

Construction of Cultural Identity through Language Education of Junior-Senior High Schools in China during 1949-1997

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Abstract

The construction of cultural identity is a very complex issue and is affected by many factors, one of which is education. To make Chinese people acknowledge their own political civilization and cultural tradition, after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Chinese education departments integrated Marxist education by using Chinese language courses in junior-senior high schools (JSHSs) as a medium. To achieve such integration, Chinese language courses must teach language knowledge while disseminating Marxism. A large number of works with Sinicized Marxism content was included in textbooks and interpreted according to relevant theories. Additionally, teachers of Chinese language courses must have high literacy regarding Marxist theory. Judging from the current social reality, the Chinese language courses in China's JSHSs have prompted the adherence, identification and internalization of Marxism among JSHS students since the founding of the People's Republic of China and have laid the foundation for the formation of a socio-political culture guided by Marxism in the general public.

Keywords: cultural identity, Marxism, Chinese language courses, junior-senior high schools, education

1. Introduction

"Identity" as an academic concept was first proposed by Freud & Cronin (1973) in the field of psychology. They argued that identification is not simply imitation but a state that commonly exists in the subconscious based on assimilation. The issue of identification became more prominent in the regionalization process in the 1980s and has since attracted academic attention. Cultural identity is the most important identity and considered to be the basis of national identity and political identity (Lash & Featherstone, 2001; Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006).

The use of education and language plays an important role in the formation of cultural identity. Driedger (1975) examined the factors influencing the cultural identity of students of different races at the University of Manitoba and found that six factors, i.e., religion, endogamous marriage, language use, race, education, and friendship, affect cultural identity. During their research on the issues of scientific assessments of teenagers, Fensham and Cumming (2013) presented that the formation of knowledge and experience could be significantly affected by the language and culture interactions among people. Nechitaylo (2017) also held a similar view and suggested that culture and art, including customs, cultural tradition, language, and religion, are key factors influencing the cultural identity of a nation. Esteban-Guitart, Lalueza, Zhang-Yu, & Llopart (2019) proposed a "culturally sustaining pedagogy", which is both a theoretical method and an educational practice and plays a role in maintaining the members' identity within a community. Su, He, & Huang (2019) noted that education plays an important role in guiding young people, especially those in ethnic minorities, to adapt to the popular society and culture.

In 1949, when the Communist Party of China (CPC) replaced the Kuomintang as ruling party, the political culture during the rules of the Kuomintang had been lasted for nearly 40 years in China. The political culture of the CPC is represented by the Marxism, which is completely different with the culture contacted by the populace at that time. How to construct the culture identity of people towards the Marxism was one of the main enterprises undertaken by the CPC since 1949. Language education, which plays an irreplaceable role in the transmission of the core values of culture between generations, is one of the most important ways to form and sustain the cultural identity of a country. In China, Chinese language courses are listed as the most important curriculum in basic education, deemed as the most basic tool that must be mastered by students (Lu, 1960).

As a result, the Chinese language courses of junior-senior high schools (JSHSs) become one of the main ways to

establish the culture identity of the Marxism. The main topic examined in this study is how the Chinese education department has established a Marxist language system through Chinese language course education at JSHSs in the formation process of a new cultural identity. Moreover, special emphasis is placed in the construction and sustainability of the national political and cultural identity via continuously strengthening the core values of Marxism to be accepted by the teenagers. In the following sections of this paper, the educational positioning, text composition, teaching team, and student feedback regarding Chinese language courses in China's JSHSs during 1949-1997 will be analyzed and discussed through policy analysis, data analysis and seven case studies.

2. The “two-in-one” Positioning of Chinese Language Education in JSHSs

Education is constrained by social and historical development, having strong time characteristics. In the course of social development, changes in the mode of production lead to the establishment of a new social relation structure and institutions that adapt to these changes and present the corresponding requirements for education. Therefore, the education in the People's Republic of China (PRC) is different from that in any past historical period in that it is designed for the consolidation and development of socialism; that is, education in the PRC should adhere to the Marxism. The Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which was adopted on September 29, 1949, to serve as the interim constitution, clearly states that “the cultural education of the People's Republic of China is for the new democracy; in other words, it is a national, scientific, and populist cultural education.” (Document Research Office of the CPC Central Committee, 1992). The Education Law of the PRC, first promulgated in 1995, also clearly states that “The country adheres to the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought and the theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics and follows the basic principles established by the constitution to develop a socialist education. (Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council, 2005)” Chinese language education, as one of the core components of basic education in China, is aligned in the same direction as overall education development in China.

The Chinese language, as the mother tongue of Chinese people, has an influence on Chinese people beginning at birth, imperceptibly shaping their ideology and cultural psychology and thus exerting a substantial impact on their life and work at a spiritual level. In particular, literature is the imagery reflection of the ideology (e.g., feelings, views, intentions, and hopes) of social classes and groups, and thus, the most effective means of propagating ideology. Moreover, adolescents in JSHSs are in a critical period of their physical growth and are forming their life outlook and values, making Chinese language education during this stage critical for the individual and society. Therefore, when formulating or revising the Standards of the Chinese Language Curriculum for JSHSs, which is a programmatic document that guides Chinese language education in China, the Ministry of Education expresses similar teaching objectives: the Chinese language courses in JSHSs must use Marxist perspectives to guide students to study texts and obtain necessary language knowledge; when learning to read and write, attention should be paid to improving students' socialist consciousness, cultivating the sentiment of the proletariat and the moral qualities of communism (Chinese Textbook Research Institute, 1999). This indicates that the JSHS Chinese language education in China has a “two-in-one” feature, i.e., in the classroom of Chinese language courses, both Chinese language knowledge and Marxist theory are disseminated. In terms of Marxist theory education, students' attitude and emotional adherence to Marxism must be realized, in addition to establishing their preliminary understanding of the theory.

From the perspective of pedagogy theory, the “two-in-one” positioning of Chinese language education emphasizes that students must make achievements at two different levels during a single learning process. Gagné (1985) categorized the abilities students acquired through learning into five aspects, i.e., verbal information, intellectual skills, cognitive strategy, attitude, and motor skills. Chinese language education enables students to acquire verbal information, improve communication and language skills, while these are only one aspect of educational activities; in the education process, the abilities of students in the other four areas also improve to various extents. The Marxist education contained therein forms an intelligence that is internalized within an individual's structure, guiding students to develop towards the needs of the country and the society in terms of cognitive strategy and attitude while acquire theoretical knowledge.

To establish students' positive attitude towards Marxist theory, it is necessary for students to acquire the theoretical concepts and obtain relevant information as internal requirements, while effective external conditions include applying imitation methods and establishing successful perceptions (Gagné 1985). The systematic study of Marxist theoretical concepts by JSHS students depends on the teaching of politics courses, and the continuous acquisition of additional learning information requires other complementary courses. Especially in Chinese language courses, the selection of Marxist's works or those capable of reflecting Marxist theory as teaching material can provide standards for imitation; while the study of these works can teach students how to use Marxist theory to analyse and interpret life so as to deepen their understanding and identification with respect to this theory.

Different from the straightforward and systematic nature of political courses in cultivating students' values and outlook

on the world and life, the nurturing of students' ideology through Chinese language courses is achieved through texts, which cannot be forced and explicit, but implicit, hidden, and even obscure. JSHS Chinese language education has its own objectives and arrangements, and the infiltration of Marxist theory in the classroom does not amount to direct preaching of Marxist ideology. Since the founding of the PRC, the main problems and social tasks of the country have undergone a series of changes, resulting in different concepts of Chinese language education in different social backgrounds. Different teaching concepts once caused an imbalance in the relationship between teaching Chinese language in the classroom and the infiltration of Marxist theory in the second half of the 20th century, and the over-politicization of the course also occurred. To balance the relationship between the two, there were debates in the education community regarding whether to teach Chinese language courses as a politics course or whether to teach Chinese as a literature course. *People's Education*, a comprehensive educational periodical published by the Ministry of Education, has a profound impact on the education community. During the debates, some scholars criticized, in *People's Education*, the phenomenon that teaching Chinese language ignored the nature of the language and basic language training and excessively focuses on the ideological and political content of the text, teaching Chinese language courses as a politics course (Luo, 1961).

However, it is a consensus in the education community and among the related scholars that education plays an important role in the process of establishing cultural identity. In 1989, the State Education Commission proposed to strengthen the ideological and political education, as well as the education regarding national civics and current events through Chinese language courses, the domestic and international situations were taught using the Marxist theoretical framework, including a description of the current situation and characteristics of international and domestic class struggles. Moreover, the JSHS students were guided to understand that there were profound class struggles and social conflicts in the capitalist world and that the majority of working class people were still experiencing heavy class exploitation and oppression (State Education Commission, 1989). The Chinese education community has also perceived that education neither can nor should be separated from politics and that Chinese language courses have always been a powerful means of ideological education, through which Marxist theory should guide daily teaching (Liu, 1983). Although the Chinese language education in JSHSs has experienced several setbacks in terms of educational mode, it has always had a "two-in-one" feature, i.e., disseminating Marxist theory through the infusion of Chinese language knowledge.

3. Selection and Interpretation of Texts in Chinese Language Textbooks

The choice of a country's educational content is a reflection of its social culture. In Chinese language courses in JSHSs, the socio-cultural value orientation shown in the textbooks as well as the specific teaching and learning details in the classroom all reflect the ideological characteristics of the country. In this section, the type and composition of the texts in China's Chinese language textbooks for JSHS students in the second half of the 20th century will be introduced, through specific numbers and how Marxism is used to explain and interpret the texts in textbooks of Chinese language with three examples.

3.1 Selection of Texts in Chinese Language Textbooks

In the early days after the founding of the PRC, the selection of teaching materials for Chinese language courses followed Mao Zedong's instructions: political standards come first, and artistic standards come second (Mao, 1952). Since then, "literature and artistic qualities" have been the selection criterion for texts in Chinese language textbooks for JSHSs. Under this standard, there have been three main types of texts in JSHS Chinese language textbooks in the half century, as shown in Table 1. The academic system in China in this period was a full-time ten-year system, which included five years of elementary school, three years of junior high school and two years of senior high school. There were six textbooks and four textbooks for junior high school and senior high school, respectively. According to the above selection criterion, among the total 300 texts in 10 textbooks, the proportions of various text types in these textbooks in the 1960s (J.W. Zhong, 1961) are illustrated in Fig. 1.

In the late 1970s, China initiated its reform and opening up. Although improvements were made in Chinese language courses, the impact of the Cultural Revolution still lingered, which also affected the selection of teaching materials in the 1978 edition of textbooks. At that time, scholars believed that the number of poems (over 30) selected by the CPC leaders, accounting for approximately 18% of the total number of the texts in the six textbooks for the junior high school, was excessive. This issue was also present in the high school textbooks, and there were some political works that were time-specific and policy-rich, but the content was often outdated (Yang, 1980).

Table 1. Text types in JSHS Chinese language textbooks in the second half of the 20th Century

Type	Description
Modern Chinese literary works	Literary works after the May 4th Movement; the most frequently used works are literary works and political articles that reflect the basic views of Marxism or the basic policies of the CPC.
Ancient Chinese literary works	According to Marxist judgement criteria, many literary works with excellent ideological content and language are included; some works focus less on content and more on learning to write, and there are very few works with negative ideological factors but an outstanding artistic level.
Literary works from other countries	Mainly masterpieces of literary masters.

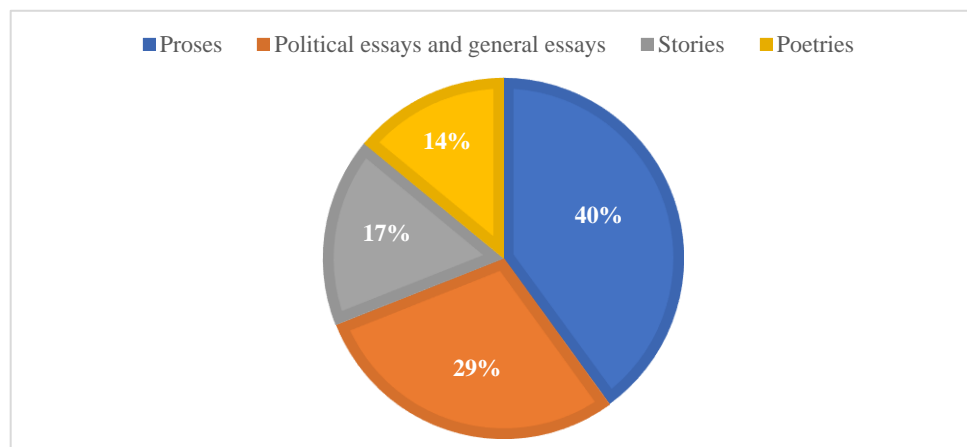


Figure 1. Types of texts in Chinese language textbooks in the 1960s

In 1980, the above issue still existed to some extent. Specifically, in the 1980 editions of ten textbooks (six for junior high school and four for senior high school), there were two classical works by Marxist writers, i.e., “Speech in front of Marx’s Tomb” by Engels and “Mourning Lenin” by Stalin. Other works on Marxism were all products of the Sinicization of Marxism. The Sinicization of Marxism refers to the process of combining the basic principles of Marxism with the specific reality of China to form Marxist theoretical results with Chinese characteristics. Among the works of Sinicized Marxism, those by the first-generation CPC leaders such as Mao Zedong dominated. Table 2 shows the representative texts of works of Sinicized Marxism in the 1980 editions of ten textbooks for JSHSs.

As summarized in Table 2, most of the selected political and current affair articles are theoretical products of the early leadership of the CPC that use Marxism to guide the Chinese revolution and construction. A few of them have strong timeliness and essentially include the basic Marxist theory and have exerted a substantial impact on the history of Chinese revolution and construction. Although Mao Zedong’s poems are not theoretical achievements of the Sinicization of Marxism, they are selected as outstanding literary works to help strengthen adolescents’ sense of identification with the political leader.

Notably, the issue pointed out by scholars in the 1970s that there were too many articles by CPC leaders in Chinese language textbooks was not resolved in the 1980s. However, relative to the situation in the 1960s and 1970s, the total number of political articles in the 1980s decreased, and many articles with strong timeliness were excluded. For instance, compared to the textbooks in 1978, in total 13 argumentative essays were removed in the 1980 edition textbooks, with 46 left, accounting for 16.9% of the total text numbers; 6 political texts by Mao Zedong were removed, with 15 left, occupying 5.5% of all the texts (Chinese Textbook Research Institute, 2010). These changes were closely related to the initiation of China’s reform and opening up, which made China more open, more free, and more internationalized and, in turn, changed its education method. Around the 1980s, the exploration and improvement of Chinese language courses, albeit imperfect, largely determined the basic principles for teaching Chinese language in JSHSs for the next 20 years.

Table 2. Works of Sinicized Marxism in the 1980 editions of JSHSs textbooks

Author	Article Nature	Quantity	Description
Mao Zedong	Political article	19	“Commemorating Bethune”, “Building a Great Socialist Country”, “Continuing the Style of Hard Work”, “Criticism and Self-Criticism”, “On Anti-Liberalism”, “A Good Experience for the Reform of Commune: An Introduction”, “Notes for Political Work of Cooperatives”, “We Communists Are Not Afraid of Difficulties”, “On Learning”, “What Is Knowledge?”, “Release Burden and Start Engine”, “To Whom Are Our Literary Arts?”, “National, Scientific and Popular Culture”, “Transforming Our Learning”, “Remembrance of Mr. Sun Yat-Sen”, “Opposing Party Stereotypes (Excerpt)”, “Preface to Rural Investigation”
	Poetry	6	“Wanxisha: In Response to Mr. Liu Yazhi”, “Send Off the God of Plague”, “Qinyuanchun: Snow”, “Qinyuanchuan: Changsha”, “Shuidiaogetou: Swimming”, “Niannujiao: Kunlun”
Zhou Enlai	Political article	2	“We must Create a Democratic Atmosphere”, “On Learning from Mao Zedong (Excerpt)”
Liu Shaoqi	Political article	2	“Being a Good Party Member and Building a Good Party (Excerpt)”, “On Individuals and the Collective”
Deng Xiaoping	Political article	1	“Speaking about Getting Truth from Facts”
Others	Current affairs article	2	“Practice is the Sole Criterion for Testing Truth” (A “Guangming Daily” special commentator’s article, May 1978), “The Great Transformation and Re-learning” (A “People’s Daily” special commentator’s article, December 1978)

3.2 Interpretation of Texts in Chinese Language Textbooks

Due to the high theoretical level of original Marxist classics, they are not suitable for lectures and dissemination in JSHSs. Therefore, original Marxist works were rarely included in Chinese language textbooks. To integrate Marxist theory into Chinese language teaching materials and into teaching itself, in addition to the inclusion of Sinicization of Marxism works into textbooks, “Curriculum standards for Chinese language courses in JSHSs” and related instructor books were used to interpret and understand Chinese language teaching materials using the Marxist theory and discourse system.

Like teaching materials, reference books for JSHS Chinese language courses were also consistently compiled by the education department and thus had the same authority as textbooks, whose interpretation of the ideological content of the text and guidelines for teaching focus determine the teaching and learning processes to a certain extent. Limited by the development of higher education, the capability of Chinese language teachers in JSHSs has been at a low level for a long time. For many teachers, the reference books are a necessity. Therefore, the authority and the value of reference books have a profound impact on teaching. Below, through three cases, we show how reference books interpret contemporary Chinese literary works, ancient Chinese literary works, and foreign literary works in the Marxist discourse system.

Case 1: Interpretation of contemporary Chinese literary works

Contemporary Chinese literary works included in JSHS Chinese language textbooks after the May 4th Movement, aside from the theoretical achievements of the Sinicization of Marxism, were dominated by Lu Xun. Mao Zedong held a high regard of Lu Xun: “Lu Xun is the leader of China’s cultural revolution. He is not only a great writer but also a great thinker and a great revolutionary.” (Mao, 1966). For a long time, Lu Xun was portrayed as China’s literary leader, whose works are full of critical spirit, which was deepened and systemized using the Marxist discourse system through JSHS Chinese language reference books.

Case text: “On the Fall of Leifeng Tower,” which is a reinterpretation of the Chinese folklore “Lady White Snake”;

Author of text: Lu Xun;

Key teaching point: Understand the anti-feudalism significance of this article and learn from Lu Xun's revolutionary spirit of anti-feudalism;

Text interpretation: In folklore, Leifeng Tower is used as an instrument for feudal autocratic rule of Lady White Snake, symbolizing the enslavement and oppression of the feudal patriarchal force on people, especially women. The author, as a revolutionary democrat, abhors Leifeng Tower and would like to see it fall, indicating the author's thoughts and feelings about overthrowing feudal autocracy.

Case 2: Interpretation of ancient Chinese literary work

In the teaching of Chinese language as a mother tongue, appreciating excellent cultural traditions is an important part of the Chinese language; therefore, textbooks have always included many ancient Chinese literary works. Despite strong historic characteristics, these works have high cultural self-awareness and rich ideological connotations due to the deep influence of the notion that literary works should serve as the vehicle of ideology. They contain the growth factors needed for modern education, and many already have simple dialectical materialist ideas. When analysed and interpreted using simple terms of the relevant Marxist theories, they can help students to further understand ideological connotations while deepening their understanding Marxism. Affected by the feudal patriarchal system, many works also contain ideas that do not pertain to current times. For these ancient works, teachers must further explore and explain their ideological connotations on the basis of the historic background and respect for the author and the text.

Case text: "Words of a snake catcher," which is a story about a household of three generations that would rather die of poisonous snakes than die of harsh taxes.

Author of text: Liu Zongyuan

Key teaching point: Understanding the crimes of feudal rulers' rampant and brutal plunder on the working class

Text interpretation: The text exposes the feudal ruling class' brutal oppression and exploitation of the working class and expresses the author's sympathy for the people's sufferings. The author hopes that the supreme ruler would change the course and eliminate social injustices to relieve the people's suffering, which is nothing but a wish that is impossible to realize, reflecting the author's limitations in understanding class struggles and history.

Case 3: Interpretation of foreign literary works

The interpretation of foreign literary works is still based on the Marxist framework system.

Case text: "The Emperor's New Clothes"

Author of text: Hans Christian Andersen. Introduction to the author in the reference textbook: he stands up for the working people in his writing, reflects the tragic fate of the working class, and exposes the cruelty and corruption of the feudal ruling class.

Key teaching point: Recognize the hypocritical, stupid, and ugly nature of the emperor and his ministers.

Text interpretation: This article exposes and satirizes the hypocrisy and stupidity of the feudal ruling class represented by the emperor through a story in which an incompetent and extravagant emperor is tricked to embarrass himself.

The content of the reference book shows that the terms of discourse under the Marxist theoretical system, such as "democracy," "feudal ruler," "class," and "working class", are integrated into daily lessons and have become an important framework to build the system for teaching Chinese language. However, there are still some problems with this framework. For example, the assessment of the authors in ancient times using the Marxist theoretical system is prone to deviate from the specific historic context; the interpretation of some texts is inclined to be meaningless or rhetoric, thus becoming useless in terms of thought provocation and language training. Nevertheless, the overall framework is effective and gradually enables the internalization of Marxist theory in the texts of Chinese language textbooks, forming a complete, scientific, self-consistent, and inclusive education system.

4. Training of Chinese Language Teachers and Their Teaching Practices

Different from specialized politics courses and Marxist political philosophy courses, the indoctrination of Marxist theory in Chinese language courses has been performed inexplicitly in the process of language teaching, in which the language teachers are tasked with guiding the students to learn the texts and necessary language knowledge with a Marxist perspective, viewpoints and methods. Rigorous training on reading and writing are conducted so that the students are ideologically educated and can continuously strengthen proletariat feelings, improve socialist consciousness and gradually establish a proletarian worldview (Wang, 1978). This places extremely high requirements on teachers. Forming teaching and research groups in normal school education, on-the-job training and daily work are the main methods adopted to train language teachers.

Shortly after the founding of the PRC, the National Conference on Primary Education and Teacher Education made it

clear that every teacher in the PRC should become a Marxist (People's Education Editorial, 1951). To ensure that every language teacher became a Marxist, many normal colleges and universities that were set to train JSHS teachers included learning content related to Marxist theory in their literary theory courses. The preface of the 1980 edition of the textbook "Basics of Literary Theory" of the Chinese Language clearly stated that Marxist literary theory is the only correct theory that is extracted from and tested by objective reality and that learning this theory requires students to learn the correct scientific conclusions that were drawn by classic Marxist writers from the widely studied literary phenomena repeatedly proven to be correct in practice; so that they can completely, accurately, and systematically master Marxist literary theories and use the Marxist perspective, viewpoint and method as well as the basic viewpoint of Marxist literary theory to study the history and current situation of literature. This guiding ideology determines that the reserve group of JSHS Chinese language teachers need to master Marxist theory and use it reasonably and effectively in their teaching activities.

The historic limitations of the development of higher education made it difficult for these graduates of normal schools to meet the actual needs of JSHS teaching. To improve the proficiency of in-service teachers who did not meet the academic standards, a corresponding on-the-job training system was introduced in 1955 (Ministry of Education of the PRC, 1955). The part-time training of teachers in secondary schools was mainly conducted in the form of teacher training colleges and correspondence courses, of which the correspondence courses for Chinese language included using Marxist theory to interpret texts. In the first volume of the 1978 edition of the correspondence teaching materials for JSHS Chinese language teachers in Yangzhou Prefecture, the first text was "Speech in front of Marx's Tomb," which is a classic text in JSHS Chinese language textbooks. To interpret this text, the textbook cited a large number of original works by Marx, such as an explanation of the "historical science" mentioned in the text, which adopts the argument of Engels in "Karl Marx's 'Critique of Political Economy'" that "all the sciences not in the category of natural sciences are deemed historical sciences." (Textbook Writing Group in Yangzhou, 1978). Through such continued education, it was guaranteed that most JSHS Chinese language teachers can master the theories related to Marxism that can be used in teaching.

However, for a long period of time, there was certain theoretical difficulty regarding teachers becoming qualified Marxists; therefore, there were two problems in practice. One problem was that some teachers only superficially accepted the words and sentences of Marxism, but in practice, they advocated another set of theories. Another problem was that although some teachers had established a preliminary Marxist position, they still lacked an understanding of systematic and in-depth theories of Marxism; therefore, they were not able to integrate Marxism into specific works and were not persuasive in teaching, failing to solve students' problems.

To address the above problem, the Central Committee for Problems related to Chinese Language Teaching was established in 1953. Shortly after, Chinese language teaching and research groups were set up in elementary and secondary schools in China to extensively facilitate research activities on language teaching, which are still in use today. These teaching and research groups organized the teachers' daily lessons, which, in addition to the literature and education, included Marxist theory and current affairs politics. In terms of learning theories, the content was mainly Marxist-Leninist theory and Mao Zedong Thought before the 1980s and then was gradually supplemented with Deng Xiaoping Theory after the 1980s. Through this theoretical learning, Chinese language teachers are able to use dialectical materialism and historical materialism in teaching, analysing, researching, and explaining various problems and in helping students develop a correct theoretical framework and political direction.

However, teachers' knowledge structure, theoretical proficiency, and teaching skills vary greatly from individual to individual, and the ways and effects of teachers' integration of Marxism into teaching also differ. The difference in the experience of teachers also causes various student feedback regarding the political theory and ideological content in Chinese language courses. Here, we present two contrasting cases:

Case 4:

Cong Weixi, a writer born in 1933, recalled a teacher in his senior high school years and mentioned that when teaching Mao Zedong's "Opening Speech at the First Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)," which was the first lesson of his senior high school Chinese language course, the Chinese language teacher asked students to take out a notebook to write down the names of well-known CPPCC members, which he had already written on the blackboard. The lesson was full of abstract political lecturing, and the class was a very unpleasant experience, like a torture from boredom, which made students think that the teacher was so incompetent that he used politics to conceal his lack of literary knowledge (Cong, 1985). The teacher, in the memory of Cong Weixi, did not have effective teaching skills and was incapable of analysing the text from a theoretical perspective and failed to resonate with students due to his dull teaching style, which not only led to student resentment but also affected the effectiveness of teaching.

Case 5:

In 1963, the experiences of the teaching group at Xinji High School in Hebei Province were analysed and popularized. One of the experiences was that the lessons did not deliberately emphasize the theoretical ideas in the text, and in the course of teaching, teachers only needed to follow the principle of unifying the language form and ideological content. For literary works with limitations in ideological content, appropriate criticism was certainly necessary, and it was sufficient for the teacher to point out the ideas in the text that were different from or incompatible with the current socialist ideology (Li, 1963). The experiences at Xinji High School achieved the integration of Marxist theory without turning the Chinese language course into a politics course, thereby gaining the recognition of the students and teachers at that time.

Training teachers to be Marxist is the premise for the integration of Marxism in the classrooms of JSHS Chinese language courses. Since the founding of the PRC, the teaching content for courses in various normal schools and on-the-job continued-education schools for teachers have been designed by adhering to the guidance of Marxism to cultivate teachers on theoretical qualities. When conveying Marxist theory to students, teachers can adopt various approaches; appropriate teaching methods can prompt students to intuitively accept Marxist theory and can be used as important theoretical tools for learning language and even life guidance.

5. Students' Feedback

In the period of the Government of Kuomintang of China (KMT), when selecting texts for JSHS Chinese language textbooks, propaganda articles were included, which made KMT's "partisan education" ubiquitous in all phases of Chinese language courses (Ministry of Education of the PRC, 1942). This kind of "partisan education" was eliminated from the education system after the founding of the PRC and replaced by the popularization and dissemination of Marxist theory. Table 3 summarizes the numbers of JSHS students since the Founding of new China. It is obvious that, with the development of education in the new China, the number of teenagers affected by the new Chinese language teaching philosophy increased significantly. Then, what is the practical effect of incorporating Marxist theory into Chinese language courses in JSHSs? The following two cases are introduced to answer this question.

Table 3. Numbers of JSHS students since the Founding of new China, retrieved from Ministry of Education of the PRC (2000) (Unit: ten thousand people)

Year	1949	1965	1978	1980	1985
Senior high school students	7.11	45.89	692.91	383.40	257.51
Junior high school students	34.12	299.89	2005.98	1550.91	1349.40
Total students	41.23	345.78	2698.89	1934.31	1606.91
Total population in China	54167	72538	96259	98705	105851
Rate of JSHS students	0.76‰	0.48‰	20.80‰	19.60‰	20.24‰

Case 6:

In the winter of 1979, the JSHS Chinese language editing group of the People's Education Publishing House sent two investigation teams to Fujian and Sichuan provinces to conduct field investigations. During the investigation, composition and language knowledge tests were conducted at several JSHSs in both rural and urban areas. The results of the tests were compiled into a survey report, in which the compositions by the students at the time were included as excerpts. It is reasonable to believe that compared with outstanding compositions, those in the report that had grammatical errors were more reflective of the cognitive level of ordinary students.

Here is a sentence from a composition by a junior high school student: this movie depicts that Raju, a son of Justice Raghunath, is oppressed by the reactionary capitalist system of the time to an unbearable level.

Here is another sentence from a composition by a senior high school student: the movie "Storms in October" mainly praises fighting against the "gang of four" by the older generation proletarian revolutionaries and the broad masses of workers and peasants (Middle School Chinese Editorial Office, 1987).

Ignoring the grammatical problems, the appearance of the terms such as "capitalism" and "proletariat" indicates to some extent that a Marxist discourse system has been essentially established in the JSHS student group.

Case 7:

In 1991, a political ideological tendency survey was applied to 603 senior high school students at four high schools in the cities of Guangzhou and Shaoguan in Guangdong Province. The survey results showed that, on average, 79.6% of

the students believe that only by adhering to educating adolescents with Marxism can they form a scientific worldview and that adolescents are relatively simple and immature, making it necessary to educate them with Marxism (Zhu, 1992).

Most of the students in this survey believed that it was necessary to uphold to the guiding position of Marxism in education. Notably, at that time, socialism had just experienced great setbacks in the world, such as the drastic changes in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union, suggesting that the proportion was actually lower under the macroscopic political environment. In other words, in the long run, most students were positive about the guiding position of Marxism in education. This survey result also indicated that although it is impossible to measure the impact of each course, JSHS Chinese language courses, as a main component of the curriculum, have made great contributions in establishing students' identity with Marxism.

Under the ideological education system of JSHSs with Chinese language courses as one of the main focuses, Marxism has been gradually accepted by JSHS students. During this period, Marxism was not only used by students in their daily learning and life but also became a theoretical method for them to understand and analyse the world. The recognition and application of Marxism by JSHS students indicated that after internalization and practice, they transitioned from adherence to Marxism to identification with Marxism, which will be further internalized as the main content of the value and attitude system in their adult lives. This transformation is of great significance for the sustainability of Marxist cultural identity in China.

6. Conclusions

At the end of 1997, the magazine "Beijing Literature" initiated a discussion on the issues of Chinese language courses in JSHSs, which gradually created a new wave of language education reform in the society. The new reforms have brought a fresh look to JSHS Chinese language courses in the 21st century, but the guiding ideology has been barely changed. The magazine "Qiushi", a publication by the CPC Central Committee, pointed out that the teaching reform regarding Chinese language must adhere to the correct direction and use Marxism as the guiding ideology of education (Y.Z. Zhong, 2000).

The public identification with Marxism in the second half of the 20th century mediated by JSHS Chinese language courses inevitably has some problems. For example, in some historical periods, the phenomenon of excessive politicization in Chinese language courses presented, which not only ignored language learning itself but also affected the true popularization of Marxist theory. In the interpretation of some texts, there were also issues of improper application of the theory or over-interpretation.

Nevertheless, the introduction of Marxist theory to Chinese language courses changed and redefined the Chinese language discipline and constructed a logical and systematic knowledge system for Chinese language curriculum, in which Marxism has become the standard for compiling Chinese language teaching materials and selecting the course knowledge while serving as one of the main contents of Chinese language courses, simultaneously promoting the sustainable rationalization and systematization of Chinese language knowledge in accordance with related Marxist theory, and thus constructing a discourse system for interpreting Chinese language textbooks.

In terms of the current social reality, the JSHS Chinese language courses since the founding of the PRC have prompted the adherence, identification and internalization of Marxism for the students. It also laid the foundation for the formation and sustainability of the Marxism-guided socio-political culture in the general public. The formation of such a cultural atmosphere has provided a prerequisite for the elimination of the KMT's "partisan education" since the Republic of China era and the phenomenon of blindly worshipping of foreign culture. More importantly, it is beneficial for the creation of China's own cultural characteristics and ultimately forming a sustainable cultural system with Marxism as the core.

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