



An Analysis on Chinese Idioms Containing the Word “罗”

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Abstract: Chinese idioms (成语) are an essential part of cultural heritage that reflect meaning, values, and unique expressions of Chinese society. Thus, in order to understand deeper about the meaning and connotations contained in the Chinese Idioms, the writers researched Chinese Idioms specifically contained the word 罗. This study focuses on idioms containing the Chinese character “罗 (luó)”, which etymologically means “net” or “mesh”. Using a semantic framework and descriptive qualitative method, this research analyzes 49 idioms sourced from standard idiom dictionaries, classical literature, and historical texts. The idioms were examined through their denotative and connotative meanings, emotional valence (positive, negative, neutral), and source origins. The findings reveal that idioms with “罗” convey diverse themes, such as entrapment, wealth, distribution, economic hardship, methodology, cultural elements, and foreign-derived terms. Of the total, 27 idioms had positive connotations, 16 were negative, and 6 neutral. The idioms originate from folklore, literary works, historical records, and foreign influences. This study highlights the semantic richness of Chinese idioms and the cultural depth embedded in the character “罗”.

Keywords: Chinese Idioms Containing The Word 罗; Meaning Analysis; Connotations; Idiom's Source.

INTRODUCTION

In any language, idioms can be considered a form of oral cultural heritage. Idioms hold a wealth of meanings and reflect the sociocultural values of a nation or community. One of the cultural treasures of China lies in its language. In Chinese, idioms, also known as 成语 (chéngyǔ), serve to enrich expression, illustrate situations, and convey moral or cultural values. Wang Yunlu which also mentioned in Alemina Br Perangin-angin, & Xenii. (2018). Perbandingan Makna Pada Peribahasa Mandarindan Peribahasa Indonesia Yang menggunakan Kata 'Air.' *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra*, 3(1).

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Christine Sri Rejeki Aritonang, Ina, & Lusi. (2023). Analisis Perbandingan Makna Peribahasa yang Mengandung Kata Arah dalam Peribahasa Mandarin dan Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran, Khatulistiwa*, 12(4), 1156–1162.

Romy (罗爱瑾), Shenni (许瑄津) (2017) expressed that the concept of *chéng* implies maturity and conventional acceptance; thus, *chéngyǔ* refer to fixed expressions with stable forms and clear meanings that are commonly recognized and used by the speech community. These expressions are noted for their semantic richness, structural conciseness, rhetorical effectiveness, wide usage, and long-standing historical origins. Among many idioms, some involve characters related to Chinese surnames, making them unique. But since there are myriads number of Chinese Idioms with unique characters and only few research about Chinese Idioms, the depth of this field was not deepened so much. In order to provide more data about Chinese Idiom, researcher then conduct a study on this subject. This study focuses on idioms that contain the character “罗 (luó),” which commonly appears in Chinese surnames and has the etymological meaning of “net” or “mesh.” Prior research specifically analyzing idioms containing surname-related characters is very limited. This study narrows its analysis to meaning, connotation, and origin. The findings aim to contribute to Chinese linguistic research in Indonesia, especially in the field of Chinese Idioms’ semantic and origins. This research emphasizes semantic and linguistic analysis of idioms containing the character 'luo' (罗). Semantic analysis in Chinese idiom studies involves connecting abstract ideas to idiomatic meanings, as proposed by Zhang Dong & Bai Jiehong (2015), and Li Xiuzhi (2010), helping make complex idioms more accessible to general readers. However, many idioms use morphemes whose meanings differ from their everyday usage (Sailer, 2020). Understanding such morphemes often requires delving into classical Chinese usage and etymology, which show that the meanings and applications of words evolve over time (Shi Shi, 1979).

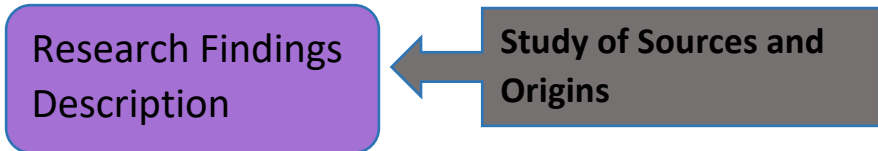
RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. It also employs literature review and comparative analysis to investigate the origins of idioms. Comparative analysis helps identify semantic similarities or differences and metaphorical sources in idioms. The methodology follows these steps:

1. Collection of contextual data (idioms from standard dictionaries and literature)
2. Semantic analysis (denotation, connotation)
3. Classification and categorization
4. Source identification (folklore, literature, history, foreign origin)
5. Descriptive presentation of findings

The semantic and connotative analysis focuses on idioms containing the character 'luo.' Connotation is divided into three categories: positive (褒义), negative (贬义), and neutral (中性义). Idioms are classified according to their sources: mythology, folktales, historical texts, literary works (classical/modern), and foreign cultural influences.





RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Meaning

To gain deeper and better understanding about Chinese Idioms which containing the word 罗, we also need to understand the etymological on the word 罗. In the classic Chinese, the word 罗 is written as '羅' without any change in the phonology. Based on Shang Dynasty's Oracle Bone Script, the word 罗 means "net" or "mesh" which used by the bird catcher to catch birds. The components which builds the word 羅 consists of 网 (wáng) on the upper part which means "net" or "mesh", 隹 (zhuì) in the bottom right part which means little bird, and 丝 (sī) in the bottom left part which means string or rope. Based on Kangxi Dictionary (康熙字典) and other dictionaries all interpret the word 罗's original meaning which is "net" or "mesh" in the Noun category, while in the verb category, it means "to catch". Notably, among all idioms containing the character 罗, some also carry meanings related to 'fishing' or activities involving 'nets'. Through analysis of the denotative and connotative meanings in Mandarin idioms using 罗 (luó), several categories of idiomial meanings have been identified:

- 1) The meaning of 'to trap someone'. The idioms that fit this meaning is:

Table 1. the Chinese Idiom containing Luo which means "to trap someone"

No.	成语 (Idioms)	Meaning
1	锻炼罗织	Fabricating false accusations to trap people
2	深文罗织	Citing legal provisions narrowly to punish the innocent
3	罗钳吉网	Describing an act of cruelty and slander
4	罗织罪名	Making false accusations
5	吉网罗钳	Describing an act of cruelty and slander
6	罗织构陷	Fabricating false evidence to frame someone
7	自投罗网	Fall into your own trap
8	云罗天网,	Used to depict an enemy or villain surrounded on all sides
9	天罗地网,	Used to depict an enemy or villain surrounded on all sides
10	地网天罗	Used to depict an enemy or villain surrounded on all sides

- 2) The meaning of 'wealth'. The idioms that fit this meaning is:

Table 2. the Chinese Idiom containing Luo which means "wealth"

No	成语/Idioms	Meaning

1	披罗戴翠	Describing luxurious and beautiful clothing and accessories.
2	珠翠罗绮	It refers to luxurious and elegant women's clothing and accessories, as well as women who dress in full luxury.
3	绫罗绸缎	Referring to a diverse range of high-quality silk products.
4	绮罗粉黛	A young woman adorned with jewelry.
5	越罗蜀锦	Describing a distinctive regional product with unique characteristics.
6	胸罗锦绣	Describing someone with exceptional talent in knowledge, literature, and intellectual pursuits

3) The meaning of 'large quantity'. The idioms that fit this meaning is:

Table 3. the Chinese Idiom containing Luo which means "large quantity"

No	成语 Idiom	Meaning
1	森罗万象	Used to describe the depth of content in a speech or composition.
2	万象森罗	Used to describe the depth of content in a speech or composition.
3	棋布星罗	Used to refer to something abundant and widespread, such as stars and chess pieces.
4	星罗棋布	Used to refer to something abundant and widespread, such as stars and chess pieces.
5	星罗云布	Used to refer to something abundant and widespread, such as stars and chess pieces.
6	甲第星罗	Depicting a wealthy man with lavish and numerous residences.
7	包罗万象	Used to describe the depth of content in a speech or composition.
8	包罗万有	Used to describe the depth of content in a speech or composition.
9	万象包罗	Used to describe the depth of content in a speech or composition.

4) The meaning of 'bad economy'. The idioms that fit this meaning is:

Table 4. the Chinese Idiom containing Luo which means "bad economy"

No	成语/ Idioms	meaning
1	罗掘俱穷	Describing the inability to accumulate money or wealth
2	罗掘一空	Using every possible means to seek and accumulate wealth.
3	罗雀掘鼠	Extremely poor conditions
4	门可罗雀	Describing the house as extremely quiet, with few customers (or shops) and the lodging spot being nearly deserted.
5	门堪罗雀	Describing the house as extremely quiet, with few customers (or shops) and the lodging spot being nearly deserted.
6	门可张罗	Describing the house as extremely quiet, with few customers (or shops) and the lodging spot being nearly deserted.

5) The meaning of methods. The idioms that fit this meaning is:

Table 5. the Chinese Idiom containing Luo which means "methods"

No	成语/Idiom	Meanings
1	耙罗剔抉	Finding and selecting talented individuals
2	爬罗剔抉	Collecting in large quantities and across a wide range, then carefully selecting
3	东搜西罗	Searching everywhere and everywhere
4	罗缕纪存	Record and save in detail
5	一目之罗	Seeing a small part, not the whole
6	罗之一目	Overemphasizing trivial matters while neglecting significant ones leads to ineffective approaches.
7	八面张罗	Cast your net wide and far, for all things may be well connected or interrelated.
8	见雀张罗	Setting traps after spotting prey

9	南山有鸟， 北山张罗	A method that is either misdirected or not properly implemented
10	知奸亦有大 罗	Governments /authorities must collaborate with the people to govern the nation.
11	罗敷有夫	In the past, it referred to a married woman, a subtle rejection by a woman.

6) The meaning of “Culture aspects”. The idioms that fit this meaning is:

Table 6. the Chinese Idiom containing Luo which means “Culture aspects”

No	成语/Idiom	Meanings
1	罗天大醮	A ritual-like practice in Taoist belief
2	波罗塞戏	Ancient games resemble chess.

7) The meaning of “other names”. The idioms that fit this meaning is:

Table 7. the Chinese Idiom containing Luo which means “other names”

No	成语/Idioms	Meanings
1	波罗奢花	Flower names that resemble chicken combs
2	拙贝罗香	Another name for the incense

8) Unique names or term. The idioms that fit this meaning is:

Table 8. the Chinese Idiom containing Luo which means “other names”

No	成语/Idiom	Meanings
1	罗曼蒂克	Romantic
2	条条大路通罗马	There are many roads leading to Rome.
3	阎罗包老	The King of Hell and Judge Bao represent individuals with a strong sense of justice.

2. Idioms' Connotation

The concept termed '感情色彩' in Chinese or 'Connotation' in English, describes human emotional responses to the meaning or connotation of words or linguistic units. In Mandarin, emotional value is categorized into three types: positive, negative, and neutral. According to research by Abdul Chaer and Liliana Muliastuti (2014) and Huang Borong and Liao Xudong (2011), positive connotation refers to the meaning of words or idioms that convey goodness, praise, affection, pleasure, respect, happiness, beauty, and other positive attributes. Negative connotation encompasses meanings associated

with rejection, evil, humiliation, hatred, judgment, and other negative aspects. Neutral connotation refers to meanings that cannot be classified as either positive or negative. Through analysis and categorization of 49 Mandarin idioms containing the character 'luo', the following results were obtained:

Table 9. the Connotation found in Chinese Idiom containing Luo

No.	Connotation	Sum	Percentage	Idiom Samples
1	Positive Connotation	27	55.2%	罗曼蒂克, 阎罗包老
2	Negative Connotation	16	32.6%	锻炼罗织, 深文罗织
3	Neutral Connotation	6	12.2%	拙贝罗香, 东搜西罗
Total		49	100%	

3. Idioms' sources

The source of the Chinese idiom in question refers to the original text or literature where it was first documented. Among the 49 collected Chinese idioms, the author also identified their respective sources. Analysis revealed that Chinese idiom sources containing the character '罗' fall into four distinct categories as follows:

- 1) Fables and folktales. The following idioms are categorized as originating from Chinese folktales:

Table 10. Chinese Idioms containing Luo found in fables and folktales

No	成语/Idioms	Source	Notes
1	天罗地网	《大宋宣和遣事》	The author remains unknown. This book chronicles the legend of Huang Di (Yellow Emperor), who was granted a Ding (a traditional alchemical furnace) by the goddess of the nine heavens.
2	地网天罗	《大宋宣和遣事》	The author remains unknown. This book chronicles the legend of Huang Di (Yellow Emperor), who was granted a Ding (a traditional alchemical furnace) by the goddess of the nine heavens.
3	云罗天网	《大宋宣和遣事》	The author remains unknown. This book chronicles the legend of Huang Di (Yellow Emperor), who was granted a Ding (a traditional alchemical furnace)

			by the goddess of the nine heavens.
4	万象包罗	《黄帝宅经》	A feng shui book, according to legend, was written by the Yellow Emperor (Huang Di).
5	包罗万象	《黄帝宅经》	A feng shui book, according to legend, was written by the Yellow Emperor (Huang Di).

- 2) Historical events and non-literary classics. The following idioms originate from historical records and non-literary Chinese texts, spanning both classical and modern periods:

Table 11. Chinese Idioms Containing Luo Found In Historical Events And Non Literary Classic

No	成语/Idioms	source	notes
1	罗之一目	《淮南子·说山训》	A collection of writings from the Western Han Dynasty that explores Taoist philosophical concepts
2	杷罗剔抉	《新唐书·韩愈传》	A book containing historical records of the Tang Dynasty
3	森罗万象	《茅山长沙馆碑》	A stele inscribed by 陶弘景 (pronounced: Tao Hongjing) on the philosophy of Taoism and Confucianism
4	万象森罗	《茅山长沙馆碑》	A stele inscribed by 陶弘景 (pronounced: Tao Hongjing) on the philosophy of Taoism and Confucianism
5	深文罗织	《东都事略》	A historical book about the Northern Song Dynasty written by Wang Cheng.
6	罗掘俱穷	《北洋军阀统治时期史话》	A historical account of the people of Shandong's struggle after the 1916-1928 war
7	罗钳吉网	《资治通鉴·唐玄宗天宝四载》	A historical book authored by Sima Guang during the Northern Song Dynasty.



8	吉网罗钳	《资治通鉴·唐玄宗天宝四载》	A historical book authored by Sima Guang during the Northern Song Dynasty.
9	罗织罪名	《唐会要·酷吏》	A historical chronicle written during the Tang Dynasty, chronicling pivotal events, cultural developments, political affairs, and military campaigns throughout the Tang era.
10	阎罗包老	《宋史·包拯传》	A biography of Bao Zheng, a prominent official from the He Fei region during the Song Dynasty.
11	门可张罗	《两京记》	A book documenting the history, geography, social customs, and traditions of the Sui and Tang dynasties
12	门可罗雀	《两京记》	A book documenting the history, geography, social customs, and traditions of the Sui and Tang dynasties
13	门堪罗雀	《两京记》	A book documenting the history, geography, social customs, and traditions of the Sui and Tang dynasties
14	罗雀掘鼠	《新唐书·张巡传》	A historical record written during the Tang Dynasty.
15	罗织构陷	《后汉书·顺帝纪》	A historical book documenting events from the Han Dynasty.
16	星罗棋布	《西都赋》	A historical book written by Ban Gu during the Han Dynasty
17	棋布星罗	《西都赋》	A historical book written by Ban Gu during the Han Dynasty
18	门堪罗雀	《史记·汲郑列传》	A historical work authored by the renowned historian Sima Qian during the Han Dynasty
19	门可罗雀	《史记·汲郑列传》	A historical work authored by the renowned historian Sima Qian during the Han Dynasty

3)

20	珠翠罗绮	《武林旧事·观潮》	A book authored by Zhou Mi that documents the social and cultural conditions of Hangzhou during the Song Dynasty.
21	罗天大醮	《正统道藏》	A book containing Taoist teachings and related content, written during the Ming Dynasty.
22	星罗云布	《两都赋》	A historical book written by Ban Gu during the Han Dynasty
23	知奸亦有大罗	《韩非子·难三》	This is a political essay written by Han Fei during the Warring States period (战国时期)
24	波罗奢花	《天禄识馀·鸡冠》,《翻译名义集·百花》	A book that records plants

Literature works refer to poetic, prose, short story, novel, and other literary forms. The following idioms originate from Chinese literary works, spanning both ancient and modern periods:

Table 12. Chinese Idioms containing Luo found in Literature works

No	成语/Idiom	Source	Note
1	罗敷有夫	《陌上桑》	A collection of poems from the Three Kingdoms period
2	包罗万有	《方南堂先生辍锻录》	A collection of poems, songs, and verses composed during the reign of Emperor Daoguang
3	胸罗锦绣	《禅真逸史》	A Ming Dynasty novel chronicling the adventures of a martial artist
4	锻炼罗织	《端午节》	A novel written by Lu Xun, a legendary figure in modern Chinese literature.
5	八面张罗	《手的故事》	A collection of contemporary prose written by Lin Wenyue.
6	见雀张罗	《红梨记·踏月》	A novel written during the Ming Dynasty.
7	南山有鸟, 北山张罗	《古诗源·卷一·鸟鹊歌》	A collection of poems

8	爬罗剔抉	唐·韩愈《进学解》	A literary work by Han Yu from the Tang Dynasty, which critiques and satirizes the social and legal systems of that era.
9	东搜西罗	《空山灵雨》	This is a collection of contemporary prose written by Xu Dishan, regarded by Chinese literary scholars as the first modern literary work to be systematically documented.
10	一目之罗	《淮南子·说山训》	A collection of essays written during the Western Han Dynasty by Liu Han.
11	罗掘一空	《民国通俗演义》	A novel depicting the social conditions from the Xinghai Movement (1911 Revolution) to the May Fourth Movement (1919), co-authored by Cai Dongfan and Xu Qinfu.
12	披罗戴翠	《危巢坠简·东野先生》	A short story written during the modern era of China by Xu Dishan
13	越罗蜀锦	《白丝行》	A poem composed by Du Fu, a renowned poet of the Tang Dynasty and a celebrated figure in classical Chinese literature.
14	罗缕纪存	《祭妹文》	A prose piece written during the Qing Dynasty by Yuan Zhang
15	绫罗绸缎	《儿女英雄传》	A novel written during modern China by Wen Kang.
16	绮罗粉黛	《红梨记·诉衷》	This is a dramatic script written by Xu Fuzuo during the Ming Dynasty.
17	自投罗网	《野田黄雀行》	A poem composed by Cao Zhi during the Three Kingdoms period.
18	甲第星罗	《皇畿赋》	A poem written by Yang Kan during the Northern Song Dynasty.

- 4) Foreign culture refers to linguistic elements originating from other languages. The following proverbs are categorized as originating from foreign languages:

Table 13. Chinese Idioms Containing Luo Found in Foreign Culture

No	成语/Idiom	Source	Note
1	罗曼蒂克	English word	Taking the phrase "Romantic" from English
2	波罗塞戏	《五杂俎·人部二》	A classic Indian chess game
3	条条大路通罗马	English Idiom	The English idiom 'All roads lead to Rome' means that every path ultimately leads to Rome.

Based on the above identification and analysis, we can conclude that the 49 Mandarin proverbs containing the character '罗' (luó) originate from: 5 idioms in fables and folktales; 24 idioms in historical events and non-literary literature; 18 idioms in literary works; and 3 idioms in foreign cultures.

CONCLUSION

This Chinese idioms featuring the character '罗' (luó) has been proven to carry profound historical significance. Its usage is documented in oracle bone inscriptions from the Shang Dynasty and appears in numerous classical Chinese texts spanning both BC and AD eras.

In terms of meaning, this idiom carries multiple layers of significance closely tied to 'net' or mesh,' both literally and metaphorically. The identified meanings include: 10 idioms about trapping people, 6 about wealth, 9 about large quantities, 6 about economic hardship, 11 about methods or strategies, 2 about cultural elements, 2 about names, and 3 about unique or modern names. Among the 49 idioms, 27 convey positive connotation, 16 negative connotation, and 6 neutral connotations.

Regarding the sources of idioms, specifically where they were first discovered or documented, the research yielded the following results: 5 idioms from fables and folktales; 24 from historical events and classical texts; 18 from literary works; and 3 from foreign cultures.

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