

Cross-Cultural Pedagogy of Chinese Sachet Culture in Thai Primary Schools: A Case Study of Bamrungwittaya School

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Abstract

Within the Belt and Road Initiative's educational cooperation framework, the international dissemination of intangible cultural heritage necessitates adaptation to host-country cultural contexts. This study aims to provide reference for teaching Chinese intangible cultural heritage within Southeast Asian Chinese language education. Bamrungwittaya School integrates Chinese language education across all primary education stages (K-9). In 2025, our school have 13 Chinese language teachers, including 8 Thai teachers and 5 Chinese teachers. The author implemented teaching practices for primary school students in grades 1 and 2, adopting a collaborative division of responsibilities with Thai local educators. This study employs action research methodology to explore cross-cultural pedagogical approaches for Chinese sachet culture, focusing on primary Grades 1-2 students at Bamrungwittaya School in Thailand during the Duanwu Festival. Building upon Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence, the research establishes

a three-dimensional teaching objective framework encompassing cognition, skills, and affect. Subsequently, a localized instructional design is developed. Practical implementation demonstrates that tangible cultural artifacts combined with multi-sensory experiences effectively reduce cultural distance. By creating sachets integrating Sino-Thai elements, students cultivate interest in and appreciation for traditional Chinese culture.

Keywords: Sachet Culture, Intercultural Pedagogy, Thai Primary Education, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Localization Strategies

Introduction

July 1, 1975 marked the historic establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand, a milestone in cultural exchange that ushered in a new era of diversified interactions. On April 15, 2004, China's Ministry of Education launched the "International Chinese Language Teacher Volunteer Program", with Yunnan Normal University sending its first cohort of 60 students to Thailand for a year-long Chinese language teaching initiative. In 2019, Thailand officially incorporated Chinese into its National Basic Education Curriculum Outline. Today, China's Belt and Road Language Connectivity Special Fund prioritizes support for Thailand, while the 2023 launch of the "China-Thailand High-Speed Railway Language Service Volunteers" program further strengthens bilateral ties.

Sachets, as treasures of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage, embody profound historical and cultural significance alongside traditional Chinese medicinal wisdom. Concurrently, they possess distinct intercultural pedagogical value: their exquisite craftsmanship showcases the aesthetic characteristics of traditional Chinese art, while the auspicious symbolism and

emotional expression they carry reflect universal human aspirations for the good and beautiful. Within the context of International Chinese Language Education, Sachets can serve as effective cultural mediators. They allow foreign learners to engage in intuitive experiences, fostering an appreciation for Chinese cultural charm alongside language acquisition, thereby achieving dual enhancement of linguistic skills and cultural cognition.

Research Objectives

1. To design a cross-cultural pedagogy for teaching Chinese sachet culture in Thai primary schools.
2. To assess the effectiveness of this pedagogy using Byram's ICC and Kolb's experiential learning frameworks.
3. Exploring pathways for cultural cognition fusion between China and Thailand through the cross-cultural empathy medium of sachets.

Research Scope

School name: Bamrungwittaya School

grade levels: grades 1 and 2

Class size: The school comprises 10 classes, with 213 students enrolled in Grade 1 and 218 students in Grade 2.

Time of data collection: June 2025, during the Dragon Boat Festival period.

Scope limited to sachet culture as part of Chinese festival education.

1. Conceptual Framework

- 1.1 Intercultural communication education theory

The Byram Model, developed by British applied linguist Michael Byram, is a theoretical framework for intercultural communication competence designed to systematically cultivate effective communication skills in multicultural contexts. Integrating perspectives from linguistics, education, and social psychology, this model has been widely adopted in foreign language teaching, international business management, and cross-cultural training. Byram categorizes intercultural communication competence into four interconnected dimensions: cognitive understanding, affective attitudes, behavioral skills, and critical cultural awareness. Based on these dimensions, the model primarily divides intercultural communication competence into skills such as attitude cultivation, knowledge acquisition, interpretative and relational skills, discovery skills, and communicative competence (Byram, 2020).

1.1.1 Cognitive understanding: The sachet is a material carrier of cultural knowledge

Byram emphasizes the systematic knowledge accumulation of both one's own and others' cultures. Both Chinese and Thai sachets embody the essence of warding off epidemics and praying for blessings. Chinese Dragon Boat Festival sachets primarily use *Artemisia argyria* and calamus as ingredients, while Thai "Sabi" sachets incorporate lemongrass and turmeric. Together, they reflect the Eastern wisdom of "preventing disease before it occurs". Through comparison, learners can understand the similarities and differences in raw materials between the two countries sachets. The patterns on sachets carry cultural connotations: for instance, Chinese plum blossom motifs symbolize "standing tall against cold", while Thailand's nine-colored silk thread weaving represents the Buddhist Nine

Virtues. When introducing Chinese sachets, teachers should not only explain their surface-level meanings like patterns and classifications, but also delve into deeper aspects such as historical background, practical functions, and symbolic significance.

1.1.2. Emotional attitude: Cultivate cultural empathy through collaborative practice

The emotional dimension requires abandoning cultural centrism. The creation of sachets achieves attitude transformation through collaborative co-creation. It is essential to break down cultural stereotypes and guide students to recognize that Chinese sachets are not mere religious symbols, but rather a lifestyle aesthetics integrating traditional Chinese medicine wisdom. This helps correct the oversimplified perception that “Chinese traditional culture equals Confucian symbols”. By engaging students in empathetic participation, we can ignite their cultural identity. The immersive experience of personally handling herbal ingredients and fabric transforms abstract culture into tangible emotional connections, aligning with Byram's philosophy of “curiosity-driven exploration”.

1.1.3 Behavioral skills: cross-cultural practices from production to communication

The sachet activity requires learners to apply behavioral strategies to resolve cultural differences. To truly understand China's sachet culture, one must go beyond mere knowledge acquisition and immerse oneself in authentic cultural contexts. This involves three key aspects: symbolic translation, situational adaptation, and conflict mediation. For symbolic translation, teachers can provide students with diverse fragrance options that cater to Thai preferences, demonstrating cultural adaptability.

Regarding situational adaptation, educators may have students exchange sachets with Chinese blessings in Mandarin, or facilitate Thai students to present sachets through the traditional Thai ritual of “heptapalm” (khat) while Chinese teachers perform the “heptapalm salute”. For conflict mediation, attention should be paid to specific symbols in Thai sachets. Through guided discussions comparing Chinese auspicious patterns with Thai Buddhist mantras, learners can practice strategies for resolving cultural differences while avoiding stigmatization of foreign symbols.

1.1.4 Critical cultural consciousness: deconstructing and reconstructing cultural power

The sachet campaign empowers learners to transcend superficial adaptations and engage in cultural reflection and co-creation. By critically examining cultural assumptions—such as comparing the “health” concept in Chinese and Thai sachets, where China emphasizes “warding off evil” (using *Artemisia argyifor* detoxification) while Thailand focuses on “balancing” (employing turmeric to harmonize bodily fluids)—it guides learners to question deeper cultural logic. Through ethical deliberation and third-space construction, the initiative employs AI-generated sachet patterns to emphasize collaboratively establishing ethical boundaries.

1.2 Experiential learning theory

The experiential teaching model originated from the experiential learning theory proposed by American psychologist David Kolb in 1971. This theory constructs a cyclical learning model based on experiential learning, comprising four interconnected cognitive stages: concrete experience acquisition, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active practice verification. Empirical studies have shown that this learning

paradigm significantly enhances learners' cognitive development, stimulates potential, and improves knowledge transfer capabilities. The experiential teaching model developed from this theory refers to educators following learners' cognitive development patterns, utilizing systematic pedagogical frameworks, and creating authentic or simulated teaching scenarios to guide learners' deep participation in knowledge construction. This approach emphasizes internalizing knowledge through personal experiences and transferring skills through practical application, ultimately achieving multidimensional educational goals including cognitive advancement, comprehensive skill cultivation, and core competency development. Based on Kolb's experiential learning cycle theory, the sachet culture activity for Thai elementary students can be viewed as a complete dynamic cognitive process of "concrete experience (smelling/sanitary product making) → reflective observation (cultural comparison) → abstract conceptualization (symbolic meaning) → active experimentation (gifting/sharing)".

1.2.1 Specific experiences

Teachers can play short videos or display images to illustrate the traditional custom of wearing sachets during China's Dragon Boat Festival. By presenting physical sachets, students can observe their shapes, colors, and patterns such as floral designs and auspicious motifs. Through olfactory experiences, they can smell common Chinese herbal ingredients like Artemisia argyria and mint inside the sachets. A simple cultural comparison between China and Thailand can be conducted, exploring similarities and differences between Thai fragrant flower garlands and Chinese sachets to guide students' thinking. This interactive session aims to

stimulate students interest in sachet culture and enhance their intuitive understanding through multisensory engagement – visual, tactile, and olfactory.

1.2.2 Reflect and observe

Teachers can organize group discussions where students explore the cultural significance of sachets. For example, they might ask: “Why are most sachets red?” or “What do the patterns symbolize?” The teacher could then explain cultural symbolism - like how lotus flowers represent purity and bats stand for ‘blessing’ (a homophone for ‘fortune’). Students could further compare why China uses *Artemisia argyita* ward off evil while Thailand employs sweet lemongrass for blessings. This approach helps students understand the cultural logic behind sachets through comparative analysis, fostering cross-cultural reflection and developing critical thinking skills to uncover underlying patterns in cultural differences.

1.2.3 Abstract conceptualization

Teachers use simple Chinese to summarize the cultural connotations of sachets, such as keywords like “health”, “peace”, and “longing”, while incorporating character teaching by writing characters like “Fu” (blessing) and “An” (peace). Students practice relevant Chinese expressions through role-playing or situational dialogues, such as “giving sachets to friends to convey blessings”, including phrases like “Wishing you good health!” and “This is a gift for you”. The purpose of this activity is to elevate concrete experiences into cultural concepts and linguistic knowledge, establishing connections between symbols and their meanings.

1.2.4 Conduct proactive experiments

Teachers prepare simple materials like non-woven fabric, colored ribbons, and dried flowers to guide students in making sachets. They

encourage students to design patterns blending Chinese and Thai cultural elements. Students then practice language skills by introducing their sachets to classmates in Chinese, such as saying “My sachet is red, symbolizing good fortune”, or presenting them as gifts with blessings. This activity aims to internalize cultural understanding through creative expression and communication, achieving synergistic language-cultural output.

In conclusion, the “double helix structure” formed by Byram’s intercultural communication competence model and Kolb’s experiential learning cycle reveals the synergistic mechanism of intercultural education. Kolb serves as the “skeleton” that provides operational pathways for “learning by doing”, while Byram acts as the “essence” that establishes competency development benchmarks. Kolb reduces abstract cultural differences to sensory dimensions, whereas Byram elevates concrete experiences into critical consciousness. While Kolb focuses on learners’ cognitive transformation, Byram emphasizes the construction of intersubjectivity.

Based on Byram’s intercultural communication competence model and Kolb’s experiential learning cycle theory, this paper designs a sachet culture teaching activity for grade 1-2 primary school students in Chinese proficiency at Bamrungwittaya School in Thailand, so as to spread Chinese folk culture and make efforts for cultural teaching.

Table 1

Correspondence between Kolb’s Learning Stages and Byram’s ICC Dimensions

Kolb stage	Byram's ability was activated
Specific experiences	Cultural literacy (cultural knowledge)
Reflect and observe	Emotional attitude (open and inclusive)
abstract conceptualization	Behavioral skills (symbol translation)

Kolb stage	Byram's ability was activated
Conduct proactive experiments	Critical awareness (ethical negotiation)

2. Literature Review

As an important carrier of human civilization, intangible cultural heritage plays an irreplaceable role in cultural continuity, social cohesion, economic development and mutual learning among civilizations. As a typical representative of traditional Chinese intangible cultural heritage, the value of sachet culture continues to gain new vitality in contemporary society.

The “Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2008” became the guiding document for Thailand’s basic education system. The “Strategic Plan to Promote Chinese Language Teaching and Enhance National Competitiveness (2006-2010)” outlined the overarching strategy for Chinese language education in Thailand. In 2014, the Ministry of Education launched the “Chinese Language Teaching Development Plan”, further advancing the development of Chinese language instruction. These initiatives have exerted a profound influence on the evolution of Chinese language education in Thailand. Zhu (2010) noted that China and Thailand have established a comprehensive partnership of good-neighborliness and mutual trust. In their bilateral relations, cultural exchanges between the two countries have become increasingly vibrant, standing out as a highlight of their relationship. The frequency, breadth, richness, and extensive participation in these cultural activities demonstrate the vitality of Sino-Thai cultural interactions, which also reflects the closeness of their diplomatic ties. These cultural exchanges have played a positive role in advancing the development of bilateral relations.

Ma and Chang (2019) examined the underlying crises in intangible cultural heritage (ICH) preservation through the lens of cultural identity erosion, emphasizing education as the cornerstone for enhancing cultural agency. They proposed establishing a sustainable social foundation for ICH development through both academic and non-academic education. Wang et al. (2021) explored augmented reality (AR) technology, advocating a paradigm shift in cultural heritage applications from “content-centric” to “user experience-centered”. Their three-dimensional design strategy featuring clear navigation, virtual-real interaction, and immersive experiences provided crucial references for human-computer interaction in ICH digitalization. Zhao and Li (2023) focused on universities educational role in ICH transmission, identifying challenges such as “not integrating ICH into campus curricula”, “inadequate interdisciplinary integration mechanisms” and “insufficient resource allocation”. They proposed deepening the integration of ICH with higher education through systemic frameworks and innovative practices. Li and Chen (2025) addressed international communication barriers by proposing the establishment of overseas ICH dissemination communities, leveraging digital intelligence technologies to enhance precision and emotional storytelling capabilities, while developing scientific evaluation mechanisms. This research highlights the systematic and audience-oriented approaches to ICH promotion under an international perspective.

Yan (2006) analyzed the forms and functions of sachets through historical documents, noting that these traditional pouches were not only crafted from exquisite silk but also made with precious metals like gold and silver. Yan (2012), along with Zeng et al. (2020), explored the origins and evolution of herbal medicine sachets. Their research detailed their

components, examined the theoretical foundations of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) applications, and provided future development strategies for these culturally significant pouches.

Numerous scholars have conducted research on cultural teaching methodologies in Thailand. Fang (2008), Feng (2014), Gao (2015), Wu (2012), and Zhu (2015) combined their firsthand experiences to investigate and analyze the history and current status of Chinese language education in Thailand. They either designed educational activities or compared Chinese-Thai activity designs, ultimately proposing feasible suggestions based on their findings. Lin (2018) adopted a Thai perspective, conducting literature analysis and interviews to design questionnaires that studied the current state of Chinese cultural dissemination among Thai learners. The research further analyzed challenges faced by Chinese cultural communication in Thailand, summarizing effective methods and strategies for improvement.

In conclusion, cultural education holds a unique position in international Chinese language teaching. As an outstanding component of China's cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) should be preserved and developed. The sachets used during the Dragon Boat Festival exemplify this tradition, which forms an integral part of ICH. However, the dissemination pathways of sachet culture in Chinese language instruction for non-native speakers warrant further exploration. Current research in this field remains limited—either focusing too broadly on cultural pedagogy without specificity, lacking empirical evidence, or failing to establish theoretical frameworks.

This research aligns with the educational collaboration objectives under the “Belt and Road” framework and selects Thailand as a case study

for three reasons: first, the author teaches in Thailand; second, Thailand shares strong Buddhist cultural ties with China; and third, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand.

Seizing the opportunity to serve as an International Chinese Language Education Volunteer in Thailand during the 2025 Dragon Boat Festival, the author leveraged the cultural context of this traditional Chinese festival. Using the sachet as an empathic medium for intercultural engagement, this initiative explored pathways for integrating Chinese and Thai cultural cognition.

Research Methodology

The Methodology section begins from the heading Instructional Design Plan onwards, as it details the participants, procedures, instructional design, and implementation of the action research.

1. Instructional Design Plan

Theme: Tiny Sachets, Fragrant Friendship: A Cultural Exchange

Target Learners: Grade 1-2 students (beginner Chinese proficiency level) at Bamrungwittaya School, Buriram, Thailand.

Learning Objectives:

1) Cognitive Objective: Understand the symbolic meaning of sachets in Chinese culture (warding off evil, attracting blessings, signifying friendship); Identify 2-3 types of Chinese medicinal herbs used in sachets.

2) Skill Objective: Assemble and decorate a sachet combining Chinese and Thai cultural elements.

3) Affective Objective: Increase awareness of traditional Chinese festivals (context: Dragon Boat Festival); Stimulate interest in Chinese culture; Appreciate the cultural commonality between China and Thailand in expressing goodwill and bonding through fragrance (“using fragrance to convey affection”).

Activity Preparation Phase:

1) Teacher Preparation of Materials

Source common sachet fillings (e.g. *Artemisia argyileaves* *Artemisia argyi*, dried osmanthus flowers, dried tangerine peel); Prepare completed sachet samples for demonstration; Assemble pre-cut student material kits containing: Non-woven fabric pouches (pre-purchased online), Pre-filled dried flower/herb packets, Colored cords/threads, Decorative items (e.g. Buddhist prayer beads); Provide child-safe, blunt-tip scissors; Source traditional Thai aromatic/fragrant materials; Develop the instructional PowerPoint (PPT) presentation and have Thai language translations verified by a native Thai teacher.

2) Cultural Ambiance Setup

Engage students with artistic skills to create a “China- Thailand Friendship Wall” mural on the classroom backboard during free time; Provide students with printed mural templates as guides; Ensure completion before the activity to serve as a photo backdrop for commemorative pictures.

3) Student Health & Safety Precautions

Consult the homeroom teacher in advance to identify any students with known fragrance or material allergies; Prepare alternative, non-allergenic materials for identified students (e.g., fragrance-free dried flowers).

4) Pre-Activity Student Engagement (Advance Task Assignment)

Announce the cultural activity theme to students beforehand; Distribute a pre-activity task sheet with guiding questions, such as: “What are the most common colors used in Chinese sachets? Why?” “What are common patterns on Chinese sachets and their symbolic meanings?” “Why does China use bitter *Artemisia argyi* for warding off evil, while Thailand uses sweet lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus*) for blessings?” “In what contexts are Thai Buddhist amulets (phra phim) or flower garlands (phuang malai) used, and what do they symbolize?”; Instruct students to research these questions and bring colored markers/crayons.

5) Utilizing Tutorial Sessions for Preparation

Leverage the supplementary 8th-period tutorial sessions offered at the school; During these sessions, allow students to: Color sachet designs (pre-cutting stage), Sketch preliminary sachet decoration ideas; Purpose: This pre-design phase builds background engagement and minimizes potential delays during the main activity time.

2. Activity Procedure (50 minutes total)

2.1 Engaging Introduction (10 minutes)

Tangible Object Demonstration: Teacher displays pre-prepared sachet samples, asking: “Look! What is this?” to capture attention. Introduces the term “Chinese sachet” and leads pronunciation drills. Students describe the sachets using known vocabulary prompted by teacher questions(e.g. “Is it beautiful?”, “Is it big or small?”, “What color is it?”, “How many sachets is the teacher holding?”).

Story Animation: Show a 2-minute promotional video depicting Dragon Boat Festival customs (making/wearing sachets, making zongzi).

Teacher lists common Chinese Dragon Boat Festival traditions, explaining the historical purpose of wearing sachets in ancient China: warding off evil spirits.

Olfactory Identification Game: Teacher introduces 3-4 common sachet ingredients (e.g. Artemisia argyleaves Artemisia argyi, Dried Osmanthus flowers, Dried Tangerine peel) with pronunciation practice. Students pass sample sachets made with different materials to engage senses. Students then close their eyes, smell the sachets, and guess the scents (PPT prompt in Thai: “นี่คือสมุนไพรจีนที่ใช้ทำถุงหอมในเทศกาลไหว้บ๊ะจ่าง!”/ “This is Chinese herbal medicine used to make sachets for the Dragon Boat Festival!”).

2.2 Mini-Cultural Lesson (10 minutes)

Visual Comparison: Display images of Chinese sachets vs. Thai Buddhist amulets (phra phim)/flower garlands (phuang malai). Facilitate discussion on: “How do different cultures use objects to convey blessings?”.

Group Discussion & Synthesis: Students discuss answers to the pre-activity task sheet questions in small groups for 5 minutes. Groups then share their answers. The Thai co-teacher provides translation support as needed. Teacher synthesizes responses on the board using a comparative table highlighting similarities and differences between Chinese sachets and Thai phra phim/phuang malai.

Basic Chinese Language Instruction: Teach pronunciation and meaning of “**Píng'ān**” and “**Xiāng**”, using gestures, translation, and images; Integrate vocabulary into simple sentence patterns for daily use (e.g. “**Zhù nǐ píng'ān**”; “**Huā hěn xiāng**”); Introduce simple character writing (e.g. “**fú**-blessing, “**ān**”- peace/safety).

2.3 Hands-on Crafting (20 minutes)

Guided Production: Utilizing the pre-assembled material kits, the teacher first demonstrates each step clearly using the PPT (with Thai translations). Students then craft their sachets step-by-step alongside the teacher. The teacher circulates to monitor progress and provide assistance; students raise hands if they encounter difficulties.

Decoration & Cultural Fusion: Provide Year of the Snake (2025) zodiac stickers. Students use colored markers to draw China-Thailand friendship symbols or patterns on their sachets. Snakes hold profound significance in Thai culture, often depicted as temple guardians in Buddhism. Incorporating snake motifs in 2025 (Year of the Snake) bridges Chinese zodiac traditions with Thai Buddhist symbolism. Students affix snake stickers, color blank areas, and may draw Chinese and Thai flags on their sachets.

2.4 Sharing & Interaction (10 minutes)

Sachet Exchange: Students exchange completed sachets with peers, using the learned Chinese phrases (e.g. “Zhù nǐ píng’ān”) to express good wishes. Selected students can present their sachets and blessings to the class; record short video clips of their messages.

Commemorative Photo Wall: Students pose for photos holding their sachets in front of the pre-prepared “China-Thailand Friendship Wall” mural as a background.

Research Results

1. Activity Conclusion Phase: Summary and Reflection

Following the activity, the teacher should: Provide specific feedback based on student engagement and outcomes; Identify and retain

particularly effective elements for future cultural activity implementation; Systematically document any challenges or issues encountered during the activity; Analyze these challenges to formulate concrete strategies for preventing recurrence in subsequent sessions. In essence, this systematic process of documentation and critical reflection serves the primary purpose of enhancing the design and delivery of future pedagogical iterations.

2. Activity Synthesis

The activity involved ten classes across two grade levels (Grades 1 and 2), exhibiting varying Chinese proficiency levels. During the preparatory phase conducted in supplementary sessions, students from all classes pre-colored sachet designs on paper. Completion rates were notably higher among Grade 2 students. Overall, student engagement and creativity in these sessions were high, resulting in aesthetically pleasing colored designs.

At the commencement of the main activity, students exhibited excitement upon seeing the teacher's completed sachet samples, engaging in peer discussions—a positive indicator of their initial curiosity and receptiveness. Students also responded actively to teacher questions. However, due to the limited, near-beginner proficiency of Grade 1 students, the teacher simplified the introductory interaction. When presenting the sachets, the primary question was “**Hảo kàn ma?** ”, supplemented by color vocabulary drills. Subsequently, a 2-minute video was shown, with the segments depicting sachet making and wearing slowed down to ensure students grasped the process and placement. This introductory phase proceeded smoothly.

The teacher introduced three herbs (Mugwort, Dried Osmanthus, Dried Tangerine Peel) sensorially, prompting students to remember them

through sight and smell. Students were then asked to identify the herbs within sample sachets. Correct answers earned small stars (part of the researcher's point-reward system). Student enthusiasm was high, though Grade 2 students comprehended the rules faster, necessitating demonstrations for Grade 1. Images comparing Chinese sachets with Thai Buddhist amulets (phra phim) and flower garlands (phuang malai) were displayed. After a few minutes of group discussion on pre-assigned task sheet questions, students shared answers.

During the hands-on crafting phase, student engagement markedly increased. The preceding theoretical cultural comparison proved less engaging; consequently, the teacher abridged this section, focusing only on essential points. Some restlessness occurred while distributing materials, with a few students starting prematurely without understanding instructions. Following step-by-step teacher demonstrations and continuous circulation for support, most students successfully completed their sachets. Those needing extra time continued working during the subsequent exchange phase. The activity concluded with a commemorative photo session in front of the “China-Thailand Friendship Wall”, documenting the event’s fundamental success.

In summary, the sachet cultural activity largely achieved its core objectives. Students gained an understanding of the sachet’s symbolic meaning in Chinese culture and could identify 2-3 Chinese medicinal herbs. They successfully assembled sachets integrating Sino-Thai elements. Grade 2 students demonstrated ICC’s skills’ dimension by accurately assembling hybrid sachets. Byram’s affective’ dimension was achieved when students voluntarily gifted sachets to teachers—a behavior unprompted in

preintervention surveys. Furthermore, their awareness of traditional Chinese festivals increased, stimulating interest in Chinese culture and fostering an appreciation for the cultural commonality between China and Thailand in using fragrance to convey affection “*yǐ xiāng chuán qíng*”.

Discussion of Results

1. Activity Conclusions

Generally, Grade 2 students demonstrated higher proficiency than Grade 1 students, characterized by stronger Pinyin skills and enhanced comprehension. This disparity was evident during instruction: when explaining rules or demonstrating tasks (e.g. “write with a pen”), Grade 2 students responded more quickly, while Grade 1 students frequently required the teacher to use translation software to clarify instructions.

Several key challenges emerged during the group discussion phase: Significant variance in task completion, some students failed to meet the intended learning objectives; Inconsistent discussion quality, instances of students seeking answers superficially rather than engaging in deep discussion were observed; Topic divergence, discussions occasionally strayed from the intended curriculum focus. It is noteworthy that challenges in restoring classroom order post-discussion, this was particularly pronounced in Grade 1 classes, where regaining a quiet learning environment proved difficult; Uneven response rates, high response rates for simple questions contrasted with difficulty in answering more complex, thought-provoking ones; Difficulty assessing preparation, the intent of the task sheet (promoting independent thought and research) made it challenging to gauge whether students had genuinely engaged with complex questions beforehand.

Leveraging the Dragon Boat Festival context, this sachet-making activity engaged Thai lower-primary students in making, wearing, and exchanging sachets to foster cultural appreciation. Pedagogical focus prioritized cultivating curiosity over theory, capitalizing on students' strong manual dexterity, creativity and enthusiasm for hands-on/artistic subjects—effectively aligning with their strengths.

1.1 Cultural Symbol Translation Depth Significantly Impacts Teaching Effectiveness

The symbolic translation of Chinese sachet culture in Thai primary schools progresses through three tiers—surface-level material substitution (e.g. Thai silk for silk), mid-level functional analogy (e.g. linking its evil-warding function to protective Buddhist phra phim amulets), and deep-level value reconstruction (e.g. framing sachet-making as Buddhist merit-making (tham bun)). This tiered pathway activates host-culture cognitive frameworks (e.g. Buddhist merit) to integrate foreign symbols into students' meaning-making systems, achieving cultural symbiosis while crucially avoiding excessive localization that erodes ICH authenticity. Multimodal teaching (visual, olfactory, tactile) and social practice strategically reinforce this translation efficacy.

1.2 The “Triple Contradictions” of Localization

Within the localization practice of sachet culture instruction in Thai primary schools, three structural contradictions exist.

The fundamental tension between tradition and modernity manifests through the clash between traditional craftsmanship and contemporary media. As technology advances and digital intelligence becomes the dominant force in societal development, this transformation

is particularly evident in education through cultivating digitally literate professionals. In December 2023, the Education Digitalization Expert Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Education held its annual work conference to discuss key issues in promoting education digitalization and help high-quality and balanced development of education. Traditional Chinese intangible cultural heritage crafts require hands-on practice—a crucial component that educators now emphasize. While classrooms are equipped with multimedia tools, teachers actively promote modern teaching methodologies. Although manual production may seem counterintuitive to digital trends, it actually represents a spiritual connection distinct from purely technical interactions.

Concurrently, the sacred-secular dialectic emerges at religious symbol boundaries, exemplified by students equating sachets with Buddhist amulets (*phra phim*), raising concerns about sacred object commodification; this necessitates material substitutions (e.g. prohibiting gold foil) and semantic clarifications distinguishing general well-wishing from blessing power conferral to preserve cultural translation legitimacy.

Finally, the individual-collective paradox surfaces through younger students' personalized creations (e.g. cartoon stickers) potentially compromising cultural symbol coherence, where excessive creative freedom may diminish core symbol recognizability; resolving this requires establishing a “prescriptive creative framework” permitting localized innovation only while retaining at least two core Chinese elements (e.g. Chinese characters, national flag).

These three sets of contradictions fundamentally represent the interplay of subjectivity, authenticity, and innovation during cultural

adaptation, necessitating dynamic balancing strategies to achieve the sustainable development of cultural dissemination.

This study validates a Chinese sachet teaching intervention in Thai primary schools through dual theoretical lenses: Byram's ICC model and Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. Analysis reveals that:

1) Within Byram's knowledge dimension, symbolic association linking sachets' evil-warding function with Thai phra phim amulets significantly enhanced students' accurate cognition of Chinese cultural symbols, fulfilling intercultural knowledge construction;

2) Within Kolb's cycle, a complete experiential loop (concrete experience → reflective observation → abstract conceptualization → active experimentation) was achieved, enabling knowledge transfer (e.g., gifting sachets with blessings);

3) Crucially, the Buddhist *tham bun* (merit-making) concept acted as a cultural-affective mediator: intensifying reflective observation in Kolb's cycle while anchoring Byram's attitudinal objectives. This transformed student motivation from instrumental to intrinsic value—repositioning sachet-giving as merit-making—and synergized both frameworks to elevate cultural practice from classroom performance to meaningful social action, offering a transferable model for ICH education in Southeast Asia.

2. Localization Innovation Strategies

2.1 Contextual Translation of Cultural Symbols

First, functional analogy bridges the sachet's "warding off evil and attracting blessings" (*qū xié nà fú*) with Thai cultural Contextual symbol translation employs functional analogy to bridge cultural cognition: the

detoxifying properties of Chinese *Artemisia argyria* align with the purification symbolism of Thai holy water, while the blessing significance embodied in sachet five-color threads corresponds to Thai birthday strings (*sai sin*). Pedagogically, this is operationalized through bilingual visual cards that establish semantic equivalencies, such as Chinese “*píng’ān*” paired with Thai “โชคดี”.

Second, aesthetic fusion design adapts Chinese sachet elements into Thai cultural expressions.

Table 2

Aesthetic Fusion of Chinese Sachet Elements and Thai Cultural Adaptations

Chinese Element	Localized Thai Adaptation	Pedagogical Output
Silk “blessing pouch”	Thai silk edging	Thai silk snake-faced sachet
Chinese knot tassel	Temple golden bell	Sound-emitting “blessing bell sachet”

2.2 Local Reconstruction of Teaching Resources

First, material substitution solutions are imperative due to geographic, climatic, and logistical constraints that render many original materials locally inaccessible, preventing students from achieving authentic reproductions of Chinese sachets.

Table 3

Material Substitution for Sachet Teaching

Item	Substitute Solution
Chinese-style non-woven bag	Thai gauze bag/Rice paper pouch
Dried mugwort	Dried lemongrass/Thai lemon tea
Chinese knot cord	Colored cotton rope + prayer beads

Subsequently, tool safety adaptations are critically prioritized given the young age of the Thai primary student participants; this entails replacing sewing needles with adhesive Velcro closures to eliminate piercing injury risks among younger pupils, while substituting metal clasps with coconut shell buttons serves dual purposes—enhancing physical safety and authentically integrating elements of Thai craftsmanship.

2.3 Creative Integration of Religious Ethics

First, the Buddhist merit-making concept (*tham bun*) is embedded through pedagogical framing: teachers instruct students that “gifting sachets to ill friends, equivalent to offering robes to monks at temples, constitutes merit accumulation”; this aligns intrinsically with the sachet’s dual purpose of blessing and protection in Chinese culture, thereby transforming sachet gifting into both an expression of goodwill and an act of *tham bun*. Students subsequently perform the *wai khru* (ไหว้ครู) gesture upon completion, honoring cultural transmission through embodied ritual.

In summary, within the pedagogical context of sachet culture instruction for Thai primary students, “contextual symbol translation” emerges as the pivotal pathway to cultural acculturation; through functional analogies bridging the sachet’s apotropaic function (*qū xié nà fú*) with Thai cultural symbols—such as holy water purification rituals and *sai sin* birthday strings blessing significance—cultural cognition barriers are effectively mitigated, exemplified by the semantic mapping of Chinese “*píng’ān*” to Thai “โชคดี”, which establishes affective Sino-Thai connections transcending linguistic translation. Aesthetic fusion design further actualizes cultural symbiosis via material carriers (e.g. Thai silk edging, temple bells), transforming sachets from foreign artifacts into localized cultural products—a strategy

validating semiotics cross-cultural transmission principle of “signifier substitution with signified retention”, wherein formal adaptations preserve core cultural meanings. Material substitution solutions, responsive to Thailand’s geographical and pedagogical constraints, demonstrate intangible cultural heritage (ICH) education’s localized adaptability; replacing *Artemisia argyi* with lemongrass and non-woven fabric with rice paper not only resolves material accessibility but activates students lived experience through indigenous resources. Tool safety adaptations reflect the “cultural safety” tenet of educational anthropology, prioritizing physical and psychological security during cultural transmission. The “creative linkage” embedding Buddhist merit-making (*tham bun*) ethics constitutes this study’s theoretical innovation; by ethically reconstructing “sachet gifting = ทำบุญ (alms-giving),” Chinese ICH symbols become integrated into Thai students meaning systems—a practice echoing Byram’s (2020) “values negotiation” mechanism, wherein host-culture ethical frameworks impart new significance to foreign cultural elements.

Recommendations

1. Teachers: Optimization of Instructional Design

Based on empirical classroom observations, key optimizations include: (1) enhancing cultural symbol translation through visual comparison of Chinese zodiac snakes with Thai “**Nāga**” mythology to clarify distinctions while reinforcing shared protective narratives (e.g. “serpent deities safeguarding peace”), mitigating lower-grade comprehension gaps; The Chinese snake is a cultural symbol, while the Thai snake god Naga is a religious deity. The Chinese snake emphasizes “natural attributes”, while the Thai Naga emphasizes “supernatural powers”. (2) addressing language barriers via Total

Physical Response methodology—e.g. pairing “*píng’ān*” pronunciation with Buddhist prayer gestures for semantic-kinesthetic-affective encoding; (3) reforming assessment systems to establish developmental portfolios tracking tripartite progression (spice identification/cognitive, craftsmanship/skill, gifting willingness/affect) beyond final-product evaluation. Critically, religious items (e.g. prayer beads) require pre-approval verification for temple permissions; substitute with culturally neutral wooden beads to preserve craft integrity while preempting sensitivity risks.

Teachers can also share student sachet-making processes on TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube to globally showcase traditional Chinese craftsmanship. Establish on-campus “sachet display walls” with protective glass casings to exhibit student creations. Launch a “Sachet Culture Cooperative” at Langyang Public Peimin School, enabling students to sell quality sachets at charity stalls—transforming cultural products into economic value while aligning with Thailand’s “merit economy” (*tam bun*) logic.

2. Future researchers: Innovation in Cultural Dissemination Mechanisms

In the future, researchers should pay more attention to the design and dissemination of Chinese culture teaching, and combine the current trend of artificial intelligence in teaching. How to truly apply technology to international Chinese teaching is still a subject worth exploring.

This tripartite cultural dissemination mechanism holds strategic significance for cross-cultural education:

1) Cultural Identity Construction: Social media documentation (e.g. TikTok) combined with physical “sachet walls” creates an immersive cultural field, transcending classroom spatiotemporal limits.

2) Educational Value Extension: The cooperative's charity model converts cultural learning into social practice—training intercultural skills (e.g. bilingual sachet explanations) and transforming cultural capital into community capital via merit economy, resonating with Thai social ethics.

3) ICH Safeguarding Innovation: The integrated digital-physical-economic cycle provides sustainable pathways for ICH, elevating dissemination from display to participatory meaning co-creation.

This paradigm represents symbiotic cultural integration—not mechanical transplantation—offering a referenceable model for Belt and Road humanities exchange.

Zhang Chen (2019) proposed that the Thai government should enhance its leadership by gradually refining policy frameworks, intensifying Chinese teacher training to elevate teaching standards, and establishing a big data system for textbook development to achieve localization. He emphasized leveraging Confucius Institutes to deepen the global dissemination of Chinese culture, ensuring systematic and scientific instruction through these institutions while regulating private Chinese education markets to foster a harmonious ecosystem. Additionally, he advocated advancing the “Internet+” globalization strategy in international Chinese education to significantly boost its global reach. These recommendations could also serve as valuable references for future initiatives.

Conclusion

This study, targeting Thai primary students at Buriram's Bamrung Wittaya School, designed and implemented a sachet-based pedagogical initiative, subsequently evaluating its efficacy to propose reflective insights

and recommendations; through systematic localization innovations and transcultural dissemination mechanisms, it pioneers a replicable pathway for propagating Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) within overseas primary education. Key findings demonstrate that the “triadic translation framework” (symbolic—functional—ethical), grounded in Byram’s Intercultural Communicative Competence Model and Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle, effectively reduces cognitive distance toward Chinese culture among Thai pupils—particularly noting that deep ethical translation (e.g. embedding Buddhist merit-making concepts) accelerates cultural integration and pedagogical efficacy. The research concurrently reveals triadic contradictions and tensions inherent in localization processes, resolved via innovative strategies achieving dynamic equilibrium between cultural adaptability and authenticity. In dissemination, the constructed “digital—physical—economic” ecosystem facilitates a qualitative leap from “cultural cognition” to “value co-creation” in ICH education. While offering a reference model for Belt and Road Initiative-participating nations, future studies should longitudinally track cultural behavior sustainability and explore AI-era digital translation pathways for ICH pedagogy, thereby advancing iterative upgrades of cultural dissemination paradigms within civilizational dialogue frameworks.

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