

## IDEOLOGICAL CULTIVATION THROUGH IDIOMS IN THE CHINESE LANGUAGE TEXTBOOK "HANYU JIAOCHENG" 《汉语教程》

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### Abstract

This research article aims to analyze ideological concepts conveyed through Chinese idioms found in the Chinese language textbook series "Hanyu Jiaocheng" 《汉语教程》. The findings reveal that the idioms in these textbooks convey six desirable characteristics: diligence and determination, self-reliance, perseverance, kindness, sincerity, and embracing life's uncertainties. Furthermore, the research uncovers that these idioms also subtly instill ideologies regarding behaviors to "avoid" and behaviors to "cultivate." Specifically, it suggests avoiding actions that are "excessive" while promoting "moderation," discouraging "dishonesty" while advocating for "integrity," and avoiding "thoughtlessness" while encouraging "mindful thinking." These values are essential for individuals to lead harmonious lives and promote societal peace and stability.

**Keywords:** ideology, Chinese idioms, Chinese language textbooks

### Introduction

Due to strong economic and cultural ties with China, Chinese language education has gained increasing importance worldwide, especially in Thailand. One of the widely adopted Chinese language textbook series in schools and universities is the six-volume Hanyu Jiaocheng 《汉语教程》, compiled by Yang Ji Zhou (杨继洲). This systematically structured textbook series not only enhances learners' language skills but also subtly conveys ideological concepts and values reflective of Chinese social and cultural norms through its use of idioms. Ideology, in this context, represents a structured system of beliefs that inspire actions to meet individual, collective, or societal needs. It is communicated through various forms, such as behavior and language, and can be described as a conviction in ideas believed to lead to an ideal outcome (Kriangkrai Kongseng, 2019, p. 16).

This research aims to analyze the characteristics and content of idioms in Hanyu Jiaocheng to explore the types of ideologies embedded within its material and the methods used to convey cultural values. The findings of this study are expected to aid in curriculum design, allowing Chinese language instruction to go beyond mere linguistic training and become a medium through which learners absorb desirable traits and values integrated into the learning experience.

## Research Objective

To analyze the ideological concepts expressed through Chinese idioms in the Hanyu Jiaocheng 《汉语教程》 textbook series.

## Scope of the Research

This research is qualitative. The population scope focuses on the Chinese language textbook series "Hanyu Jiaocheng" 《汉语教程》, covering volumes 1 through 6. The content scope involves analyzing various ideological concepts conveyed through the communication presented in the lessons of the "Hanyu Jiaocheng" 《汉语教程》 textbook series. The population used in this study consists of Chinese idiomatic expressions found in the "Hanyu Jiaocheng" 《汉语教程》 textbook series, compiled by 杨继洲 and published by Beijing Language and Culture University Press, comprising a total of six volumes.

## Research Methodology

The research employs document analysis and interpretation as its methodology. The research process is carried out as follows:

1. Collect relevant documents and studies related to the "Hanyu Jiaocheng" 《汉语教程》 textbook series, volumes 1–6, along with other pertinent research studies.
2. Identify and categorize the ideological characteristics within the scope of the research content.
3. Present the findings descriptively and analytically.
4. Conclude and discuss the results, accompanied by recommendations.

## Research result

The study reveals that the *Hanyu Jiaocheng* textbook series instills two types of ideological concepts: (1) desirable qualities and (2) behaviors to "avoid" and behaviors to "cultivate," conveyed through idioms within the lessons.

### 1. Desirable Qualities

#### 1.1 Diligence and Determination

Diligence and determination are desirable qualities that lead individuals toward success. This is illustrated in the idiom 拳不离手 (Vol. 5, p. 59), which means "**proficiency comes through constant practice**," emphasizing that expertise in any endeavor requires consistent effort and perseverance. Similarly, the idiom 曲不离口 (Vol. 5, p. 59), "**a song must be practiced daily to attain mastery**," illustrates that regular practice leads to proficiency, likening this to the art of singing, where only consistent training allows for skill and beauty in performance. This dedication must be sustained and genuine, not intermittent, as conveyed by the idiom 三天打鱼两天晒网 (Vol. 2, p. 210), "**three days fishing, two days casting the net**," which implies that tasks require continuous commitment rather than sporadic effort. Just as one cannot succeed in fishing without a sustained approach, one cannot achieve success without steady effort.

Furthermore, diligence and determination empower individuals to overcome any obstacles. This is encapsulated in the idiom 世上无难事，只怕有心人 (Vol. 4, pp. 80-81), "**There is no difficult task under the heavens for a determined person**." This quality of perseverance ultimately leads to proficiency and success in any field, as in the idiom 熟能生巧 (Vol. 5, p. 59), "**proficiency comes from practice**," highlighting that expertise arises from

diligent, repeated effort and patience in training. Diligence also compensates for any deficiencies, as illustrated by 勤能补拙 (Vol. 5, p. 59), "**diligence can make up for lack of ability.**" This suggests that hard work can bridge any skill gaps, bringing greater completeness. For instance, if one lacks expertise in a certain area, regular 勤能补拙 can cultivate that proficiency. This is equally true for the diligent pursuit of knowledge, expressed in 求知若渴 (Vol. 6, p. 42), "**to thirst for knowledge.**"

Through these idioms, *Hanyu Jiaocheng* conveys the importance of diligence and determination, presenting these qualities as pathways to mastery, fulfillment, and success.

### 1.2 Self-Reliance

Self-reliance is a valuable trait that empowers individuals to achieve success, building upon the diligence and perseverance discussed earlier. This concept is encapsulated in the idiom 事在人为 (Vol. 5, p. 59), "**success in any endeavor depends on one's efforts.**" It highlights that the success of any task relies on one's diligence and personal effort rather than consistently depending on others for assistance. Additionally, the achievements gained from self-reliance foster a sense of personal pride.

### 1.3 Patience

Patience is a crucial factor for success in any endeavor. Even with diligence, without sufficient patience, a person may not overcome obstacles or complete their goals. This is illustrated in the idiom 拔苗助长 (Vol. 5, p. 116), "**pulling up seedlings to help them grow.**" This phrase compares the impatience of pulling up young plants, thinking it will make them grow faster, to hastiness that can ultimately cause harm. Just as pulling up seedlings harms their growth, rushing a task without patience may lead to unfavorable outcomes. This idiom subtly warns against impatience, urging individuals to practice patience and avoid hasty decisions. Similarly, the idiom 君子报仇，十年不晚 (Vol. 5, p. 117), "**a gentleman takes ten years to exact revenge,**" advises patience when responding to challenges or adversaries, avoiding impulsive actions that could lead to unfavorable results. In the textbook's context, this phrase conveys that the best form of "revenge" or resolution is to improve oneself continuously rather than reacting hastily.

Through these idioms, *Hanyu Jiaocheng* emphasizes patience as an essential quality, guiding learners to approach their goals thoughtfully and to focus on self-improvement as a means of achieving long-term success.

### 1.4 Kindness

Kindness is an essential quality that fosters harmony and unity within society, making communities more livable and promoting goodwill among people. The idiom 乐于助人 (Vol. 6, p. 14), "**willing to help others,**" reflects a genuine readiness to assist others without seeking or expecting anything in return. Similarly, the idiom 在家靠父母，出门靠朋友 (Vol. 4, p. 2), "**at home, rely on parents; outside, rely on friends,**" emphasizes mutual support and kindness across relationships—whether within families, among friends, or even toward strangers. These expressions convey the value of extending compassion and support to one another, creating a cooperative and caring society.

### 1.5 Sincerity

Sincerity is a fundamental aspect of human relationships, vital for building trust and harmony among people. The idiom 诚心诚意 (Vol. 5, p. 145), "**sincere and wholehearted,**" expresses a genuine intent and earnestness in actions, indicating a commitment to authenticity. Similarly, 真心真意 (Vol. 5, p. 152), also meaning "**true sincerity,**" highlights the importance of genuine intentions in one's actions toward others. When individuals interact sincerely, it fosters a sense of ease and mutual respect between parties. Moreover, sincerity

naturally leads to "dedication," as reflected in the idiom 一心一意 (Vol. 5, p. 152), "**wholehearted dedication.**" This phrase conveys the idea of being focused and committed to a task without discouragement, creating an environment where both personal satisfaction and positive results can be achieved.

These idioms, as presented in *Hanyu Jiaocheng*, underscore the importance of kindness and sincerity as qualities that enrich personal relationships and contribute positively to social harmony and individual fulfillment.

### 1.6 Embracing Life's Uncertainties

Embracing life's uncertainties involves acknowledging the reality that everything is subject to change. Accepting these truths and responding with appropriate and constructive actions enables individuals to live happily in society. Living harmoniously in a community requires respecting others and societal norms. This concept is illustrated in the idiom 先来后到 (Vol. 6, p. 28), meaning "**first come, first served,**" which emphasizes the importance of justice by granting precedence to those who arrive first. When everyone respects this rule, society remains peaceful and free from conflict.

However, if conflicts arise—whether intentionally or unintentionally—the ability to let go can help alleviate tension. The idiom 一笑了之 (Vol. 6, p. 147), "**laugh it off and let it go,**" conveys a positive outlook, encouraging individuals not to let trivial matters weigh on their emotions and to maintain a lighthearted perspective. This approach promotes emotional restraint, helping individuals avoid unnecessary stress.

Another aspect of understanding the world is empathy, as conveyed by the idiom 设身处地 (Vol. 6, p. 146), "putting oneself in another's shoes." This phrase encourages empathy, suggesting that understanding others' feelings allows one to respond to them appropriately, leading to better interpersonal relationships and self-regulation of emotions. Additionally, the idiom 刮目相看 (Vol. 5, p. 118), "**to view with newfound respect,**" promotes a mindset of admiration and appreciation for the success and accomplishments of others. Such openness fosters goodwill and positivity, contributing to a cheerful and warm disposition.

Moreover, adaptability is crucial for harmonious integration into different social contexts. This is reflected in the idiom 入乡随俗 (Vol. 5, p. 59), "**When in Rome, do as the Romans do,**" which emphasizes the importance of adjusting to the customs and norms of each community. This flexibility enables individuals to coexist smoothly in diverse environments and cultures, leading to a sense of belonging and happiness.

Through these idioms, *Hanyu Jiaocheng* promotes understanding, empathy, and adaptability as essential qualities for achieving personal and social harmony, guiding individuals to live peacefully and happily within a diverse society.

## 2. Behaviors to "Avoid" and Behaviors to "Cultivate"

The idiom 画蛇添足 (Vol. 4, p. 91), "**drawing legs on a snake,**" metaphorically describes actions that are excessive or unnecessary, exceeding what is appropriate. This idiom serves as a subtle caution against acting without forethought or restraint or operating outside the established rules. Rather than leading to success, such behavior often results in complications. Hence, this idiom conveys an implicit warning: in any endeavor, one should avoid doing what is "unnecessary" and instead aim for "moderation"—a balanced and principled approach that maximizes true benefit.

Another idiom, 滥竽充数 (Vol. 5, p. 78), "**a talentless person blending in with the talented,**" highlights deceitful or dishonest behavior, where an individual attempts to deceive others for personal gain. This idiom subtly implies the importance of "integrity," warning

against behaviors characterized by dishonesty or manipulation. The message is to uphold honesty toward oneself and others, emphasizing the value of genuine contribution.

Mindfulness is another important quality, enabling individuals to navigate tasks smoothly and overcome obstacles with ease. Being mindful involves maintaining mental clarity, avoiding scattered thoughts, and not allowing external pressures to disrupt one's focus. The idiom 胡思乱想 (Vol. 5, p. 157), "**wild and chaotic thoughts**," reflects a lack of mental stability, with thoughts becoming scattered and irrational. This idiom serves as a reminder to avoid "thoughtless actions" and instead to "think mindfully," making well-considered decisions to prevent potential negative consequences.

Additionally, mindfulness includes attentiveness and caution in all matters. The idiom 小心翼翼 (Vol. 6, p. 15), "**with extreme caution**," highlights the importance of being careful to minimize errors. Such a cautious approach can prevent situations like those described by 将错就错 (Vol. 6, p. 56), "**continuing an error because one is already in too deep**," which reflects the predicament of being forced to continue on a problematic path due to a lack of initial mindfulness. This idiom underscores the necessity of careful and thoughtful decision-making to avoid being trapped in undesirable situations.

Through these idioms, *Hanyu Jiaocheng* emphasizes the importance of moderation, honesty, and mindful thinking as behaviors to cultivate while warning against unnecessary, dishonest, and thoughtless actions. These qualities contribute to a balanced and principled way of living.

## Conclusion and Discussion

The findings of the study reveal that six desirable traits embedded in the Chinese idioms used in the "Hanyu Jiaocheng" 《汉语教程》 textbooks are aimed at cultivating these characteristics in learners. These traits include diligence and perseverance, emphasizing the importance of consistent effort as the key to success. The idioms promote self-reliance, inspiring learners to achieve their goals independently. They stress patience, enabling individuals to overcome challenges. Generosity is highlighted through the encouragement of helping others to create a harmonious and livable society. Sincerity is emphasized to foster positive relationships, and lastly, the texts advocate for an understanding of the world, adaptability to social contexts, and optimism. These traits reflect ideologies aimed at enabling individuals to live happily in society while contributing to peace and harmony.

Moreover, many idioms in the textbooks serve as cautionary or instructional tools, emphasizing actions to be avoided and virtues to be upheld. They highlight the importance of moderation, warning against excess, and encourage honesty while discouraging deceit. Learners are taught the value of mindfulness and careful consideration before taking action, alongside prudence to minimize mistakes. This approach aims to prevent individuals from being compelled to act wrongly under difficult circumstances.

These ideologies align with the core moral principles of Confucian philosophy, which emphasizes individual responsibility as a foundation for societal development. Confucianism posits that the prosperity or decline of society and the world originates from individuals, and therefore, improving individuals will automatically lead to societal and global progress. Additionally, it reflects the social philosophy of mutual interdependence, teaching that individuals are not isolated but must interact with others, necessitating principles for interpersonal conduct (Phra Ittiphon Iddhinano, 2014).

The study demonstrates that the ideological concepts reflected in the Chinese idioms within the "Hanyu Jiaocheng" 《汉语教程》 textbooks convey significant social values aimed

at instilling key qualities in learners. These qualities motivate learners to pursue their goals independently, navigate challenges effectively, and contribute to personal and societal well-being.

### **Acknowledgment**

This research article was completed with the invaluable guidance of my academic advisor, for which I am deeply grateful. I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to the university administration, the administrators of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Research Institute at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for providing the opportunity to present this research. I hope that the findings of this study will contribute meaningfully to academic scholarship and benefit society in the future.

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