



Nakhon Ratchasima Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences

# Nakhon Ratchasima Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences

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## Nakhon Ratchasima Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, ISSN 3057-1596 (Online)

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Current issue presents articles that reflect key topics in the fields of humanities and social sciences, covering language, education, and social sciences. Five articles are included in total, two of them are research articles and three of them are academic articles, all of which contribute valuable knowledge to academic development and practical application. **The first article** is “The Development of Virtual Classrooms (Metaverse) to Promote Reading”. **The second article** is “A Cultural Reflection Study Of Chinese Idiomatic Expressions Containing The Word “鱼” (Fish)”. **The third article** is “Disasters from the Perspective of Thai Society”. **The fourth article** is “Exploring Reinvented Curriculum Models Bridging Humanities Education and Generation Z In Thai Higher Education”. **The fifth article** is “The Emergence and Rationale of the Reminder-Emphasis Construction “N 是用来 V 的” in Chinese”.

The editorial team of Nakhon Ratchasima Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (NJHSS) would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of authors for their contributions, as well as to the esteemed reviewers for their

valuable guidance that help maintain the high quality and standard of our journal.

We sincerely hope that this issue will be beneficial to all readers and serve as an inspiration for further study and research in the future.

Thank you all for supporting our journal.



(Dr. Teerawat Karnsopa)

Editor of Nakhon Ratchasima Journal of  
Humanities and Social Sciences



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# The Development of Virtual Classrooms (Metaverse) to Promote Reading

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## Abstract

Research on how immersive virtual environments like the metaverse can be effectively implemented to improve learning outcomes has been burgeoning recently. However, there remains a significant gap in understanding how virtual classroom environments might leverage students' affinity for digital technology to foster increased reading engagement and achievement. To fill this research gap, this study aimed to develop a virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading, compare students' learning achievement before and after using the virtual classroom, and study their satisfaction with this approach. The sample consisted of 30 students from Grade 8/3 at Nong Ngu Lueam Pitthayakhom School, under the Nakhon Ratchasima Provincial Administrative Organization, during the academic year 2023, selected using cluster random sampling. Research instruments included a Metaverse based lesson plan for reading promotion, a learning achievement test, and a satisfaction questionnaire, with data analyzed using descriptive statistics and t-test analysis. The findings indicated that the overall appropriateness of the virtual classroom (Metaverse) for promoting

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reading was rated at the highest level. Learning achievement improved significantly, with average scores increasing from 13.80 (46.00%) in the pre-test to 22.23 (74.10%) in the post-test, a 28.10% improvement that was statistically significant at the .05 level. Student satisfaction with the virtual learning environment was also exceptionally high. This research contributes to educational technology by demonstrating how virtual environments enhance reading skills among middle school students. It provides insights for engaging digital-native learners and addressing declining reading habits. By establishing evidence for Metaverse applications in education, this study supports future implementation across diverse contexts, potentially transforming teaching methodologies in the digital learning landscape.

**Keywords:** virtual classroom, reading promotion activities, learning achievement

## Introduction

Reading significantly influences personal development by fostering intellectual and emotional growth, enhancing communication skills, and promoting critical thinking. Research indicates that reading habits among students substantially affect their academic performance and personal development, with a majority acknowledging its importance for educational success (Appalabatla & Priya, 2023; Belo et al., 2024). Reading not only expands vocabulary and comprehension but also cultivates creativity and empathy, essential attributes in today's interconnected world (Belo et al., 2024). The increasing preference for digital materials among students reflects the evolving nature of reading habits, suggesting a transition toward more accessible formats (Adhikari, 2023). In contemporary technological contexts,

maintaining reading habits remains essential for developing critical thinking and information processing skills vital in both academic and professional environments (Dukare, 2023). Educators play a pivotal role in motivating students to engage with diverse texts, thereby enriching their reading experiences and fostering lifelong habits that contribute to improved mental well-being and resilience (Sear, 2024; Belo et al., 2024). These findings collectively underscore the importance of cultivating reading habits across all demographic groups to foster a well-educated society.

From the study of the current situation, the issue of diminishing reading interest among Thai citizens is multifaceted, influenced by educational, social, and economic factors. Key challenges include insufficient institutional support, teachers' perceptions regarding reading instruction, and students' motivation and reading habits, which impede the effective implementation of extensive reading programs (Thongsan & Waring, 2024). The proliferation of digital media and electronic devices has diverted attention from traditional reading practices, complicating efforts to foster a reading culture (Zalukhu & Zalukhu, 2024). Reader characteristics, including age and educational attainment, significantly influence intentions to engage with electronic books, indicating that targeted strategies are necessary to enhance digital literacy and promote reading in this context (Sinchawarnwat & Pankham, 2024). Limited access to quality reading materials and supportive learning environments further exacerbates this problem, necessitating collaborative initiatives among educational institutions, families, and communities to cultivate positive literacy practices (Seventilova, 2024; Ermiana et al., 2024).

Modern educational technology improves accessibility, engagement, and instructional efficacy, all of which are critical components of better teaching management in educational institutions. Within educational institutions, the incorporation of digital tools, including school management information systems and e-learning platforms, promotes better communication, administration, and decision-making (Fadillah et al., 2024; Manaf, 2024). The educational environment is enhanced by the immersive learning experiences that contemporary educational technologies, such as virtual and augmented reality, provide, accommodating a variety of learning styles (Junger et al., 2023; Mubaroq & Ilham, 2023). Furthermore, to create productive learning environments and enhance educational outcomes, a well-rounded strategy that combines cutting-edge technology with conventional pedagogical approaches is necessary (Junger et al., 2023; Manaf, 2024).

From the study of the current reading promotion activities, it was found that modern technology has been applied as a tool to promote reading and develop skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by applying the Metaverse, a digital technology that combines AR and VR technologies. This new technology can attract learners by allowing them to create virtual representations of themselves, called avatars. The metaverse provides a virtual world that is freely accessible and offers activities that learners want to engage with, enabling them to interact with each other as if they were in the real world. Participants need not be in the same physical location; regardless of where they are, everyone can join without borders (Charuphan, 2021). The concept of virtual classrooms within the metaverse leverages advanced technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR),

and artificial intelligence (AI) to create immersive educational experiences. Research demonstrates that these environments enhance student engagement and collaboration by providing personalized learning experiences that simulate authentic interactions (AL Seiri et al., 2023; Hedrick et al., 2022). The integration of AI-driven virtual avatar assistants facilitates dynamic interactions, enabling students to engage more effectively with instructional content and peers (Halim et al., 2024).

The integration of metaverse technologies into virtual classrooms represents a transformative approach to promoting reading engagement, leveraging immersive environments to enhance comprehension and motivation. Research shows that metaverse platforms allow teachers to use new teaching methods, bringing reading materials to life with virtual characters and interactive features, which helps students think and feel more deeply about what they read (Rezk, 2024). Metaverse libraries enhance access to diverse reading materials and facilitate collaborative learning experiences, transcending geographical constraints and enabling substantive peer discussions (Namdas, 2024). The immersive characteristics of metaverse environments support scenario-based learning, simulating authentic contexts for reading comprehension and promoting deeper understanding and retention (He et al., 2022). Furthermore, the capacity for personalized learning trajectories can accommodate individual reading preferences, enhancing motivation and engagement in literacy activities (Yue, 2023).

Despite metaverse technologies' educational promise globally, significant research gaps exist regarding their application to Thailand's declining reading engagement. While studies have examined the metaverse in education (AL Seiri et al., 2023; Hedrick et al., 2022) and virtual

environments for literacy development (Rezk, 2024; Namdas, 2024), limited research explores how metaverse environments can be culturally adapted for Thai readers. Current literature inadequately addresses how immersive technologies can overcome cultural, linguistic, and motivational barriers specific to Thai educational contexts (Thongsan & Waring, 2024). Although technical implementation aspects have been studied, pedagogical frameworks for using metaverse technologies to cultivate sustainable reading habits among Thai students remain absent. This gap is particularly important given Thailand's declining reading rates and the need for innovative approaches that engage digital-native learners while preserving cultural literacy values.

This research aims to develop and evaluate a culturally responsive metaverse-based learning environment specifically designed to enhance reading engagement and comprehension among Thai students, thereby addressing the critical gap in immersive technology applications within Thai reading education contexts and contributing to the reversal of declining reading habits in Thailand's increasingly digitalized society.

## Research Objectives

1. To develop lesson plans by using the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading.
2. To compare students' learning achievement before and after learning by using a virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading.
3. To study students' satisfaction with the usability of the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading.

## Research Scope

This research focuses on the development of a virtual classroom (metaverse) to promote reading among lower secondary students, focusing primarily on investigating pedagogical approaches for junior secondary reading skills development. The study began with a comprehensive literature review of both Thai and international sources on reading instruction and virtual learning environments, which informed the design of an immersive, interactive digital classroom. The virtual classroom underwent expert validation by specialists in library science, curriculum and instruction, and educational technology before being piloted in an actual classroom setting. The research sampled 30 eighth-grade students from Nong Ngu Lueam Phitthayakhom School in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, selected through cluster random sampling from a population of 242 lower secondary students. Instructional content was adapted from royal literary works by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, integrated into contextually appropriate learning activities within the digital environment. The research and development process spanned five months, from November 2023 to March 2024.

Based on a review of relevant concepts, theories, and empirical research, the researcher established a conceptual framework to guide the design of a Metaverse-based virtual classroom aimed at promoting reading. The framework integrates the following three key theoretical perspectives:

### **1. Metaverse in Education**

The metaverse combines augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) to create immersive learning environments where learners

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interact through avatars in interconnected digital spaces (Charuphan, 2021; Seesamut, 2022). These environments support 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills development within continuous and interoperable virtual worlds that enable spontaneous interaction (Park & Kim, 2022; Mystakidis, 2022).

## **2. Self-Directed Learning Theory**

Self-directed learning emphasizes learner autonomy through goal-setting and self-assessment. Key elements include intrinsic motivation, metacognition, and the ability to plan and monitor learning progress (Gary, 2022; Peno, 2024). Instructional models like flipped classrooms support SDL by encouraging independence and collaboration, essential for effective use of educational technologies (Anshu et al., 2022).

## **3. Constructivist Learning Theory**

Constructivism posits that learners build knowledge through experiences, social engagement, and reflection. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and Bruner's discovery learning highlight the importance of guided interaction and exploration (Tohari & Rahman, 2024). Constructivist pedagogy transforms teachers into facilitators within student-centered environments (Kusuma et al., 2021; Oanh & Nhung, 2022), while technologies like Learning Management Systems enhance learner engagement and personalization (Zin et al., 2024).

## **4. Reading Promotion Concepts**

Effective reading promotion integrates traditional and modern strategies through digital media and targeted content (Ye, 2024). Creative management of events like book fairs stimulates reading motivation (Filina & Kostelna, 2023). Schools can combine sustained silent reading with digital tools like storytelling apps to enhance interest in recreational reading (Tupas,

2023), while school libraries can leverage social media to connect with students (Petrushka & Mashtalir, 2023).

### **5. Virtual Reality in Reading Promotion**

VR enhances reading engagement through immersion, improving comprehension and motivation. Applications like StoryVR increase narrative absorption (Kubincová et al., 2020), while high-immersion VR environments significantly improve reading comprehension compared to traditional formats (Kaplan-Rakowski & Gruber, 2024). VR enables higher cognitive engagement and memory retention, creating dynamic reading environments suitable for complex texts and language learners (Çoban et al, 2024).

### **6. Conceptual Framework for Metaverse Virtual Reading Classroom**

The design of a Metaverse-based virtual classroom for reading promotion integrates theoretical foundations into seven key components and a structured self-directed learning process.

#### **6.1 Components of the Virtual Reading Classroom**

6.1.1 Virtual Library Space: Digital bookshelves organizing royal literary works by category, comfortable reading corners, and informational displays about the works and their significance.

6.1.2 Digital Content: Interactive eBooks of royal works, contextual supplementary information, and multimedia materials (photos, videos, audio) connected to the narratives.

6.1.3 Activity Spaces: Discussion zones for debates, exhibition areas for student projects, and gamification zones featuring quizzes and interactive puzzles.

6.1.4 Reading Tools: Digital notebooks for reflections, virtual maps for exploring travelogue routes, and mind mapping tools for synthesizing ideas.

6.1.5 Interaction System: Avatars representing teachers and students, chat systems, and voice channels for real-time communication.

6.1.6 Monitoring and Assessment Tools: Virtual quizzes for comprehension assessment, activity logs tracking participation, and satisfaction surveys.

6.1.7 Self-Directed Learning Support: User guides, learning plan templates, and structured reflection forms.

6.2 Self-Directed Learning Process The virtual classroom implements a six-phase learning process:

6.2.1 Orientation: Introduction to the SDL model, roles, tools, and expectations.

6.2.2 Planning: Students explore resources and create personalized learning goals and plans.

6.2.3 Implementation: Learners engage in activities with teacher guidance and progress tracking.

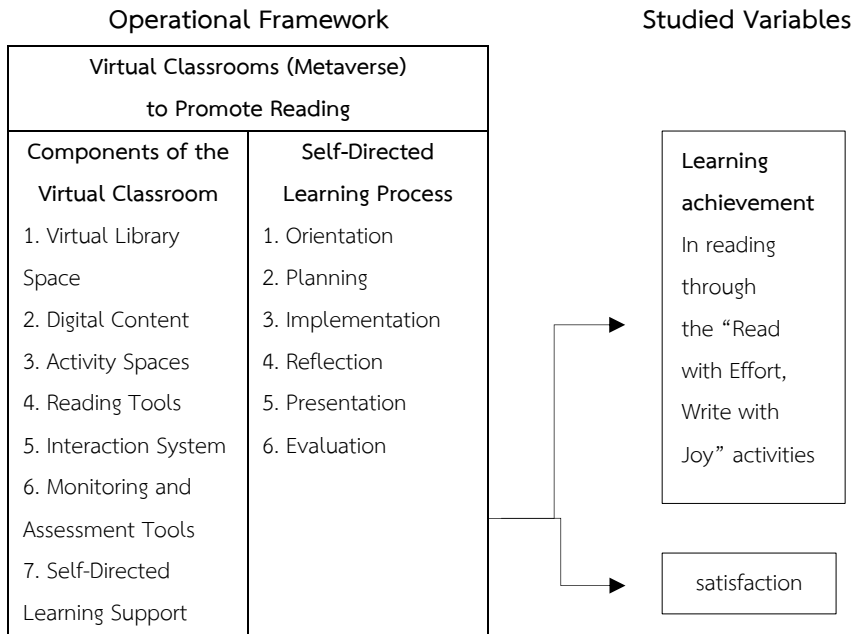
6.2.4 Reflection: Students assess their progress and adjust plans as needed.

6.2.5 Presentation: Learners share their work and insights, exchanging feedback with peers.

6.2.6 Evaluation: Multiple assessment methods including self-assessment, peer review, and teacher evaluation.

The researcher conducted an extensive review of relevant theories, principles, and conceptual frameworks through document analysis and prior

research. These findings were then analyzed, synthesized, and applied to develop a Metaverse-based virtual classroom aimed at promoting reading. The developed platform was subsequently used to investigate and compare students’ learning achievement and satisfaction with the Metaverse learning environment, as illustrated in Figure 1.



### Research Methodology

The development of a Metaverse-based virtual classroom to enhance reading skills consists of three key phases:

Phase 1: Development of lesson plans by using the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading.

Phase 2: Comparison of students’ learning achievement before and after learning by using a virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading.

Phase 3: Study of students' satisfaction with the usability of the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading.

**Phase 1: Development of lesson plans by using the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading.**

1. Data Sources

The data for this study were obtained from academic documents, theoretical principles, concepts, and prior research related to Metaverse-based virtual classrooms for reading enhancement conducted by both Thai and international scholars and educators.

2. Informants

The study engaged three experts: specialists in library science, curriculum and instruction, and educational technology.

3. Implementation Process

The development of the Metaverse-based virtual classroom for reading enhancement was conducted through the following steps:

3.1 Literature Review

A review of literature and research related to virtual classrooms (Metaverse), the use of the Spatial program and its application in teaching and learning, self-directed learning concepts, principles of reading promotion for lower secondary school students, and the types and content of literary works authored by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

3.2 Lesson Plan Design.

The design of lesson plans by using the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading integrates theoretical foundations into seven key components and a structured self-directed learning process.

3.2.1 Components of the virtual reading classroom consist of virtual library space, digital content, activity spaces, reading tools, interaction systems, and monitoring and assessment tools.

3.2.2 Self-Directed Learning Process: The virtual classroom implements a six-phase learning process consisting of orientation, planning, implementation, reflection, presentation, and evaluation.

### 3.3 Expert Review

The developed lesson plans by using the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading was evaluated by three experts using an assessment questionnaire to determine its appropriateness and alignment with educational objectives. A rating scale was employed for the assessment (Tanya, 2002, pp. 161–162), with the following scoring criteria:

5 = Highly appropriate and consistent

4 = Appropriate and consistent

3 = Moderately appropriate and consistent

2 = Slightly appropriate and consistent

1 = Least appropriate and consistent

The evaluation followed a predetermined rating scale (Srisasaad, 2013, p. 103) as follows:

Mean score 4.51–5.00 = Highly appropriate and consistent

Mean score 3.51–4.50 = Appropriate and consistent

Mean score 2.51–3.50 = Moderately appropriate and consistent

Mean score 1.51–2.50 = Slightly appropriate and consistent

Mean score 1.00–1.50 = Least appropriate and consistent

The overall mean score from expert evaluation was 4.35 (S.D. = 0.48), which was higher than the established quality acceptance criteria (3.51).

### 3.4 Revision and Refinement

Based on the experts' feedback, modifications and improvements were made to the lesson plans by using the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading to enhance their effectiveness and ensure their alignment with the intended objectives.

### 4. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using mean scores ( $\bar{x}$ ), standard deviation (S.D.) and content analysis.

## **Phase 2: Comparison of students' learning achievement before and after learning by using a virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading.**

### 1. Population and Sample

#### 1.1 Population:

The population for this study consisted of 242 lower secondary school students at Nong Ngu Lueam Pittayakom School under the jurisdiction of the Nakhon Ratchasima Provincial Administrative Organization for the academic year 2023.

#### 1.2 Sample:

The sample group comprised 30 students from Grade 8/3 at Nong Ngu Lueam Pittayakom School, selected for the academic year 2023. The sample was selected using cluster random sampling.

## 2. Research Instruments

The research instruments were divided into two categories: experimental tools and data collection tools.

### 2.1 Experimental Tool:

The lesson plans by using the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading.

### 2.2 Data Collection Tools:

The primary instrument for data collection was a learning achievement test consisting of 30 items that had undergone quality verification. The test had a difficulty index ( $p$ ) ranging from 0.20 to 0.80, a discrimination power ( $r$ ) of 0.20 or higher, and a reliability coefficient for the entire test of not less than 0.70.

## 3. Data Collection Procedures

### 3.1 Pre-Test:

Students' learning achievement was assessed before the intervention using a learning achievement test.

### 3.2 Instructional Implementation:

Students engaged in learning activities based on the instructional design using the Metaverse-based virtual classroom.

### 3.3 Post-Test:

A post-test was conducted to evaluate students' learning achievement following the intervention.

### 3.4 Data Analysis:

The results from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the Metaverse-based virtual classroom in enhancing reading skills.

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#### 4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using percentage, mean scores, standard deviation, and the t-test.

### **Phase 3: Study of students' satisfaction with the usability of the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading.**

#### 1. Population and Sample

##### 1.1 Population

The population of this study comprised 242 lower secondary school students at Nong Ngu Lueam Pittayakom School, under the jurisdiction of the Nakhon Ratchasima Provincial Administrative Organization, during the academic year 2023.

##### 1.2 Sample

The sample group consisted of 30 students from Grade 8/3 at Nong Ngu Lueam Pittayakom School, selected for the academic year 2023. The sample was selected using cluster random sampling.

#### 2. Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this phase was a student satisfaction questionnaire on the usability of the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading. The instrument featured a 5-point Likert scale addressing five dimensions: classroom design and usability, content presentation, reading activities, interaction, and learning benefits. A rating scale was employed for the assessment (Tanya, 2002, pp. 161–162), with the following scoring criteria:

5 = Very Highly Satisfied

4 = Highly Satisfied

3 = Moderately Satisfied

2 = Slightly Satisfied

1 = Least Satisfied

Content validity was established through expert review, selecting items with IOC values  $\geq 0.50$ , and implementing recommended revisions.

### 3. Data Collection Procedures

#### 3.1 Administration of the Satisfaction Questionnaire

Upon completion of the learning activities in the Metaverse-based virtual classroom, all students were required to complete the satisfaction questionnaire.

#### 3.2 Data Compilation and Synthesis

The collected responses from the student satisfaction questionnaire were compiled, summarized, and synthesized for further analysis.

### 4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using percentage. The evaluation followed a predetermined rating scale (Srisasaad, 2013, p. 103) as follows:

Mean score 4.51–5.00 = Very Highly Satisfied

Mean score 3.51–4.50 = Highly Satisfied

Mean score 2.51–3.50 = Moderately Satisfied

Mean score 1.51–2.50 = Slightly Satisfied

Mean score 1.00–1.50 = Least Satisfied

## Research Results

The development of a virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading presents the study results in the following sequential stages:

### **Step 1: Development of lesson plans by using the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading.**

The Virtual Classroom (Metaverse) to Promote Reading was designed based on a framework incorporating virtual library space, digital content, activity areas, reading promotion tools, interaction systems, and assessment tools. Using Spatial as the primary platform, the design features a virtual library showcasing royal-authored books, reading promotion areas, journey maps based on royal writings, and student exhibition spaces.

Content includes digitized books by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, historical context information, and multimedia elements. Reading promotion activities include virtual notebooks, travel maps, discussion forums, exhibitions, interactive games, and creative writing exercises. The learning management methodology follows a 6-step Self-Directed Learning Process framework: orientation, planning, implementation, reflection, presentation, and evaluation.

Consistency and Appropriateness of Lesson Plans by Using Virtual Classrooms (Metaverse) to Promote Reading. The overall consistency and appropriateness of lesson plans by using virtual classrooms (Metaverse) to promote reading had a mean value of 4.76 (S.D. 0.32), which is at the highest level. The aspect with the highest mean value was the components of lesson plans (mean = 4.85), followed by reading promotion activities (mean = 4.81), virtual classroom design (mean = 4.79), implementation (mean = 4.68), and measurement and evaluation (mean = 4.67), respectively.

### **Step 2: Comparison of students' learning achievement before and after learning by using a virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading.**

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The study of student achievement found that before learning, students achieved an average score of 13.80 (S.D. = 3.42), equivalent to 46.00%. After learning, the average score was 22.23 (S.D. = 2.75), or 74.10%, with an average progress score of 6.66 (S.D. = 2.18), equivalent to 22.20%. The learning achievement after implementing the learning management was significantly higher than before implementation at the .05 statistical significance level.

### **Step 3: Study of students' satisfaction with the usability of the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading.**

Overall student satisfaction was high (mean = 4.13, S.D. = 0.57). Highest satisfaction ratings were for enjoyment (mean = 5.00, S.D. = 0.00), activity creativity (mean = 4.84, S.D. = 0.37), and knowledge enhancement (mean = 4.83, S.D. = 0.38). Other well-received aspects included learning media (mean = 4.33), systematic planning (mean = 4.17), and creative development (mean = 4.00).

These results suggest that the Metaverse-based virtual classroom effectively enhanced students' reading skills, led to significant academic improvement, and was well-received by students, with high satisfaction levels across various aspects of the learning experience.

## **Discussion Of Results**

The findings from this study on the development of a metaverse-based virtual classroom for reading enhancement can be discussed as follows:

## **1. The results of the development of lesson plans by using the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading**

This study successfully developed and implemented a virtual classroom in the metaverse to promote reading, structured around a six-step self-directed learning process. The design included immersive components such as digital royal-authored books, interactive reading activities, and student exhibition areas. These findings align with prior research emphasizing the benefits of immersive learning environments in enhancing engagement and learner autonomy (Al Seiari et al., 2023). Similar research integrating immersive technologies in language learning has shown positive effects on reading habits and content retention (Kongchan, 2022).

The high consistency ratings of the lesson plans (mean = 4.76, S.D. = 0.32) confirm the methodological rigor of the instructional design. All aspects of the evaluation received scores in the highest category, with components of learning management plans scoring the highest (mean = 4.85, S.D. = 0.25). These findings echo Flores-Castañeda et al. (2024), who argue that well-structured virtual environments enhance learner engagement and instructional clarity.

## **2. Comparative results of students' learning achievement before and after learning by using a virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading**

The significant improvement in student achievement provides strong evidence for the effectiveness of the metaverse classroom in promoting reading skills. Pre-test scores averaged 13.80 (S.D. = 3.42, 46.00%), while post-test scores rose to 22.23 (S.D. = 2.75, 74.10%), representing a statistically significant increase of 28.10% ( $t = 15.47$ ,  $df = 29$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These

results demonstrate that the immersive virtual environment positively impacts learning outcomes, consistent with López Belmonte et al. (2024), who found that metaverse technologies provide equitable access to high-quality content regardless of geographic location.

The primary beneficiaries of this research are secondary students, who demonstrated significant academic improvement as noted above. The results indicate potential for enhancing learning experiences across digital divides, particularly for students in rural or under-resourced regions where access to diverse reading materials may be limited.

### **3. Results of a study of students' satisfaction with the usability of the virtual classroom (Metaverse) to promote reading**

Student satisfaction with the virtual classroom was high overall (mean = 4.13, S.D. = 0.57), with particularly strong ratings for enjoyment and entertainment (mean = 5.00, S.D. = 0.00), creativity of activities (mean = 4.84, S.D. = 0.37), and enhancement of knowledge and understanding (mean = 4.83, S.D. = 0.38). These findings suggest that the metaverse environment successfully combines educational value with engaging experiences, supporting research by Aditya et al. (2023) showing that metaverse-based tools help develop soft skills and flexible learning approaches.

There were some limitations reflected in the lower satisfaction scores for application to daily life (mean = 3.67, S.D. = 0.82) and cultivation of reading habits (mean = 3.33, S.D. = 0.92). Additionally, there was a learning curve associated with navigating the virtual platform, which initially hindered student engagement. Although these issues diminished over time, they underscore the importance of providing digital literacy support prior to Metaverse integration.

Teachers also benefit through exposure to modern pedagogical tools that stimulate creativity and learner interaction. The structured implementation framework provides educators with a replicable model for technology integration. Research has similarly shown that Metaverse-based tools help teachers develop soft skills and pedagogical flexibility (Aditya et al., 2023).

Despite overall positive outcomes, the implementation revealed barriers typical of EdTech interventions—limited broadband coverage, underpowered devices, and minimal IT support. These findings support Aditya et al. (2023), who stressed the importance of designing metaverse applications with context-specific constraints in mind.

## Recommendations

1. Future development of Metaverse-based virtual classrooms for reading enhancement should incorporate a more diverse range of content. Expanding the scope of learning materials would provide greater variety in reading promotion activities, thereby enriching the overall learning experience.

2. This study primarily focused on the development of a Metaverse-based virtual classroom for reading enhancement. However, for long-term retention of knowledge and sustainable skill development, extended exposure and practice are essential. Therefore, it is recommended that learners be encouraged to engage in self-directed learning to further strengthen their reading habits and comprehension skills over time.

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# A Cultural Reflection Study of Chinese Idiomatic Expressions Containing the Word “鱼” (Fish)

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## Abstract

The study titled “A Cultural Reflection Study of Chinese Idiomatic Expressions Containing the Word “鱼” (Fish)” aims to explore the cultural implications reflected in Chinese idiomatic expressions featuring the character “鱼”. The researcher gathered 36 idioms from the Chengyu Dictionary (Chengyu Dictionary Editorial Committee, 2020) and conducted an in-depth analysis to categorize their cultural meanings. The findings reveal that Chinese idioms containing “鱼” can be grouped into four main categories of cultural reflection: (1) Natural Reflections, comprising 7 idioms (19.44%); (2) Behavioral and Psychological Reflections of Humans and Animals, the largest category, consisting of 27 idioms (75%); (3) Reflections on Lifestyle and Living Conditions, including 6 idioms (16.68%); and (4) Reflections on Beliefs and Religion, with 4 idioms (11.11%). Notably, some idioms reflect characteristics from more than one category. Furthermore, the study did not find any idioms that reflect aspects of music or traditional performances, as there is no apparent connection between fish and musical instruments or folk entertainment in Chinese idiomatic expressions. These

findings offer a deeper understanding of how language encodes cultural perceptions and values, highlighting the symbolic significance of fish in Chinese culture. Future comparative studies on idioms involving “鱼” in Chinese and their equivalents in Thai could provide valuable insights into cross-cultural linguistic patterns.

**Keywords :** Cultural reflections, Chinese Idiomatic, Fish symbolism

## Introduction

Fish serve as significant cultural symbols and hold profound symbolic meanings in Chinese culture. Sontiang (2016) stated that fish are considered auspicious symbols in Chinese tradition, representing wealth, prosperity, affluence, and abundance. This symbolism arises from the phonetic similarity between the Chinese character “鱼” (yú), meaning “fish”, and “余” (yú), which means “surplus” or “abundance”. This linguistic connection is evident in Chinese New Year greetings such as “年年有余”, which conveys the wish for continuous wealth and abundance year after year. Consequently, fish are an essential dish in Chinese celebratory feasts. It can thus be asserted that humans maintain a close relationship with fish, and this connection is prominently reflected in linguistic expressions, including words, idioms, and proverbs.

Chinese idioms, or chengyu (成语), are an invaluable part of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Chinese people. The use of Chinese idioms reflects cultural traditions and the way of life of the Chinese people from ancient times to the present. They serve as concise records of historical events, functioning as moral teachings and cautionary reminders passed down through generations. A distinctive feature of Chinese idioms is their

brevity and simplicity, yet they often carry profound meanings. Their significance extends beyond daily language use, as they play a crucial role in literary creativity, cultural transmission, and historical documentation. Furthermore, Chinese idioms contribute to understanding social values, beliefs, and the ways of life of the Chinese people.

As a former student majoring in the Chinese language, the researcher has had the opportunity to read books and articles on Chinese idioms and has observed that idioms containing the character “鱼” do not necessarily refer to fish in a literal sense but rather convey different meanings depending on the structural composition of the idiom. An example from the book *Principles of Thai-Chinese Translation* (Thamcharoenkit, 2010) illustrates this point: the idiom “鱼目混珠”, which literally translates to “mixing fish eyes with pearls”, metaphorically refers to the act of passing off counterfeits as genuine items.

Therefore, the researcher selected and analyzed Chinese idioms that include the character “鱼” from the dictionary *Comprehensive Chengyu Dictionary* (Chengyu Dictionary Editorial Committee, 2020). These idioms were categorized based on their cultural reflections, classified according to their meanings using the theoretical framework of cultural imagery in idioms proposed by Kanchanakaphan (2000, pp. 2-5). This framework categorizes idioms into five types based on their cultural reflections: (1) reflections of nature, (2) reflections of human and animal behaviors and emotions, (3) reflections of lifestyles and dwellings, (4) reflections of beliefs and religion, and (5) reflections of musical instruments and traditional performances.



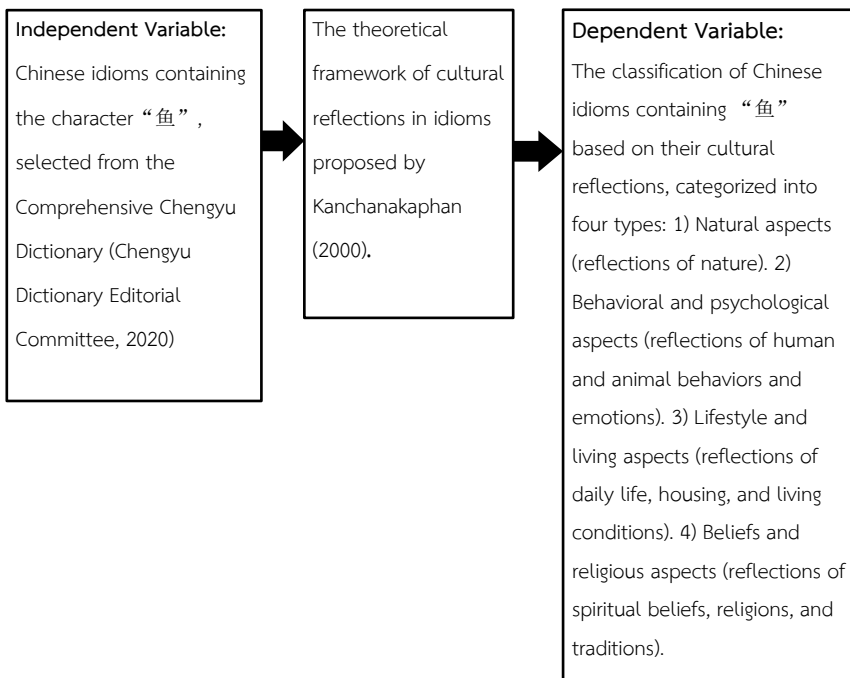
## Research Objectives

To study the cultural reflections of Chinese idioms containing the character “鱼”

## Research Scope

The study focuses exclusively on four-character Chinese idioms that contain the character “鱼”, selected from the Comprehensive Chengyu Dictionary (Chengyu Dictionary Editorial Committee, 2020)

### 1. Conceptual Framework



## **2. Concepts Related to the Origins of Idiomatic Reflections**

Kanchanakaphan (2000, pp. 2-5) stated that Thai idioms have existed since ancient times and have evolved alongside the changing historical and social contexts of the country. Idioms do not emerge naturally but rather originate from various causes, such as nature, human actions, the environment, customs, traditions, religious beliefs, folklore, legends, and other cultural elements.

## **3. Relevant Research on Idiomatic Comparisons**

Surakhachorn (2001) conducted a comparative study of Chinese and Thai idioms containing animal-related terms. The research aimed to examine the general characteristics of Chinese and Thai idioms involving animals and analyze the comparative aspects of idioms related to four specific animals: horses, tigers, dragons, and fish. The study also explored the cultural reflections embedded in these idioms in relation to environmental factors, traditions, customs, and the way of life of both Chinese and Thai societies. The findings revealed that while some idioms in both languages share similarities, others differ in their expressions. The study categorized the comparison into three groups: (1) idioms in both languages that contain the same animal-related term, (2) Chinese idioms containing a specific animal-related term while Thai idioms use a different animal, and (3) Chinese idioms that include an animal reference while the corresponding Thai idioms do not mention any animal at all. The study concluded that idioms serve as reflections of environmental conditions, cultural values, and societal perspectives.

Sawatthayothin (2019) studied Thai and Chinese idioms containing the word “snake” with three key objectives: (1) to classify the types of Thai

and Chinese idioms that include the word “snake”, (2) to examine the cultural reflections embedded within these idioms, and (3) to assess the comprehension of Thai idioms containing the word “snake” among undergraduate students. The study involved 121 participants from an English for International Communication program, divided by academic year. The research employed comprehension tests to evaluate their understanding of idioms, using statistical measures such as mean scores, standard deviation, and frequency distribution. The results indicated that idioms containing the word “snake” in both Thai and Chinese could be classified into three categories: (1) idioms where both languages contain the word “snake”, (2) idioms where only Chinese contains the word “snake” while Thai does not, and (3) idioms where Thai contains a different term altogether. The cultural reflections observed in these idioms were divided into five aspects: nature, human and animal behavior and emotions, way of life and living conditions, beliefs and religion, and traditional music and performances. Additionally, the study found that first-year and fourth-year students demonstrated higher levels of comprehension, whereas second- and third-year students showed moderate levels of understanding. The overall comprehension of idioms was found to be at a moderate level.

Phlananumas et al. (2021) conducted a comparative study of Chinese idioms containing the word “虎” (tiger) and Thai idioms containing the word “เสือ” (tiger). The research analyzed 92 Chinese idioms and 26 Thai idioms, referencing two Chinese dictionaries, one Thai dictionary, and information from the website of the Royal Society of Thailand. The objectives were (1) to study the meanings and classifications of these idioms and (2) to compare the meanings of Chinese and Thai idioms containing the

word “tiger”. The study revealed six primary similarities in idiomatic meanings between the two languages: (1) emotions and mental states, (2) risk-taking, (3) moral teachings, (4) submission, (5) behavioral traits and personality, and (6) human actions. In Chinese idioms, the word “tiger” was predominantly used to describe human actions, accounting for 29 idioms (29.9%). In contrast, Thai idioms most frequently used the word “tiger” in contexts related to moral teachings and risk-taking, with five idioms (19.2%) in each category. This suggests that while both Chinese and Thai cultures view the tiger in both positive and negative aspects, the emphasis of its meaning varies between the two languages.

Yu (2014) analyzed the semantic structure and cultural interpretations of idioms containing the word “fish”. The research aimed to explore the specific meanings of “fish” as recorded in authoritative dictionaries, categorize its symbolic meanings, examine its grammatical structure and function in idioms, and investigate the cultural implications associated with its usage. The study concluded that Chinese idioms encapsulate the wisdom of the Chinese people, carrying deep cultural connotations and linguistic elegance. By analyzing idioms containing the word “fish”, the research classified their grammatical structures into six types: (1) compound structures, (2) modifier-head structures, (3) subject-predicate structures, (4) verb-object structures, and (5) compound verb structures. Furthermore, idioms were categorized into nouns, verbs, and adjectives based on their syntactic functions. The findings indicated that the word “fish” in idioms symbolizes various social situations, human behaviors, abilities, and emotions. Through a detailed examination of these meanings,

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the study provided deeper insights into the symbolic nature of “fish” in Chinese culture and the unique charm of the language.

Lin (2014) conducted a comparative study of animal-related idioms in Chinese and Thai. This research examined idioms involving animals from both languages, analyzing their semantic and cultural variations and identifying the underlying causes of these differences. The study was divided into three key areas: (1) defining Chinese and Thai idioms, verb usage, and idiomatic classifications, (2) comparing cultural factors influencing idioms, including religious beliefs, behavioral traits, daily life, traditional customs, and historical legends, and (3) analyzing the cultural implications reflected in idioms. The study highlighted how idioms serve as linguistic reflections of social and cultural backgrounds, natural environments, and emotional perspectives of Chinese and Thai people toward animals. The findings aimed to enhance the understanding of cultural factors in idioms for Chinese and Thai language learners.

Based on the reviewed literature and related studies, several researchers have examined cultural reflections in idiomatic expressions. In this study, the researcher explores Chinese idioms containing the character “鱼” to serve as a framework for further investigation aligned with the research objectives.

Findings from the literature review indicate that research on Chinese idioms containing “鱼” in Thailand remains limited. Most existing studies focus on idioms related to specific animals, primarily in a comparative context between Chinese and other languages. However, there has been no research exclusively dedicated to idioms featuring “鱼”, nor an in-depth examination of the cultural reflections embedded within these idioms.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze Chinese idioms containing “鱼” to better understand the cultural values and perspectives reflected through them. By doing so, it will contribute to more accurate and effective communication in Chinese language studies.

## Research Methodology

This study aims to examine the cultural reflections of Chinese idioms that contain the character “鱼” to enhance the understanding of cultural representations in Chinese idioms.

### 1. Population and Sample

#### 1.1 Population

This study focuses exclusively on four-character Chinese idioms that include the character “鱼” as documented in Chengyu Dictionary (Chengyu Dictionary Editorial Committee, 2020).

#### 1.2 Sample

A total of 36 four-character Chinese idioms containing the character “鱼” were selected from Chengyu Dictionary (Chengyu Dictionary Editorial Committee, 2020).

### 2. Data Collection Instrument

A classification table was employed to categorize the cultural reflections based on the meanings of the selected Chinese idioms containing the character “鱼” .

**Table 1**

*Classification of Cultural Reflections in Chinese Idioms Containing the Character “鱼”*

Category of Cultural Reflection	Number of Idioms Containing “鱼”
1. Nature-related aspects	7
2. Human and animal behaviors and thoughts	27
3. Lifestyles and living conditions	6
4. Beliefs and religion	4
Total	44

Based on the table above, the researcher compiled a total of 36 four-character Chinese idioms containing the character “鱼” from Chengyu Dictionary (Chengyu Dictionary Editorial Committee, 2020). However, since some idioms can be classified into two categories, the total number of classifications after analysis and categorization amounts to 44 instances.

### 3. Data Collection

3.1 Collected 36 four-character Chinese idioms containing the character “鱼” from Chengyu Dictionary (Chengyu Dictionary Editorial Committee, 2020).

3.2 Analyzed the meanings of the selected idioms and categorized them based on their cultural reflections.

## Research Results

The researcher compiled 36 four-character Chinese idioms containing the character “鱼” from Chengyu Dictionary (Chengyu Dictionary Editorial Committee, 2020). These idioms were categorized into four cultural reflection aspects. The first aspect pertains to nature, with 7 idioms. The

second aspect reflects human and animal behaviors and thoughts, comprising 27 idioms. The third aspect relates to lifestyles and living conditions, including 6 idioms, while the fourth aspect concerns beliefs and religion, with 4 idioms. This study aims to analyze the cultural reflections found in these idioms. Notably, some idioms exhibit characteristics of more than one category, leading to their classification under multiple aspects. The details of these classifications are presented in the following table.

**Table 2**

*Analysis of Cultural Reflections in the Meanings of Chinese Idioms Containing the Character “鱼”*

Category of Cultural Reflection	Number of Idioms	Percentage (%)
1. Nature-related aspects	7	19.44
2. Human and animal behaviors and thoughts	27	75.00
3. Lifestyles and living conditions	6	16.68
4. Beliefs and religion	4	11.11

According to Table 2, the researcher initially collected a total of 36 four-character Chinese idioms that contain the character “鱼” from Chengyu Dictionary Editorial Committee (2020). However, upon further analysis, it was found that some idioms reflect more than one cultural aspect. Specifically, eight idioms were identified as having meanings that could be classified under two different cultural categories. As a result, after categorization, the total number of classified idioms increased to 44. The idioms that exhibit multiple cultural reflections are as follows:



1. 鸢飞鱼跃: This idiom, which describes the energetic movement of kites flying in the sky and fish leaping in the water, symbolizes a vibrant and lively natural environment. At the same time, it metaphorically reflects human emotions, aspirations, and freedom, classifying it under both nature and human/animal behaviors and thoughts.

2. 鱼跃鸢飞: Similar to the previous idiom, this phrase emphasizes the dynamic harmony between creatures in nature, illustrating both environmental and emotional expressions. It is categorized under nature and human/animal behaviors and thoughts.

3. 枯鱼涸辙: Literally meaning “a dried-up fish in a parched rut”, this idiom symbolizes a state of extreme distress or helplessness. The phrase vividly depicts a natural phenomenon—fish struggling in a drying riverbed—while also conveying human hardship and suffering, making it relevant to both nature and human/animal behaviors and thoughts.

4. 涸辙之鱼: This idiom shares a similar meaning with 枯鱼涸辙, referring to a desperate situation where survival is uncertain. It illustrates a natural occurrence while metaphorically representing human struggle, thereby falling under both nature and human/animal behaviors and thoughts.

5. 如鱼得水: This phrase, meaning “like a fish in water”, describes an individual who finds themselves in a suitable or ideal environment. While its literal meaning reflects the natural relationship between fish and water, its figurative use relates to human comfort and well-being in their surroundings. Therefore, it is classified under both nature and lifestyles/living conditions.

6. 犹鱼得水: With the same fundamental meaning as 如鱼得水, this idiom also describes someone thriving in a favorable environment. As it reflects both a natural phenomenon and human adaptation to an ideal setting, it is categorized under nature and lifestyles/living conditions.

7. 水清无鱼: Translated as “clear water has no fish”, this idiom implies that excessive purity or strictness can lead to undesirable consequences. It reflects a natural observation while metaphorically applying to human behaviors and governance, thus fitting under both nature and human/animal behaviors and thoughts.

8. 鱼龙混杂: This phrase, meaning “fish and dragons mixed together”, describes a situation where the good and bad coexist, such as an environment where people of varying character are found together. It reflects the diversity of living conditions while also carrying a connotation of belief systems and societal dynamics, making it relevant to both lifestyles/living conditions and beliefs/religion.

By considering the overlapping cultural reflections of these idioms, the researcher determined that the total number of categorized idioms increased from 36 to 44, as each idiom that fit into multiple categories was counted separately within each classification.

**Table 3**

*Table Showing the Meanings and Cultural Reflections of Four-Character Chinese Idioms Containing the Word “鱼” in the Context of Nature*

No.	Chinese Idiom	Meaning of the Idiom
1	鸢飞鱼跃 (Eagle - Fly - Fish - Leap)	The eagle soars in the sky while the fish leaps in the water. This describes the natural behavior of animals and metaphorically represents a person's

No.	Chinese Idiom	Meaning of the Idiom
		joy when they achieve their desires.
2	鱼跃鸢飞 (Fish - Leap - Eagle - Fly)	The eagle soars in the sky while the fish leaps in the water. This describes the natural behavior of animals and metaphorically represents a person's joy when they achieve their desires.
3	枯鱼涸辙 (Withered - Fish - Dried Up - Wheel Track)	A dried-up fish in a parched rut, metaphorically describing a person in a dire situation, struggling with difficulties and unable to escape hardship.
4	水清无鱼 (Water - Clear - No - Fish)	Water that is too clear cannot support fish. This serves as a metaphor suggesting that one should not be overly demanding or strict, as it may lead to isolation or lack of support from others.
5	涸辙之鱼 (Dried Up - Wheel Track - Fish)	A fish in a dried-up rut, symbolizing someone in a desperate situation who cannot solve their problems alone and urgently requires external assistance.
6	犹鱼得水 (Like - Fish - Gain - Water)	A fish finding water, representing a situation where someone is in an environment or condition that suits them well, whether in their personal life or career.
7	如鱼得水 (As If - Fish - Gain - Water)	A fish finding water, symbolizing an individual thriving in an environment that is well-suited to their needs, whether in living conditions or their professional life.

From Table 3, the researchers identified seven idioms that reflect natural phenomena involving fish. These idioms use naturally occurring

elements and behaviors of fish to metaphorically represent various aspects of life. The key findings from the analysis are as follows:

Idioms such as 枯鱼涸辙 and 涸辙之鱼 illustrate the natural adaptability of fish to environmental changes. As seasons transition from winter to summer, water bodies in certain areas dry up, leading to water shortages. Some fish species have adapted by burying themselves in the mud to survive during droughts. When the rainy season arrives, previously dry areas regain moisture, allowing fish to return to their original habitat. In addition to depicting natural adaptation, these idioms also serve as metaphors for human struggles, signifying individuals facing adversity. Consequently, these idioms can also be classified under human behavior and emotions due to their depiction of life's hardships.

Idioms such as 鸢飞鱼跃, 鱼跃鸢飞, 如鱼得水, 犹鱼得水, and 水清无鱼 reflect the natural characteristics of birds and fish. Birds, as creatures of the sky, instinctively fly, and their migration patterns are influenced by seasonal changes. Similarly, fish rely on water for survival. However, if the water is excessively clear, fish face difficulty in sustaining life due to a lack of shelter, making them vulnerable to predators. As a survival instinct, fish leap above the water's surface to evade danger or when encountering new habitats.

Additionally, certain idioms serve as metaphors for human emotions and behavior. The idioms 鸢飞鱼跃 and 鱼跃鸢飞 not only depict natural phenomena but also symbolize human joy and fulfillment. When people achieve their aspirations, they express their happiness through gestures and actions, akin to birds soaring and fish leaping.

Idioms such as 如鱼得水 and 犹鱼得水 extend beyond nature and reflect aspects of human living conditions. They metaphorically represent individuals thriving in environments that best suit their personal and professional lives, reinforcing the connection between natural phenomena and human existence.

Through this analysis, it is evident that idioms containing the character “鱼” not only reflect elements of nature but also convey deeper meanings related to human emotions, behavior, and social conditions.

**Table 4**

*Table Showing the Meanings and Cultural Reflections of Four-Character Chinese Idioms Containing the Word “鱼” in Terms of Human and Animal Behaviors and Emotions*

No.	Chinese Idiom	Meaning of the Idiom
1	鸢飞鱼跃 (Hawk-Flying-Fish-Leaping)	The eagle soars in the sky, and the fish leaps in the water. This natural behavior of animals symbolizes the joy of people who have achieved their desires.
2	鱼跃鸢飞 (Fish-Leaping-Hawk-Flying)	The eagle soars in the sky, and the fish leaps in the water. This natural behavior of animals symbolizes the joy of people who have achieved their desires.
3	察见渊鱼 (Observe-See-Deep-Fish)	Having sharp vision to see fish in deep waters metaphorically compares to being inquisitive about others' affairs.
4	河决鱼烂 (River-Breach-Fish-Rot)	The inability to mend a dam's leak, leading to the decay of fish, symbolizes a situation that has deteriorated beyond repair due to internal factors.
5	枯鱼涸辙	A dried-up fish in a desiccated ditch symbolizes a

No.	Chinese Idiom	Meaning of the Idiom
	(Withered-Fish-Dry-Ruts)	person in a dire situation with little hope of escape.
6	枯鱼之肆 (Withered-Fish-Stall)	A hopeless and irreversible situation, signifying despair over past mistakes that cannot be undone.
7	水清无鱼 (Water-Clear-No-Fish)	Overly clear water lacks fish, signifying that excessive strictness or transparency can lead to isolation.
8	鱼烂土崩 (Fish-Rot-Soil-Collapse)	Rotten fish and collapsing earth symbolize division and the disintegration of unity within a group.
9	鱼目混珠 (Fish-Eyes-Mix-Pearls)	Substituting fish eyes for pearls, signifying deception by passing off fake items as real.
10	涸辙之鱼 (Dried-Ruts-Fish)	A fish in a dried-up rut represents someone in an extremely difficult situation requiring urgent assistance.
11	为渊驱鱼 (For-Deep-Chase-Fish)	A tyrannical ruler forcing the people to flee, often to join opposing forces, indicating poor leadership that drives away loyalty.
12	弹铗无鱼 (Strike-Sword-No-Fish)	Seeking help from others in difficult times is not shameful, signifying the necessity of assistance during hardship.
13	鱼贯而出 (Fish-Enter-and-Exit)	Moving in an orderly manner like a school of fish, symbolizing coordinated movement toward a shared goal.
14	鱼贯而入 (Fish-Enter-and-Enter)	Moving in an orderly fashion like fish swimming together, symbolizing unity in entering a situation collectively.

No.	Chinese Idiom	Meaning of the Idiom
15	鱼贯而行 (Fish-Enter-and-Move)	Moving in an orderly fashion, metaphorically representing people advancing in unison toward a common destination.
16	鱼肉百姓 (Fish-meat-hundred-surname)	Being oppressed and exploited, reflecting injustice by those in power over the weaker populace.
17	缘木求鱼 (Climb-Tree-Seek-Fish)	Climbing a tree to catch fish symbolizes attempting the impossible due to misguided efforts.
18	混水摸鱼 (Turbid-Water-Catch-Fish)	Fishing in murky waters symbolizes taking advantage of chaos for personal gain.
19	浑水摸鱼 (Muddy-Water-Catch-Fish)	Fishing in murky waters symbolizes taking advantage of chaos for personal gain.
20	鱼游釜底 (Fish-Swim-Cauldron-Bottom)	A fish swimming at the bottom of a cauldron symbolizes someone trapped in a perilous situation with no escape.
21	鱼游釜中 (Fish-Swim-Cauldron-Center)	A fish swimming at the bottom of a cauldron symbolizes someone trapped in a perilous situation with no escape.
22	鱼死网破 (Fish-Die-Net-Break)	A fish dying and a net breaking symbolizes a desperate struggle where one fights to the end regardless of the outcome.
23	漏网之鱼 (Escape-Net-Fish)	A fish escaping from the net represents a wrongdoer who evades capture.
24	釜底游鱼 (Cauldron-Bottom-Swim-Fish)	A fish swimming at the bottom of a cauldron, metaphorically describing severe danger and inescapability.

No.	Chinese Idiom	Meaning of the Idiom
25	釜底枯鱼 (Cauldron-Bottom-Withered-Fish)	The fish swimming in the pot represents people who are in a dangerous situation, reflecting human life at that time.
26	沉鱼落雁 (Sink-Fish-Fall-Wild Goose)	Describing beauty so mesmerizing that fish forget to swim and geese forget to fly.
27	如鱼似水 (Like-Fish-Get-Water)	Signifying a close relationship, particularly between lovers or spouses, indicating mutual understanding and harmony.

Based on Table 4, the research team identified 27 Chinese idioms containing the word “鱼” that pertain to human and animal behavior and emotions. These idioms describe human and animal actions or expressions, such as oppression by those in power, as well as various emotional states. The researchers have analyzed them as follows:

1. 如鱼似水: This idiom falls under the category of behavioral and emotional reflection in humans and animals. It signifies close relationships, such as friendships, romantic partnerships, and marital bonds, likening them to fish and water. For instance, a married couple shares joys and hardships together, understanding each other instinctively, as if they are part of the same entity.

2. 河决鱼烂, 鱼烂土崩: These idioms indicate severe internal chaos within organizations, institutions, or families. If foundational problems are ignored while only addressing surface-level issues, the core problems will persist, leading to irreparable consequences. The analogy compares societal stability to a well-fed population; when moral integrity is lost among leaders or citizens, chaos ensues, ultimately resulting in irreversible destruction.



3. 枯鱼之肆: This idiom conveys regret over past mistakes that cannot be undone, akin to time that has passed and cannot be reclaimed.

4. 水清无鱼: This idiom suggests that excessive clarity or strictness can be detrimental. If water is too clear, fish cannot survive, paralleling situations where excessive honesty or rigid regulations create discomfort for those involved. A balance must be struck between principles and flexibility to maintain harmony in social interactions.

5. The idioms 鱼目混珠, 察见渊鱼, 为渊驱鱼 and 鱼肉百姓 reflect aspects of human nature, both good and bad. Using negative traits to harm others, whether intentionally or not, is something that should be avoided. For instance, the idiom 鱼目混珠 describes the act of mixing fake items with real ones or falsely claiming that something of inferior quality is actually valuable. This represents deceitful behavior aimed at misleading others, which can cause significant harm to the victim. In terms of social etiquette, everyone should uphold basic manners. Interfering in matters that do not concern oneself is considered impolite. A lack of proper etiquette can also extend to selfish behaviors such as exploiting others. The idiom 鱼肉百姓 refers to those who take advantage of others by oppressing them, showing a lack of humanity. Similarly, 为渊驱鱼 illustrates a situation in which a leader governs unjustly, forcing the people to abandon them and even align with their enemies.

6. 缘木求鱼: This idiom illustrates futile attempts, akin to undertaking a task in an irrational or impractical manner. It serves as a warning against pursuing goals without proper strategy or consideration.

7. The idiom 沉鱼落雁 reflects human emotions and perceptions of beauty through both human and animal imagery. It originates from the

legendary tale of Xi Shi (西施), one of China's Four Great Beauties. According to folklore, her beauty was so mesmerizing that fish in the water, entranced by her appearance, forgot to swim and sank to the riverbed. Similarly, wild geese in the sky, captivated by her, forgot to flap their wings and fell from the sky. However, in reality, birds naturally possess the ability to fly, and fish are instinctively skilled at swimming. This idiom, therefore, represents an imaginative and exaggerated perception of beauty, illustrating how human emotions can shape poetic expressions that transcend the boundaries of nature and reality.

8. 鱼进行行, 鱼进而入 and 鱼进而出 These idioms reflect the instinctive movement of fish swimming in schools to protect themselves from predators and facilitate food searching. It metaphorically describes humans following a structured, unified movement, such as people leaving a meeting room in an orderly fashion.

9. 混水摸鱼 and 浑水摸鱼 These idioms depict opportunistic behavior, where individuals manipulate chaos for personal gain, akin to stirring water to catch fish more easily.

10. 釜底游鱼, 鱼游釜中, 釜底枯鱼, 鱼游釜底, 鱼死网破 and 漏网之鱼 These idioms depict struggle and survival instincts. A fish in a pot symbolizes being trapped in a dire situation, where escape is nearly impossible. Meanwhile, a fish escaping a net signifies rare opportunities to break free from adversity. The imagery reflects human resilience in facing difficulties, demonstrating determination despite slim chances of survival.

11. 鸢飞鱼跳 and 鱼跳鸢飞 These idioms depict the natural behaviors of eagles soaring in the sky and fish leaping in water. They

symbolize boundless joy and elation, comparable to human expressions of excitement when achieving their desires.

12. 枯鱼涸辙, 弹铗无鱼 and 涸辙之鱼 These idioms express struggles faced by individuals in extreme adversity. A fish stranded in a dried-up ditch must desperately seek water to survive, mirroring people in desperate situations who require external assistance. These expressions emphasize perseverance despite seemingly insurmountable odds.

Through analyzing these Chinese idioms, it is evident that the symbolism of fish is deeply intertwined with human experiences, emotions, and societal structures. These idioms reflect a wide range of themes, including interpersonal relationships, governance, morality, resilience, and joy. Their metaphorical meanings provide valuable insights into cultural perspectives on behavior and survival, offering profound wisdom applicable to modern contexts.

### Table 5

*A Table Illustrating the Meanings and Cultural Reflections of Four-Character Chinese Idioms Containing the Word “鱼” in Relation to Lifestyle and Living Environment*

No.	Chinese Idiom	Meaning of the Idiom
1	犹鱼得水 (Like-fish-receives-water)	This idiom conveys the idea of being in an environment or situation that is highly suitable and beneficial, whether in one's home or professional life.
2	如鱼得水 (As if-fish-received-water)	Similar to the previous idiom, this phrase describes an individual thriving in an environment that aligns well with their needs, preferences, or professional aspirations.

No.	Chinese Idiom	Meaning of the Idiom
3	鱼米之邦 (fish-rice-of-country)	This idiom refers to a region rich in fish and rice, symbolizing agricultural prosperity and natural abundance. It highlights the importance of natural resources in sustaining livelihoods.
4	鱼米之乡 (fish-rice-of-hometown)	Similar in meaning to 鱼米之邦, this idiom refers to a native land or village characterized by agricultural abundance, particularly in terms of staple food resources.
5	鱼龙混杂 (Fish-dragon-mixed-mixed)	This idiom metaphorically describes a situation where individuals of varying qualities—both virtuous and deceitful—are intermingled, making it difficult to discern good from bad.
6	情同鱼水 (mood-like-fish-water)	This phrase illustrates a deep and inseparable bond between individuals, akin to the interdependent relationship between fish and water. It is often used to describe strong emotional connections or mutual reliance.

Based on Table 5, the researchers identified six Chinese idioms containing the character “鱼” that reflect aspects of lifestyle and living environments. These idioms depict themes related to livelihood, habitation, agricultural abundance, environmental suitability, and interdependence among humans. The analysis of these idioms is as follows:

1. The idiom 情同鱼水 illustrates the concept of mutual dependence and collaboration. In many situations, individuals cannot achieve certain tasks alone and require assistance from others. This reciprocal support benefits both parties, fostering cooperation and shared advantages. This idiom also reflects traditional communal practices, such as

the exchange of food and resources among neighbors, which reinforces the idea of interdependence in human society.

2. The idioms 鱼米之乡 and 鱼米之邦 symbolize the prosperity of a region in terms of its natural resources and agricultural productivity. These idioms are comparable to the concept of a land of abundance, where natural resources, such as fish in water and rice in fields, sustain the local population. They reflect the traditional agrarian lifestyle, where farming and fishing are essential for survival and economic stability. These idioms emphasize the importance of fertile lands and rich natural environments in sustaining livelihoods.

3. The idioms 犹鱼得水 and 如鱼得水 convey the idea of finding an environment or situation that is most suitable for oneself. These idioms metaphorically compare human life to that of a fish, which thrives in water. Just as a fish cannot survive outside its natural habitat, individuals flourish when they are in environments that align with their abilities, preferences, or social circles. Additionally, these idioms reflect natural principles, as fish inherently require water to survive. They highlight the necessity of choosing an appropriate environment for one's well-being and success.

4. The idiom 鱼龙混杂 describes a society where both virtuous and immoral individuals coexist. It conveys the complexity of human nature, emphasizing that people possess both good and bad traits. This idiom metaphorically contrasts fish and dragons to represent different human characteristics. People's true nature often becomes evident only after close interaction. Furthermore, this idiom can also be interpreted as a reflection of cultural beliefs and religious traditions. The dragon, as one of the twelve Chinese zodiac animals, holds a significant place in traditional cosmology.

Notably, all zodiac animals are terrestrial or aerial creatures, with none originating from underwater or subterranean realms. This further underscores the cultural significance of distinguishing between different types of individuals within a community.

In conclusion, these idioms illustrate various aspects of human existence, emphasizing the importance of suitable living conditions, mutual support, agricultural prosperity, and the complexities of social interactions. They serve as linguistic representations of both natural and cultural reflections embedded in Chinese society.

**Table 6**

*The Meaning and Cultural Reflections of Four-Character Chinese Idioms Containing the Term “鱼” in the Context of Beliefs and Religion*

No.	Chinese Idiom	Meaning of the Idiom
1	葬身鱼腹 (burial-body-fish-belly)	“Buried in the belly of a fish”—metaphorically describes a person who encounters significant misfortune or destruction, leaving them with no escape. It conveys a sense of tragic fate, often implying an untimely or dishonorable death. This idiom reflects traditional beliefs regarding destiny and the consequences of adverse circumstances.
2	鱼龙混杂 (Fish-dragon-mixed mixed)	“Fish and dragons intermingled”—symbolizes a society where virtuous and immoral individuals coexist. It highlights the difficulty of distinguishing between good and bad people in a complex social environment. The contrast between fish and dragons reflects the unpredictable nature of human interactions and the necessity for

		discernment in social engagement.
3	鲁鱼亥豕 (Stupid-fish-position 12 in the earth diagram-pig)	Represents unintentional errors in writing or printing, where one character is mistakenly substituted for another due to visual similarity. This idiom emphasizes the importance of accuracy in textual transmission, particularly in classical or religious texts.
4	鲁鱼帝虎 (Stupid-fish-god-tiger)	Similar to 鲁鱼亥豕, this idiom also refers to mistakes in writing or printing, where miswritten characters lead to errors in meaning. It underscores the value of precision in scholarship and the potential for misinterpretation if textual errors are overlooked.

Based on Table 6, the researchers identified four Chinese idioms containing the term “鱼” that reflect beliefs and religion. These idioms illustrate traditional religious beliefs, the significance of fish and auspicious animals in the Chinese zodiac, and cultural interpretations of fate, morality, and textual accuracy. The analysis of these idioms is as follows:

The idiom 葬身鱼腹, which translates to “buried in the belly of a fish,” reflects religious beliefs associated with funeral rituals. Burial customs vary across religions and cultures, with each tradition carrying its own spiritual significance. In Chinese beliefs, burial and cremation are common practices, as it is thought that burial allows the soul to travel through underground currents, known as the “Yellow Springs” (黄泉), ultimately leading to reincarnation. However, discarding a body into a river is considered inauspicious, often associated with unclaimed bodies or a form of punishment for criminals, allowing fish to consume the remains rather than

following proper burial rites. In contrast, in Indian traditions, dying by the banks of the Ganges River or having one's ashes scattered in its waters is regarded as a form of spiritual purification, believed to cleanse sins before ascending to heaven.

The idioms 鱼龙混杂, 鲁鱼亥豕 and 鲁鱼帝虎 also reflect religious and cultural beliefs, as they include references to auspicious animals such as dragons, pigs, and tigers—each of which holds significance in the Chinese zodiac. Among these, the dragon is particularly revered in Chinese culture. It is a mythical creature regarded as a deity, symbolizing power, prosperity, and imperial authority. It is believed that dragon saliva can produce magical pearls capable of bringing agricultural abundance. The dragon has also been historically associated with emperors, representing supreme power and good fortune. The pig, another zodiac animal, is traditionally believed to embody warmth, sincerity, and trustworthiness, while also symbolizing innocence and emotional sensitivity. Likewise, those born in the Year of the Tiger are thought to be confident, courageous, and bold in their actions. In Chinese tradition, zodiac signs are also used for fortune-telling related to career prospects, marriage compatibility, love, and health. In examining the cultural reflections of idioms containing the word “fish”, it is notable that although the fish is not included in the twelve Chinese zodiac animals, it holds an auspicious connotation in Chinese culture. The pronunciation of the word “鱼” (yú) is a homophone for “余” (yú), meaning “abundance” or “surplus”, which is frequently used in New Year blessings such as 年年有余, meaning “May you have abundance every year”. Additionally, it is believed that hanging fish images on the front door brings prosperity. The association between fish and dragons is also reflected in the phrase 鲤跃龙门 or



鲤鱼跳龙门, a legendary tale about a carp leaping over the Dragon Gate, symbolizing success. According to this legend, any carp that successfully leaps over the gate will transform into a dragon, signifying perseverance and achievement. However, some Feng Shui scholars have questioned why fish, despite being an auspicious symbol, were not included in the twelve zodiac animals or the earthly branches (地支). One possible explanation is that all the zodiac animals are terrestrial creatures—whether four-legged or winged—while fish, being aquatic, were intentionally excluded.

Furthermore, the idiom 鱼龙混杂 can also be categorized as a reflection of social life. It metaphorically describes the coexistence of virtuous and corrupt individuals within society, emphasizing the complexity of human interactions and the necessity for discernment in distinguishing good from bad.

## Discussion of Results

The study of Chinese idioms that contain the term “鱼” provides insights into cultural reflections and linguistic patterns. The findings align with the framework proposed by Sanga Kanchanakaphan, which categorizes cultural reflections into four key aspects.

The most prominent category is reflections on Human and animal behaviors and thoughts, which accounts for 27 idioms (75%). This category captures various human and animal actions, including gestures, movements, habits, and emotional expressions. The second most common category is Nature-related aspects, comprising 7 idioms (19.44%), which depict natural characteristics of animals and environmental phenomena. The third category, Lifestyles and living conditions, includes 6 idioms (16.68%) and

portrays aspects of daily life, subsistence, and mutual dependence. Lastly, reflections on beliefs and religion account for 4 idioms (11.11%), emphasizing ancient religious beliefs, symbolic meanings of fish, and their association with auspicious animals in the Chinese zodiac.

Notably, the study found that idioms containing “鱼” do not fall into the category of musical instruments or traditional performances, as no Chinese idioms related to fish reference these aspects. Instead, fish are primarily linked to food culture, as they are widely consumed in Chinese cuisine. Every part of the fish is utilized in cooking, and ornamental fish are often kept for aesthetic pleasure, interior decoration, and Feng Shui purposes to attract prosperity and wealth.

The findings of this study align with previous research by Phlananumas et al. (2021), which compared Chinese idioms containing “虎” (tiger) with Thai idioms containing “เสือ” (tiger). In her research, she analyzed 92 Chinese idioms and 26 Thai idioms, drawing from two Chinese dictionaries, one Thai dictionary, and data from the Royal Society of Thailand’s website. She identified six common idiomatic categories in both languages, including idioms related to emotions and psychology, risk-taking, moral lessons, submission, behaviors and character traits, and human actions.

Upon comparison, the present study found that three categories of Chinese idioms containing “鱼” align with idioms containing “虎” in Chinese and “เสือ” in Thai: 1) Idioms related to emotions and psychology 2) Idioms depicting behaviors and character traits 3) Idioms describing human actions

These findings suggest that idiomatic expressions in different languages may share common conceptual and cultural foundations despite variations in symbolic representations.

## Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, further research could be conducted in the following areas:

1. A comparative study between Chinese idioms containing “鱼” and Thai idioms containing “ปลา” (fish) to explore linguistic and cultural parallels.
2. An analysis of figurative meanings associated with “鱼” beyond its literal translation as “fish”, examining its extended metaphorical uses and cultural implications in various contexts.

Such studies could provide deeper insights into the interplay between language, culture, and cognition in idiomatic expressions.

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## Disasters from the Perspective of Thai Society

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### Abstract

This article aims to examine disaster situations from the perspective of Thai society through an academic study and an analysis of government agency reports and documents. The objectives of this study are: (1) to explore the body of knowledge related to disasters, and (2) to analyze disasters from the perspective of Thai society. The initial section of this article discusses fundamental information on disasters, including the definition of “disaster”, the types of disasters, the unique characteristics of disasters, and the impacts of disasters. Following this, the article examines the disaster situation in Thailand as a foundation for analyzing disasters from the Thai societal perspective in three key dimensions: (1) legal frameworks, policies, and planning; (2) disaster management; and (3) resource administration. These dimensions reflect Thailand’s preparedness and response capabilities in disaster management.

**Keywords:** Disaster, Disaster Response, Disaster Preparedness

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## Introduction

### 1. Rationale and Significance

The global climate has been undergoing continuous change, leading to an increasing number of natural phenomena that severely impact humanity. The world is facing climate change that results in unpredictable weather patterns and extreme events, which disrupt human livelihoods and hinder socio-economic development. In the past, global development has primarily focused on economic growth, with rapid exploitation of natural resources, often disregarding environmental limits and the capacity for natural recovery. This unsustainable approach has led to the depletion of natural resources and the ongoing destruction of ecosystems. The lack of careful and responsible management has contributed to the current severe environmental crisis, particularly in relation to climate variability, which correlates with global warming and intensifies natural disasters. When these disasters accumulate in complexity and scale, they escalate into catastrophic events, leading to widespread destruction and loss for humanity.

Disasters are perceived as a consequence of unbalanced development, manifesting as severe events that cause extensive damage to human societies, physical infrastructure, and the environment. The extent of these disasters often exceeds a community's ability to manage and recover (United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, 1992). The causes of disasters can be classified into two main categories: natural disasters, such as floods, storms, landslides, droughts, earthquakes, and wildfires; and man-made disasters, including fires, transportation accidents, hazardous chemical incidents, and workplace-related hazards.

Disasters often impact densely populated areas, making preparedness a crucial factor in mitigating their effects. The ability to respond effectively to disasters is essential for disaster preparedness and risk reduction. Therefore, a thorough understanding of disasters is necessary for effective disaster readiness and response planning. This article aims to present an overview of disasters, analyze Thailand's disaster situation, and ultimately provide an assessment of disaster management from the perspective of Thai society. The findings will highlight Thailand's preparedness and response strategies, ensuring the safety and well-being of the population.

## **2. Objectives**

- 1 To examine the body of knowledge related to disasters.
- 2 To analyze disasters from the perspective of Thai society.

## **3. Scope of the Study**

This article focuses on studying disaster-related information to gain a deeper understanding of disaster phenomena. The study then extends to an analytical discussion that reflects disaster preparedness and response from the perspective of Thai society.

## **Definition of “Disaster”**

The term “disaster” originates from the Latin words “dis-” and “Astro”, which collectively refer to a severe event caused by either natural forces or human actions. Disasters can occur suddenly or develop gradually over time. Regardless of their onset, disasters significantly impact social and economic structures and severely impair the ability of affected individuals to safeguard their lives, properties, resources, and environment. Consequently,



communities often find themselves unable to cope with the disaster on their own (Bhandari, Malakar, & Murphy, 2010; Coppola, 2007; Pine, 1946; United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 2009).

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) defines “disaster” as “a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources”. (UNISDR, 2009)

According to this definition, a disaster is characterized by its profound impact on a community or society, rendering it incapable of restoring normalcy without external assistance. The term “disaster” in a global context refers to the severe interruption of societal or community functions due to either natural or human-induced hazards. Such disruptions lead to extensive consequences on human lives, property, society, the economy, and the environment, surpassing the affected community's ability to manage the crisis using its available resources (Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation & United Nations Development Programme Thailand, 2014, p. 29).

Additionally, disasters arise from either natural hazards or human-induced events, significantly disrupting the normal functioning of communities or societies. They cause extensive damage to property and result in the loss of human lives. The severity of disaster-related damages depends on several factors, including the type and intensity of the disaster, the physical and social vulnerability of the affected community, and the community's ability to perceive, understand, and effectively respond to the situation (Kamolvej, 2011, p. 77). Disasters are caused by both direct and

indirect hazards, leading to consequences such as human casualties, property loss, environmental destruction, social disruption, and threats to the normal functioning of essential services and production systems (Shi & Shi, 2019, p. 17).

From the various definitions of disasters, it can be concluded that a disaster is a severe disruption in the functioning of a community or society, resulting from either natural or human-induced hazards. These disruptions have widespread impacts on human life, property, social structures, the economy, and the environment, exceeding the affected community's ability to manage the crisis with available resources. The extent of damage varies depending on the type and intensity of the hazard, the community's physical and social vulnerabilities, and its ability to cope with the disaster.

The concept of disasters is generally associated with disturbances that disrupt the normal course of life. These disruptions are often severe, sudden, and unpredictable, escalating rapidly and causing significant harm to human populations. They result in loss of life, injuries, hardship, and long-term health effects. Disasters also impact social structures, causing damage or destruction to government institutions, infrastructure, communication systems, and essential services. Furthermore, affected communities experience urgent needs such as shelter, food, clothing, medical assistance, and social support.

## **Types of Disasters**

Scholars have categorized disasters in various ways. Shaluf (2007, pp. 704-705) classifies disasters into three categories: natural disasters, human-made disasters, and hybrid disasters. Eshghi and Larson (2008, p.

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71) identify five categories of disasters: biological disasters, geological disasters, meteorological disasters, human conflicts, and technological disasters. Gupta et al. (2016, p. 10) divide disasters into two primary types: natural disasters and human-made disasters. In this article, disasters are classified into two main categories: natural disasters and man-made disasters (Chueachanthuek, 2023, p. 5). The details are as follows:

### **1. Natural Disasters**

Natural disasters refer to adverse events that pose risks to local communities. Governments at national, regional, and local levels, along with various agencies, organizations, and networks, work together to implement disaster preparedness and mitigation strategies. Natural disasters can generally be categorized into two broad types:

1.1 Climate-related disasters – These disasters result from changes in climatic conditions, including floods, droughts, storms, and extreme cold weather.

1.2 Geophysical and other natural disasters – These disasters result from changes in the Earth's surface or other environmental factors, including landslides, earthquakes, wildfires, and heatwaves.

### **2. Man-Made Disasters**

Man-made disasters are non-natural events that may occur suddenly or develop over time. Sudden-onset human-induced disasters include fires, transportation and traffic accidents, chemical and hazardous material incidents, and workplace hazards. Additionally, disasters related to air, land, and maritime transport, as well as acts of sabotage, are considered human-made disasters.

Both natural and man-made disasters significantly disrupt the functioning of communities and societies, severely affecting social structures, causing loss of life, destruction of property, economic decline, and environmental degradation. The extent of damage depends on the type and severity of the disaster, the physical and social vulnerabilities of the affected communities, and their ability to manage and respond effectively. In many cases, disasters exceed the capacity of the affected communities to cope using their existing resources, requiring external assistance and intervention.

## Unique Characteristics of Disasters

Disasters arise from either natural hazards or human-induced events. Understanding their characteristics is essential, as disasters significantly disrupt the normal functioning of communities and societies, causing property damage and loss of life. The extent of destruction depends on various factors, including the type and severity of the disaster, the physical and social vulnerability of affected communities, and their ability to perceive, comprehend, and effectively respond to the situation. Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of disaster management requires a thorough understanding of these characteristics, which facilitates better preparedness and response strategies. Several unique characteristics define disasters, including the following: Compound Hazard, Level of Community Vulnerability, Cross-Jurisdictional Impact, Uncertainty, and Chaos (Kamolvej, 2011, p. 78)

### 1. Compound Hazard

A disaster can trigger subsequent hazards, leading to a chain reaction of destructive events. For example, an earthquake may generate a

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tsunami, which, in turn, can lead to disease outbreaks if not properly managed. Understanding this characteristic allows for more effective disaster response by addressing both the initial disaster and its cascading effects.

## **2. Level of Community Vulnerability**

The severity of a disaster is influenced by the vulnerability of the affected community. Physical factors, such as geographical risks, and social factors, including the presence of vulnerable populations such as children, women, and the elderly, play a crucial role in determining the impact of a disaster. Disaster preparedness and response must incorporate structural and social measures to minimize risks.

## **3. Cross-Jurisdictional Impact**

Disasters often extend beyond a single administrative boundary, affecting multiple regions and requiring coordinated responses. Effective disaster management requires collaboration among neighboring jurisdictions, both to contain the expanding impact of the disaster and to facilitate mutual aid and resource sharing.

## **4. Uncertainty**

Uncertainty is a fundamental characteristic of disasters. Previous disasters may reoccur in different forms, with increased intensity and frequency, and under different conditions. For example, off-season storms, nighttime earthquakes, or unprecedentedly severe tsunamis illustrate the unpredictable nature of these events. Preparedness efforts must be continuously updated to account for evolving risks and changing environmental conditions.

## 5. Chaos

Disasters create highly complex and abnormal situations, often resulting in widespread confusion and operational difficulties. Each disaster incident involves multiple affected groups, extensive damage, and numerous responders, leading to challenges in coordination. The destruction of infrastructure—such as collapsed bridges, landslides, and flooded transportation routes—further complicates response efforts. Additionally, the involvement of multiple agencies, emergency resources, and humanitarian aid can contribute to disorder and logistical difficulties.

Understanding these disaster characteristics is essential for effective disaster management. Disasters frequently affect densely populated areas, necessitating comprehensive risk assessments that consider geographical conditions, infrastructure vulnerabilities, and potential hazards. A well-informed approach to disaster preparedness and response is critical for minimizing the impact and ensuring efficient recovery efforts.

### Impacts of Disasters

Disasters have profound effects on both life and property, significantly disrupting economic activities. In the commercial sector, services and investments are forced to halt, causing businesses, industries, and the tourism sector to suffer financial losses or even shut down. Tourists lose confidence in affected areas, while the industrial and agricultural sectors face damaged or scarce raw materials and crops. Public utilities, such as water supply and electricity, may become inoperable, while transportation and communication networks may be severed, leading to cascading effects on supply chains. The scarcity of goods results in price surges, impacting not

only the directly affected areas but also surrounding regions (Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation & United Nations Development Programme Thailand, 2014, pp. 13–14).

The affected population can be categorized into three groups based on the type and level of damage sustained, as well as their residential location (Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation & United Nations Development Programme Thailand, 2014, p. 12):

### **1. Primary Affected People**

Primary affected people refer to individuals residing in disaster-stricken areas who experience direct impacts. This group includes casualties, injured individuals, and those who become disabled due to the disaster. It also includes people in need of emergency shelter, food, and medical assistance, as well as those who suffer property damage or loss.

### **2. Secondary Affected People**

Secondary affected people are those who may not be directly impacted by the disaster but live near affected areas or face disruptions in accessing public services. These disruptions may include water supply, sanitation systems, electricity, transportation, and communication services. Additionally, these individuals may face increased costs of goods and services as a result of the disaster.

### **3. Tertiary Affected People**

Tertiary affected people are those residing outside the disaster-affected region who experience indirect consequences at a later stage. This includes individuals facing increased transportation costs when traveling to affected areas, shortages of essential goods or services, and disruptions in logistics and supply chains.

The widespread consequences of disasters extend beyond immediate loss of life and property, affecting all sectors—social, economic, and environmental. Moreover, disasters disrupt planned development efforts, causing interruptions in financial continuity. Budget allocations initially designated for long-term development must instead be diverted toward reconstruction, rehabilitation, and recovery. Therefore, it is crucial for all sectors to collaborate in disaster risk reduction, mitigation, and response planning to minimize potential impacts effectively (Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation & United Nations Development Programme Thailand, 2014, pp. 12–14).

## **Disaster Situation in Thailand**

Like many other countries worldwide, Thailand faces significant disaster risks, particularly from natural hazards that have occurred frequently throughout history. Key disaster events in Thailand that have caused substantial loss of life and property include floods, droughts, landslides, earthquakes and tsunamis, storms, fires, forest fires and haze, transportation-related hazards, and infectious disease outbreaks. The occurrence of these disasters across all regions of the country has had severe consequences on lives, property, and the national economy (Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, 2013).

According to a 2011 risk analysis conducted by Maplecroft, a global risk assessment firm, Thailand was ranked 37th among countries facing medium-term climate change risks. Furthermore, the 2013 Climate Change Vulnerability Index ranked Bangkok as the third most vulnerable city in the world to climate change impacts, categorizing it as an area with extreme risk.



This ranking was based on global climate trends and their influence on the frequency and intensity of disasters (Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, 2013, p. 19).

The disaster situations outlined above highlight the widespread impact of various hazards across all regions of Thailand, affecting lives, property, and the national economy. Therefore, it is essential for individuals and communities across the country to prepare for potential disasters in their areas. Additionally, efforts should be made to reduce factors that increase vulnerability at the individual, community, and societal levels to mitigate disaster risks effectively.

## **Analysis of Disasters from the Perspective of Thai Society**

Disasters, which tend to become increasingly severe and complex, have made disaster response more challenging and intricate. This section presents an analysis of disasters from the perspective of Thai society. Based on disaster situations, Thai society has responded in various ways, which the author categorizes into four aspects, as detailed below.

### **1. Laws**

Several legal instruments and strategic plans have been established to support disaster management efforts. In particular, the key legislation and core plans include the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act B.E. 2550 (2007), various master plans on disaster types, and the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan. These frameworks contribute to a more unified approach to disaster management. Additionally, the

stipulations set forth in these laws provide operational guidelines that enhance the country's capacity to effectively respond to disasters.

## 2. Policy

Policies related to disaster prevention have not yet been designated as matters of national priority on par with economic or social policies. Furthermore, there is a lack of mechanisms that allow communities to participate in disaster management at the policy level. Community engagement is limited to receiving government assistance as disaster victims or acting as civil defense volunteers. When disasters occur, all sectors are susceptible to impacts and therefore inherently play a role in mitigating disaster risk. Consequently, disaster risk reduction should be treated as a key concern and integrated into development processes.

## 3. Management

Current disaster management practices are characterized by fragmented operations across different agencies, with numerous entities involved in the process. However, a lack of comprehensive command and coordination has resulted in a lack of unity and shared objectives among organizations. Operational procedures and guidelines remain ambiguous (Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, 2015, p. 11). The focus remains predominantly on emergency response rather than on disaster risk management. Therefore, greater emphasis should be placed on risk reduction strategies to ensure a sustainable approach to disaster prevention and resolution (Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, 2021, p. 15).

Moreover, the disaster management mechanisms lack coherence across national, provincial, district, and local levels. This is due to the multi-

tiered structure of disaster management in Thailand and the involvement of numerous agencies and sectors. Simultaneously, legal duty-bearers often lack comprehensive authority to issue commands, hindering coordination among participating agencies. The resulting operational landscape is fragmented, with each agency functioning independently. This leads to inefficiencies and reactive crisis management rather than strategic collaboration grounded in clearly defined goals, guidelines, and procedures. In addition, there is insufficient awareness and preparedness for disaster management, despite the existence of disaster response plans. These plans are rarely subjected to drills or simulations, which undermines preparedness and results in primarily ad hoc responses to crises (Ubalee, 2014, p. 52).

Therefore, it is necessary to promote integrated approaches aimed at reducing disaster risk and enhancing proactive disaster management. This involves prioritizing risk management strategies that address potential hazards before they occur, rather than focusing solely on emergency response once disasters have already taken place.

#### **4. Administrative Resources**

Resources are a critical component of disaster management and include the following:

4.1 Budgetary Resources encompass regular internal organizational budgets, emergency relief funds allocated to assist disaster victims, and central contingency funds. The latter refers specifically to funding intended for post-disaster recovery and reconstruction of damages caused by disasters, focusing on restoration efforts following the occurrence of a disaster (Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, 2021, p. 135).

4.2 Human Resources. There is a shortage of personnel with specialized expertise (Saengkla, Phonmasri, and Wariwan, 2021, p. 36), as well as an overall insufficiency in the number of staff responsible for disaster prevention and mitigation (Ubalee, 2014, p. 52). This shortage impedes timely and comprehensive assistance to disaster victims and delays the rehabilitation of affected areas. Furthermore, the available workforce often lacks the technical knowledge and specialized skills required. Therefore, it is essential to enhance the capacity of disaster prevention and mitigation personnel through training and practical exercises to build knowledge and preparedness for effective disaster management.

4.3 Equipment and Material Resources. There is a notable deficiency in equipment and tools required for disaster prevention and mitigation operations (Saengkla, Phonmasri, and Wariwan, 2021, p. 36), including the absence of essential instruments and materials (Ubalee, 2014, p. 52). Moreover, the high cost of essential equipment for disaster response results in limited availability of tools, machinery, vehicles, and necessary facilities. As disaster services are predominantly focused on alleviating impacts and restoring damaged areas, the lack of ready-to-use and high-quality equipment and vehicles undermines public confidence in disaster prevention and mitigation efforts. (Putta & Poboon, 2018, p. 31). Therefore, it is imperative to ensure that equipment and supplies are adequately prepared and of high quality in order to foster public trust in disaster prevention and mitigation operations.

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## Conclusion

Disaster knowledge encompasses the understanding that disasters are events that severely disrupt the functioning of a community or society, resulting from natural hazards or human-induced causes. Disasters are categorized into two main types: natural disasters and man-made disasters. Understanding the characteristics of disasters is critical for enhancing response effectiveness. These characteristics include that a primary disaster may trigger secondary or cascading hazards; the severity of a disaster may be intensified when the community's vulnerability is high; disasters can spread across wide geographic areas, often crossing administrative boundaries. Disasters are inherently unpredictable; disasters typically generate widespread disorder and chaos; the impacts of disasters can be classified based on the type and extent of damage and the affected residential areas. These impacts are divided into three groups: primary victims, secondary victims, and tertiary victims. Thailand, like many countries around the world, faces a variety of disaster risks, particularly from natural hazards. These include floods, droughts, landslides, earthquakes and tsunamis, storms, fires, forest fires and haze, transportation-related hazards, and epidemics.

An analysis of disasters from the perspective of Thai society reveals four key dimensions: **Legal Dimension:** Multiple laws and plans exist to support disaster management, providing clear guidelines and operational frameworks for effective disaster response. **Policy Dimension:** Policies related to disaster prevention have not yet been elevated to the same level of national importance as economic or social policies. As such, disaster risk

reduction should be prioritized and integrated into the national development process. **Management Dimension:** Disaster management in Thailand is characterized by a fragmented structure, with various agencies operating independently. There is a predominant focus on emergency response rather than risk reduction. Although the management framework spans multiple administrative levels, there is a general lack of awareness and preparedness. Therefore, integrated approaches are necessary, emphasizing proactive disaster risk management and placing greater importance on pre-disaster risk mitigation. **Administrative Resource Dimension:** Budgets for disaster management are sourced from multiple channels. There is a need to enhance the capacity of disaster prevention and mitigation personnel and ensure the availability and quality of necessary equipment and materials.

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# Exploring Reinvented Curriculum Models: Bridging Humanities Education and Generation Z in Thai Higher Education

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## Abstract

The landscape of Humanities education in Thailand has undergone significant changes due to evolving student expectations and global educational trends. The emergence of Generation Z, characterized by digital fluency and a preference for interactive learning, necessitates a curriculum reinvention that aligns with their learning habits and professional aspirations. Traditional Humanities curricula, often criticized for their theoretical rigidity and lack of employability-focused skills, must now integrate interdisciplinary, technology-enhanced, and competency-based approaches. This paper examines the theoretical underpinnings of Humanities education, challenges in adapting to Gen Z's needs, and innovative curriculum frameworks that bridge traditional Humanities disciplines with career-oriented skills. Through an analysis of curriculum reform initiatives, digital and hybrid learning models, industry collaborations, and modular learning structures, this study provides insights into best practices for modernizing Humanities education. The paper

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also offers policy recommendations for Thai universities to enhance curriculum flexibility, faculty development, and international collaboration.

**Keywords:** Generation Z, Humanities Education, Thai Higher Education, Curriculum Innovation, Digital Learning

## Introduction

Anticipating the evolving demands of the global economy, future professional landscapes will be shaped by rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, digital technologies, and sustainability-driven initiatives. Essential skills for the workforce will transcend technical competencies, emphasizing cognitive flexibility, analytical thinking, and adaptability. As automation and digital transformation reshape industries, proficiency in technological tools, data-driven decision-making, and creative problem-solving will be pivotal for professional success. Ghimire et al. (2024) highlight that the integration of agentic generative AI into education systems is redefining workforce development by necessitating critical thinking, adaptability, and digital proficiency. Additionally, the expansion of AI-powered digital marketing underscores the demand for analytical and strategic thinking skills in navigating complex, technology-oriented markets (Zulfikar, 2024). Furthermore, fostering entrepreneurial intent, innovativeness, and a commitment to continuous learning will be vital in preparing graduates for competitive and dynamic economies (Kavitha & Joshith, 2024). These insights underscore the need for interdisciplinary education approaches that align with future economic trends, ensuring that graduates are equipped with both specialized knowledge and adaptable,

cross-functional skills to navigate emerging professional challenges successfully.

The historical development of Humanities education in Thailand reflects the country's emphasis on cultural heritage, ethical reasoning, and analytical thinking. Traditionally, Humanities disciplines such as history, philosophy, and literature have played a vital role in fostering critical perspectives and civic responsibility. However, as Thailand's economy globalizes, the role of Humanities in higher education is being reevaluated to ensure its continued relevance in a technology-driven job market (Seemiller & Grace, 2019).

In recent decades, enrollment in Humanities programs has declined in favor of STEM and business-related disciplines. Studies suggest that Gen Z students prioritize practical, skills-based education that enhances their employability and aligns with global labor market trends (Pragholapati, 2020). Unlike previous generations, Gen Z is deeply influenced by technological advancements, social media, and personalized learning experiences (Purwantara, Ashari, & Nurhadi, 2023).

As higher education institutions in Thailand strive to balance academic integrity with modern industry expectations, it is imperative to rethink Humanities curricula to make them more adaptable, interdisciplinary, and skill-oriented (Kozová, 2024).

## **Purpose of the Article**

The primary purpose of this article is to critically evaluate and propose strategies for reinventing Humanities curricula in Thai higher education to align with the educational and professional expectations of

Generation Z. In response to the evolving academic landscape and global educational trends, this study explores four core objectives:

1. Analyze how traditional and contemporary theoretical perspectives of humanities education align or conflict with the interactive, technology-driven learning preferences of Generation Z students, focusing specifically on digital engagement, critical thinking, and cultural awareness.

2. Identify and critically assess the key structural and pedagogical challenges, including declining enrollment, perceived lack of career applicability, and institutional resistance, encountered when adapting humanities curricula for Generation Z learners in Thai universities.

3. Examine and evaluate the effectiveness of specific reinvented curriculum frameworks—including digital and hybrid learning models, industry-oriented and experiential approaches, modular and personalized learning structures, and globally integrated curricula—in enhancing student engagement and employability for Generation Z.

4. Propose comprehensive policy recommendations and practical strategies for Thai higher education institutions to facilitate successful implementation of innovative humanities curriculum models through policy reform, competency-based education, faculty development, digital infrastructure enhancement, and international collaboration.

By examining international best practices and contextualizing them within Thailand's higher education framework, this article proposes actionable strategies to ensure that Humanities education remains an essential and dynamic component of Thai universities. The study ultimately seeks to contribute to the development of adaptable and future-oriented

Humanities curricula that resonate with Generation Z’s aspirations and the broader demands of the global knowledge economy.

## Theoretical Perspectives On Humanities Education And Generation Z

Humanities education has long served as a foundation for critical thinking and cultural awareness. However, in the digital age, traditional teaching methods struggle to engage Generation Z students, who prefer interactive and technology-driven learning. Thai universities must rethink their humanities curricula to align with modern student expectations and emerging career demands.

### 1. Humanities Education: Traditional and Contemporary Views

Humanities education has long served as a foundation for critical thinking and cultural awareness. However, in the digital age, traditional teaching methods struggle to engage Generation Z students, who prefer interactive and technology-driven learning. Thai universities must rethink their humanities curricula to align with modern student expectations and emerging career demands.

#### 1.1 The Role of Humanities in Shaping Critical Thinking and Cultural Awareness

Historically, Humanities education has played a vital role in fostering critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and cultural literacy. Courses in philosophy, literature, history, and the arts provide students with the tools to analyze complex societal issues, make informed ethical decisions, and appreciate diverse cultural perspectives (Manganello & Rampulla, 2023). Humanities subjects promote intellectual curiosity and the ability to

construct well-reasoned arguments, qualities essential for professions in law, journalism, public policy, and education (Kolb & Kolb, 2006).

Thailand, Humanities disciplines have traditionally emphasized rote learning, memorization, and textual analysis, preparing students for academic rather than professional careers. However, globalization has increased the demand for problem-solving, intercultural competence, and communication skills, making it imperative for Thai universities to rethink their Humanities curricula (Novis-Deutsch, Cohen, & Alexander, 2024). By integrating real-world applications such as digital storytelling, historical simulations, and interdisciplinary research, Humanities education can evolve to maintain its relevance in modern society (Manganello & Rampulla, 2023).

## 1.2 Criticism of Traditional Teaching Methodologies in Modern Education

One of the major criticisms of traditional Humanities education is its reliance on passive learning strategies, including rote memorization, didactic lectures, and standardized assessments. These methods fail to engage Generation Z learners, who thrive on interactive, collaborative, and technology-enhanced learning (Høgetveit, 2024). Many Humanities courses do not emphasize practical skills or direct career pathways, leading students to perceive these fields as less employable compared to STEM and business disciplines (Camarda & Mercier, 2023).

Another limitation of traditional Humanities education is the lack of interdisciplinary integration. Humanities subjects are often taught in isolation, without meaningful connections to science, technology, or business. In contrast, contemporary educational models advocate for

blended learning, interdisciplinary coursework, and experiential projects to enhance student engagement and increase employability (Nikitchenko, Davydova, & Krylova, 2024). To modernize Humanities education, universities must adopt more flexible, skills-based approaches that emphasize collaborative problem-solving, project-based learning, and digital literacy (Ramírez-Montoya & García-Peñalvo, 2022).

To modernize Humanities education, universities must adopt more flexible, skills-based approaches that emphasize collaborative problem-solving, project-based learning, and digital literacy (Becker, Rai, & Rigdon, 2017).

## **2. Generation Z's Learning Characteristics**

Generation Z students are digital natives who favor experiential and skills-based learning. Unlike previous generations, they engage more with multimedia content, gamification, and collaborative projects. Thai universities must adopt interactive learning strategies, such as virtual reality, digital archives, and project-based assessments, to maintain student interest.

### **2.1 Digital Nativity and Preference for Interactive, Technology-Driven Learning**

Generation Z students—those born between 1997 and 2012—have grown up in a world dominated by technology, social media, and instant access to information. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z learners prefer visual and interactive content over traditional text-based instruction (Tan, Voogt, & Tan, 2024). Their exposure to digital platforms, gamified learning, and collaborative online environments has significantly influenced their learning preferences (Wang, Chen, Yu, Liu, & Jing, 2024).

Thai universities must integrate digital tools such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and gamification to enhance Humanities education. Studies suggest that students retain information better when engaged in interactive and participatory learning experiences (Camarda & Mercier, 2023). The use of educational technology in Humanities subjects—such as digital archives, online discussions, and multimedia storytelling—can significantly improve student engagement and knowledge retention (Hodžić, 2024).

## 2.2 The Shift from Rote Memorization to Skills-Based Learning

Unlike previous generations, Generation Z values experiential, hands-on learning over passive instruction. They prefer practical applications of knowledge rather than abstract theoretical discussions (Kandemir, Ulusoy, & Kandemir, 2024). Traditional assessment methods such as memorization-heavy exams and essay writing are increasingly seen as ineffective for measuring real-world competencies (Baños, Blanco-Reina, & Bellido-Estévez, 2024).

Instead, Gen Z students benefit from skills-based learning models that include:

- 1) Project-based assessments (e.g., multimedia projects, digital storytelling)
- 2) Experiential learning opportunities (e.g., internships, service learning)
- 3) Competency-based evaluation methods (e.g., portfolio assessments, real-world problem-solving tasks) (Khurma & El Zein, 2024).

By shifting from content-heavy courses to skills-driven models, Thai universities can ensure that Humanities graduates possess the practical skills



needed for modern careers in media, public relations, policy analysis, and cultural entrepreneurship (Skenderi & Skenderi, 2023).

### **3. Educational Theories Relevant to Curriculum Innovation**

Educational theories like constructivism and student-centered learning advocate for active knowledge construction. Modern humanities education should embrace interdisciplinary learning, flipped classrooms, and case-based approaches to make lessons more applicable to contemporary challenges. Integrating STEM, business, and media studies can enhance the employability of humanities graduates.

#### **3.1 Constructivist and Student-Centered Learning Models**

The constructivist learning theory suggests that students learn best when actively engaged in constructing their own knowledge through real-world applications and collaborative learning experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2006). This theory aligns with Gen Z's preference for interactive and participatory learning.

Key features of constructivist and student-centered learning include:

- 1) Collaborative group projects that encourage peer-to-peer learning
- 2) Flipped classrooms where students engage with content before class and apply it in discussions
- 3) Case-based learning where students analyze real-world problems and develop practical solutions (Bakar, 2021).

#### **3.2 Interdisciplinary and Experiential Learning Approaches**

To make Humanities education more applicable to contemporary challenges, universities are blending disciplines such as

Humanities, STEM, and business studies. Interdisciplinary learning ensures that students develop cross-functional skills necessary for modern careers (Cruz, 2020).

Some examples of experiential learning models are:

- 1) Study-abroad programs to expose students to global cultural perspectives
- 2) Internships in media, policy, and business sectors to provide hands-on experience
- 3) Community-based research projects that address real-world issues (Pozuelos-Estrada & Rodríguez-Miranda, 2024).

These models ensure that Humanities graduates possess the skills necessary for the evolving job market.

Humanities education in Thailand must evolve to meet Generation Z's learning needs. By integrating constructivist, interdisciplinary, and experiential learning approaches, universities can enhance student engagement and increase career readiness (Dara & Kesavan, 2024). The next section will explore specific challenges and opportunities in modernizing Humanities curricula for Thai universities.

The evolving landscape of Humanities education requires rethinking traditional teaching approaches to align with Generation Z's learning preferences. Embracing technology-driven, interactive, and interdisciplinary strategies will enhance relevance, foster critical thinking, and prepare students for modern careers while preserving the core values of the Humanities.

## Challenges In Adapting Humanities Education for Generation Z

A key challenge in humanities education is declining enrollment, as students prioritize STEM and business fields. Many perceive humanities degrees as lacking clear career pathways. Thai universities must address this by introducing industry collaborations, digital humanities courses, and entrepreneurial humanities programs to showcase practical applications of these disciplines.

### 1. Declining Enrollment and Interest in Humanities

#### 1.1 Statistical Trends in Thai Universities

The Humanities disciplines in Thai universities have witnessed a steady decline in enrollment rates over the past decade. Reports indicate that students increasingly favor STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and business-related programs, which are perceived to provide better employment opportunities (Espinoza-Rodríguez, 2021).

According to data from the Office of the Higher Education Commission of Thailand, Humanities programs have seen a 20% decline in enrollment over the past five years, while STEM and business fields have experienced a growth rate of over 30% (Brehm, 2022). Similar trends are observed globally, with students opting for degrees that align with emerging job markets such as technology, finance, and healthcare (Kitamura & Brehm, 2020).

#### 1.2 Perceived Lack of Career Applicability

One of the primary reasons for the declining interest in Humanities education is the perception that these degrees lack direct career applicability (Winichakul, 2018). Many students view Humanities disciplines

as theoretical and research-based, with fewer clear-cut job prospects compared to STEM and business fields. Employers often prioritize technical skills, industry certifications, and applied knowledge, making Humanities graduates feel less competitive in the job market (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994).

Integrating STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) into humanities education is pivotal for equipping Generation Z with interdisciplinary skills essential for the complexities of modern careers (Oeurn, Tharith, Seingheng, & Leang, 2023). Studies demonstrate that blending applied mathematics with visual arts enhances innovative problem-solving (Karsan, Hasan, & Jeyakumar, 2024), while problem-based learning environments foster analytical reasoning and applied knowledge (He & Wei, 2021). Such integration ensures students develop both technical and cognitive competencies, facilitating active contributions to real-world challenges (Ullah, Shoaib, Ali, & Ullah, 2022). Moreover, STEM-focused curricula enhance adaptability, collaboration, and global awareness, bridging the gap between technology and human-centered problem-solving (Wu & Gordon, 2022). This approach not only cultivates transferable skills but also promotes ethical reasoning and cultural sensitivity, preparing Generation Z for future roles that require navigating technological and societal complexities (Chun, Yau, Leung, & Tang, 2023).

To counteract these perceptions, Thai universities must integrate practical skill-building courses into Humanities programs, such as:

- 1) Digital Humanities: Teaching students how to apply data analytics, digital archiving, and AI-driven research to traditional Humanities fields (Fry, 2018).

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2) Industry Collaboration: Creating partnerships with media companies, think tanks, and cultural organizations to offer internships and hands-on learning experiences (Cheok, Edirisinghe, & Shrestha, 2024).

3) Entrepreneurial Humanities: Introducing courses on cultural entrepreneurship, social innovation, and policy advocacy to showcase real-world applications of Humanities studies (Buasuwan, 2018).

## **2. Structural and Pedagogical Limitations**

Rigid course structures and outdated assessments hinder the modernization of humanities curricula. Traditional reliance on essays and memorization-based exams does not align with Gen Z's preference for hands-on learning. Competency-based education, hybrid learning models, and digital assessments can make humanities education more engaging and skill-focused.

### **2.1 Outdated Course Content and Rigid Structures**

Many Humanities curricula in Thailand remain rooted in traditional academic structures, emphasizing memorization, textual analysis, and classical literature without modern interdisciplinary applications (Anyadiegwu & Osegbo, 2024). As global education systems evolve, Thai universities must embrace modular and interdisciplinary course designs that integrate Humanities with emerging disciplines like digital media, environmental studies, and behavioral science (Wahyugi, 2025).

### **2.2 Traditional Assessment Methods vs. Competency-Based Evaluation**

Traditional assessment methods in humanities education, such as written exams, essays, and long-form research papers, have long been central to evaluating student performance. However, with Generation Z's preference for interactive, hands-on, and practical learning experiences,

it is essential to transition toward more dynamic assessment models that focus on competencies rather than rote memorization (Ashby & Exter, 2019). Competency-based evaluations emphasize the application of knowledge and skills in real-world scenarios, encouraging deeper engagement and critical thinking (Makda, 2025).

To effectively assess competencies, Thai universities should implement diverse and innovative evaluation methods. Firstly, formative assessments should be employed to provide continuous feedback throughout the learning process. These may include case studies, peer evaluations, and interactive quizzes, which help identify learning gaps and support students in achieving competency benchmarks (Laskar, 2024). Formative assessments encourage self-reflection, adaptability, and consistent skill development, aligning closely with modern educational demands. Secondly, authentic assessments should be introduced to ensure real-world applicability. These involve tasks that mirror professional challenges, such as policy simulations, multimedia presentations, and portfolio projects. Authentic assessments are instrumental in fostering problem-solving skills and practical knowledge application, preparing students for complex, interdisciplinary challenges (Yadav, 2024).

Moreover, adopting hybrid learning models and leveraging digital tools can further enhance competency-based evaluations. The incorporation of AI-powered grading systems, gamified coursework, and online simulations can create interactive and engaging assessment environments (Makhachashvili & Semenist, 2022). This approach not only caters to Generation Z's digital proficiency but also supports personalized learning trajectories, allowing students to progress at their own pace and

according to their unique learning styles. Through these multifaceted evaluation strategies, Thai universities can develop more adaptable, future-ready graduates equipped with critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills relevant to the modern labor market.

### **3. Resistance to Change in Academic Institutions**

Resistance to change is another major obstacle. Many faculty members are reluctant to adopt new teaching methods due to concerns over academic integrity and lack of digital training. Institutional policies should support professional development, flexible accreditation, and funding for innovative teaching tools to modernize humanities education effectively.

#### **3.1 Institutional Inertia and Faculty Adaptation Issues**

One of the biggest barriers to Humanities curriculum reform is institutional inertia—the reluctance of universities to change long-standing academic traditions (Armstrong & Dyer, 2016). Faculty members who have taught using conventional methods for decades may resist new pedagogical strategies, fearing that digitized, interdisciplinary coursework could undermine the core values of Humanities education (Shen, Yang, & Zhou, 2023).

Common faculty concerns include:

1) Loss of Subject Integrity: The belief that incorporating STEM, business, or media studies into Humanities education dilutes the intellectual rigor of traditional subjects (Mitchell, Parlamis, & Claiborne, 2015).

2) Lack of Training: Many professors are not trained in using digital platforms, interactive teaching tools, or competency-based assessment methods (Graham, Danaa, Purevsuren, & Martinez, 2023).

3) Resource Constraints: Universities often lack the funding to implement new technologies, hire interdisciplinary faculty, or support innovative research initiatives (Ralston, 2021).

### 3.2 Policy and Accreditation Challenges in Thai Higher Education

Thai universities operate under strict national accreditation frameworks, which often reinforce rigid academic structures and standardized course requirements. Many Humanities faculties struggle to introduce new courses, interdisciplinary programs, or competency-based assessments due to bureaucratic obstacles (Gaebel, Zhang, Stoeber, & Morrisroe, 2021).

Reforming Humanities education in Thailand requires systemic changes at the policy level, including:

1) Flexible Accreditation Models: Allowing universities to experiment with interdisciplinary degrees, digital coursework, and modular learning systems without jeopardizing accreditation (Liu, Zha, & He, 2019).

2) Government Support for Faculty Training: Providing funding for professional development programs that help educators transition to digital and hybrid teaching models (Dumont, Ni, Van Wart, Beck, & Pei, 2021).

3) Industry Collaboration Incentives: Encouraging universities to partner with businesses, cultural organizations, and media companies to create job-relevant Humanities curricula (Mercader, 2020).

The challenges facing Humanities education in Thailand reflect global trends in higher education reform. Declining enrollment, outdated curricula, and faculty resistance highlight the need for systemic change in how Humanities programs are designed and delivered. Universities must modernize their courses, integrate interdisciplinary learning, and embrace



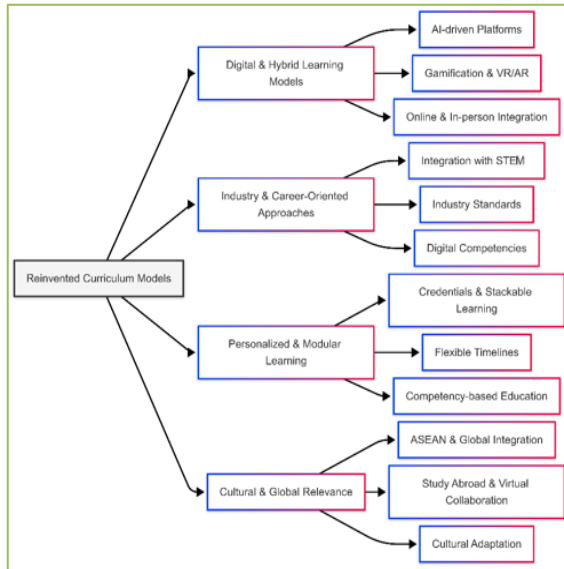
digital tools to align Humanities education with the expectations of Generation Z. The next section will explore reinvented curriculum models and their potential impact on Thai higher education.

## **Reinvented Curriculum Models: Frameworks And Applications**

To adapt to Gen Z’s needs, universities must implement hybrid learning models that combine online and in-person instruction. Industry-oriented humanities programs, digital literacy courses, and modular learning structures will enhance student engagement and career readiness. Emphasizing global perspectives and ASEAN studies can further enrich humanities education in Thailand.

### **1. Digital and Hybrid Learning Models**

The integration of digital learning into humanities education has become a crucial strategy in modernizing curricula to align with Generation Z’s digital nativity. Hybrid learning models, which blend traditional in-person instruction with online education, have gained significant traction in higher education. These models leverage digital tools, learning management systems (LMS), artificial intelligence (AI)-driven learning platforms, and gamification to enhance student engagement and outcomes (Namboothiri, Varghese, Jacob, Job, & Cyriac, 2025).



**Figure 1** Reinvented Curriculum Models: Frameworks and Applications.

Hybrid learning has demonstrated various advantages, such as increased flexibility, accessibility, and personalized learning. According to a study by Alsowat (2022), hybrid learning fosters an interactive and student-centered learning experience, making it particularly effective for engaging digital-native students (Alsowat, 2022). Research comparing hybrid and virtual learning models found that hybrid learning significantly improved students' essay writing and digital literacy skills, emphasizing its effectiveness in humanities education.

Moreover, studies have highlighted the role of hybrid learning in digital humanities education. Liu (2024) analyzed hybrid digital humanities courses and found that a mixed classroom-digital experience fosters deeper engagement in critical analysis and interpretive skills. Additionally, the

integration of AI and big data analytics into hybrid learning enhances personalized feedback mechanisms, improving student learning outcomes (Karapakdee, Wannapiroon, & Nilsook, 2024).

While hybrid learning models offer multiple advantages, challenges remain in their implementation. Studies have identified issues such as digital equity concerns, faculty training, and technological infrastructure limitations. Nonetheless, with continuous advancements in digital education, hybrid models present a viable pathway for reinventing humanities curricula.

## **2. Industry and Career-Oriented Approaches**

Blending humanities education with STEM, entrepreneurship, and media studies has emerged as a strategy to increase its career applicability. Traditionally, humanities disciplines have faced criticism for their perceived lack of direct career pathways, contributing to declining enrollments. To address this, interdisciplinary curriculum models have been developed to integrate humanities education with practical, career-focused skills (Benavot, Care, Lee, Takahashi, & Gong, 2021).

A promising model is the integration of humanities with digital innovation and entrepreneurship. Studies have shown that incorporating digital competencies, such as coding, data analytics, and design thinking, into humanities curricula enhances employability (Al-Abdulaziz & Al Darwesh, 2023). Similarly, humanities courses infused with media and communication studies foster skills in digital storytelling, social media strategy, and public relations, making graduates more competitive in modern job markets (Salmi, Hienonen, Nyman, & Kaasinen, 2023).

Another approach is embedding experiential learning opportunities through industry collaborations, internships, and project-based learning. Research indicates that real-world applications of humanities concepts, such as museum curation projects, digital archiving, and social entrepreneurship initiatives, significantly improve student engagement and practical skill acquisition (DeWinter & Rumbley, 1965). Thus, humanities programs that embrace career-oriented frameworks provide students with both intellectual depth and market-ready competencies.

### **3. Personalized and Modular Learning Structures**

The shift towards modular and flexible curricula has gained momentum in response to the diverse learning preferences of Generation Z. Micro-credentialing, elective clusters, and competency-based education allow students to tailor their learning paths according to their interests and career aspirations. This personalized approach enhances student motivation and engagement while aligning education with industry demands (Brint, Proctor, Murphy, Turk-Bicakci, & Hanneman, 2010).

Micro-credentialing, in particular, enables students to acquire specific skill sets in areas such as digital humanities, linguistic analysis, or cultural heritage management. By earning stackable credentials, students can demonstrate expertise in specialized fields without committing to long-term degree programs (Channon, 2018). Likewise, elective clusters allow students to explore interdisciplinary themes, such as “Technology and Society” or “Ethics in Artificial Intelligence”, fostering critical thinking across domains (Gundemeda, 2014).

Additionally, competency-based education models prioritize skill mastery over traditional grading structures. These models provide students

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with flexible learning timelines, enabling them to progress based on their proficiency rather than a fixed schedule. Research suggests that such approaches enhance student retention and overall academic performance, particularly in humanities disciplines that require iterative learning and critical analysis (Mestenhauser, 1976).

#### **4. Cultural and Global Relevance in Humanities Education**

As globalization reshapes education, incorporating ASEAN and global perspectives into humanities curricula is essential. A curriculum enriched with comparative cultural studies, multilingualism, and international collaborations provides students with a broader worldview and intercultural competence (Yuen, Yau, Lui, & Tam, 2019).

In Thailand, humanities education can benefit from regional integration through ASEAN-focused courses that explore Southeast Asian literature, philosophy, and history. Studies highlight that students exposed to cross-cultural dialogues and global perspectives develop enhanced analytical skills and adaptability in international job markets (Lai, Wang, & Huang, 2023).

In Thailand, humanities education can benefit from regional integration through ASEAN-focused courses that explore Southeast Asian literature, philosophy, and history. Studies highlight that students exposed to cross-cultural dialogues and global perspectives develop enhanced analytical skills and adaptability in international jobs (Marcella & Sandy, 2024).

Furthermore, digital collaborations with international universities enable students to engage in virtual exchange programs and collaborative research projects. Such initiatives provide experiential learning opportunities

and prepare students for careers in global institutions, NGOs, and multinational corporations (Li, 2024).

By embracing digital, career-oriented, personalized, and globally relevant curriculum models, Thai higher education can enhance the relevance and impact of humanities education in the 21st century.

The development of reinvented curriculum models is essential to ensuring the adaptability and relevance of Humanities education in the 21st century. By integrating hybrid learning models, interdisciplinary studies, and experiential learning opportunities, Thai universities can create more flexible, engaging, and career-oriented programs. Emphasizing global perspectives, digital literacy, and modular course designs will further enhance student motivation and employability. These frameworks encourage innovative thinking and real-world problem-solving, preparing graduates for diverse professional landscapes. Moving forward, continued refinement and application of these models will contribute to the long-term sustainability and global competitiveness of Humanities education.

## **Implications And Recommendations for Thai Higher Education**

Thai higher education must reform policies to promote interdisciplinary curricula, competency-based assessments, and faculty development. Increased funding for digital infrastructure and research will support curriculum innovations. By modernizing teaching strategies and embracing global collaborations, Thai universities can ensure that humanities education remains relevant in the 21st century.

## 1. Policy and Institutional Recommendations

The transformation of Humanities education in Thai higher education necessitates a policy framework that aligns with contemporary educational needs. Thailand's education reform efforts under the "Thailand 4.0" initiative aim to create a knowledge-based economy, but significant gaps remain in curriculum modernization and policy implementation (Napathorn, 2022). Policymakers and educational institutions must consider flexible, interdisciplinary curricula that integrate digital learning, career-oriented approaches, and student-centered pedagogy.

One critical area of reform is the decentralization of curriculum design to allow universities to tailor programs based on student demand and labor market trends. The rigid structure of Thai higher education, characterized by top-down policy directives, often stifles innovation. Effective policy implementation should involve collaboration between government agencies, universities, industry stakeholders, and student representatives to ensure curricula remain relevant (Rohana & Shaikh Mohd Khalid, 2023).

Additionally, policies should prioritize competency-based education models, which emphasize skills acquisition rather than rote memorization. The Thai government's competency-based education reforms aim to enhance workforce readiness but have faced challenges due to a lack of clear guidelines for implementation (Chairungruang & Piriyasurawong, 2023). To address this, institutions should integrate competency assessments, industry partnerships, and micro-credentialing systems to validate student learning outcomes.

Moreover, funding mechanisms should be restructured to provide financial incentives for universities that adopt innovative curriculum models. Current financial constraints and reliance on international students have limited the ability of Thai higher education institutions to compete globally (Rukspollmuang & Fry, 2022). Increased investment in digital infrastructure, faculty training, and research initiatives would enable universities to implement and sustain curriculum innovations effectively.

## **2. Faculty Development and Teaching Innovation**

The successful implementation of curriculum reforms in Humanities education depends on faculty readiness and pedagogical adaptability. Many Thai educators still rely on traditional lecture-based methods, which are increasingly misaligned with Generation Z's preference for interactive and technology-enhanced learning environments (Kohnke & Ulla, 2024). To foster pedagogical innovation, universities should invest in comprehensive faculty development programs focusing on digital teaching strategies, competency-based assessment, and student-centered learning.

Training educators in hybrid and online teaching methods is essential, particularly as digital learning becomes a central component of modern curricula. A study by Ahmad et al. (2023) found that hybrid learning models incorporating AI-driven assessments and gamification significantly improved student engagement and retention rates. Faculty members should be trained to integrate such technologies effectively, ensuring they complement rather than replace traditional pedagogical approaches.

Moreover, faculty incentive structures should be revised to encourage continuous learning and research in innovative teaching practices. Current promotion and tenure systems in Thai universities often prioritize

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research output over teaching excellence, discouraging faculty members from investing time in curriculum development (Becker, Brown, Dahlstrom, & Davis, 2018). Implementing a balanced evaluation system that recognizes teaching innovation, student mentorship, and interdisciplinary collaboration would create a more dynamic and responsive educational environment.

Additionally, faculty exchange programs with international universities can provide exposure to global best practices in curriculum design. Thailand's push toward internationalization in higher education presents an opportunity to integrate global perspectives into Humanities education while improving faculty expertise (Benassaya, 2019). Collaborative research projects, virtual co-teaching initiatives, and joint curriculum development efforts could enhance the quality and relevance of Thai higher education.

### **3. Future Directions for Humanities Education**

The future of Humanities education in Thailand lies in its ability to adapt to changing societal and technological landscapes. Traditional humanities disciplines must evolve to incorporate interdisciplinary frameworks, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical applications (Toro-Troconis, Reedy, Voce, & Bates, 2022). For instance, digital humanities, which integrate computational tools with traditional humanities research, offer new avenues for student engagement and employability.

Emerging fields such as environmental humanities, ethics in artificial intelligence, and digital storytelling provide opportunities for Humanities programs to remain relevant in a rapidly evolving job market (Thoyib, Ngoh, & Badrudin, 2024). By offering interdisciplinary courses that combine humanities with technology, business, and policy studies,

universities can prepare students for diverse career paths in media, education, international relations, and social advocacy.

Moreover, research in Humanities education should be expanded to assess the long-term impact of curriculum innovations. The introduction of learning analytics and AI-driven education platforms allows for data-driven insights into student performance and curriculum effectiveness (Soulé & Kakoulli Constantinou, 2024). Universities should establish research centers dedicated to studying the intersection of technology, pedagogy, and humanities education.

Another critical future direction is enhancing global engagement through ASEAN and international collaborations. As Thailand seeks to position itself as a regional education hub, incorporating ASEAN cultural studies and global perspectives into Humanities curricula would provide students with a broader understanding of regional and international issues (Miryala, 2024). Study-abroad programs, virtual exchange courses, and international research partnerships could further strengthen Thai Humanities education.

Modernizing Humanities education in Thailand requires strategic policy reforms, institutional innovation, and faculty development. Emphasizing flexible, interdisciplinary curricula and competency-based assessments will align education with labor market needs. Strengthening digital infrastructure, fostering international collaborations, and enhancing faculty training will ensure curricula remain adaptable and relevant, positioning Thailand as a leader in innovative higher education.

## Conclusion

This article has explored the evolving landscape of Humanities education in Thailand, highlighting the necessity for curriculum reinvention to align with the learning preferences of Generation Z. The discussion has underscored key challenges, including declining enrollment, outdated pedagogical methods, and institutional resistance to change. However, innovative curriculum models—such as digital and hybrid learning, career-oriented humanities, modular and personalized learning, and globally integrated curricula—present viable solutions for enhancing student engagement and academic relevance.

Policy reforms must emphasize competency-based education, interdisciplinary curriculum design, and financial restructuring to support innovation. Faculty development is crucial for sustaining pedagogical advancements, requiring comprehensive training in digital teaching, competency assessments, and active learning strategies. Future directions for Humanities education should prioritize research-driven curriculum evolution, global partnerships, and interdisciplinary course offerings that prepare students for dynamic career opportunities.

By implementing these strategies, Thai higher education institutions can foster a more adaptable and future-ready Humanities education system that meets the demands of the 21st-century knowledge economy.

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# The Emergence and Rationale of the Reminder - Emphasis Construction “N是用来V的” in Chinese

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## Abstract

This paper primarily investigates the emergence process of the reminder-emphasis construction “N是用来V的” (N is used to V). The formal emergence process unfolds as follows: from the objective event narration “用NV” (use N to V), to the subjective evaluation of things “N可以用来V” (N can be used to V), and finally to the inter-subjective assessment “N是用来V的” (N is used to V). The emergence of meaning primarily relies on pragmatic inference: the speaker violates the cooperative principle, the listener actively engages in inference, and the implicature is captured. During the emergence process, the construction requires that N possesses the property of “everyday activity” and V exhibits “conventional functionality”, while “是用来……的” (is used to...) emphasizes “functional prominence”.

**Key words:** N是用来V的, Reminder-Emphasis, Construction Emergence, Rationale of Construction

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## Introduction

In Modern Chinese, expressions such as “房子是用来住的” (Houses are for living in) and “月饼是用来吃的” (Moon-cakes are for eating) frequently appear in everyday discourse. For example:

(1) 第四，促进房地产市场平稳健康发展。要坚持“房子是用来住的、不是用来炒的”的定位，综合运用金融、土地、财税、投资、立法等手段，加快研究建立符合国情、适应市场规律的基础性制度和长效机制。（《人民日报》2016年12月17日）

(2) 其实，无论月饼生产商把包装做得如何精美，但若只做“面子”，不做“里子”的工作，恐怕最终还是要丧失市场，丢掉顾客的。毕竟，月饼是用来吃的。（《人民日报海外版》2004年08月23日）

(3) 于是，有些添加药物的保健食品、营养食品也应运而生。药品是用来治病的，有严格的剂量界限，随便吃药是会影响健康的。（《人民日报》1984年07月14日）

The underlined portions in the aforementioned examples can be formalized as “N是用来V的” (N is used to V), which primarily serve to remind and emphasize the functional purpose V of N. Therefore, this construction can be referred to as the reminder-emphasis construction “N是用来V的”. However, the issue lies in the fact that these V functions represent the most basic purposes of N. Whenever N is mentioned, people naturally associate it with its functional purpose V in their minds. In other words, these V functions are universally recognized as inherent to N. For instance, when mentioning “房子”, one naturally thinks of its purpose for living; when referring to “月饼”, its purpose for eating comes to mind.

Given this, why is there still a need for such reminder and emphasis? A review of existing literature reveals that no studies have yet provided an explanation for this phenomenon.

We contend that the key to addressing this question lies in elucidating the origins of the construction's form and meaning, as the relevant manifestations of form and meaning are inherently tied to their formation process. The question then arises: how should this be explained? The approach adopted in this paper is to treat the reminder-emphasis construction “N是用来V的” as a distinct construction and to interpret it from the perspective of constructional emergence. This involves analyzing the emergence process, including the development of both the construction's form and its meaning. The following presents a preliminary analysis.

## Construction Emergence

The emergence of constructions is a significant topic in construction grammar research. Goldberg (1995, p. 4), in her classic definition of constructions, pointed out that a construction cannot be fully predicted from its components or other preexisting constructions. Shi (2013, pp. 23-38) further argues that a fundamental premise for understanding the characteristics of constructions is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and that the (syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic) features of a construction cannot, or cannot entirely, be derived from its constituent elements. In other words, at least some aspects of a construction's features “emerge” from the linear sequence of the construction, making them non-

linear. This is the emergent nature of constructional features, also referred to as the constructionality of a construction.

Certainly, academic discussions on the emergence of constructions are not limited to the emergence of constructional meaning (including constructional features). Scholars have also approached the topic from a diachronic perspective, arguing that the formation of constructions involves a developmental process. For instance, Traugott (2008) posits that constructions emerge gradually rather than being inherently fixed. Constructions undergo a process of expansion and manifestation, progressing from the lowest level of constructs to micro-constructions, meso-constructions, and ultimately to macro-constructions at the highest level.

However, dynamic emergence can be either diachronic or synchronic. With respect to the reminder-emphasis construction “N是用来V的” (N is used to V) discussed in this paper, we do not intend to explore its formation process from a diachronic perspective. Chinese is a pragmatically oriented language, where pragmatic factors play a primary role in shaping sentence structures (Liu, 1995). Therefore, we propose to examine the specific influence of pragmatic factors on the emergence of constructions from a synchronic standpoint.

### **1. Formal Emergence**

Based on corpus evidence, we observe that the formal emergence of the construction “N是用来V的” (N is used to V) has undergone approximately the following stages: objective event narration “用N V” (use N to V, indicating the agent's action on N) → subjective evaluation of things “N可以V” (N can V) → inter-subjective assessment “N是用来V的” (N is used to V). [Here, the three stages are representative constructions identified

based on the progression from “objective narration” to “subjective evaluation” and then to “intersubjective assessment”. These stages are not exclusive, as there may be other similar expressions at the “objective narration” stage, for example ] (1).

### 1.1 “用 N V”

The construction “用 N V” (use N to V) emphasizes the agent's utilization of a tool to achieve a certain purpose, that is, the agent accomplishes a goal by acting upon N, highlighting the agent's instrumental role. For example:

(4) 有好几次，他上前向他们道辛苦，他们扭转脖项，给他看后脑瓢。于是赵四去到城外，捡了一堆砖块，在城墙上用白灰画了个圆圈，练习腕力和瞄准，预备打他们的脑瓢。（老舍《老张的哲学》）

(5) 只见东洋武士佐藤秀郎和神鞭傻二面对面站着。东洋武士浑身全黑，短身長臂，鼠面鹰目，那样子非妖即怪。傻二还是宽宽松松一件蓝布大褂，辫子好像特意用蓖麻油梳过，上松下紧，辫梢夹进红丝线头绳，漂漂亮亮盘在顶上。（冯骥才《神鞭》）

(6) 随着吱嘎吱嘎开张的门扇，她的爹借着月光，她看到爹的脸上血迹斑斑。那部不久前在斗须大会上虽败犹荣的胡须，只余下几根根，鬃曲在满下巴的血污之中。她惊问：“爹，这是怎么啦？”她唤醒小甲，把爹弄到炕上。用筷子撬开紧咬的牙关，灌进去半碗凉水，他才苏醒过来。（莫言《檀香刑》）

(7) 一九九四年十月的一个黄昏，当他步行回家刚刚走过一座桥，一个歹徒扑上前去用刀刺向他的颈脖。他被路人送到医院，脱离了危险，但由于伤及神经，右手至今不能恢复写作。（余秋雨《千年一叹》）

It is evident that the “用 N V” (use N to V) typically requires an agent, as seen in the examples: “她” using chopsticks to pry in (4) and (5), Zhao Si using white lime to draw in (6), and “他” using his hands to push in (7). The agent employs “用 N V” to achieve a specific purpose, such as pouring cold water to sober "him" up or smashing walnuts to eat. In these cases, N is usually definite, meaning that both the speaker and the listener can identify the referent of N with a specific entity in the context, such as “chopsticks, stone, white lime, hands” in the aforementioned examples. Further examples include:

(8) 那人摔倒在地，痛苦地咕哝着。德克尔把左轮手枪踢到一边，用贝瑞塔顶着他的脑门，迅速把他身上搜了一遍。（戴维·莫雷尔《较量》）

(9) 藏书中还有李玄伯先生的《中国古代社会新研》，是我初一时买的，我万万没想到在七年以后，我竟在李先生的课堂上，用这本书做了教本！（李敖《传统下的独白》）

In example (8), “贝瑞塔” refers to a type of handgun and is a proper noun. In example (9), “这本书” takes the form of “这 + (quantifier) + noun”, which, according to Chen (1987, pp. 81-89), represents a typical definite noun phrase. Meanwhile, in the “用N V” (use N to V) construction, V can be a procedural component, denoting specific events with strong actionality, and can be modified by aspect markers such as “了/着/过”. Thus, it functions as an event sentence (Yuan , 2003, pp. 3-16), as seen in examples (4-5) and (8-9) with “画了”, “梳过”, “顶着”, and “做了”. Additionally, V can co-occur with directional verbs, as in examples (6-7) with “撬开” and “刺向”.

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## 1.2 “N 可以 V”

Sentences with definite components as objects typically exhibit strong anaphoric continuity (Zhang & Fang, 1996, p. 10). If the preceding discourse context has already discussed N, and the speaker wishes to emphasize the functional purpose of the subject, the continuity of the topic motivates the use of N as the topic. From their subjective perspective, the speaker evaluates N through the construction “可以V” (can V), forming the construction “N可以V”. Consequently, compared to “用NV” (use N to V), the agent argument in “N可以V” can often be omitted. For example:

(10) 夫人顾咸信，见老何成天心事重重，走在大街上也是勾着脑袋，怕他出事，更怕他会跑到什么会上，或是去什么场合，像过去一样想到什么说什么，就动员老何去学学抽烟喝酒。因为，她听人说，酒可以消愁，烟能助人深虑，她只希望老何平安地度过这段日子。（《中国农民调查》）

(11) 天一阁是明朝鄞县范钦藏书的地方，建造于嘉靖四十年（1561）。当时藏书七万多卷。范钦认为书最怕火，古书上有“天一生水”的说法，水可以灭火，便把藏书楼取名为天一阁。（《中国儿童百科全书》）

(12) 土豆含有维生素C，生活在现代社会的上班族，最容易受到抑郁、灰心丧气、不安等负面情绪的困扰，土豆可以帮你解决这个难题。食物可以影响人的情绪，是因为它里面含有的矿物质和营养元素能作用于人体，改善精神状态。（《人民日报海外版》2015年02月06日）

In examples (10-12), the agent is not explicitly mentioned, as the speaker primarily aims to emphasize the functional purpose of N. Consequently, N is topicalized and explained using the “可以V” (can V)

construction. Unlike in the “用N V” (use N to V) structure, N in “可以V” does not refer to a specific entity but typically functions as a generic reference (a hallmark of topicalization), highlighting the shared functionality of a category of things. For instance, almost all types of alcohol can alleviate sorrow, hence the expression “借酒消愁” .

Moreover, these instances of N are discourse-organized in continuation of a specific topic within the text. For example, in (10), “抽烟喝酒” constitutes new information introduced in the preceding sentence. In (11), “天一生水” serves as a crucial piece of evidence in the speaker's argument. In (12), “食物” is a theme that runs through the prior context (e.g., potatoes).

Furthermore, the V in “N可以V” (N can V) functions as an attributive predicate, exhibiting clear non-processual characteristics. It abstractly denotes an action, state, or relationship (Guo, 1997, pp. 162-175). As a result, it cannot be modified by aspect markers such as “了/着/过” , as seen in the ungrammatical examples “\*酒可以消了愁” , “\*水可以灭着火” , and “\*食物可以影响过人的情绪” . Similarly, it cannot co-occur with directional verbs, as in the case of “刀可以切菜” , which cannot be extended to “刀可以切向菜” .

In addition to the syntactic constraints on N and V, there are further differences between “N可以V” (N can V) and “用N V” (use N to V). According to Yin and Yuan (2022, pp. 13-26), in “N可以V” , “N must possess a functional role” and “V must represent the conventional functional role of the core noun N” , whereas this is not necessarily the case for “用N V” . For example:

- (13) 他用真挚的心爱学生。 他用酒消愁。 他用酒洗澡。  
\*真挚的心可以爱学生。 酒可以消愁。 \*酒可以洗澡。

- (14) 他用泪水告别爱人。 他用水灭火。 他用水（以指代笔）画画。  
\*泪水可以告别爱人。 水可以灭火。 \*水可以画画。

In examples (13) and (14), the expressions “真挚的心” and “泪水” generally do not readily evoke corresponding functional roles, thus rendering the construction “N可以V” (N can V) infelicitous. Similarly, “洗澡” and “画画” are not typically conventional functional roles associated with “酒” or “水”, respectively, which also results in the invalidity of the “N可以V” (N can V) construction. The construction “N可以V” (N can V) is only well-formed when N possesses a functional role and V represents its conventional functional role. The notion of a “常规功用角色” indicates that this is not a subjective evaluation by the speaker but rather a socially shared understanding of N. Examples include “酒可以消愁” and “水可以灭火”.

Furthermore, in their comparison of the substitution constraints between the constructions “N可以V” (N can V) and “用N V” (use N to V), Yin and Yuan (2022, pp. 13-26) point out that [when V represents the surface functional role of the subject noun, the construction “N可以V” (N can V) cannot be replaced by the “用N V” (use N to V). In the construction “N可以V” (N can V), V can indeed be the surface functional role of the subject noun [The surface functional role contrasts with the potential functional role. For example, in the sentence “白菜可以吃，也可以止痰化咳”，“吃” represents a surface, direct function and is thus a surface



functional role, whereas “止痰化咳” represents a deeper, potential function and is therefore a potential functional role. For further details, see Yin and Yuan (2022, pp. 13-26).]. However, based on our corpus analysis, we find that in the construction “N可以V” (N can V), V is generally not the surface functional role of N, as seen in questionable examples like “? 酒可以喝” or “? 饭可以吃”. Such examples only appear when emphasizing or describing a specific, concrete entity. For example:

(15) 他说：“他们吃什么？他们有没有好吃的鱼？”他的舌头从黄色的利齿间钻了出来，舔舐着苍白的嘴唇。“不，我们没有鱼，”佛罗多说：“我们只有这个——”他拿起一片精灵的干粮说：“还有水，希望这边的水可以喝。”（托尔金《魔戒全集》）

(16) 鲎（hòu），节肢动物，头胸部的甲壳略呈马蹄形，腹部的甲壳呈六角形，尾部呈剑状，生活在海底。肉可以吃。俗称鲎鱼。（《倒序现汉词典》）

In example (15), “这边的水” refers to water in a specific context, which is unfamiliar to people. In example (16), “肉” anaphorically refers to the meat of the horseshoe crab, serving as a lexical explanation that helps readers better understand this animal.

The reason why V tends not to represent the surface functional role of N may lie in the fact that the surface functional role of N is overly obvious, belonging to socially shared encyclopedic knowledge, and thus lacks sufficient informational value to provide new information. Consequently, people are only likely to use the construction “N可以V” (N can V) in unfamiliar contextual scenarios, such as in lexical explanations.

In summary, under the motivating influence of the topic, the construction “N可以V” (N can V) emerges in specific contexts. However, compared to the construction “用N V” (use N to V), which emphasizes the agent’s manipulation of N in an objective event description, the speaker employs “N可以V” (N can V) to subjectively evaluate the functional role of N. The distinction is primarily reflected in the different syntactic constraints that apply to these two constructions. Furthermore, the evaluation in “N可以V” (N can V) is typically not based on individual subjective experience but rather on the shared cognition of society as a whole. Therefore, in the construction “N可以V” (N can V), N must possess a corresponding functional role, and V must represent its conventional functional role.

### 1.3 “N是用来V的”

The subjectivity of language imbues linguistic structures with elements that reflect the speaker’s “self”, while intersubjectivity embodies the speaker’s attention to the listener’s “self”, thereby re-encoding the form and meaning of language (Traugott & Dasher, 2002, pp. 22-23; Wu, 2004, pp. 18-24). The construction “N可以V” (N can V) represents a functional evaluation derived from socially established patterns and is widely recognized within the community. However, if someone forgets, deems it unimportant, or has made or is about to make an error, the speaker may use the “是.....的” structure to emphasize, forming the subjective emphatic construction “N是用来V的” (N is used to V) [Here, N is in its bare form, so structures such as “这/那+ (量) +名” (this/that + classifier + noun) or “数+ (量) +名” (numeral + classifier + noun) are excluded.]. The purpose of such emphasis may be to draw attention or to provide a preparatory explanation. For example:

(17) a 相传，有一次因为家人生病，胡雪岩派佣人去药店抓药。结果他发现抓回来的药已经发霉变质，就让人去调换，药店的伙计却说：“本店只有这种药，如果你们要好药，可以自己开一家药店呀。”胡雪岩听了很生气，药是用来治病的，怎么可以拿人命当儿戏？（《人民日报海外版》2016年09月24日）

b 丽鹃爸附和道：“你讲的一点不错。他们那里风俗好像就是男的享受女的干活。一点不晓得疼女人，女人是用来疼的，他们倒好，女的当畜生一样地使。亚平倒不像他爸爸那么大男人主义，以前丽鹃讲还给她倒洗脚水的。”（六六《双面胶》）

(18) a 众所周知，笔是用来写字的，但是您知道笔也可以用作医疗吗？前几天，美国德克萨斯大学的科学家发明了一种钢笔，可以在10秒内识别出癌变组织。（《人民日报海外版》2017年09月21日）

b 大司马子鱼当即反驳说：“既然军队是用来作战的，就应该乘敌人之危而出击；既然军队中的锣鼓是指挥作战的号令，就应该及时鸣鼓向还没列阵的敌军进攻。不然，要军队、要号令有什么用呢？”（《人民日报》1974年08月01日）

In example (17), the purpose of the emphasis is to draw the listener's attention. The reason for this reminder is that, in (a), the traditional Chinese medicine store is selling moldy and deteriorated medicine, having forgotten that “药是用来治病的”. In (b), “他们” are too feudalistic, assigning all tasks to women while neglecting the idea that “女人是用来疼的”.

Moreover, such reminders are often accompanied by corresponding negative constructions, serving as warnings or admonitions. For example:

(19) “房子是用来住的、不是用来炒的”，就是要让住房回归居住的属性。（《人民日报》2016年12月17日）

(20) 日本人发现了汽车的发展趋势越来越向“傻瓜”车发展，对于一般人（特别是老美们）来说，汽车是用来代步的而非是用来炫技的，

因此只要方便就可以了，不需要掌握多么高超的技术，只要有电子产品辅助就可以了。（《文汇报》2005年12月13日）

In example (18), the purpose of the emphasis is to provide a preparatory explanation or elaboration. Both (a) and (b) appear in the subordinate clause of a complex sentence. In (a), the clause “笔是用来写字的” is followed by an adversative clause marked by the conjunction “但是”. In (b), the clause “军队是用来作战的” is followed by a causal clause marked by the conjunction “既然.....就.....” (since...then...). Since the functional role of N is widely recognized within the community, the speaker can directly treat “N是用来V的” (N is used to V) as given information, using it as a foundation for further explanation or inference, such as “笔也可以用作医疗” and “应该乘敌人之危而出击”.

Similar to “N可以V” (N can V), the construction “N是用来V的” (N is used to V) also emerges under the motivating influence of the topic. Here, N typically functions as a generic reference [Of course, it does not have to be generic. For example, “这种草是用来排毒的，唯有昆仑山上长得效果好”], while V is a non-processual component representing an abstract event. This means that V cannot take aspectual markers such as “了/着/过” or combine with directional verbs, making it a state-of-affairs sentence (Yuan, 2003, pp. 3-16).

However, there is a slight difference: in the construction “N是用来V的” (N is used to V), N is generally a familiar everyday object with socially shared knowledge, such as “房子”, “月饼”, “药”, “女人”, “床”, “煤”, and so on. Moreover, V can represent the surface functional role of N. For example:

(21) “1你看书的地点不对，（因为）床是用来睡觉的；2看书的氛围不对，没有我在旁边啰嗦，你就犯困了。”（BCC对话）

(22) 有人可能会感到奇怪：煤是用来燃烧的，为什么还要拿到水里去洗一遍呢？实际上，所谓洗煤，不只是“洗”，而且是通过洗来“选”，所以洗煤又叫作洗选。（《人民日报》1959年01月24日）

In the examples above, “睡觉” and “燃烧” are the surface functional roles of “床” and “煤”, respectively. As such, they generally do not appear in the construction “N可以V” (N can V), as in “\*床可以睡觉” or “\*煤可以燃烧”, because they lack sufficient informational value and fail to provide new information. However, why can they appear in the construction “N是用来V的” (N is used to V)? We argue that this is related to the intersubjectivity embodied in “N是用来V的” (N is used to V). That is, although the functional role V of N is the most basic and widely known, the speaker’s emphasis here serves to draw the listener’s attention or to provide further explanation. A notable syntactic feature is that, in such cases, N does not need to be introduced by explicit foregrounded information but rather relies on the socially shared encyclopedic knowledge about N in people’s minds. For example:

(23) 从他们那里我知道了一个简单的真理：文字是用来读的，不是用来看的。看起来黑鸦鸦的一片，都是方块字，念起来就大不相同。诗不光是押韵，还有韵律；散文也有节奏的快慢，或低沉压抑，沉痛无比，或如黄钟大吕，回肠荡气——这才是文字的筋骨所在。（王小波《沉默的大多数》）

(24) 郑孝燮说道：“这桥（卢沟桥）不能再走车了！”可有人说：“桥，就是走车的。”他有些愤怒了：“过去是走车的，但现在不

行！碗是用来吃饭的，但我们能用故宫里的金碗吃饭吗？”（《人民日报》1997年01月06日）

In example (23), the topic N “文字” (writing) is not introduced by foregrounded information but rather serves as a general introductory statement summarizing the content of the subsequent discourse. The underlined sentences are all intended to explain that “文字是用来念的，不是用来看的”，serving as a reminder to the listener. In example (24), the topic N “碗” is even more implicit, originating from the speaker’s metaphor, where “碗” is used to metaphorically represent “桥”，thereby better illustrating the point that “卢沟桥现在不能走车了”。

Different functions require different forms of expression, as Traugott (1989, pp. 31-55) pointed out, this “semantic-pragmatic tendency” is closely related to the process of subjectification. From the objective event narration “用N V” (event sentence; V as event predicate; N as definite entity) to the subjective evaluation of entities “N可以V” (N as a category of entities; V as attributive predicate, indicating the function of N) and the intersubjective assessment “N是用来V的” (state-of-affairs sentence; N as a familiar category of entities; V as attributive predicate, which can indicate the surface function of N), the subjectivity progressively intensifies. This dynamic emergence process is essentially a result of language continuously adapting to achieve the purpose of information exchange.

## 2. The Emergence of Constructional Meaning

The constructional meaning of “N是用来V的” (N is used to V) can be summarized as “emphasizing that the function of N is to V”，serving to remind the listener or to provide a preparatory explanation. How, then, do

these implicatures such as reminders or elaborations emerge? We argue that this can be explained from the perspective of pragmatic inference.

In daily life, the essential factor enabling people to communicate and convey information effectively lies in the tacit adherence to the “Cooperative Principle” in conversation by both parties. That is, under normal circumstances, conversational participants cooperate with each other. Not only does the speaker consistently follow the “Cooperative Principle”, but the listener also always believes that the speaker will not violate it. Moreover, the speaker is aware that the listener trusts them to adhere to the “Cooperative Principle” (Grice, 1975; Shen, 2015, p. 67). Therefore, if the speaker violates a certain aspect of the “Cooperative Principle”, it becomes a signal that triggers inference. The listener will keenly detect this anomaly and, in conjunction with the context, engage in reasoning to capture the speaker’s implied meaning.

The construction “N 是用来 V 的” (N is used to V) emphasizes that the function of N is to V, which is an obvious and self-evident truth for everyone, constituting old information. If the information provided by the speaker is already known to the listener, then the speaker’s utterance should theoretically be unnecessary. However, this contradicts the “Cooperative Principle”. According to the “Maxim of Quantity”, the speaker would not say anything superfluous or redundant. Therefore, upon receiving this inference signal, the listener will actively engage in reasoning to interpret the implied meaning. Take, for example, “房子是用来住的” (houses are for living in) and “笔是用来写字的” (pens are for writing).

**Pragmatic Inference of “房子是用来住的” (Houses Are for Living In):**

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**Presupposition:** In conversation, both the speaker and the listener adhere to the “Cooperative Principle” and cooperate with each other.

**Fact:** The speaker’s statement that “房子是用来住的” (houses are for living in) constitutes old information for the listener, seemingly violating the “Principle of Quantity”.

**Inference:** The speaker would not make a meaningless statement, so it is likely that the listener has not paid attention and has used “houses” for other purposes, such as “speculation”.

**Implicature:** Reminder, admonition, criticism, etc.

**Pragmatic Inference of “笔是用来写字的” (Pens are for writing):**

**Presupposition:** In conversation, both speaker and listener adhere to the “Cooperative Principle” and cooperate with each other.

**Fact:** The statement “The pen is used for writing” made by the speaker represents old information for the listener. Moreover, if the statement is a metaphorical usage, the “pen” appears unrelated to the topic being discussed, which seems to violate the “Quantity Maxim” and the “Relevance Maxim”.

**Inference:** The speaker would not say something useless or irrelevant. Therefore, it is highly likely that the speaker intends to use this as a preamble to provide further clarification on the “pen” or a topic N that may be metaphorically related.

**Implicature:** The preamble enhances the explanation, among other functions.

In the expression of interactive subjectivity, speech inherently carries



more implicature (Traugott & Dasher, 2002, pp. 22-23). Moreover, because the structure "N is used for V" not only implies various implicatures such as reminders, advice, or preambles for further explanation, but also evokes a strong resonance from the listener (as both N and V are familiar to the audience), it is often placed in positions within the text that most effectively convey the speaker's intent, such as titles and topic sentences.

(25) 青春如朝日，是一个人最宝贵的年华。该如何度过，才能让青春的枝头绽放梦想之花？五四青年节来临之际，让我们一起共话青春。一代人有一代人的青春。与老一辈相比，这一代年轻人成长在中国发展最快、最好的年代。（《人民日报》2017年05月03日，标题《“青春是用来奋斗的”——五四之际致青年》）

(26) 有呼吁“救市”的人提出，买卖二手房的都是“刚需”，价格就得稳定。啥叫“刚需”？“房子是用来住的，不是用来炒的。”——去年底中央经济工作会议提出的论断，为“刚需”定了调：刚性需求，就是只用于或主要用于自住、不将投资功能考虑在内的购房需求。既然是“刚需”，……（《人民日报》2017年02月27日）

(27) 琴是用来听的，为何要读？近日的一次参观，看到钢琴制作流程中的一幅幅画面，就如同一页页地翻书，姑且称之为读吧。从小对音乐有一种向往，对于有着“乐器之王”美誉的钢琴更是带有一分崇敬。（《人民日报》2016年08月28日，标题《读琴》）

In example (25), “青春是用来奋斗的” serves as the title of the entire report; in example (26), the key term “刚需” runs throughout the text, and “房子是用来住的，不是用来炒的” precisely explains the concept of “urgent demand”; in example (27), the title is “读琴”， and this subject is introduced and elaborated through the preamble “琴是用来听的”.

## Motivation of Constructions

A construction is a form-meaning pairing, and the emergence of constructional meaning cannot be separated from the significant contributions of its constituent elements. Below, we will examine the respective roles played by the variables N and V, as well as the constant “是用来...的” (is used to...), in the process of meaning emergence in the “N 是用来 V 的” (N is used to V) construction.

### 1. The Activity Level of N in Daily Contexts

As mentioned in Section 2, N is closely related to people's daily lives. The speaker's purpose in using the construction “N 要一 q 一 q V” is to remind or advise the listener that only by starting from more familiar daily activities can the listener better understand and accept the message. High-frequency items in the corpus such as “房子, 月饼, 药品, 笔, 煤” are all closely connected to people's daily lives. The phrase “谁/任何人都知道” can be added before “N 是用来 V 的”, as in “谁都知道房子是用来住的” or “任何人都知道月饼是用来吃的”.

However, if the subject is distant from daily life or unfamiliar to people, such as some specialized terminology, it generally cannot be used in the “N 是用来 V 的” construction. For example:

(28) a\*高锰酸钾是用来杀菌消毒的。—— 高锰酸钾可以用来杀菌消毒。

b\*层次分析法是用来分析语言结构的。—— 层次分析法可以用来分析语言结构。

Moreover, N represents a kind of generic reference. According to Chen (1987, pp. 81-89) and Liu (2002, pp. 411-422), the core semantic feature of genericity is non-individuality, referring to the common characteristics and

attributes of a category of entities. In the construction, N denotes “an entire class of entities”, such as “房子, 月饼, 药品, 笔, 煤”, which can be understood as the collective set of all “houses, mooncakes, medicines, pens, coal” in the world, rather than specific members of the category. Therefore, words like “所有” or “任何” can be added before N to emphasize the collective whole: “(所有/任何) 房子都是用来住的”, “(所有/任何) 月饼都是用来吃的”, and so on. This genericity is syntactically manifested in the fact that noun phrases with specific reference generally cannot enter the construction. For example:

- |                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| (29) *一套房子是用来住的 | *一个月饼是用来吃的  |
| ? 这盒药是用来治病的     | ? 那支笔是用来写字的 |

Precisely because N is closely related to people's daily lives, represents shared old information between interlocutors, and denotes a kind of generic reference, it possesses a high topicality property and readily serves as the topic of the “information flow” in communicative processes. During the transmission of information in communication, different concepts exist in a dynamic cognitive state in the minds of both the speaker and the listener. Particularly when N represents a generic reference and is closely tied to people's daily lives, it corresponds to what Chafe (1994) terms “active information” or “semi-active information”. Even if not introduced by explicit foregrounded information, N can still become the subject of discussion in the sentence.

## 2. The Conventional Functionality of V

V is closely related to N, typically representing the functional role of N (e.g., “住” (to live) in “房子是用来住的” or “吃” in “月饼是用来吃的”). It exhibits strong predictability and a high degree of conventionality.

In contrast, V expressing temporary functional roles or generalized functional roles generally cannot enter the “N 是用来 V 的” construction.

For example:

(30) a 刀是用来切菜的 —— ?? 刀是用来剃头的 —— ?? 刀是用来斩断过去的

刀可以切菜 —— 刀可以剃头 —— 刀可以斩断过去

b 笔是用来写字的 —— ?? 笔是用来逗猫的 —— ?? 笔是用来书写未来的

笔可以写字 —— 笔可以逗猫 —— 笔可以书写未来

The conventional functional roles of “刀” and “笔” are “切(菜)” and “写字”, respectively, making them highly compatible with the “N 是用来 V 的” construction. In contrast, “剃头”, “斩断过去”, “逗猫”, and “书写未来” represent temporary functional roles and generalized functional roles for “刀” and “笔”, respectively, which appear markedly awkward. However, such restrictions do not apply in the “N 可以 V” construction. Furthermore, if the preceding N takes a definite form, the acceptability of temporary and generalized functional roles significantly improves, as in “这刀是用来剃头的”, “这刀是用来斩断过去的”, “那笔是用来逗猫的”, and “那笔是用来书写未来的”. This is because conventional functional roles are shared by all members within a category, while temporary functional roles pertain to specific members within the category, thus requiring the subject noun to be definite and specific. Generalized functional roles, on the other hand, refer to the effects

brought about by the entity denoted by the subject noun, and specific entities often yield concrete effects, which is why N typically appears as a definite form in such cases.

As further discussed in Section 1.3, V functions as an attributive predicate and cannot take any temporal markers (such as “了, 着, 过, ” etc.). Consequently, from a formal perspective, V in the construction is almost invariably a bare verb.

### 3. The Functional Emphasis of “是用来..的” (is used to...)

“是用来..的” (is used to...) serves as a focus marker emphasizing functionality. Lu (1985, pp. 241-251) points out that “是..的” indicates an affirmative focus, and “the focus of affirmation lies in the component following ‘是’”, functioning similarly to a focus indicator. Therefore, the focus of “N 是用来 V 的” (N is used to V) is “用来 V” (used to V), which emphasizes the functionality of N.

Moreover, it often manifests as a contrastive focus. Particularly when the speaker uses the construction to draw the listener's attention, the functional V in the focus often co-occurs with other functions, forming a contrast. In other words, “是..的” (shi...de) here acts as a focus marker for contrastive focus (Fan & Zhang, 2000, p. 194). In addition to positive-negative contrasts, as seen in examples (1), (19), (20), (23), and (26), there are also parallel contrasts between different Ns, thereby distinguishing their respective functionalities. For example:

(31) 王柏林不要命的工作热情和作风感染了中心的每一个人。他们的工资很低, 1997 年 4 月以前每月只领 280 元钱, 现在也只 400 来块钱。但没有人喊苦喊累, 没有人计较个人得失。王柏林身上常带着两样东西: 西瓜霜和存折。西瓜霜是用来润嗓子的, 存折是用来“润”中心的各

种支出的。一年多下来，他的存折上少了近百万元。（《人民日报》1998年）

(32) 在中国的学问里，大致是以经和史两种学问最重要。史书是用来记事的，经书的主要功能在于规范人的行为。为什么“五四”以后，学校中是否读“经”一直是一个争论不休的问题？因为“经”代表了一整套的行为规范，那么我们知道，传统的教育正是从读“经”开始。小学启蒙读物就是《四书五经》，所以这方面锻炼是比较重要的。（郑家栋《传统对于我们意味着什么》）

## Conclusion

The emergence of constructions encompasses both formal and semantic emergence. The formal emergence of the reminding and emphasizing construction “N 是用来 V 的” (N is used to V) has roughly undergone the stages of “用 N V” (use N to V) for objective event narration, “N 可以 V” (N can V) for subjective evaluation, and “N 是用来 V 的” (N is used to V) for intersubjective assessment. This dynamic emergence process is essentially the result of the speaker continuously adapting linguistic forms to achieve the goal of information exchange, driven by the topic and based on the expression of different functions. The emergence of constructional meaning is primarily realized through the listener's pragmatic inference. When the speaker emits an implicature—violating the “cooperative principle” in conversation—the listener keenly detects it, activates inference in context, and captures the speaker's implied meaning. Furthermore, from the perspective of constructional motivation, N in the construction exhibits daily activity, V demonstrates conventional functionality, and “是用来...的” (is used to...) serves as a focus marker emphasizing functionality.

From the perspective of functional linguistics, different linguistic forms necessarily serve different functions. However, from the standpoint of speaker encoding, different functions also require distinct forms for expression. The reason linguistic forms are encoded in such a way is to meet the speaker's diverse functional expression needs. Driven by the topic, N in “N 是用来 V 的” (N is used to V) can naturally continue the theme being discussed in the discourse, making the text more coherent and conveying the speaker's intention to remind or advise the listener. Clearly, such syntactic arrangements highlight the speaker's specific informational expression, as “the communicative need is primary in determining linguistic structure” (Zhang & Fang, 1996, p. 11). This vividly reflects the pragmatic-oriented nature of the Chinese language.

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