



Integrating the Classic Chinese Elementary Reading Materials into Preschool Education: A Case Study of “A Thousand Family Poems” in Guizhou Province, China

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Abstract. The classical poetry genre of traditional primary school reading materials was the applied teaching material for children’s education in ancient China. Moreover, its representative works include The Thousand Family Poems, The Three Hundred Tang Poems, The Divine Child Poems, and other poetry collections of traditional primary school reading materials that significantly impacted ancient China. The article supports the importance of classical poetry in the kindergarten curriculum through reading and interviews, identifies challenges in the application of classical poetry in the kindergarten curriculum, and analyzes problem-solving solutions for the application of the ancient poetry heritage. Therefore, this article concludes that classical poetry books and materials have natural advantages in compiling and applying kindergarten and school-based curricula. Furthermore, kindergartens can use classical poetry books as a blueprint for activity design and development and use this vehicle to establish a classical poetry curriculum and activity system in kindergartens using classical poetry books as materials and improve kindergarten. Moreover, the curriculum is intended to complement the kindergarten curriculum.

Keywords: Ancient poems · Kindergarten curriculum · Traditional MengXue reading material

1 Introduction

Based on the requirements of cultural self-confidence and the need for traditional culture’s protection, inheritance, and development. The Opinions on Implementing the Project of Inheritance and Development of Excellent Chinese Traditional Culture issued by the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council of the Chinese government in 2017 put forward that by 2025, a basic system of inheritance and development of excellent Chinese traditional culture will be formed the incredible Chinese conventional culture. The project will integrate Chinese traditional culture into all aspects of moral education, cultural knowledge education, arts and

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sports education, and social practice education, as well as in all areas of enlightenment education, primary education, vocational education, higher education, and continuing education. In addition, focus on early childhood, primary and secondary school textbooks to build a Chinese culture curriculum and teaching materials system.

As the starting link of initiation and lifelong education, it is necessary and of great value for kindergartens to practice traditional culture and build a curriculum system of traditional culture, which is an important motive and source of thinking about this topic. At the same time, preschool education, as the starting stage of life education, is the foundation of primary education and an essential stage of cultural transmission. Moreover, ancient poetry is a significant literary form and genre in Chinese literature. Therefore, this study aims to use old poems to root the core of traditional culture in kindergarten education and to develop the cultural confidence of young children, the cultural confidence of early childhood teachers, the perceptual immersion of young children in ancient poems, and the ability of early childhood teachers to design and prepare activities. Based on these considerations and the current situation, this topic was chosen for in-depth research and reflection.

Classical poetry is a treasure of traditional Chinese culture. The genre and form of poetry are an essential element in the enlightenment of young children in language, writing, vocal rhyme, aesthetics, moral etiquette, cultural inculcation, and cultivation, and is a quality element in the overall cognitive, emotional and social development of young children. At the same time, classical poetry is essential to our splendid and unique culture. Therefore, poetry education has outstanding educational value both in ancient and modern China. Especially in contemporary kindergarten education, poetry education has been given the critical task of cultural heritage. In the globalization and integration trend, the people's culture and traditions need to be preserved and passed on. Identifying the value of traditional MengXue reading materials is the first objective that this study needs to achieve, i.e., the basis of the research. The value of the conventional MengXue reading materials in the classical poetry genre is confirmed to be instrumental in promoting language development, aesthetic education, cultural transmission, and personality formation based on the poems' content. After the value determination objectives were achieved, problems were identified through the documentation and interview methods to understand the application of ancient poetry in the kindergarten curriculum. Finally, countermeasures and methods to solve the issues are discussed and explored in the discussion section.

2 Literature Review

The research on MengXue education is rich and radiant. Moreover, the research results are numerous and abundant, mainly focusing on three aspects: research on the development and evolution of the MengXue education system, research on the content of MengXue reading materials, and analysis of the value and application of MengXue education.

2.1 Development and Evolution of the MengXue Education System

A general introduction and elaboration of traditional MengXue education is provided from three perspectives: the knowledge system of MengXue education, the education system, and the content of teaching materials clarifying the concept of MengXue education as a school section and outlining the outline and prototype of MengXue education in general. For example, the development of MengXue education in the Han dynasty, including the formation of the folk education process for young children entering primary school. Furthermore, adult children already entering university, the role of official intervention in forming MengXue education, and the tendency for MengXue education to spread to other age groups. The tendency to apply to different age groups in society.

2.2 The Content of MengXue Readings

Since there is a wide variety of reading materials, there has been fruitful research on the contents of the reading materials of MengXue studies. A systematic review was conducted of the Qing Dynasty's reading materials of MengXue studies, Qionglin of Young Learning, in terms of language and content. A comparative study of the Three Character Classic and the Longwen Whip Shadow; Han Jiehui (2017) conducted a study and review of the Primary School Cyanpu compiled by Wang Yinglin in the Song Dynasty in terms of content and knowledge structure. (2017) studied and sorted out the content and knowledge structure of Wu Qian (2017) analyzes the writing and use of the Three Character Classic, the Hundred Family Names, and the Thousand Character Classic from six aspects: background, authorship, content, ethical thinking, language form, and widespread use, and explores the rationality and shortcomings of their writing to form a comprehensive and correct understanding of them. Therefore, the book is an objective and correct understanding of the subject.

2.3 The Value and Application of MengXue Education

Liao Xuejun (2016) centered on the application value of MengXue calligraphy education in primary school calligraphy education, utilizing the strengths of MengXue calligraphy education to compensate for the inadequacies of contemporary primary school calligraphy education. In her study, she examined the value and application of history books in the teaching of history in secondary schools in terms of the context of promoting traditional culture, the relevance of history books to current textbooks, the suitability of history learning for seventh-grade students, and the significance of using history books in the teaching of history in secondary schools. This paper examines the need to return history books to secondary school history classrooms from four perspectives: the background of promoting traditional culture, the relevance of history books to the content of current textbooks, the suitability of history learning characteristics for seventh-grade students, and the current situation of history teaching in junior high school.

A brief review of the above research on MengXue education reveals that, first and foremost, research on MengXue education is rich in content and from various perspectives, covering cultural, historical, philosophical, and educational research perspectives, and is informative. In the field of basic education, kindergarten, primary, secondary, and

Table 1. Basic Situation of Preschool teachers surveyed

Name	Gender	Age	Education level	Years of work
A	female	30	Bachelor's degree	8 years
B	female	25	College Degree	5 years
C	female	28	Bachelor's degree	6 years

university education stages are all covered; however, research on kindergarten education is wealthy. However, research on establishing a MengXue studies strategy and system in the kindergarten curriculum and how it is integrated into the kindergarten curriculum is limited. As a result, the researcher employs the ancient poetry genre to introduce MengXue education's lyrical content into the kindergarten curriculum and to investigate the practical application of traditional classical poetry in the kindergarten curriculum.

3 Research Methods

The scope of the study was Zunyi City, Guizhou Province, China, where three working kindergarten teachers from three different kindergartens in the city were selected for interviews. The basic information of the interviewees was as follows (to protect the personal information and privacy of the interviewees, the the researcher used the code names A, B, and C instead of the actual names of the interviewees).

From Table 1, we can find that the average age of the interviewees is no more than 30 years old, and they have 5 years or more of teaching experience. The rich teaching experience ensures that the interviewees can give adequate information concerning their teaching experience when answering the interview questions, ensuring that the study can be carried out and advanced smoothly.

Through the websites of CNKI, Wanfang, and Vipul, the researcher reviewed the relevant literature and sorted out the theoretical support, research background, and other contents needed for this study from the literature on traditional MengXue reading materials. At the same time, we determined the specific value of ancient poems in the kindergarten curriculum. On this basis, they constructed their theoretical framework for the study and clarified their research objectives. The interviewees were identified by developing an interview outline, and first-hand information was obtained. The interview outline was divided into four dimensions: curriculum philosophy, curriculum form, curriculum organization, and curriculum evaluation, with 1–2 specific questions for each dimension. The interviewees were selected from young kindergarten teachers with more than five years of teaching experience. The educational levels were chosen from specialists and undergraduates, covering the two leading educational components of kindergarten teachers in China today.

This study is based on the framework idea of investigation of the current situation, analysis of the problem, and proposal of countermeasures to study the current situation of the application of ancient poems in kindergarten curriculum; the specific framework diagram is on Fig. 1.

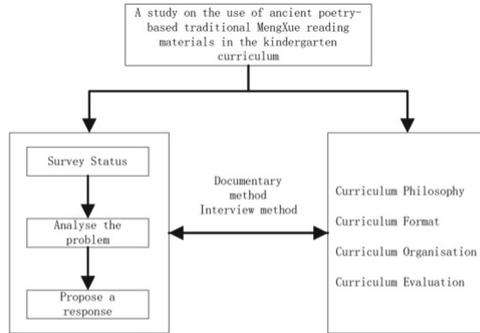


Fig. 1. A Theoretical framework for research on the use of traditional MengXue reading materials in the kindergarten curriculum

4 Research Results

4.1 Content of Interviews

Tables 2, 3, and 4 show the results of the conversations of Interviewee A, Interviewee B, and Interviewee C, respectively. The researcher presented the interviewees’ interview contents in a table and sorted and analyzed them to conclude.

Table 2 shows the content of the interview with Respondent A. Respondent A has eight years of teaching experience in kindergarten. The researcher distilled the interviewees’ responses and came to the following conclusions: the curriculum concept dimension, Interviewee A believes that the current kindergarten curriculum concept follows the concept of curriculum gamification, and the application of ancient poems in the kindergarten curriculum should also follow the curriculum concept of curriculum gamification; in terms of the curriculum form, group teaching activities are the main form of activity, mainly based on teachers’ teaching and children’s group learning; the curriculum organization In terms of curriculum organization, the content of activities in the language area is the main focus, and ancient poetry is a type of literature activity, as are activities such as talking, narrating and debating in the language area. The primary function and role are that of a tool to promote children’s language development; therefore, the curriculum evaluation follows the evaluation system of group teaching activities, focusing on the children’s performance and the process effects of the activity sessions.

Table 3 shows the content of the interview with Interviewee B, who has five years of teaching experience. The researcher distilled the responses of Interviewee B and came to the following conclusions: in terms of curriculum philosophy; Interviewee B believes that there are very many curriculum philosophies and that the actual teaching of kindergarten education, as well as the curriculum, is a blend of many curriculum philosophies applied; the format, organization, and evaluation of the curriculum is the same as the responses of Interviewee A, following the application of ancient poetry as a literary work activity in the language domain and emphasizing the functional and instrumental.

Table 4 shows the content of the interview with Interviewee C, who has six years of teaching experience. Regarding curriculum philosophy, Interviewee C was guided by

Table 2. Interview table on the use of traditional MengXue reading materials of the ancient poetry genre in the kindergarten curriculum (1)

Item	Question	Interviewee A
Curriculum Concept	What is the curriculum philosophy behind the choice of classical poetry for the design of curriculum activities?	Strictly speaking, nowadays, kindergartens promote the gamification of the curriculum, so we will consider the element of play when we design the curriculum. The use of ancient poems for curriculum activities is also based on the consideration of curriculum gamification.
Curriculum Format	What are the primary forms of classical poetry used in the kindergarten curriculum?	It mainly focuses on the collective teaching activities in the language field of preschool children. However, poetry is also the main form and carrier of literature in language education, so it is natural and essential to apply it to teaching activities in the language field because ancient poetry is not very easy for children to understand the text, so in the primary or collective teaching activities.
Curriculum Organization	Is there a specific form of curriculum organization for applying classical poetry in kindergartens? How is it usually carried out?	Generally speaking, our ancient poetry teaching activities are in the field of language poetry activities; there is no independent activity module of the ancient poetry curriculum. Instead, based on collective teaching activities to help children understand and learn ancient poetry.
Curriculum Evaluation	How to evaluate the use of classical poetry in the kindergarten curriculum? Are there any specific evaluation criteria?	Because ancient poetry curriculum activities in our language teaching activities of literary works, our curriculum evaluation is still based on children's curriculum performance; there are no evaluation standards.

Table 3. Interview table on the use of traditional MengXue reading materials of the ancient poetry genre in the kindergarten curriculum (2)

Item	Question	Interviewee B
Curriculum Concept	What is the curriculum philosophy behind the choice of classical poetry for the design of curriculum activities?	There are so many guidance documents on curriculum philosophy from experts, curriculum gamification, and child-centredness, and I feel that the curriculum philosophy for kindergarten should result from many sources.
Curriculum Format	What are the primary forms of classical poetry used in the kindergarten curriculum?	Just like story and prose activities, it is mainly based on the development of children's language, so it is still said that in collective teaching activities to perceive and understand, if children are interested, it will let them go down to enrich more content about ancient poetry.
Curriculum Organization	Is there a specific form of curriculum organization for applying classical poetry in kindergartens? How is it usually carried out?	In terms of specific curriculum organization, there is no systematic curriculum of ancient poetry, just like stories, prose, and nursery rhymes; curriculum activities are designed as a tool for language development.
Curriculum Evaluation	How to evaluate the use of classical poetry in the kindergarten curriculum? Are there any specific evaluation criteria?	There is still a focus on reflection and evaluation of teaching activities, the performance of teachers and children, and the effectiveness of the activities. However, there are no evaluation criteria specific to the activities of the ancient poetry program.

a more general view of education and did not talk about a specific curriculum idea. In terms of curriculum format, the interviewee believed that the curriculum format of group teaching activities was chosen to develop and conduct the language material because of the difficulty of the content of ancient poems. Finally, regarding the organization and evaluation of the curriculum, interviewee A and interviewee B share the same view of ancient poetry as a type of literary activity in the language domain, valuing it as a functional and instrumental tool for language development.

Table 4. Interview table on the use of traditional MengXue reading materials of the ancient poetry genre in the kindergarten curriculum (3)

Item	Question	Interviewee C
Curriculum Concept	What is the curriculum philosophy behind the choice of classical poetry for the design of curriculum activities?	It is the child-centered, child-centered view of education and the curriculum.
Curriculum Format	What are the main forms of classical poetry used in the kindergarten curriculum?	Group teaching activities, after all, are not understandable to the children without the teacher leading the learning of the poems.
Curriculum Organisation	Is there a specific form of curriculum organization for applying classical poetry in kindergartens? How is it usually carried out?	Are you talking about the framework structure for designing themed activities? This is not the kind of curriculum organization framework that kindergartens use for themed activities, but they do not usually use ancient poetry as a theme. We typically equate old poems with literary forms such as stories to develop children's language skills
Curriculum Evaluation	How to evaluate the use of classical poetry in the kindergarten curriculum? Are there any specific evaluation criteria?	It is the regular evaluation and reflection on teaching and learning. Generally, we make the ancient poems into a group teaching activity, so the evaluation and reflection are carried out in the context of the group teaching activity.

4.2 Results of the Interviews

Through sorting out the content of the interviews, the researcher found the following four problems in the contemporary application of traditional MengXue reading materials of the ancient poetry genre in the kindergarten curriculum: first, a single curriculum concept with limited orientation; second, a single curriculum form with strong instrumentalism; third, a curriculum organization with weak thematic and fragmentation; and fourth, a confusing curriculum evaluation with a lack of standards.

4.2.1 Curriculum Concept: Single Concept and Limited Orientation

Classical poetry is positioned in kindergarten education as educational content in the language area and is generally operated and educated to develop children's language

skills. Teachers use classical poetry in group teaching activities in the language area to design and arrange teaching activities, presenting the current situation that the utilization of classical poetry in kindergarten education is not high. On the one hand, classical poetry is not easy to organize for teaching, and in terms of content, On the one hand, classical poetry is not as easy to manage and teach. Its content is not as well grasped as other forms of literature, such as stories. On the other hand, classical poetry is not as attractive as other forms of literature, such as stories. Classical poetry focuses on creating imagery and context, which is not easy to teach effectively under the demands of playful teaching. As a result, classical poetry is less valued than other forms of literature, such as stories, as a component of language teaching in kindergarten. This single position and content limitation has led to the common use and utilization of classical poetry in kindergarten education.

4.2.2 Course Format: Single Format and Highly Instrumental

In terms of the form of the curriculum, the teaching of classical poetry in kindergarten shows a tendency to be mono-teaching and instrumentally oriented. In the previous discussion, we highlighted the problem of the limited orientation of classical poetry education in kindergartens. Due to the limitations of the orientation, classical poetry is positioned in the field of language. There is a lack of comprehensive application and integration of classical poetry education, leading to a single form of teaching in practice, with group teaching activities being the main focus. The teaching of classical poetry is completed in group teaching activities without the effective connection and cooperation of other links. Teachers usually ask children to recite classical poetry or review it with their parents at the end of the lesson. However, there is a lack of extended content and in-depth exploration of classical poetry in other sessions, resulting in a tendency to rely too heavily on group teaching activities. The second is that, in practice, the teaching is so instrumental that the essence and core of classical poetry are neglected. Poetry is essentially a literary form with rules of meter and meter, and its academic nature is strong. Still, in practice, teachers focus on the rhythm and form of the language, treating classical poetry simply as a vehicle for perceiving the rhythm and meter of the language and not enough for understanding and grasping the mood and imagery of classical poetry.

4.2.3 Curriculum Organization: Weakly Thematic and Fragmented

The problem of the weakness and fragmentation of the curriculum is not a single issue raised concerning classical poetry in kindergarten education. As kindergartens do not have explicit teaching materials and do not teach separate subjects, there is no concept of teaching materials. However, the differences between each kindergarten due to the situation, the development level of the region, the teacher staffing, and the local policy guidelines lead to difficulties in developing and applying a systematic kindergarten-based curriculum in line with the developmental characteristics of the children in the kindergarten region. As a result, the lack of resources and design for curriculum development in kindergartens is characterized by a weak, fragmented and haphazard approach to teaching and learning. As a result, classical poetry teaching in kindergartens is usually organized so that the teacher selects a poem, designs a lesson plan, and finally carries

out the activity in the language area, and then the classical poetry activity ends. This does not give children a continuous developmental experience.

4.2.4 Curriculum Evaluation: Lack of Standards and Confusing Evaluation

How can the integration of classical poetry into the kindergarten curriculum be effectively evaluated, and how effective is the integration? How can the integrated curriculum be evaluated? There are currently no systematic answers in kindergarten education. The integration and application of classical poetry in the kindergarten curriculum requires a complete evaluation system to assess all aspects of it. Can they understand the meaning of classical poetry? How effective was the lesson? There is a lack of systematic and holistic evaluation of the classical poetry curriculum; for example, is the teaching method appropriate? In addition, there is a lack of systematic and holistic assessment of the classical poetry curriculum, such as whether the teaching methods are appropriate and whether the choice of classical poetry is scientific and rational. In other words, there is a single dimension of curriculum evaluation for teachers.

Moreover, there are no unified and systematic criteria for integrating poetry into the kindergarten curriculum. What curriculum development steps and evaluation systems are needed, and what kind of classical poetry application curriculum is scientific and effective? These questions must be addressed in the design and development of kindergarten curricula using classical poetry in kindergartens today.

5 Discussions

Based on the problems identified in the interviews, the researcher tried to explore countermeasures and solutions to different issues, making recommendations and strategies in the following four areas.

5.1 Curriculum Philosophy: Establishing a Philosophy and Clear Positioning

The first thing that should be made clear when teaching classical poetry in kindergartens is why and for what purpose young children should learn classical poetry. What can young children gain from classical poetry? This is very important. In the country's vigorous advocacy of reviving traditional culture, promoting traditional culture, and building cultural confidence, kindergartens should establish the educational concept of restoring and inheriting traditional culture and infiltrate and integrate building cultural confidence into the daily education of kindergartens. Classical poetry is a favorable window for children to learn about traditional culture and build cultural confidence. The descriptions of festivals, the presentation of ancient life scenes, and the family sentiments in classical poetry are all content that naturally fit with our Guidelines for the Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–6 and the requirements of early childhood development. At the same time, precise positioning of classical poetry beyond the content of language education and a comprehensive educational concept of classical poetry is required to maximize the value of classical poetry education. This means inheriting the time-honored tradition of 'poetry education' and integrating classical poetry with aesthetic art education, extending the value of poetry as a purely linguistic education to include aesthetic art education.

However, in light of the current situation in kindergartens and the context of the times, the value of classical poetry does not only belong to the field of language and art but can also be integrated as a carrier and content into the comprehensive educational content of kindergartens, with a comprehensive and integrated concept of classical poetry education in kindergartens.

5.2 Curriculum Forms: Enriching Forms and Returning to the Essentials

To enrich the conditions of learning and teaching classical poetry, inquiry-based learning, theme-based learning, active learning, and individual, group, and collective learning and teaching that work together to teach. Furthermore, learn classical poetry and develop forms of teaching and learning classical poetry other than group teaching activities. For example, inquiry-based learning of classical poetry activities in district corners, classical poetry program teaching activities, theme-based knowledge of classical poetry activities, including the linkage and development of environment creation, play activities, district activities, drama performances, home activities, and community activities, incorporating the learning and application of classical poetry in all aspects. However, on the other hand, there is a need to return to the literary essence of poetry, reduce the instrumental nature of classical poetry, and focus on poetry's spiritual core and cultural content.

To enrich the cultural core of classical poetry, apart from focusing on the linguistic perception of the rhyme and meter of classical poetry, attention should also be paid to the core and cultural content. Classical poetry's rich humanistic scenes and emotional experiences are infectious and vital cultural nutrients. Furthermore, various forms of teaching classical poetry convey the mood, imagery, emotions, spirit, and cultural context of classical poetry. Through different forms of classical poetry teaching and learning, children perceive language, feel emotions, nourish culture, develop aesthetic abilities, enrich aesthetic experiences, root traditional culture in their life systems, and establish a cultural and spiritual belonging to the nation and country.

5.3 Curriculum Organization: Rational Organization and Establishment of a System

A complete and systematic curriculum organization and learning system for classical poetry are established. Different forms of classical poetry learning are organized and practiced systematically and rationally. It uses the various stages of children's experience development as a blueprint. It gives full play to the usefulness of different forms of teaching and learning, which together promote the development of children's language experience, emotional experience, and cognitive experience. The curriculum and teaching organization of kindergartens is mainly based on thematic forms of teaching and learning. However, there are two apparent problems with implementing this thematic curriculum. At the same time, the themes are fragmented, and there is no continuity and hierarchy of experience development. Therefore, the first issue that should be addressed in teaching classical poetry in kindergartens is how to integrate children's developmental experiences into learning classical poetry or other content. Moreover, to establish a teaching and curriculum system for classical poetry in kindergartens that is aimed at

children's development and that uses a systematic, regular, shallow to the deep pathway of acquisition of children's experiences as a method and means.

5.4 Curriculum Evaluation: Establishing Indicators and Scientific Evaluation

A complete system of curriculum evaluation indicators is set to provide a scientific and efficient assessment of the classical poetry application curriculum and to optimize better and guide the design, preparation, and implementation of the classical poetry curriculum. Based on the developmental level and cognitive rules of young children, the core experiences required, the core experiences of classical poetry, and the laws of curriculum setting, the indicators are considered and set—the more specific the indicator points, the better the course evaluation. The more detailed the indicators are, the more effective and comprehensive the course review will be and the stronger the guidance.

6 Conclusions

The main issue with classical poetry education in kindergartens is that it is not systematic, fragmented, and strongly fragmented. In contrast, kindergartens, due to their activity-based teaching and learning mode, do not have a unified curriculum standard and system, only the Guidelines and the Outline as guiding documents. This leads to high-quality curriculum setting and garden-based curriculum development with high requirements for kindergarten quality, teachers, and funding. However, given the overall and general conditions of kindergartens in China today, they are not yet able to meet them, so a variety of curriculum issues, including classical poetry education, have arisen. As a result, many curriculum issues have arisen, including classical poetry education. Traditional monastic readings and textbooks have natural advantages in curriculum development and application in kindergartens, and kindergartens can use them as a blueprint for activity design and development.

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