Chinese Traditional Literature and Academic Achievement: A Study of Secondary Schools Students

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Abstract: This study aimed to determine the opinions of the secondary school students of learning Chinese classical literature, the difference in the level of acquisition between male and female, and find out the relationship between the acquisition of knowledge in Chinese traditional literature and their academic achievement. This study was done in two national-type secondary schools (NTSS) in Selangor. The instrument consisted of a set of acquisition test and questionnaire drafted based on the Language Acquisition Theory. The respondents were 104 form four students, consisting of 52 students randomly chosen from two schools. The findings showed that form four students overall hold negative views about learning Chinese classical literature. There was a significant positive correlation between the acquisition test scores of Chinese traditional literary knowledge (M = 39.56, SD = 11.66) and the grades obtained by the students in the Chinese subject in the Lower Secondary Assessment Examination (M = 3.77, SD = 1.27), r = .686, p < .01. The results show that actions should be taken to raise students' interest in traditional literature and to improve students' acquisition of Chinese traditional literary knowledge as well as to ensure that the Chinese syllabus is implemented effectively.

Keywords: acquisition, Chinese traditional literature, Chinese language, Language Acquisition Theory, national-type secondary schools, national secondary schools

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a critical advancement in human history. Without it, humanity would likely not be nearly as advanced as it is today. There are four reasons to not only study literature, but to master the study of literature. Literature is a tool to record historical events as well as knowledge. It's also quite capable at bringing people together. Lastly, the understanding of literature is a form of power in historical and modern societies. These are all good reasons to emphasize the importance of literature. Therefore, the use of literature in language teaching and learning is effective in producing balanced and harmonious individuals [1].

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In Malaysia, Chinese language is an elective subject that is offered to secondary school students. Many students did not choose to study Chinese language at secondary school level even though they have studied six years of Chinese primary education.

In Chinese traditional literature component in Chinese Language at Malaysia Certificate Examination (MCE), famous core element is important to be learnt and mastered. Zhang's [2] findings in 2009 involving 600 students from five secondary schools in the district of Johor Bahru, reported that a total of 88.33% of the students were of the view that Chinese famous core element is very important in the teaching and learning of the Chinese language. Zhang's findings also showed that the lack of literary background has disadvantages and it affects the learning of Chinese famous core element. This is unexpected because the element of Chinese traditional literature is a vital component in the