

Dialect Survey and Collection of Folk Rhymes in Tanjung Piandang, Perak

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This project aims to create awareness about the importance of dialects through surveys and analysis on Teochew language spoken by local resident in Tanjung Piandang. Besides, we're aiming to keep documentation about the historical and cultural heritage of the village, including folk rhymes, history of both Chinese and Indian temples found in Tanjung Piandang.

Apart from donations from the public with small amount, there was no other fund raising effort during the project.

As the project begun, we've undergone training in survey methodology, which conducted by our lecturer, Dr. Khoo Kiak Uei. Throughout the training session, we were required to learn and memorize the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in Mandarin, which showed the pronunciation of each alphabet. We were also had to undergo a listening training session. As we heard the word in pronounced in dialect, we had to interpret the word and record it in form of IPA. We had undergone these training session for twice in 2 months.

Next, we had planned the schedule to conduct the dialect survey. The dialect survey was conducted thrice in 3 months. The first survey was conducted from 1st August to 7th August 2016, and the second survey was conducted from 27th August to 3rd September 2016, in semester break of semester 2, session 2015/2016. The third survey was conducted from 22th October – 28th October 2016 as we're having our mid-semester break on the same time.

Before we carry out the survey, we're aiming for respondent who lived in Tanjung Piandang for more than 50 years, and had been speaking Teochew as mother language since young age. Fortunately, we're assisted by former alumni of S.J.K.(C) Nam Hua, Tanjung Piandang, and we managed to find an alumnus from them as respondent, who worked as managing director of S.J.K.(C) Nam Hua, Tanjung Piandang. We contacted the respondent to make an appointment for our survey, and the survey was conducted for 2 hours each session.

To ensure a better performing way to our survey, we explained how the survey will be conducted to the respondent as we met with him first time to show a respect and maintain a good relationship with the respondent as well. We're given a book which contains index of Chinese characters, and the respondent had been given one of the copy too. The respondent was required to pronounce each word one by one using Teochew language, and we had to note down the pronunciation of the word in common alphabets. The session was conducted for 2 hours, and we recorded the interview for each session.

After the survey, we analyzed the pronunciation of the respondent, and interpreted the data in form of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). We played the voice recording on the same time to analyze the data more accurately. As we completed the analyzation, we're given time to present the survey result using index form which contained Chinese characters and the phonetic system.

Besides the dialect survey, we recorded the oral history regarding the Chinese and Indian temples in Tanjung Piandang. The oral history was collected throughout a few interviews and voice recording by some residents and person in charge of those temples, to collect some history information regarding the history of temples. Next, we interpreted the information collected from residents. As we listened to the voice records, we interpreted the information into form of words and kept them as a documentation for the usage of academic article regarding Tanjung Piandang in the future.

In this project, we met the difficulties in searching folk rhymes due to unpredictable reasons. The folk rhymes weren't keep as heritage among them as time passed by, even the elderly didn't remember what kind of folk rhymes they'd learnt. However, we had collected some historical information regarding ancient

temples from residents, and kept them as extra documentations. Besides that, we faced difficulties in the expenditures too. As we travelled to Tanjung Piandang by train, each trip costs us around RM60. Thus, we spent a lot on our travelling fee. Plus, the student expenses shall not exceed 30% of total expenses, we faced a big problem in lodging fee as the homestay fee in Tanjung Piandang are expensive. Luckily, a resident in Tanjung Piandang willing to provide us his house to stay for the survey period. It helped us to save the expenditure virtually. Thus, we appreciate his help very much. Besides that, we have to bare fully expenses on our food due to the restriction of budget.

In our project, we managed to keep a good interaction with residents in Tanjung Piandang. In fact, they gave us a lot of assistance every time and we appreciate their help. Besides that, we manage to complete the survey on time. Although we unable to collect any Teochew folk rhymes from residents, we still managed to get valuable historical and information regarding ancient Chinese and Indian temples in Tanjung Piandang.

We believe that the residents of Tanjung Piandang will be benefited from our project, as the residents are planning to build and organize a local historical museum as an effort to promote local culture in Tanjung Piandang. Since our project is aiming to keep a historical documentary for Tanjung Piandang, the documentation enable them to find a valuable way to preserve and conserve their local history as far as possible.

Furthermore, the project will bring out benefits to any students or researchers who are interested in the field of study regarding both Chinese early settlements and Chinese dialects. Though both field of research are interesting and yet to be developed, there is not much undergraduates and researchers who participated in the research. Hence, we hope this project can encourage more undergraduates to participate in it and to exploit a new academic achievement for the Chinese Studies academia in Malaysia.

We hope we can continue to carry on this project and bring further happiness to the residents in Tanjung Piandang. As we heard that the residents are planning to organize a museum for Tanjung Piandang, we felt that they have realized the importance to keep their living place as cultural and historical heritage, and their sincerity to promote the unique of Tanjung Piandang to the outsiders. Hence, we believe that the project is sustainable to them as it has helped them in effort to keep dialects and historical documentations as their valuable heritage.

From the view of academic, the project is sustainable as it has shown the importance of research in field of both dialects studies and early Chinese settlements in Malaysia. Besides, it has included the research of Chinese folk religion. Hence, we believe that the result of project is valuable and it can be a guideline for future research regarding those field of studies which related with Chinese community. Moreover, it will create social awareness through realizing the importance of dialects as a cultural heritage to Chinese society.

How does or will your project contribute to happiness?

The project will contribute to happiness among volunteers and residents in Tanjung Piandang, in a long term. It has created social awareness among the residents and the volunteers – realizing the importance of Chinese dialects as cultural and historical heritage. To the volunteers, though we speak different dialects (other than Teochew), we had a good opportunity to learn a new language, and explore the unique of dialect. Moreover, it has showed a positive reflection to us – the importance of existence of dialect, and the ethnic symbolization of a dialect. To the residents, the project will benefit them through keeping both historical and cultural documentations of Tanjung Piandang. In fact, it has made the residents realize about the importance of local history in their living place.

Has your project changed the way you think about the world? How has it changed you?

Yes, the project has changed the way I think about the world. In the previous time of my study, I was only concerned about myself and dislike to have teamwork with others. Also, I was reluctant to speak any dialect with my family. Throughout this project, I'd realized that my attitude had barred myself from learning something new and socialize with others. And now, I'm willing to enjoy teamwork and be more tolerance to others. Besides, I've realized the importance of dialects to Chinese community. By now, I'm willing to learn and communicate with others in dialects, and volunteering myself in projects related with preservation of dialects.

Personal statement:

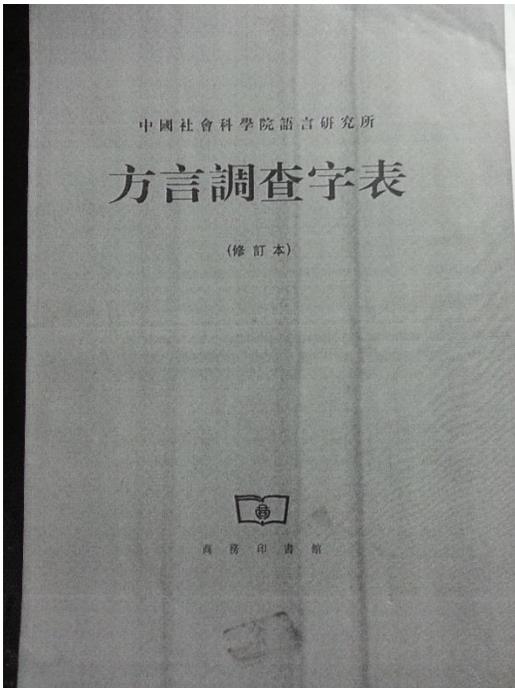
I realized the unique of our dialects, and how are they symbolized us. I'm ready to learn from experiences and face with challenges. And now, I'm willing to share the unique of Chinese dialect to others. (Yap Siew Wen)

Dialect and the temples is the carrier of the regional culture. It represents the diversity and the interaction of the culture. Throughout the project, I realized that most of our local dialects are only the transmission of words. There's no any corresponding text record left. This project is important as it help us to discern and prove that the relationship between the language and culture are inseparable. Thus, we should find a way to preserve and conserve these two aspects as they are closely related with the unique regional culture and people's thinking. (Chin Xian En)

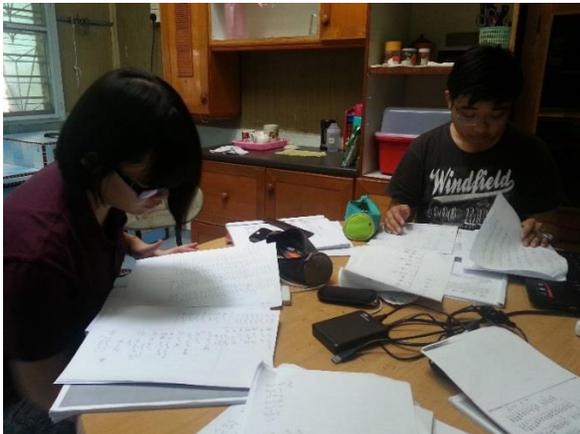
Throughout this project, the friendliness of the residents of Tanjung Piandang warms my heart. We are unfamiliar with the village, but the residents willing to treat us like their friends, sharing their experience and stories, including the dialect. Preservation of dialect equals to preservation of one's identity as language as the mother tongue of one carries the culture, knowledge, history, which form a background of an ethnic or group of people. (Lee Chee Yong)



We're conducting dialect survey with respondent.



We'd consumed 3 weeks to complete the dialect survey, by using this index book we used contains an amount of 3,000 Chinese characters.



The pronunciations used by the respondent were analyzed and interpreted in form of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).