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## THE EDUCATION ROLE OF HIEROGLYPH IN PRESERVING CULTURAL VALUES OF HOMELAND IN DIASPORA: A CASE STUDY OF THE CHINESE DIASPORA IN SINGAPORE

**Summary:** *This article explores the educational role of Chinese hieroglyphs in preserving cultural values of the homeland within the diaspora, focusing on the Chinese community in Singapore. The study examines how hieroglyphic writing serves as a cultural bridge, maintaining the identity and heritage of the Chinese diaspora while fostering a connection to their motherland. The aim of the research is to investigate how the use of hieroglyphs in everyday life contributes to cultural continuity among diaspora communities. Practical tasks include analysing the role of the Chinese in Singapore, exploring the role and balance between the Chinese characters and the official language in Singapore and find the ways it saves the Chinese culture and forms locality to Chinese state initiatives now. The research employs qualitative methods, including case studies and content analysis, to assess the effectiveness of hieroglyphs as cultural preservers. Results indicate that the use of hieroglyphs in community practices strengthens cultural retention and identity within the diaspora.*

**Keywords:** *PR China, Singapore, Chinese culture, Chinese character, hieroglyph, diaspora.*

**Problem statement and its connection with important scientific or practical tasks.** In today's world of increasing globalisation and migration, preserving cultural identity within diaspora communities has become a significant challenge for nations globally. Language, as a fundamental pillar of cultural heritage, plays a crucial role in sustaining the connection between diaspora groups and their homeland (Kalashnyk, 2020). This connection is particularly strong within the Chinese diaspora, where the teaching and use of hieroglyphs act as a key tool for cultural preservation. Studying the educational role of Chinese hieroglyphs in maintaining homeland cultural values within the diaspora provides valuable insights not only for understanding the Chinese experience but also for addressing similar challenges in Ukraine and Europe.

As multicultural societies continue to grow, the lessons from the Chinese diaspora can help shape

effective policies that promote cultural diversity while strengthening national unity. Language, as a core element of cultural identity, not only preserves traditions but also fosters social cohesion and unity in diverse societies. By exploring how the Chinese diaspora uses hieroglyphic education, Ukraine and Europe can design more impactful multicultural education policies, protect linguistic diversity, and enhance connections with their own diaspora communities. These insights are crucial for creating inclusive, resilient, and culturally vibrant societies that embrace diversity while reinforcing a strong sense of national unity.

**Analysis of basic research and publications.** Issues surrounding the role of hieroglyphs (and graphic writing systems more broadly) as a factor in preserving cultural and social values of the country of origin, as well as maintaining self-identification of diaspora in a new country, are highly specialized and interdisciplinary. They

sit at the intersection of several scientific fields, including pedagogy, ethnopsychology, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. Among the key publications that examine the Chinese diaspora in Singapore and the role of Chinese hieroglyphs in preserving cultural values are the following:

- “Dissecting the Singaporean Chinese Identity: After the Diaspora” (2009), by Abanti Bhattacharya, analyses how the Chinese diaspora in Singapore has adapted its cultural identity and highlights how “Chineseness” has evolved, particularly as younger generations have moved away from traditional Chinese languages and practices under Western influences in education and daily life;

- “Singapore Chinese Culture: National Identity, Ethnic Belonging, and Cultural Construction” (2003), by Lee Guan Kin, explores the role of clan associations, Chinese schools, and community newspapers in preserving cultural values despite the challenges of Westernisation and cultural hybridisation;

- “Transnational Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Case Studies from Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore” (2022), edited by Yos Santasombat, investigates the transnational mobility of the Chinese diaspora and examines how Chinese migrants in Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia negotiate their cultural identities and adapt to new environments while maintaining cultural ties with homeland .

- “Cultural Transplantation: The Writing of Classical Chinese Poetry in Colonial Singapore (1887–1945)” (2023), by Lap Lam, delves into the role of classical Chinese poetry and hieroglyphs in maintaining Chinese cultural heritage in colonial Singapore. It provides insights how these literary traditions helped the diaspora maintain a connection to homeland while adapting to local contexts;

- “The New Chinese Diaspora in a Globalizing Singapore” (2021), by Hong Liu, explores how new waves of migrants maintain their cultural links to China.

These publications offer a comprehensive view of the cultural, linguistic, and educational strategies employed by the Chinese diaspora in Singapore to preserve ties with their homeland, with a special focus on the educational role of hieroglyphs in maintaining cultural identity.

**The article goals and objectives formulation.**

The article aims to highlight the role of Chinese characters in preserving Chinese self-identity within the diaspora. This includes the transmission of Chinese social and cultural values to future generations with minimal alterations, while fostering a sense of loyalty to contemporary Chinese culture and the social system. The article also explores how these dynamics are maintained through diaspora communities in various countries, ensuring continuity of cultural heritage and alignment with modern Chinese societal values.

**Presenting the main material.**

The Chinese diaspora in Singapore was selected as the focus group due to its status as one of the largest and oldest Chinese communities in the East. It plays a significant role in the country’s cultural and social landscape, not only because of its size but also due to the steady influx of new immigrants from the People’s Republic of China. This continuous addition of newcomers provides an opportunity to examine the role of hieroglyphics in the long-term dynamics of Chinese cultural preservation and self-identification within the diaspora, tracing how these elements have evolved over centuries.

The practical tasks of the article are outlined as follows:

- to provide an overview of the Chinese diaspora in Singapore, highlighting its status as one of the largest and oldest Chinese communities in the East. This diaspora, which forms a significant portion of Singapore’s population based on ethnic characteristics, has a dominant influence on shaping the country’s social and cultural values;

- to analyse the Chinese hieroglyph as a tool for encoding and transmitting information, including cultural and social values, ensuring that these remain unchanged among speakers and users of the Chinese language;

- to identify the various methods and practices employed within the Chinese diaspora in Singapore to preserve hieroglyphic writing, emphasizing its role as the primary medium for transmitting graphic information;

- to examine how hieroglyphic writing functions as a pedagogical tool within the Chinese diaspora in Singapore, helping maintain cultural and social self-identity among its members and fostering loyalty to geopolitical initiatives of the

People's Republic of China in the East and globally.

The research methods encompass approaches typical of comparative and social pedagogy, such as analyzing literature from publicly available sources, conducting case studies on the lives of Chinese diaspora members in Singapore, and reviewing relevant normative documents and academic publications on the research topic. These methods are employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the core issues addressed in the study and provide a comprehensive understanding of the problem under investigation.

The Chinese diaspora in Singapore is one of the largest and most long-standing Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, with a deep historical legacy that has profoundly shaped the cultural, social, and economic fabric of the island nation. Its origins trace back to the early 19th century, following the establishment of Singapore as a British trading post in 1819 by Sir Stamford Raffles. During this time, a significant influx of Chinese migrants, mainly from southern provinces such as Fujian and Guangdong, arrived in pursuit of economic opportunities. Over the following decades, the continuous migration of Chinese settlers cemented their position as a dominant ethnic group in Singapore (Ke, 2019). By the early 20th century, the Chinese community had become deeply integrated into Singapore's socio-economic framework, and today they make up approximately 75% of the population (Cai & Huang, 2022).

As one of the oldest Chinese communities in the East, the Chinese diaspora has played a crucial role in shaping Singapore's cultural and social values. Traditional Chinese cultural practices, such as the celebration of festivals like Chinese New Year and the Mid-Autumn Festival, along with the preservation of language and religious customs, have been integral to the community's identity. Institutions such as Chinese-medium schools, temples, and clan associations were established early on and served as vital hubs for cultural preservation and community cohesion (Gong, 2013).

Chinese values, heavily influenced by Confucianism's emphasis on family, education, and respect for authority, have also permeated Singapore's broader societal ethos.

The Chinese community's influence in Singapore extends beyond historical migration

and is reinforced by deliberate social and political policies. Many of Singapore's founding figures, including Lee Kuan Yew, the nation's first prime minister who is widely credited with engineering Singapore's economic transformation, were of Chinese ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. Singapore's government has skillfully navigated the balance between promoting multiculturalism and preserving the heritage of the Chinese community (Barr, 2019). While English has become the primary language of communication, Mandarin continues to be a core instructional language in schools, and cultural policies actively support the preservation of Chinese heritage alongside that of the Malay and Indian communities (Kalashnyk, Ruda, Oserska, & Nazarenko, 2024).

The Chinese hieroglyph, or Chinese character, is one of the oldest and most enduring forms of written language in human history. For thousands of years, it has served not only as a means of communication but also as a powerful tool for encoding and transmitting information - particularly cultural and social values - among speakers and users of the Chinese language (Cao, 2024). Unlike many other writing systems, Chinese hieroglyphs are ideographic, meaning that they convey meaning through a system of symbols that represent words or ideas rather than sounds. This characteristic gives Chinese characters a unique ability to preserve the essence of cultural and social values across generations, ensuring continuity even as the spoken language evolves (Liu, 2020).

The ideographic nature of Chinese hieroglyphs plays a key role in their ability to encode and transmit cultural values. Many characters are constructed through a combination of radicals, which are graphical components that provide clues about the meaning of the character. For example, the character for "filial piety" (孝, xiào) combines the radical for "old" (老) with the radical for "child" (子), symbolising the idea of a child honouring their elders. In this way, the character itself encodes a cultural value that has been central to Chinese society for millennia. Similarly, the character for family (家, jiā) is composed of the radical for "roof" (宀), symbolising shelter, and the radical for "pig" (豕), which represents domestic wealth and prosperity (Xu, & Sun, 2020). This reflects the traditional importance of family as the core unit of social organization in Chinese culture, with an

emphasis on providing both physical and financial security within the household. These characters are more than linguistic tools; they are visual representations of key cultural concepts, allowing users of the language to internalise these values from a young age (Wang & Quan, 2020). Through literature, legal codes, and religious texts, Chinese hieroglyphs have been the primary medium for the transmission of Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist teachings, which have shaped Chinese civilization for over two thousand years.

Confucian texts such as the Analects (论语, Lúnyǔ) and Taoist classics like Dao De Jing (道德经) are written in Chinese characters and contain layers of cultural meaning embedded in the text. Because of the stability of the Chinese writing system, these texts have remained accessible in their original form to readers across generations, with relatively few changes required in character form or meaning (Xu Yi, 2019). This makes Chinese hieroglyphs a unique tool for cultural preservation.

One of the key strengths of Chinese hieroglyphs in preserving cultural and social values is their stability. Unlike alphabetic systems, where phonetic changes in the spoken language may lead to significant changes in spelling or grammar over time, Chinese characters remain relatively fixed. A character written thousands of years ago often retains its core meaning today, even if its pronunciation has changed. This allows for the direct transmission of ancient texts and ideas without requiring continuous reinterpretation (Kalashnyk, 2020). This stability allows for the transmission of consistent moral teachings through literature, religious texts, and everyday communication.

In recent years, the Chinese diaspora in Singapore has continued to expand with a consistent influx of migrants from the People's Republic of China. Unlike earlier waves of migration, which primarily consisted of individuals speaking southern Chinese dialects such as Hokkien, Cantonese, and Teochew, these newer migrants are predominantly Mandarin speakers and hail from a broader range of regions across China. This shift has contributed to a more complex cultural landscape within Singapore's Chinese community, creating distinct differences between long-established Chinese Singaporeans and recent arrivals from mainland China (Zhou

& Liu, 2012). In this case one can speak about the strengthening of the role of hieroglyphics (which is common for all the Chinese local languages and their variants) as the only source of communication inside the Chinese diaspora in Singapore.

Both the Chinese and Singaporean governments have made concerted efforts to sustain the use of Mandarin in education and society, promoting it through various programs and policies that influence the diaspora's cultural landscape. Through the combined efforts Mandarin remains a dominant force in shaping the social and cultural identity of the Chinese diaspora in Singapore (Liu, 2021). Such government programs all contribute to the preservation of Mandarin as a key component of education and cultural life. Singapore's "Speak Mandarin Campaign" (SMC) is one of the country's longest-running and most impactful language initiatives. Launched in 1979 under the leadership of then-Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, the campaign aimed to shift Chinese Singaporeans, particularly the younger generation, away from using southern dialects (like Hokkien, Cantonese, and Teochew), which were predominant among earlier migrant waves, to using Mandarin as their primary spoken language (Lynn, 2001). The early slogan, "汉语Cool!" (Mandarin is Cool!), was designed to make Mandarin more appealing to younger people. The campaign had two main objectives: simplifying communication among Chinese Singaporeans by promoting a common language and aligning the local Chinese diaspora with Mandarin, China's official language, thus reinforcing ties with the mainland (Harper, 2019).

Another major component of Singapore's language policies is the Bilingual Education Policy, introduced in 1966. This policy mandates that English be the main language of instruction in schools, ensuring Singapore's global competitiveness. At the same time, students are required to learn their "mother tongue" as a second language, which for the majority of Chinese students is Mandarin.

The policy aims to create bilingual proficiency, equipping students to thrive in both local and international environments. With Chinese Singaporeans comprising 75.9% of the population (approximately 3.07 million people in 2023) (Hirschmann, 2024), Mandarin is a mandatory subject in schools, thus ensuring its continued

relevance and role in preserving cultural values (Liu, 2021).

The Chinese government has also played a key role in promoting Mandarin through the establishment of Confucius Institutes in Singapore. These institutes, in partnership with local educational institutions such as Nanyang Technological University (NTU), provide Chinese language courses, cultural workshops, and educational exchange programs. Since 2005, the Confucius Institutes have been instrumental in promoting Mandarin learning and fostering a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, particularly among diaspora communities and foreign learners. Their efforts also help enhance Singapore-China relations, providing both academic and professional development opportunities while creating a favourable image of China among Chinese-origin Singaporeans (Zhou, & Liu, 2012).

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013, has further influenced the Chinese diaspora in Singapore. Through the BRI, China seeks to deepen cultural and economic ties with Southeast Asian countries, including Singapore. Exchange programs sponsored by the Chinese government allow Singaporean students to study in China, and Chinese educators frequently visit Singapore to organise language and cultural workshops. These initiatives not only promote Mandarin use but also foster loyalty to China's geopolitical and cultural goals, reinforcing the connection between Singapore's Chinese community and the mainland (Liu, 2021).

Another important institution is the Singapore Centre for Chinese Language (SCCL), established in 2009. Operated by the National Institute of Education (NIE) and supported by the Ministry of Education, the SCCL focuses on improving the teaching and learning of Mandarin in Singaporean schools. It offers professional development programs for Chinese language teachers and develops pedagogically effective and culturally relevant teaching materials (Zhou, & Liu, 2012). The SCCL plays a crucial role in ensuring that Mandarin education evolves with the times while maintaining its role in preserving Chinese cultural

identity in Singapore.

Together, these programs and initiatives by both the Singaporean and Chinese governments work to safeguard the use of Mandarin in Singapore, reinforcing the cultural and social identity of the Chinese diaspora while ensuring Singapore's integration into both regional and global contexts and reinforcing the cultural identity of future generations of Singaporeans.

**Conclusions.** The Chinese hieroglyph is far more than a simple writing system; it is a powerful tool for encoding and transmitting cultural and social values across generations. Through their ideographic structure, characters represent key cultural concepts, allowing speakers and users of the Chinese language to internalise important societal values. The stability of the Chinese writing system has ensured that these values remain largely unchanged over time, preserving the essence of Chinese culture even as the spoken language and external influences evolve.

Today, efforts to promote the learning and use of Chinese hieroglyphs continue to ensure that this ancient tool for cultural transmission remains relevant in the modern world, preserving a deep connection to China's rich heritage. The role of Chinese hieroglyphs in preserving cultural values among diaspora communities, particularly within the Chinese diaspora in Singapore, is of significant educational and cultural importance. As a tool for encoding and transmitting social and cultural values, hieroglyphs serve not only as a linguistic system but also as a bridge to the homeland's traditions, history, and identity (He, 2022).

In Singapore, educational programs and initiatives, such as the Speak Mandarin Campaign and the Bilingual Education Policy, have been essential in ensuring that these hieroglyphs remain a vital part of the diaspora's cultural life. Furthermore, Chinese hieroglyphs help maintain cultural continuity across generations, preserving a shared heritage and fostering a sense of loyalty to the cultural values of the homeland, even within a multicultural context. The study of this dynamic offers valuable insights into how language education can be leveraged to sustain cultural identity within diaspora communities.

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## ПЕДАГОГІЧНА РОЛЬ ІЕРОГЛІФІВ У ЗБЕРЕЖЕННІ КУЛЬТУРНИХ ЦІННОСТЕЙ БАТЬКІВЩИНИ В ДІАСПОРІ: ПРИКЛАД КИТАЙСЬКОЇ ДІАСПОРИ В СІНГАПУРІ

У статті досліджується педагогічна роль китайських ієрогліфів у збереженні культурних цінностей батьківщини серед китайської діаспори в Сінгапурі. Ієрогліфічна писемність виступає важливим засобом збереження культурної ідентичності та спадщини в умовах глобалізації та зростаючої асиміляції в місцеві соціокультурні контексти.

**Методи дослідження** включають методи, які є характерними для компаративної та соціальної педагогіки (аналіз літератури з відкритих джерел інформації, кейс-стаді життя представників китайської діаспори в Сінгапурі, вивчення нормативної документації та академічних видань з теми дослідження тощо).

**Мета і завдання статті.** Метою статті є аналіз ролі китайських ієрогліфів в освітньому процесі китайської діаспори Сінгапуру та визначення їх значення у формуванні лояльності до китайських державних ініціатив у сучасному світі. До основних практичних завдань дослідження входить: аналіз соціально-культурної ролі китайців у Сінгапурі, дослідження балансу між використанням китайських ієрогліфів та офіційної латинської писемності в місцевій освітній та суспільній практиці, а також вивчення механізмів, через які збереження ієрогліфічної писемності сприяє підтримці китайської культурної спадщини та ідентичності.

**Результати.** Дслідження розглядає, як ієрогліфічна писемність впливає на самоідентифікацію етнічних китайців в Сінгапурі (також і з числа «нової» діаспори), а також як вищезазначені фактори впливають на формування лояльності місцевих етнічних китайців до сучасних китайських державних ініціатив, таких як «Один пояс – один шлях», і як це підтримується урядом КНР.

У **висновках** зазначається, що китайські ієрогліфи не лише виконують роль культурного зв'язку з батьківщиною, але й сприяють підтримці національної ідентичності в умовах багатонаціонального середовища, зміцнюючи культурну лояльність до китайської держави та її сучасних ініціатив. Окрім того, система освіти, що інтегрує вивчення ієрогліфів, є важливим фактором у формуванні міжкультурного діалогу та збереженні полікультурної гармонії в Сінгапурі.

**Ключові слова:** КНР, Сінгапур, китайська культура, китайський ієрогліф, ієрогліф, діаспора

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