



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

**THE ADAPTATION OF 3D ANIMATION ON CHINESE
IDIOM STORY**

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**Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Design Technology)
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the hidden meanings behind the Chinese idiom story. The results of the study show that integration of 3D animation technique can be used as part of the animated Chinese idiom story. The experiments include the use of visual appeals, sound effects, visual effects as well as good composition for an animation. The aim of this animated 3D Chinese Idiom story is to generate more attention and understanding among the youth around the world on the importance of preserving the Chinese Idiom story heritage.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini mengupas pelbagai maksud tersirat yang terdapat di dalam kisah daripada Peribahasa Cina. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan teknik 3D adalah penting dalam menghasilkan sebuah karya animasi Peribahasa Cina ini. Eksperimen yang dijalankan berkait rapat dengan penggunaan *visual appeals*, kesan bunyi, serta komposisi yang baik dalam sesebuah animasi. Matlamat utama animasi 3D kisah daripada Peribahasa Cina adalah untuk menarik minat serta memberi pemahaman terhadap kepentingan khazanah kisah daripada Peribahasa Cina di kalangan remaja di seluruh dunia.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This is a research study on the Chinese idiom stories in animation. The study focuses on description of idioms and animation techniques used to convey the hidden meaning of the Chinese idiom stories.

This chapter focuses on the discussion in details of the following: the background of the research, problem statement, objectives, limitations, definition of key terms and the conclusion would be listed in details. Understanding the cultural traits of Chinese idioms would help people to better understand one another in communication, both within and across cultures.

1.1 Background of Research

Chinese idioms '*Chengyu*' lie in the heart of the Chinese language. Idioms are mostly composed of four characters. Most of them contained moral lesson, inspiration or motivation. They are set phrases and short sentences which concise meanings that are widely used in society. Chinese idioms are written using only four characters that rhythm which is easy to express and memorize. Expressions of emotions such as

happiness, sadness, and etc are expressed through idioms. Idiom is a special form of language communication that may give precise cultural information such as history, geography, religion, custom, and thought pattern. Chinese has a long story of writing and using idioms way before confusions time.

Chinese idioms have strong moral values that derived from historical background which are culturally related. All Chinese schools in Malaysia included the learning of Chinese idioms in the school syllabus and curriculum starting from primary four.

In the earlier times, the Chinese idioms were written in wall scrolls in the form of art and drawings. Later, the Chinese idiom stories are also transformed into comics as the media for entertainment and education. Nowadays, we can see that a lot of animation used to present the Chinese idiom stories in 2D animation such as flash, drawing, Chinese traditional shadow-play animation and 3D Origami Animation.

Figure 1 shows Chinese idiom wall scrolls featuring popular idioms which dated as far back to ancient China. These calligraphy scrolls make great gifts for family, friends or colleagues.

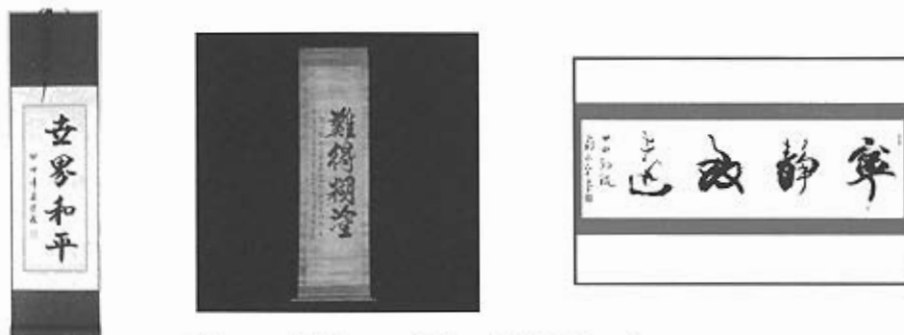


Figure 1 Chinese Idiom Wall Scrolls

One of the ways for character building is acquiring moral values and principles from Chinese idioms. The moral values and principle of Chinese idioms can be understood by all races through animation to enhance the learning and teaching in education. This is one of the ways to understand the cultural traits of the Chinese through their idioms. Animation interprets complex ideas from Chinese idioms to simple and interesting stories to achieve the goal of teaching through entertainment.

1.2 Definition of Chinese Idiom

1.2.1 Definitions Given in Various Representative Dictionaries

The definitions of idiom are given in various standard dictionaries listed below.

1.2.1.1 In *Ts'u-yuan Chinese idiom dictionary* (1915):

An idiom is a form of old expression. Those that become prevalent in society and could be referred to their historical allusions and express one's ideas are called idiom (Ma, 1978).

1.2.1.2 In *Hanyu cidian Chinese idiom dictionary* (1936):

An idiom is a form of old expression. Those that become prevalent in society are called idiom (Ma, 1978).

1.2.1.3 In *Xiandai hanyu cidian Chinese idiom dictionary* (1959):

Idioms are set phrases and short sentences, usually in pithy forms with concise meanings, prevalent in society, used by the common folk, which have seen ages of constant use. Idioms are mostly composed of four characters. The meanings for some of them are not difficult to deduce from the constituents.

1.2.1.4 In the new version of *Ts'u-hai Chinese idiom dictionary* (1963):

An idiom is a type of fixed phrase, usually in four-character form with varying constituent constructions and diverse origins. The meanings for some of them can be deduced from their constituents

1.2.2 A Generalized Definition of Idioms

Many of the definitions of idioms mentioned are thorough. They take into account the (1) broad understanding, (2) structure or form, (3) semantics, (4) function, and (5) sources of the idioms.

1.2.2.1 Broad Understanding

An Idiom is an old expression, prevailed in society for a long period of time.

1.2.2.2 Structure or Form

An idiom is a set phrase, or short sentence. It is usually in four character form, with varying constituent constructions. The internal constituent relations are fixed. None of its constituents can be changed or replaced by any other element. The fixed form of idiom has been shaped through history. This basic structure can be traced to era of *Shi Jing –Book of Odes*. One feature of the poems in the Odes is that the lines are four characters in length. This impact on Chinese writing was conceivable in two ways.

First, the four character line was to persist as a form on writings. "The evenness of four word line would easily produce a stilted rhythm, comparable to steady 4/4 time in music" (Chen, 1961).

Secondly, the four character pattern is regarded as one of the lineal literary dictions. The phrases in these ancient songs became historical fixtures in the speech and writing of the learned and have used in Chinese literature for over two thousand years.

1.2.2.3 Semantics

The meanings for most of idioms can be deductible from their letter. With some of the idioms, the integrated meanings are unlikely to be directly inferred from their letter.

1.2.2.4 Function

An idiom functions as one lexeme in full expressions or sentences. Since idioms are usually in four-character form, they function as a special type of lexeme in full expressions or sentences rather than as a common lexeme. Idioms can function as subject, object, verb, adjective, adverb, adverbial phrase, verb complement in sentences.

1.2.2.5 Allusive Origins

The sources of idioms are mainly the classics, poems, and other standard works, or arose from ballads. Oral form is the primary origin of idioms rather than the written form. In fact, these two sources are mutually dependent. For some idioms, it is even harder to tell whether their real origins were in the classical or the oral traditions. However, it is certainly true that those quotations extracted from the classics, poems, and other standard works have written sources.

叶公好龙 ye gong hao long	Lord Ye' s Proffesser love of dragon Meaning:A pretended love for what you really fear.
对牛弹琴 dui niu tan qin	To play lute to the cow Meaning:someone speaks or writes without considering his audience.
拔苗助长 ba miao zu zhang	To help the shoots grow by pulling them upwards Meaning:spoil things by excessive enthusiasm.
磨杵成针 mo zu chen zhen	Grinding an iron pestle to make a needle Meaning:There is nothing that cannot be accomplished by perseverance.
画蛇添足 hua she tian zu	To draw a snake and add feet to it Meaning:ruin the effect by adding something superfluous.Wasting time on something superfluous.

Figure 2 Example of Chinese idioms

Figure 2 shows a few Chinese idioms which is a set phrase, or short sentence and it is usually in four characters form. The left side is Chinese idioms which come with their meanings at right hand side.

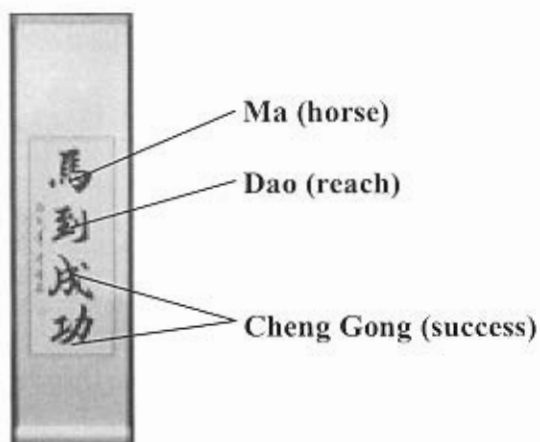


Figure 3 Example of Chinese idiom “马到成功” (Horses Come Bring Success)

From Figure 3, the meaning of each word of idiom can help us guessed the meaning of this idiom“马到成功” (Horses Come Bring Success) .This idiom using horse because in ancient China the horse was the main means of transportation, so if you see one's horse came back, it was no doubt that one's task had been finished successfully. Nowadays, this idiom is widely used as a kindhearted wish that the receiver find success in everything they do.

The Chinese idiom “马到成功” (Horses Come Bring Success) also shows how an idiom with a special meaning comes from the meanings of the separate words and none of the constituents of the idiom can be deleted or replaced by any other element.

For examples, concerning “*Ma Dao Cheng Gong*”, meaning horses come bring success.

The following points should be noted:

- a) **No constituent of the entry can be deleted**, such as “*Dao Cheng Gong*”.
The object “*Ma*” had been deleted. The words of “*Dao Cheng Gong*” cannot give any meaning or symbolism. There is no such phase in Chinese and cannot consider as Chinese idioms because it no have four characters form.
- b) **No constituent of the entry may be replaced by any other element**, e.g. “*Niu Dao Cheng Gong*”– The object “*Ma*” (horse) changes to “*Niu*” (Cow).
Although the meaning of this deviant form is not changed much, but the meaning is totally different from the original history. This cannot be considered as Chinese idiom because Chinese idioms must have their moral, inspirational or motivational meaning from real history. This “*Niu Dao Cheng Gong*” is considered as created phase, not a Chinese idiom.
- c) **No other element may be added**, such as “*Ma Dao Er Cheng Gong*”, which is considered as created phrase because it does not have four characters form.
- d) **The word order may not be changed**, e.g. “*Cheng Gong Ma Dao*” is a valid Chinese topical, but not an idiom.

1.3 Problem Statement

- 1.3.1 The youth generation gradually forgets the cultural story behind the Chinese idiom.
- 1.3.2. Existing Chinese idiom animation hard to be understood due to the overuse of classicality Chinese elements of visuals.

1.4 Objective

In the research of the Chinese idiom story in animation, I have come out 4 important objectives through this research.

- 1.5.1 To identify the cultural story and description of the Chinese idiom.
- 1.5.2 To analyze animation techniques that commonly used to convey the meaning of the Chinese idiom story.
- 1.5.3 To propose an animation that can attract the youth's interest and enhance visual understanding in Chinese idiom story.
- 1.5.4 To validate the effectiveness of the 3D Chinese idiom animation to the target audience.

1.5 Hypothesis

3D animation will generate more attention in promoting the Chinese idiom story.