (The first edition of Integrated Chinese in 1997 was printed in single color. The second edition in 2005 was printed in two colors, while the third edition in 2009 was changed to be printed in four colors. The revised edition has not only improved in its form but also updated its content to suit the social development and changes.)In Lesson 10 of the second volume of Basic Chinese, there is such a sentence, " 我正要到电话局打长途电话 (I was just going to the telephone station to make a long distance call.)", which is typically about what was happening in the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century, when telephones and mobile phones are almost accessible to everyone.). But when almost everyone has easy access to phones and mobiles, content of the text should also be adjusted accordingly.

# Some Suggestions on Thailand Local Chinese Textbooks

Zhou Lei (2009) surveyed on the use of Chinese language textbooks used by college freshmen in Thailand. In 11 universities, textbooks were introduced from the Chinese mainland; in 5 universities, the textbooks were compiled by Thais locally (3 universities use Basic Chinese), and two colleges used textbooks compiled by the joint effort of the Thai people and the Chinese people. As can be seen, the mainland imported textbooks is

predominantly used in Thailand. But Chen Jiyun (2006) pointed out that few Chinese textbooks imported from the Chinese mainland really meet the need of actual Chinese teaching in Thailand. Actually, this type of textbooks is more suitable for the Chinese people or their children living in Thailand, while for the common Thai students, there are some deficiencies in such type of textbooks. As far as the content of these textbooks are concerned, except those textbooks required by the Ministry of Education of Thailand, the content of most textbooks is not close to the Thai students. For example, they have no idea about some place names which have been mentioned in the textbooks. So we can say that the textbooks do not make changes that suit local circumstances. Zhou Xiaobing and Chen Nan (2013) also pointed out that flaws of many textbooks imported from China can be attributed to the Chinese compilers' failures to understand the local country's culture and customs. Advantages of the textbooks imported from the Chinese mainland lie in its design and processing of language points, while the disadvantages lie in the misunderstanding or under-processing of cultural elements, which is often the very opposite of local Textbooks.

Based on the above analysis on Basic Chinese, we conclude that to compile high-quality Thai local textbooks, the following several aspects should be paid attention to:

## 1. Prerequisite: Deeper Communication between Thai Schools and Chinese Experts

Thai schools at all levels need to increase their communication with language teaching experts from China, which is the prerequisite of the high-quality local textbooks.

The advantages of Thai teachers lie in the fact that they are very familiar with Thai cultural background and teaching system, and they understand the learning styles, thinking patterns and values of different types of learners, their specific needs, the topics they are interested in, the mistakes they frequently make and the key points in teaching. However, language teaching experts from China who have rich classroom experience, more solid Chinese linguistic expertise, are able to arrange the teaching content in due order, are familiar with both the advantages and disadvantages of various teaching methods, fully understand the Chinese expression patterns and the Chinese culture. Consequently, the two parties should fully communicate with each other to make full use of all resources available. Only in this way can the high-quality Chinese textbooks be worked out.

## 2. Theoretical Foundation: Infusion of Different Pedagogic Theories

The essence of various schools of pedagogic theories should be integrated and used for reference, on the basis of comprehensive understanding the rules of the Chinese language, which is an important aspect when a set of localized Chinese textbooks in Thailand is compiled.

From the grammar-translation approach to communicative approach and task-based approach, there is a clear trend of being convergent and comprehensive, such as the Russian "self-motive approach", American "cognitive approach", China's "structure-function-culture approach", and "cognitive function approach". There are various differences in the languages themselves in this world, and learners' natural learning characteristics, learning motivations, learning conditions vary dramatically. As a result, we cannot expect that a certain kind of teaching method can solve all the problems encountered. Therefore, we should pay attention to learning the essence of different teaching methods, and implementing them into our textbooks.

## 3. Composing Parts: Reflection of Comparative Awareness:

The contrastive analysis of Thai and Chinese helps to project the surface features and in-depth features of the localized textbooks in the composing parts of the textbooks.

Chinese textbooks generally comprise words, texts, explanations, grammatical points and exercises. Before compiling a set of textbooks, an overall consideration should be made in advance so as to integrate the Thai-culture elements into the textbooks. For example, in vocabulary learning, some Thai-commonly used words and unique Thai words should be included, and the contrast between the Thai and Chinese pronunciations, vocabulary, grammatical points, and cultural aspects should be actively involved in. The teaching priorities and difficulties should be clarified, and the strategies on the targeted problems should be implemented throughout the textbooks so as to ensure proper phonetic training and grammatical teaching. The texts should be focused on topics that the Thai people are interested in, while at the same time the Thai and Chinese culture elements should be well treated. Moreover, different thinking patterns, study habits of different ages and different teaching systems should also be taken into consideration when exercises are designed. Furthermore, the amount and type of exercises should be determined in accordance with the common local teaching style and teaching methods.

## 4. Technical Skills: Corpus and Computers

In the process of textbook compiling, corpus and computerized resources should be made full use of, which provide the technical assurance of the appropriate difficulty of the Chinese textbooks.

Li Mou (2005) pointed out that among the six volumes of Basic Chinese published by Beijing Language and Culture University Press, the first two volumes are widely and frequently used in various schools or training classes in Thailand, while the latter four volumes are seldom applied owing to their sharp increase in difficulty. The root of the

problem is that there are remarkable differences between the Thai and Chinese students' learning time, learning efficiency, and teaching methods, etc. As a result, the learning content and syllabus that are suitable for the Chinese students are not necessarily applicable to the Thai students. That's the reason why textbooks introduced from China are often not well received in other countries.

Currently, remarkable development in computer technology ensure a scientifically designed vocabulary and recurrence of the common characters and words on basis of a large corpus, control the proportion of difficult words, the average length of the sentences and texts, and make sure a natural and gradual transition between the introductory level, elementary level, intermediate level and advanced level of the textbooks.

## 5. Teaching Materials Supplement: Three-dimensional Materials

Supporting three-dimensional teaching materials should be produced as aid to the paper textbooks, and new editions of textbooks should be updated in the form and content. Traditional paper textbooks can only provide students with visual stimulation. However, the three-dimensional teaching materials are a combination of pictures, words, sound, images and network. A variety of stimulations can help to attract students' attention and to improve their learning efficiency. At the same time, teachers can share resources, understand the purpose of the compliers better, get more guidance of teaching methods and teaching skills and finally improve their teaching efficiency.

Over the last decade, Chinese has been continuously gaining more use and users, thus it is impending to make the demand for sophisticated Chinese textbooks. Faced with the increasing need for Chinese learning in a competitive market, localized Chinese textbooks in Thailand will be losing more learners if they are not substantially refined,

A Chinese poet in the Qing dynasty once said, "一花独放不是春，万紫千红春满园。(A flower does not make the spring, spring comes only when all flowers bloom)" The same is true of the Chinese textbook market where there should exist a variety of different textbooks. In this market, the Thai people should try to make their voices heard, and the local Chinese textbooks compiled by the Thai people should occupy an important place in the market, or at least they should be more actively involved in the work of co-compiling the Chinese textbooks with the Chinese people, because only the Thai people themselves know the native living habits, cultural customs, learning difficulties and profound needs, and only Thai people could know about Thailand's national conditions, deeply understand the essence of the Thai culture, and then they can compile the Chinese textbooks suitable for learners of different ages and from different types schools in Thailand.

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