

Perceptions of Pupils towards Chinese Literature Texts, Factors Influencing Mastery of Chinese Language and Effective Teaching Methods in Teaching Literature Texts

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to identify the pupils' perceptions towards the use of Chinese literature texts, factors in influencing the mastery of Chinese language and the effective teaching methods in teaching literature texts among the Chinese-medium primary school pupils. The theory used in this survey research was Children's Literature Theory (Kow, 2002). Research sample of 216 year five pupils were drawn from six Chinese-medium primary schools, either in urban area or rural area in Hulu Langat, Selangor. Questionnaire was used to gather the information needed for the data analysis. The results of the study showed that the pupils basically showed positive perceptions towards the literature texts. The main factors in influencing the pupils' performances in Chinese language were the factors of teachers, peers and parents. Besides, the pupils showed positive perception towards students-centered approaches that apply teaching aids in teaching Chinese literature. Hence, teachers must equip themselves with effective teaching methods in order to generate young generation who appreciate literature.

Keywords

Chinese literature texts; Pupils' perceptions; Factors; Effective teaching methods; Chinese-medium primary school

1. INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, Chinese schools have come a long way since the colonial days. Chinese education is an integral part of Malaysian Chinese cultural system, and Chinese primary school has been regarded by the Chinese educationists as the "Last Bastion of Chinese

education and culture” (Chong, 2013). In other words, Chinese primary schools provide the basic Chinese language skills that should be mastered by pupils. Due to the current situation in Malaysia, parents from different races wish their children can at least learn the Chinese language at the primary school level.

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Primary Education is the initial stage of education and has as its basic aim to create, establish and offer opportunities to all children, regardless of age, gender or country of origin, to achieve a balanced cognitive, emotional and psychomotor development (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016).

Since 2011, Primary School Standards Based Curriculum or the KSSR was implemented among all the national schools in Malaysia, including Chinese-medium primary schools. With the emergence of KSSR, the Standards-Based Chinese Language Curriculum was designed as well with significant changes in curriculum documents and organization. Accordingly, the Standard Document was developed and became the blueprint of the Chinese language curriculum for Years One to Six (Tajularipin, 2015).

Under the implementation of education reformation, new Chinese language curriculum itself demands teachers to design such lessons and assessments about literature texts that require pupils to comprehend the language input and answer questions with high levels of cognitive skills that emphasize on conceptual understanding and integration of language skills and language focus rather than traditional rote learning skills. These efforts could be seen through the content standards and learning standards related to the learning of literature texts which are stated in Chinese Language Standard Document for Curriculum and Assessment or the DSKP (2011). The purposes of learning literature texts is to promote pupils to express their thoughts and to communicate with others, which is not usually covered and emphasized in the curriculum of KBSR. Through the implementation of KSSR, learners are given opportunities to explore within meaningful conversational contexts by exposing to the children’s literature (Liu, 2015).

The children literatures texts such as stories, poems, narrative texts and application texts were recruited in primary Chinese language textbooks of Year 1 to Year 6. The textbooks are used by the Chinese language teachers in Chinese-medium primary schools based on Primary School Standards Based Curriculum (KSSR). The curriculum guidelines and are generally assumed to set clear teaching and learning objectives and to provide a systematic and progressive approach to language syllabus design.

The contents of the Chinese language textbooks of Year One to Year Six showed the recruitment of a variety of literature genres, which include poetry, story and narrative texts. Table 1 showed the literature genres which are selected in the Chinese language textbooks for each of the year in primary schools.

Literature Genre	Frequency of Chinese literature texts						
	Year						
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	E
Poetry	7	4	2	4	4	2	23(29.1)
Story	0	0	11	4	4	4	23(29.1)
Narrative texts	0	0	2	3	10	12	27(34.2)
Application texts	0	0	0	3	2	1	6(7.6)
Total	7	4	15	14	20	19	79(100.0)
N	56	54	50	30	30	29	249
%	12.5	7.4	30	46.7	66.7	65.5	31.7

Table 1. Literature Genres of Chinese-medium Primary School Chinese Language Textbooks

Table 1 showed the types and frequency of literature genres that are selected in the Chinese language textbooks of Chinese-medium primary school. There were 249 passages recruited in the textbooks of year one to year six. Among these 249 passages, 79 of them were literature texts of different genres, which are poetry, story, and narrative texts application texts. The percentage of literature texts in the Chinese language textbooks inclined from year one to year six, which was from 12.5% to 65.5%. For the textbooks of year five and year six, the sum of literature texts was more than the half of the total literature texts, which are 66.7% and 65.5% respectively. This meant that the pupils had more opportunities to read and learn the literature texts in higher level of primary education.

Standard Document for Curriculum and Assessment (DSKP) was introduced and implemented in order to help the educational transformation in Primary School Standards Based Curriculum (KSSR). Six Standard Documents for Curriculum and Assessment (DSKP) for each year which is from Year One to Year Six are provided by Ministry of Education Malaysia.

The implementation of the literature component also encourages the students to show their aesthetic appreciation toward the literary work and relate them to one's life. In general, the aims of literature component reflects the reasons for teaching and using literature in classroom and it is in accordance to what has been mentioned by literature prominent and a continuity from a previous reading program. Other factor that drives the literature component to be integrated in school is to enhance the appreciation values through the understanding of themselves and others. Malaysia known as multiracial and multicultural country, maintain the harmonious in the country through using a book as a unity tool (Murat, 2004). The literary text chosen will encompass moral values which relevant to our lives and it confirms one of the reasons for using literature as a means for cultural enrichment where students will be exposed to certain aspects of target culture.

However, the incorporation of the literature component had initially mixed responses from the pupils. This can be seen through the responses from teachers and students. Their responses have become more positive with its full implementation (Vethamani, 2007). However, some interesting reactions came from the learners themselves as "they were anxious about having to read and discuss the works of writers that seemed difficult and foreign to them" (Tina, Hassan, Fauziah, Fara Adlina, & Marzilah, 2007).

Susanna (2007) also claimed that students with negative perceptions usually have poor strategies and give up easily when they find struggle. In addition, many studies have been conducted on students' poor performance in learning the language indicated that language learning anxiety in students also found that students were afraid of making mistakes in the classes, failing the exams, as well as the poor socio economic background cause of the poor performance in learning languages (Baig, 2011).

The year 2016 marked the first 6 years of the Chinese literature component being incorporated in the Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR). After having been around for more than 6 years, one would tend to expect that teachers and pupils have developed positive attitudes and perceptions towards the literature component as it is introduced by the Ministry of Education as a means to help improve pupils' language proficiency. It is with this belief in mind that this research be carried out to actually have a look at how teachers and pupils, are currently adapting and coping with literature teaching and learning in schools.

Recently, pupils generally had negative perception towards the literature texts. The students

indicates that majority of them agreed that literature texts are difficult to read, literature are difficult to learn due to grammar restriction and it is time consuming to read long literature text. On the other hand, majority of them agreed that by reading literary texts, one can be a good reader and they also agreed that they had developed interest in language subject through learning literature (Suhailah, 2015). Pupils' perceptions can surely influence their literature reading motivation.

Initially, many school teachers were still worried as they did not have enough knowledge on the methodology to teach literature (Tina, Hassan, Fauziah, Fara Adlina, & Marzilah, 2007), while some were worried of the time needed to cover the syllabus so that they would be able to prepare their students for examination (Rashid, Rahman & Rahman, 2016).

Moreover, parental involvement may be an essential factor in the development of the foundation in children's education. In spite of this, many parents do not appear to be getting involved in their children's education. Parents of primary school children are often faced with unique challenges that hinder them from meeting the learners' needs. These include; insufficient time, job type, home rules, level of education, order of priority, set home environment, opinion to voluntary work at school, time taken to respond to school activities, attending parents meetings, conferences, academic clinic day, and discussing the academic progress of the child. If the above needs are not attended to, the child may not perform well because of inadequate parental support (Veronica, 2013).

The other factor that influenced pupils' language achievement is peer factors and affect. Student engagement and motivation are precious commodities, valuable not only to teachers but also to students. Students' school lives are more enjoyable when they are engaged in their classes. Engagement provides an energetic resource for coping with the challenges of schoolwork, promoting students' motivational resilience (Martin & Marsh, 2009). Interactions with peers that contribute to structure in the classroom are also important for the development of a sense of control. Although they do not provide structure in the same way that teachers do, classroom peers provide contextual affordances that can support academic competence (Wentzel, 2009). For example, when interacting with classmates, students practice communicating, give and receive feedback, model academic competencies, resolve conflicts, provide help and advice, and create shared academic goals and behavioral standards (Parr, 2002).

In the past, Malaysian educational system depends on didactic approach in teaching and learning that based on teachers' instructions. However, in the era of globalization, educational system nowadays are progressing with regards to approach of teaching and learning at every level towards a more active and constructive education (Sarina, 2014).

Therefore, in order to achieve effective teaching methods and motivating communication, it is usually necessary to go beyond the forms of the language or to use other input which differ from the traditional textbooks. In this sense, literature texts present a never-ending source of resources for studying, teaching and communicating (Puri, 2011). The relationship between literature and language has changed according to the paradigm applied to the teaching methods of language, particularly in the last century. The relationship was an excellent one at the beginning of the 20th century under the classical paradigm when "literary language was superior to spoken language" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

The use of literature texts in Chinese language primary schools is no longer a new phenomenon since the primary education of Malaysia was reformed by introducing KSSR or

the Primary School Standards Based Curriculum in 2011. It is undeniable that the reformation had brought the both positive and negative impacts on the Chinese language education. However, there were not much studies have been done in Malaysia on the perceptions of the pupils towards the use of Chinese literature texts. Therefore, this study aimed to answer below research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of the pupils towards the use of Chinese literature texts?
2. What are the factors that influence the mastery of Chinese language of pupils in Chinese-medium primary school?
3. What are the effective teaching methods in teaching Chinese literature texts?

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this research has been developed just as shown in Figure 1. The figure was developed based on the objective of the study and the outcome obtained through the literature review. According to Borgatti (1999), a conceptual framework is a collection of interrelated concepts, like a theory but not necessarily so well worked-out. A conceptual framework guides research, determining things to measure and the statistical relationships to look for.

According to Children’s literature theory, the purpose of using literature in a language classroom is to make the class interactive and it can be stated that an interactive class can obviously improve communicative competence of the learners and keep a lasting impact on their mind. Such a class can enhance the critical thinking abilities of the learners and at the same time maintain a learner centre environment. Literary texts are a rich source of classroom activities and can surely prove to be very motivating for learners. No wonder the use of literary pieces play a significant role in language teaching. Literature opens a new world to the students. It cultivates the critical abilities of the students. It encompasses every human dilemma, conflict and yearning unravelling the plot of a short story is more than an automatic exercise (Kow, 2002).

To identify the effect of the theoretical framework of research, a survey study was carried out to identify the pupils’ perceptions towards Chinese literature texts, factors in influencing the mastery of Chinese language and the effective teaching methods in teaching Chinese literature texts among the Chinese-medium primary school pupils. The effects from pupils’ demographic particulars and teaching methods of teachers were reviewed by using the instruments of questionnaire.

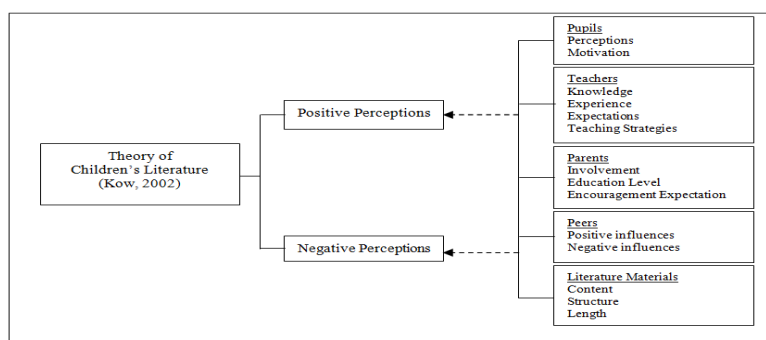


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the Research

4. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this study included quantitative method, whereby questionnaire was used to gather the information. The researcher used survey study design to examine the pupils' perceptions towards Chinese literature texts and factors that influence their Chinese language learning. Besides, this study also aimed at identifying teachers' effective teaching methods in teaching Chinese literature texts.

The target respondents are the pupils from Year Five, which they have already been exposed to literature texts in the textbooks since Year One. One set of Year Five Chinese textbook that are used in Chinese-medium schools (SJKC), published under the implemented Primary School Standards Based Curriculum (KSSR) curriculum was analyzed. There were 20 literature texts recruited in Year Five Chinese textbook, which had the highest percentage of literature texts in the Chinese language textbooks. The researcher selected four literature texts of different types of genres recruited in Chinese language textbooks, which were poems, story, narrative text and application text respectively in both reading comprehension test and aesthetic appreciation expression test. Hence, there are a total of four literature texts with different genres are included in these two parts of the test.

Population and Respondents of the Study

The research was conducted in Chinese-medium primary schools (SJKC) in Hulu Langat District, Selangor. It has a mix of urban and rural settlements with a majority of the population settling in towns near Kuala Lumpur (Nur, 2016). Hence, the data and information about Chinese-medium primary schools from both rural and urban areas can be gathered by conducting the survey research in Hulu Langat, Selangor.

In this district, three schools that located in urban area and three schools that located in rural area were chosen for the purpose of the study. The Chinese-medium primary schools which were located in urban area are known as school "A1", "A2" and "A3", at which A1 is a Grade B school while A2 and A3 are Grade A schools. Meanwhile, the "B1", "B2" and "B3" represent the Chinese-medium primary schools which are located in rural area. For rural area, B2 is Grade B school while B1 and B3 are Grade A schools.

These schools were selected due to their similarity to the environment of Chinese-medium primary schools in Malaysia nowadays, in which different races of pupils choose to study at Chinese-medium primary schools. The schools' grade distribution is the same for both urban and rural area.

For this survey research, the sample size assigned is 300 pupils. The researcher conducts purposive sampling procedures to determine the target respondents of students of Year Five in Chinese-medium primary school where 36 pupils were selected from each school and each school comprised of 18 male and 18 female pupils.

Instruments of Study

To gather the information needed for the data analysis, questionnaire is used for determining and finding out the perceptions of pupils towards the use of literature. At the same time, the instruments of effective teaching methods were made with the reference of Wu (2015) in her study about using Chinese literature to teach Chinese and Yu (2007) in his study about the role of children's literature in the teaching of language to young learners.

The questionnaire contained 53 items, which were distributed into seven sections, which were

sections A, B, C, D, E, and F and G. Section A contained the questions which were related to the pupils' demographic particulars such as gender, ethnic, language used at home, favourite subject, attendance of Chinese language tuition class, parents' education level and Chinese subject grade. Section B involved the items about the perceptions of pupil towards the use of Chinese literature texts in language classrooms. Sections C to F contained the questions related to the factors that affect the Chinese language achievement of pupils, which were pupils' opinions about the influence of teachers, influence of parents, influence of peers in pupils' mastery of Chinese language, whereas section F were related to the relevance of the literature texts. Section G was related to pupils' thoughts about teachers' effective teaching methods in teaching literature texts. The items in sections B, C, D, E, F and G are measured by using the five-level Likert scale (Likert, 1932).

The questionnaire was validated by three lecturers in teacher training institute (IPG), Mister P, Mister S and Madam N. They focused on checking the types of questions on the questionnaire. The items in questionnaire were changed and be corrected based on their feedbacks and comments. After the validation was done, a pilot study was also run by the researcher. The researcher carried out a pilot test on 30 pupils from a school before conducting the survey research. The alpha Cronbach value for each part of the questionnaire was 0.8. This indicated that the questionnaire was reliable and can be carried out for real study.

Profile of Respondents

Demographic particulars of the respondents were shown in Table 2.

Respondents' Profile	Category	Urban Area (%) n = 108	Rural Area (%) n = 108	Σ (%) N = 216
Gender	Male	54 (25.0)	54 (25.0)	108 (50.0)
	Female	54 (25.0)	54 (25.0)	108 (50.0)
Ethnic	Chinese	92 (42.6)	95 (44.0)	187 (86.6)
	Malay	13 (6.0)	10 (4.6)	23 (10.6)
	Indian	3 (1.4)	2 (0.9)	5 (2.3)
	Others	0 (0.0)	1 (0.5)	1 (0.5)
Language Used At Home	Chinese	83 (38.4)	91 (42.1)	174 (80.6)
	Malay	10 (4.6)	11 (5.1)	21 (9.7)
	English	13 (6.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (6.0)
	Other	2 (0.9)	6 (2.8)	8 (3.7)
Favourite Language	Chinese	62 (28.7)	66 (30.6)	128 (59.3)
	Malay	8 (3.7)	15 (6.9)	23 (10.6)
	English	36 (16.7)	22 (10.2)	58 (26.9)
	Other	2 (0.9)	5 (2.3)	7 (3.2)
Attendance of Chinese Language Tuition Class	Yes	53 (24.5)	57 (26.4)	110 (50.9)
	No	55 (25.5)	51 (23.6)	106 (49.1)
Father's Education Level	UPSR	7 (3.2)	10 (4.6)	17 (7.9)
	PMR	13 (6.0)	18 (8.3)	31 (14.4)
	SPM	40 (18.5)	48 (22.2)	88 (40.7)
	STPM	14 (6.5)	6 (2.8)	20 (9.3)
	Diploma	15 (6.9)	4 (1.9)	19 (8.8)
	Bachelor	16 (7.4)	19 (8.8)	35 (16.2)
	Master	1 (0.5)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.5)
	PhD	1 (0.5)	2 (0.9)	3 (1.4)
	No Data*	1 (0.9)	1 (0.5)	2 (0.9)
Mother's Education Level	UPSR	7 (3.2)	7 (3.2)	14 (6.5)
	PMR	3 (1.4)	14 (6.5)	17 (7.9)
	SPM	50 (23.1)	54 (25.0)	104 (48.1)
	STPM	17 (7.9)	8 (3.7)	25 (11.6)
	Diploma	18 (8.3)	3 (1.4)	21 (9.7)
	Bachelor	11 (5.1)	22 (10.2)	33 (15.3)
	Master	2 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.9)
	PhD	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.00)
Number of extra Chinese books read in a week	0	10 (4.6)	9 (4.2)	19 (8.8)
	1-4 books	62 (28.7)	47 (21.8)	109 (50.5)
	5-8 books	24 (11.1)	35 (16.2)	59 (27.3)
	> 8 books	12 (5.5)	17 (7.9)	29 (13.4)
Chinese Subject Grade	A	32 (14.8)	29 (13.4)	61 (28.2)
	B	32 (14.8)	35 (16.2)	67 (31.0)
	C	27 (12.5)	23 (10.6)	50 (23.1)
	D	12 (5.5)	8 (3.7)	20 (9.3)
	E	5 (2.3)	13 (6.0)	18 (8.3)

* Respondent is an orphan.

Table 2. Respondents' Demographic Particulars

Table 2 showed the gender of the respondents was also evenly distributed which there were 108 (50%) male pupils and 108 (50%) female pupils involved in this research. Most of the respondents were Chinese (86.6%), followed by Malays (10.6%), Indians (2.3%) and others (0.5%). Among these 216 respondents, more than half of them (59.3%) like Chinese language the most. It was then followed by English (26.9%), Malay (10.6%) and others (3.2%).

The attendance of Chinese Language tuition class was quite evenly distributed among the respondents, either they are from the urban schools or rural schools. For urban area, there were 53 (24.5%) respondents who attended Chinese language tuition class while there were 55 (25.5%) respondents did not attend. The education level revealed that the majority of the respondents' father (156, 72.3%) only received the education up to primary or secondary schools. Data also showed that the education level were higher among the fathers whose children studied at urban schools. On the other hand, there were 121 (56%) respondents' mothers were secondary school leavers. There were more respondents' mothers from urban area (31, 14.3%) received tertiary education than the respondents' mothers from rural area (25, 11.6%).

There were 197 (91.2%) respondents read at least one extra Chinese language book in a week. This proved that most of the respondents had the habit of reading extra Chinese language books. However, there were also 19 (8.8%) respondents did not read any extra Chinese language book in a week. Table 3 revealed that the majority of the respondents had good performance in Chinese language subject with 61 (28.2%) respondents scored grade whereas 67 (31.0%) respondents scored grade B. The respondents from urban schools scored better than the respondents from rural areas in Chinese language subject, as there were lesser respondents from urban schools scored grade E in their Chinese language paper.

5. RESULT

Research Question 1:

What are the perceptions of the pupils towards the use of Chinese literature texts?

Pupils' Perceptions	Σ (%) N = 216			Mean	SD
	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree		
1. Read it when first receiving textbook	26 (12.0)	48 (22.2)	142 (65.7)	3.75	1.023
2. Enjoy reading literature texts	32 (14.8)	51 (23.6)	133 (61.6)	3.61	1.051
3. Imagine himself/herself the main character	84 (38.9)	54 (25.0)	78 (36.1)	2.98	1.239
4. Help in expressing thoughts	43 (19.9)	49 (22.7)	124 (57.4)	3.48	1.193
5. Read extra literature texts	32 (14.8)	36 (16.7)	148 (68.5)	3.79	1.192

Table 3. Respondents' Perceptions towards the Use of Literature Texts

The data shown in Table 3 revealed that the pupils basically showed positive perceptions towards the literature texts. The means of each of the statement were all higher than 2.5, at which most of the pupils were agreed and strongly agreed that they liked Chinese literature texts. Among these five statements, the mean of the statement "Read extra literature texts" was the highest ($M=3.79$, $SD=1.192$). This was followed by the mean score of 3.75, at which pupils would read literature texts when first receiving textbooks ($M=3.75$, $SD=1.023$). Besides, the respondents also enjoyed reading literature texts with the mean score of 3.61 for the related statement ($M=3.61$, $SD=1.051$). Also, the statement of "Literature texts help in expressing thoughts" was also quite agreed by the respondents with the mean score of 3.48 ($M=3.48$, $SD=1.193$). However, not much respondents claimed that they would imagine

himself or herself the main character in the literature texts. The mean score for this statement was the lowest among all these five statements, which was 2.98 ($M=2.98$, $SD=1.239$).

There were 142 (65.7%) respondents would read the literature texts when first receiving Chinese language textbooks. 133 (61.5%) of them also claimed that they enjoyed reading literature texts and always experienced pleasure in reading literature texts. Also, most of the respondents agreed that literature texts can help in expressing their thoughts and feelings. There were 124 (57.4%) respondents found that the texts they read can promote the expansion of their imagination. Among these 216 respondents, 148 (68.5%) of them will read extra Chinese literature texts after class. Obviously, from the pupils' points of views, reading literature texts made them enjoyed the learning, as the literature texts promoted and encouraged pupils to express their thoughts.

Results of the research was accordance with the education phenomenon at which Chinese language subject showed an improved performance in UPSR 2017. In 2017 UPSR, it was found that the percentage of candidates who scored above the required minimum level (all D's and above) for all the subjects had risen up, except English language (writing). For Chinese language subject (comprehension), the percentage of candidates who scored above the required minimum level reached 89.9%, which had risen up 3% from last year's 86.9%, while the percentage of A-scorer candidates was 17.6%, which was 1.9% higher than that of last year's 15.7% (Oriental Daily, 2017).

On the other hand, the number of candidates who attained the minimum level of writing in Chinese language subject was 89.7%, only an increase of 1% over the 88.7% of last year. However, there were 24.8% of candidates who scored A's in 2017, compared with 21.9% of the candidates who scored A's in the previous year, there was an increase of 2.9% (Oriental Daily, 23/11/2017).

Perceptions can alter every aspect of a person's life, including their education. Student perceptions on learning determine their ability and willingness to learn. If negative perceptions are not altered, a student is unlikely to continue his education beyond what is required. Changing students' negative perceptions towards learning is a process that involves determining the factors driving the attitude and using information to bring about change (Hamid, 2016).

The learning attitude of students is a factor that is known to influence students' study and achievement in the subject. The findings of the previous study (Alphine, 2015) showed that show that students' perceptions and beliefs, perceived learning abilities and competencies and previous performances of students in language influenced their level of motivation leading to low outcomes. Negative attitude and lack of motivation can lead to obstacles in learning a language. However a student's negative attitudes can be changed and turned into positive ones and facilitate getting a positive result. Having positive attitude towards learning a language is a good start to learn a language. By providing positive attitudes among the students, we can raise students' motivation.

The results of the data analysis showed that the pupils had positive perceptions towards the Chinese literature texts. They enjoy reading the literature texts recruited in the Chinese language textbooks. This was important as the one's perception can make a difference on the language learning. Positive perceptions can promote some good attitudes and motivation among the pupils in learning a language.

Research Question 2:

What are the factors that influence the mastery of Chinese language of pupils in Chinese-medium primary school?

Factors	Σ (%) N = 216					Mean	SD
	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree		
Influence of Teachers							
1. teacher is knowledgeable	10 (4.6)	17 (7.9)	41 (19.0)	76 (35.2)	71 (32.9)	3.85	1.1 19
2. share interesting extracurricular knowledge in the lessons	19 (8.8)	19 (8.8)	31 (14.4)	76 (35.2)	71 (32.9)	3.75	1.2 48
3. guide me to experience the lessons taught in the literature texts.	4 (1.9)	12 (5.6)	28 (13.0)	81 (37.5)	91 (42.1)	4.13	.96 4
4. appreciate my learning attitude and classroom performance	23 (10.6)	29 (13.4)	84 (38.9)	59 (27.3)	21 (9.7)	3.12	1.1 02
5. conducts lessons in adequate time	13 (6.0)	33 (15.3)	41 (19.0)	65 (30.1)	64 (29.6)	3.62	1.2 25
6. can get main ideas of the literature texts	12 (5.6)	23 (10.6)	65 (30.1)	59 (27.3)	57 (26.4)	3.58	1.1 50
Influence of Parents							
1. can speak Mandarin fluently	12 (5.6)	24 (11.1)	46 (21.3)	79 (36.6)	55 (25.5)	3.65	1.1 39
2. set goals for my Chinese subject	27 (12.5)	28 (13.0)	55 (25.5)	74 (34.3)	32 (14.8)	3.26	1.2 27
3. get rewards when scoring high marks	27 (12.5)	32 (14.8)	41 (19.0)	57 (26.4)	59 (27.3)	3.41	1.3 58
4. discuss literature texts with parents	48 (22.2)	67 (31.0)	49 (22.7)	37 (17.1)	15 (6.9)	2.56	1.2 07
5. have the habit of reading literature	33 (15.3)	47 (21.8)	64 (29.6)	43 (19.9)	29 (13.4)	2.94	1.2 53
6. read the literature books for me	64 (29.6)	52 (24.1)	36 (16.7)	38 (17.6)	26 (12.0)	2.58	1.3 85
7. collections of literature at home	29 (13.4)	24 (11.1)	36 (16.7)	64 (29.6)	63 (29.2)	3.50	1.3 67
Influence of Peers							
1. my friends like Chinese literature	36 (16.7)	67 (31.0)	56 (25.9)	34 (15.7)	23 (10.6)	2.73	1.2 22
2. discuss literature with friends.	42 (19.4)	66 (30.6)	53 (24.5)	42 (19.4)	13 (6.0)	2.62	1.1 75
3. read storybooks with friends.	25 (11.6)	38 (17.6)	45 (20.8)	65 (30.1)	43 (19.9)	3.29	1.2 88
4. exchange books with friends	25 (11.6)	33 (15.3)	53 (24.5)	52 (24.1)	53 (24.5)	3.35	1.3 14
5. go to library to borrow Chinese literature books.	32 (14.8)	36 (16.7)	43 (19.9)	57 (26.4)	48 (22.2)	3.25	1.3 64
6. perform better when my friend get praised	15 (6.9)	15 (6.9)	42 (19.4)	73 (33.8)	71 (32.9)	3.79	1.1 78
Literature Materials							
1. contents are close to my life	48 (22.2)	43 (19.9)	47 (21.8)	59 (27.3)	19 (8.8)	2.81	.91 1
2. promotes the expansion of my imagination	43 (6.02)	38 (8.3)	32 (14.8)	54 (48.2)	39 (22.7)	2.9	.90 6
3. language is simple and easy to understand	28 (13.0)	30 (13.9)	65 (30.1)	53 (24.5)	40 (18.5)	3.22	1.0 61
4. language is very graceful	33 (15.3)	48 (22.2)	22 (10.2)	62 (17.6)	51 (23.6)	3.23	.85 4
5. vocabulary and the sentences are reader friendly	52 (24.1)	37 (17.1)	53 (24.5)	48 (22.2)	26 (12.0)	2.81	1.2 40
6. length is appropriate	55 (25.5)	59 (27.3)	30 (13.9)	51 (23.6)	21 (9.7)	2.65	.92 5
7. illustrations are vivid and appropriate	50 (23.1)	50 (23.1)	31 (14.4)	44 (20.4)	41 (19.0)	2.89	1.1 16

Table 4. Factors that Influence Chinese Language Achievement

Based on the results shown in Table 4, the factors influencing the pupils' mastery of Chinese language according to priority were influence of teachers ($M=3.68$, $SD=1.135$), influence of peers ($M=3.17$, $SD=1.257$), influence of parents ($M=3.13$, $SD=1.002$) and relevance of literature materials ($M=2.93$, $SD=1.277$).

According to the findings, it was found that the respondents would have the higher motivation in learning literature texts if the Chinese language teacher was knowledgeable. There were 147 (68.10%) respondents wished that their Chinese language teacher was knowledgeable in teaching literature texts, so that they could learn more from the teacher. Also, the same amount of respondents (147 pupils, 68.10%) could learn more effectively if the Chinese language teacher was able to share interesting extracurricular knowledge in the lessons. Teachers' knowledge could guide the pupils to experience the main points and lessons taught in the literature texts, leading for a better understanding of literature texts.

There were 164 (75.93%) respondents would try to perform better if the teacher appreciated his/her learning attitude and classroom performance. The teacher's attitudes encouraged them to perform better in literature texts lesson, and at the same time they enjoy the class. People are shaped by their backgrounds. Respecting students means respecting their backgrounds, races, and cultures. To this end, teachers need to understand how each student approaches learning and craft an environment that respects and responds to what each student brings to the classroom. Treat others as they want to be treated. Through conversations with students and observations of them at class, teachers develop a learning profile about the way he or she likes to learn, personal interests, and varied ways of reaching the goal. Then, teachers purposefully select instructional approaches that respond to them to ensure high-level success for each student. All learning activities align with essential learning targets and have intellectual rigor: They are both standards friendly and student friendly (Kaplan, 2016).

According to the above summary, the influence of teachers was the most important factor in affecting the mastery of Chinese language among the pupils. The Chinese language teachers could influence the children by their knowledge and attitudes applied in the literature texts lessons. Teachers in schools were the role models for the children, as the majority time of them was spent in schools. If the teachers teach and educate the pupils in a better manner, the pupils would definitely achieve improvements in their academic and language performances (Amy, 2011; Carnoy, 2008; Ball, 2008; Debra, 2013).

The findings of the research also revealed that the peers' reading habit was the second important factor in affecting the pupils' mastery of Chinese language. the respondents also enjoyed reading Chinese storybooks with their peers (108 respondents, 50%), exchanging books with peers (105 respondents, 48.61%), and going to library to borrow Chinese literature books (105 respondents, 48.61%). These were accordance to the study carried out by Kirth (2000), at which the peer effect is a particularly strong influence in academic achievement, especially for upper primary school children. Pupils belonging to the same class tend to study and revise the subject together, so generating important externalities. A peer group affects student achievement in several ways: members of a group interact in learning, help each other in their studies, share important information, impose externalities on others by behaving well or badly (for example, a noisy student disrupts the study environment) or by allowing teachers to go deeper in subjects, contribute to the formation of values and aspirations, and so on (Hoxby, 2000). These phenomena proved that the pupils enjoyed learning and reading literature text with their peers.

The third factor according to the findings of the research was parents' background. Parents' influences proved to be strongly related to students' academic growth. There were 134 (62.04%) respondents whose parents could speak Mandarin fluently, 127 (58.80%) respondents claimed that there were collections of literature books at their home. The reading background of the parents encouraged the children to be in touch with the literature texts. However, not all the Chinese-medium primary school pupils were Chinese, as SJKC also have gained popularity and have enjoyed high enrolments, even among non-Chinese pupils (Kuek, 2015). Hence, the language background of the parents influenced their children's language performance. In this study, there were 187 Chinese pupils, 23 Malay pupils, 5 Indian pupils and 1 Japanese pupil. The percentage of passing the reading and writing paper was very low according to their Chinese language result in schools. This happened because of the medium of instruction used in Chinese-medium primary schools was Chinese language. However, Chinese language was neither first language nor mother tongue for the Malays,

Indian and other races pupils. Chinese language may be was the second or third language used in their daily lives.

Among these 29 non-Chinese pupils, only 2 (6.90%) of the parents could speak Mandarin. In the other words, 27 (93.10%) of the non-Chinese parents did not communicate with their children in Mandarin as they did not know how to speak in this language. Children whose primary language is not the language of instruction in school are more likely to drop out of school or fail in early grades. Research has shown that children's first language is the optimal language for literacy and learning throughout primary school (UNESCO, 2008).

In spite of growing evidence and parent demand, many educational systems around the world insist on exclusive use of one or sometimes several privileged languages. This means excluding other languages and with them the children who speak them (Arnold, Bartlett, Gowani, & Merali, 2006). Hence, the Chinese-medium primary schools were not suitable for the non-Chinese pupils. Mother tongue-based education should be promoted in order to embrace the learning and development of the children academic achievement.

Research Question 3:

What are the effective teaching methods of teaching in teaching literature texts?

Teaching Methods of Literature Texts	Scale					M	SD
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree		
1 Show pictures and videos	3 (1.4)	1 (0.5)	11 (5.1)	63 (29.2)	138 (63.9)	4.54	.74
2 Play games	8 (3.7)	4 (1.9)	10 (4.6)	49 (22.7)	145 (67.1)	4.48	.95
3 Explain the details of each paragraph	4 (1.9)	3 (1.4)	27 (12.5)	79 (36.6)	103 (47.7)	4.27	.87
4 Use Internet	9 (4.2)	32 (14.8)	22 (10.2)	56 (25.9)	97 (44.9)	3.93	1.23
5 Question and answer (Q&A) competition	9 (4.2)	16 (7.4)	40 (18.5)	75 (34.7)	76 (35.2)	3.89	1.10
6 Pre-class preparation	12 (5.6)	13 (6.0)	42 (19.4)	76 (35.2)	73 (33.8)	3.86	2.02
7 Small group discussion	16 (7.4)	27 (12.5)	23 (10.6)	74 (34.3)	76 (35.2)	3.77	1.26
8 Role playing	26 (12.0)	24 (11.1)	34 (15.7)	50 (23.1)	82 (38.0)	3.64	1.39
9 Search for the original literature texts	8 (3.7)	27 (12.5)	62 (28.7)	72 (33.3)	47 (21.8)	3.57	1.08
10 Read the literature texts independently, share the sense of reading	21 (9.7)	33 (15.3)	58 (26.9)	65 (30.1)	39 (18.1)	3.31	1.21
11 Read other literature texts of the same writer.	22 (10.2)	37 (17.1)	57 (26.4)	56 (25.9)	44 (20.4)	3.29	1.26
12 Pupils share their thoughts	34 (15.7)	52 (24.1)	51 (23.6)	41 (19.0)	38 (17.6)	2.99	1.33

Table 5. Effective Teaching Methods by Pupils' Perceptions

Table 5 showed the respondents' perception towards the effective teaching methods which are used by Chinese language teachers in Chinese literature lessons by ascending order. Obviously, the teaching method of using teaching aids was mostly preferred by the respondents, at which the items which were related to teaching aids had the high mean scores. Among the teaching methods with the use of teaching aid, the highest mean score went to the teaching method of showing pictures and videos. There were 201 (93.1%) respondents agreed with this statement ($M=4.54$, $SD=0.74$). For this statement, only 4 (1.9%) respondents were disagreed of showing them some pictures and videos can deepen their impression.

From the perspective of teaching activities conducted in Chinese literature classrooms, teaching method of playing games received great responses among the pupils in Chinese-medium primary schools. The mean score of this item was the second highest, which was 4.48 with the standard deviation of .95. There were 194 (89.8%) respondents liked to

play games in the literature lessons. The teaching activities preferred by the respondents were followed by question and answer (Q&A) competition ($M=3.89$, $SD=1.10$) and role playing ($M=3.64$, $SD=1.39$). There were 151 (69.9%) respondents thought that Q&A competition could help the pupils to revise the learning of the literature texts. Also, 132 (61.1%) respondents wished to participate in role playing because this could help them to understand the contents of the literature texts. More than 50% of the respondents agreed that three of these activities (playing games, Q&A competition and role playing) could help them in learning and understanding the literature texts.

Moreover, teachers' guidance was also crucial in developing the pupils' mastery of Chinese language at schools. The most effective teachers' guidance from the perspective of these respondents was paragraph explanation ($M=4.27$, $SD=0.87$). Among these 216 respondents, 182 (84.3%) of them hoped teachers could explain to them in details of each paragraph. This could enable them to understand the contents of literature text immediately. The teaching method which also received good responses from the respondents was pre-class preparation ($M=3.86$, $SD=1.12$). For this method, teachers gave guidance by giving the pupils some clues for pre-class preparation. More than half of the respondents (149 pupils, 69.0%) agreed that this teaching method was effective. In their points of view, pre-class preparation helped them record the main elements of the literature texts.

However, the other two teachers' guidance were not preferred and supported by the respondents. These two teaching methods were search for the original literature texts ($M= 3.57$, $SD=1.08$) and read other literature texts of the same writer ($M=3.29$, $SD=1.26$). Only 119 (55.1%) and 100 (46.3%) respondents preferred their teachers guided them to search for the original literature texts and read other literature texts of the same writer respectively.

On the other hand, the teaching method of independent study which was related to the sharing of pupils' opinions was not very preferred by the respondents. The mean score of these three items were only 3.4, which was relatively lower than other items in section G of the questionnaire. Moreover, the pupils did not wish their teachers to let them read the literature texts independently ($M=3.31$, $SD=1.21$). There were more than half of the total respondents who did not agree and uncertain about this item. The pupils were feared of sharing the sense of reading in front of the class. They were scared of others did not respect their interpretation.

The teaching method which was the least preferred by the respondents referred to teacher gave the pupils opportunities to share their thoughts towards the literature texts ($M=2.99$, $SD=1.33$). There were only 79 (36.6%) respondents enjoyed to share their thoughts. Most of the pupils (86 respondents, 39.8%) were disagreed with this item and some of the pupils (51 respondents, 23.6%) did not give neither positive nor negative comments about this statement.

Many researches were conducted to improve the quality of education in Asia, one problem is frequently highlighted: spoon-feeding (Rum, 2017). This phenomenon always occurred in most of the Chinese-medium primary schools, and it was related to a harmful learning style, which was spoon-feeding. Spoon-feeding through dense lectures has for many years been the traditional method of teaching in the classroom (Janice, 2015). This type of teaching primarily consists of a teacher-centred style of instruction where the instructor provides the students with all of the information they need to know for the course resulting in destroying initiative or curbing independent thought and action (Rhem, 2010).

Hence, the teachers in Chinese-medium primary schools have to be innovative and develop the pupils' ability to work independently alone or in group settings, as independent learners under the implementation of new KSSR curriculum. This will free up the teachers' time as a practitioner to work on teaching higher order skills; thus, rather than spending time spoon-feeding and hand-holding, over time, teachers are teaching pupils how they can learn for themselves, where teachers as educators help children to discover the incredible learning ability we all have as human beings.

These statements were in line with the theoretical framework of the study. Teachers are influential as they play important roles in conducting language lessons, especially in inculcating reading comprehension aesthetic appreciation expression of literature texts among the pupils. The roles of a teacher are the various responsibilities and activities in which teachers engage. Hence, teachers must equip themselves with effective teaching methods in order to attract the pupils to appreciate and love to read literature.

6. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, the pupils from Chinese-medium primary schools had positive perceptions towards the literature texts. Student perceptions on learning determine their ability and willingness to learn. The three main factors in influencing the Chinese language achievement in Chinese-medium primary school were teachers' knowledge and attitude, peers' reading habit and parents' background. Children's first language is always the optimal language for literacy and learning of literature throughout primary school. The first language education should be concerned and focussed, especially for the primary education. Pupils showed positive perception towards students-centred approaches that apply teaching aids in teaching Chinese literature. Teachers are influential as they play important roles in inculcating reading comprehension aesthetic appreciation expression of literature texts among the pupils. Hence, teachers must equip themselves with effective teaching methods in order to generate young generation who appreciate literature. Lastly, all parties such as government, schools, Chinese language teachers, parents, community and pupils themselves have to collaborate in promoting the culture of reading children's literature among the pupils.

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