

Traditional Chinese Cultural Elements in Ceramic Tea Set Design Based on Morphosemantics

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of ceramic tea sets continues to the present day. The integration of traditional Chinese cultural elements into the design of ceramic tea sets serves to enhance the aesthetic function of the design and expand the design elements, while also improving the cultural connotation of the tea set products. This study employs the theory of morphosemantics to examine the integration of traditional Chinese cultural elements into ceramic tea set design. It proposes a methodology for combining conventional cultural elements with modern design in novel ways, thereby facilitating the inheritance and innovation of cultural heritage. Guided by the theory of morphosemantics, this study presents a synthesis of the morphological principles, meanings, and design methods associated with traditional cultural elements in ceramic tea set design. It underscores the value of innovative design based on inheritance and advocates for the effective integration of cultural inheritance and modern design.

Keywords: *Morphosemantics, Ceramic tea set, Chinese traditional culture elements*

INTRODUCTION

This paper initially elucidates the connotation and style of traditional Chinese cultural elements, enumerates and expounds upon these elements, and seeks to demonstrate the significance of traditional cultural elements in the design of ceramic tea sets in internationalisation. To this end, it examines the shortcomings of the existing design of ceramic tea sets. This study introduces the theoretical basis of morphosemantics and takes ceramic tea sets as the object of study. It explores the application of traditional Chinese cultural elements in the design of modern ceramic tea sets and provides innovative ideas for the design of ceramic tea sets. The research is divided into two distinct sections. The research is divided into two parts. The first part analyses the cultural connotation of the design elements of ceramic tea set and summarises the style and main features. The second part studies the design method of introducing traditional Chinese cultural elements. The application of traditional Chinese cultural elements in the design of modern ceramic tea sets is explored under the morphosemantics, to provide innovative ideas for the use of traditional cultural elements in the design of ceramic tea sets and offer broader directions and information for subsequent research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Yang (2008) examined the integration of traditional auspicious elements in the design of ceramic tea sets. They analysed traditional Chinese ceramic tea sets through the lens of traditional Chinese ceramic tea sets, combining the connotation of traditional auspicious elements and specific forms of expression. Their study aimed to elucidate the correlation between traditional Chinese auspicious elements and the design of traditional ceramic tea sets. Additionally, they explored the potential for re-creation through the utilisation of traditional auspicious elements in modern ceramic tea set design. This study takes the traditional Chinese auspicious elements as its point of departure, which constitutes a crucial element of traditional Chinese cultural heritage and is also the element most frequently employed in design.

In conjunction, Wang (2023) highlights that Design Representation Theory provides further insight into the symbolic content, the "rhetorical" sources, and the realisation of the creative potential associated with Chinese ceramic tea sets. The symbols employed in the design of objects derive from a multitude of sources and are subject to a set of established conventions, which inform the deeper connotations associated with these symbols. The design philosophy under discussion is, in fact, the ideology of Chinese ceramic tea set design, which encompasses the content of the traditional Chinese cultural spirit and its influence on design. Xiao (2023) analysed the application of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Mingma beliefs in soft ceramic design. This was presented in an article on the innovative application of traditional Chinese cultural elements in soft ceramic design. The analysis considered the fundamental influence of these elements on the style and expression of traditional cultural elements. It also discussed the impact on the development of soft ceramic design from the perspective of ideology and culture. Yu and Zhu (2024) conducted a study of the application of traditional Chinese cultural elements in art design. This was presented in an article on the development and evolution of soft ceramic design. In their article, "Chinese Traditional Cultural Elements in Art Design," Yu and Zhu (2024) examined a range of art design fields, including graphic, architectural, environmental, and clothing design, and discussed how traditional Chinese cultural elements are integrated into contemporary art design. The aforementioned articles collectively examine the impact of traditional Chinese culture on art design.

Sun (2023) examined the integration of traditional Chinese cultural elements in contemporary ceramic art. They analysed traditional patterns, modelling techniques, and colours, with a particular focus on the exploration of traditional Chinese cultural elements in modern ceramic art. In his thesis on the

inevitability of the integration of traditional cultural elements and modern ceramic art Cheng (2022), the author explores the inevitability of the integration of traditional cultural elements and modern ceramic art from a variety of perspectives, including pattern, colour, shape, and so forth. It was concluded that the traditional Chinese cultural elements of the art design have established a robust foundation. The articles in question primarily focus on the core aspects of ceramic art and do not delve into the utilisation of traditional cultural elements in ceramic tea sets.

In a study, Yu (2009) provided a comprehensive account of semiotics as a method of analysis in the study of furniture forms, situating their approach within the broader theoretical framework of semiotics. The development of semiotics theory in the field of design can be traced back to the mid-to-late 20th century when American philosopher Charles William Morris first divided semiotics into three parts: morphology, semantics, and pragmatics. The scope of the study later involved several disciplines. In 1950, the Ulm School of Modelling was the inaugural institution to apply semiotic theories to product design. In 1982, Stuart K. Card, a design scientist, educator, and writer, was the first to apply semiotic theories to product design in a paper entitled *The Semantics of Form in Design*. In a paper entitled "The Semantics of Form in Design", Stuart K. Card, a design scientist, educator, and author, first introduced the concept of product semantics, emphasising the relationship between form and meaning in product design and how product form communicates signs and symbols. This paper is regarded as a seminal contribution to the field of product design, particularly in terms of elucidating the relationship between product form and meaning. Liu (2019) initiated the process by constructing corresponding design reflections from the cognitive, emotional, and symbolic levels of product form semantics, beginning with the product design of nixing pottery. Additionally, some articles adopt a morphosemantic perspective to examine cultural and creative products, such as Huizhou wood carvings and Liangzhu artefacts. These studies collectively contribute to the research on the application of morphosemantics in design from diverse perspectives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study was qualitative, and the process undertaken is illustrated in Figure 1.

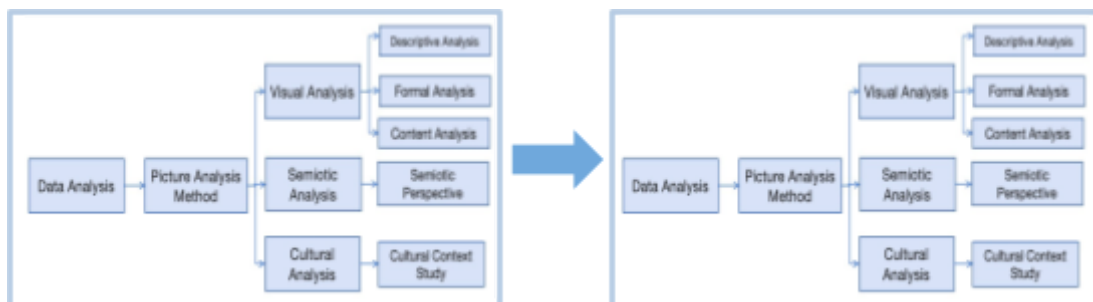


Figure1. Research methodology framework diagram
(Source: Zuo, 2023)

















Following an initial focus on the stylistic application of traditional Chinese cultural elements in the design of ceramic tea sets, the first step was the collection of data, which included a literature review, a field survey, and visits. The objective is to ascertain the precise manner in which traditional Chinese cultural elements are employed in the design of ceramic tea sets. The basis, background, and scope of the data collection were determined through the collation and organisation of relevant literature. During the fieldwork, visits were conducted to the manufacturers of ceramic tea sets, and photographs were taken

and catalogued of pertinent ceramic tea sets in museums and markets. The data collection and fieldwork were conducted concurrently to ensure the comprehensive nature of the data set. A field survey of the market in the Jingdezhen area is planned, as well as a study of the ceramic tea sets in the collections of eight major museums in China. The principal observation sites comprise a range of Taoxi Chuan, Tao Yang Xin Chuan marketplaces, ceramic factories, the Jingdezhen Ceramic Museum, the Palace Museum, the Nanjing Museum, the National Museum of China, and the Sichuan Museum. Ultimately, the visual and cultural analyses of the documentation, field surveys, visits, and images assist in defining the methods by which traditional Chinese cultural elements are employed in ceramic tea sets, and in comprehending their cultural contexts, meanings, and connotations.

FINDINGS

The researcher conducted a literature review, using the Knowledge Network, to identify relevant papers on the application of traditional Chinese cultural elements in modern art design in China. The review yielded 20 papers on the application of traditional Chinese cultural elements in ceramic art, 1300 papers on traditional Chinese patterns, 11 papers on the design of traditional Chinese auspicious patterns in ceramic art, and 3 dissertations on the design of traditional Chinese auspicious patterns in ceramic tea sets. Three doctoral dissertations have been published on the topic of the design of traditional Chinese auspicious patterns in ceramic tea sets. A review of the dissertations and journal articles published in the last five years revealed that dragon patterns, phoenix patterns, flowers (peony, lotus, pine, and bamboo), auspicious clouds, eight treasures pictures, and pictures of auspicious beasts are the most frequently used traditional Chinese cultural elements in the research descriptions of patterns. A comprehensive table has been compiled to provide detailed information on the application of these traditional cultural elements in ceramic tea sets. The accompanying table provides a clear illustration of the diverse range of drawing styles employed in traditional ceramic tea sets, showcasing the incorporation of an array of elements.

Table 1. Traditional Chinese cultural elements and application

Name	Dragon Pattern	Phoenix pattern	Lotus pattern	Cloud pattern	Longevity peach pattern	Bat pattern	Bird and flower motif	Auspicious animal
Pattern								
Application								
	Ming blue and green incised Waves and dragon in pear shape	Ming dynasty jar with clouds and Phoenixes in blue and white	Ming dynasty blue and white lotus bowl	Qing dynasty five-colour cloud-patterned and box with strap	Qing dynasty famille-rose enamelled porcelain bowl with falling branches	Qing dynasty blue and white porcelain nine peaches' dragon's ear flat vase	Qing dynasty famille-rose enamelled bowl with lotus flower on a gold ground	Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain dish with bamboo and stone unicorn design.

Elementary semantic analysis of traditional Chinese patterns

Yan and Zhang (2013) stated that Cultural Semantic Analysis of Traditional Patterns The dragon and phoenix pattern, fish pattern, peacock pattern, magpie pattern, and other patterns have a common point in that they all have positive, auspicious symbolism. This can be traced back to the earliest known examples in the Zhuangzi. Tang Cheng Xuan Ying offers the following interpretation: the auspicious, the good things; auspicious, the signs of Jiaqing. The combination of numerous auspicious patterns creates a visually appealing and festive image, which is used to convey the idea of seeking good fortune and driving away evil spirits.

In traditional Chinese culture, the dragon and phoenix are regarded as auspicious objects. These creatures frequently feature in the work of designers. The dragon represents imperial power and authority and was used by emperors in ancient China. The phoenix symbolises auspiciousness and happiness. These two creatures often appear together in ancient times, as evidenced by their depiction together in symbols. The dragon and phoenix together represent the auspiciousness of these symbols. The "fish pattern" has a traditional cultural meaning of life. The "fish" pattern signifies life, abundance, and richness in traditional culture. For instance, during traditional Chinese festivals, blessings are often bestowed upon the populace, and window lanterns are inscribed with the words "yearly surplus". In this context, the term "surplus" and the image of the fish within the pattern serve to represent the abundance and prosperity associated with the fish pattern. Peacock patterns are frequently observed in conjunction with dragon and phoenix patterns in ancient Chinese art, as the latter symbolises good fortune. In traditional Chinese culture, the fish pattern signifies a life characterised by richness and abundance whereas the peacock is regarded as a symbol of good fortune. The peacock pattern can be used to embellish a tea set, signifying luxury and prosperity. Magpies are associated with joy and celebration, and their image is often used in patterns that convey joy and good fortune, such as the "joyful eyebrows" style, which features the traditional magpie image on branches. In the selection of patterns, the image of a fuller, more rounded, and more colourful design is often chosen. This can be decorated with other elements of the image simultaneously or independently. The composition and layout of the design can also be considered. In the design of modern ceramic tea sets, traditional patterns can be used as a foundation for integrating modern technology and incorporating traditional elements.

In the plant's traditional cultural pattern style, used more is the lotus flower not only with the Buddhist ideology but also has pure and elegant, fresh and modest representatives; traditional landscape painting patterns are often used in the design of tea plates and tea trays, so that the design of the pattern to show the large rivers and mountains, so that it seems as if people travelling between the mountains and the water; Chinese literati have always loved the flowers, through the flowers and plants to express their feelings, from ancient times, the expression of flowers and plants is also colourful, such as idyllic poet Wang Wei's poetry, known as "poetry has a painting, painting has a poem", Tao Yuanming picking chrysanthemums under the hedge, the painting has a poem, "poetry has a poem". The expression of flowers and plants is also colourful, such as the idyllic poet Wang Wei's poetry, known as "poetry in the painting, painting poetry", Tao Yuanming picking chrysanthemums under the East Fence, leisurely looking at the South Mountain of leisure, which reflects the aesthetic sense of literati and refined people to flowers in the poetry, flowers in the paintings, flowers in the ceramics, which are the most commonly used decorative elements; Such as "The three friends of the year" are pine, bamboo, plum, these three decorative themes often appear in painting and poetry, but also in the design of ceramic tea sets, different times to express the different ways, but the expression of these three objects has never stopped. Decorative art with flowers and plants as the main body, in the cultural atmosphere of the Chinese nation, naturally becomes the object of expression, and penetrates the spirit of traditional Chinese culture and aesthetic awareness of the idea that Confucianism, the expression of flowers and plants is a relay of their ideas, their interest in expression. The elements with auspicious cultural connotations are integrated into the design of the tea set through design methods. These image elements are embodied in shape, colour,

pattern, craftsmanship, text, material, symbols, form, etc., which reflect the beauty of the shape, texture, and structure of the artefacts (Liu & Zhang, 2023). Combined with the history, mood, connotation, charm, and thought in the intentional elements, it reflects the beauty of harmony and rhythm. In form, ceramic tea is set in the visual embodiment of the form of beauty, so in the expression of the content of the visual way to externalise the display, based on the law of formal beauty, through the shape of the curvature of the changes in the proportions of the proportions and the balance of the form of beauty, in the application of traditional elements of auspicious culture in the design of ceramic tea set, designers will choose a festive and auspicious symbol of the graphic image, reflecting the desire for good things in the Chinese people's heart. Chinese people's hearts desire and wish for beautiful things.

There are clouds and water ripples is a common decorative elements of traditional culture, representing the clouds, water ripples of the mood, such patterns can often be used as a rich image of the elements, often play a role in supporting the layout of the atmosphere, fill the image effect of the composition of the layout of the role of these traditional elements of Chinese patterns are rich in the design of ceramic tea set decorative motifs, but also enriched with the cultural connotation of the ceramic tea set.

The elements with auspicious cultural connotations are integrated into the design of the tea set through design methods. According to Liu and Zhang (2023, these image elements are embodied in shape, colour, pattern, craftsmanship, text, material, symbols, form, etc., which reflect the beauty of the shape, texture, and structure of the artefacts. Combined with the history, mood, connotation, charm, and thought in the intentional elements, it reflects the beauty of harmony and rhythm. In form, ceramic tea is set in the visual embodiment of the form of beauty, so in the expression of the content of the visual way to externalise the display, based on the law of formal beauty, through the shape of the curvature of the changes in the proportions of the proportions and the balance of the form of beauty, in the application of traditional elements of auspicious culture in the design of ceramic tea set, designers will choose a festive and auspicious symbol of the graphic image, reflecting the desire for good things in the Chinese people's heart. Chinese people's hearts desire and wish for beautiful things.

A semantic analysis of traditional modelling functional forms

In the analysis based on morphosemantics, patterns, colours, materials, composition, and graphics are visually analysed. Morphosemantic analysis is conducted through morphological identification, semantic interpretation, and design style. These three aspects of pattern characteristics are summarised.

Table 2. Analysis Methods List

Visual Analysis	Patterns	Dragon pattern, phoenix pattern, flower pattern, auspicious clouds, eight treasures pattern, animal face pattern, auspicious animal pattern
	Pattern	Flat pattern : Dragons, phoenixes, beasts and flowers
	Colour	Yellow, gold, red, green
	Material	Celadon and white porcelain
	Composition	Bottle, Cap, Cup
Morphosemantic Analysis	Morphological Recognition	Dragon and phoenix, lotus flower, auspicious clouds, birds and animals.
	Semantic Interpretation	Authority, auspiciousness, noble temperament, good blessing

	Design Style	Realistic style
Cultural Analysis	Confucian thoughts	Benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom and faith
	Buddhist thought	Compassion and Love
	Taoist Thought	Taoism and Nature

In the context of art and design, modelling is typically understood to refer to the shape, structure, and appearance of an artwork or object. This visual expression is formed through a range of techniques, including sculpture, painting, architecture, and craftsmanship (Yan & Zhang, 2013). It encompasses various aspects, such as shape, structure, proportion, line, surface treatment, and others. In essence, modelling represents the outward image and form of an artwork. In the context of ceramic teaware, the manipulation of points, lines, surfaces, and body blocks serves to display visual forms through modelling. This process emphasises the organisation of shapes and structures, as well as the aesthetic and coordinating aspects of these elements as a whole. In the design of a ceramic tea set, modelling encompasses the overall shape of the teapot, teacup, tea bowl, and other objects, the design of handles, lid knobs, and other localities, as well as surface decoration, carving, etc. Through the application of an effective modelling design, the ceramic tea set not only fulfils its functional purpose but also exhibits a distinctive artistic sensibility and cultural connotation.

In the modelling design of a ceramic tea set, the application of traditional Chinese cultural elements can be reflected in the shape, structure, decoration, and other aspects, thereby creating a tea set that is imbued with the distinctive flavour of traditional Chinese culture (Liu & Yan, 2018). The design may be classified as belonging to the traditional classical style. In such a case, it is important to ensure that the centre of gravity is stable, that the shape is full and rounded, and that the lines are smooth and natural. This principle may also be applied to other artefacts, such as teapots, teacups, and tea cups. The modelling of ancient bronze and porcelain evinces an atmosphere of traditional elegance. The handles of ceramic tea sets, as well as other parts such as knobs, are crafted with traditional sculpture techniques or with the addition of mythical beasts, including dragons, phoenixes, and unicorns. The beasts frequently signify auspicious, righteous, and sacred concepts. The engraving of traditional cultural patterns or classic stories on the surface of the ceramic tea set not only endows the tea set with a distinctive decorative quality but also serves to convey the heritage of traditional culture.

As documented in the Book of Examination and Craftsmanship, there exists a temporal dimension to the creation of art, wherein the heavens and the earth, the materials and the craftsmanship, each play a distinct yet complementary role. The combination of these four elements is essential for the creation of a superior work of art. The quote emphasises the importance of aligning the timing of the sky, the quality of the earth's atmosphere, the aesthetic appeal of the materials, and the ingenuity of the craftsmen to achieve a harmonious and exceptional outcome. The idea conveyed in this quote emphasises the necessity of following nature, paying attention to the texture of the materials, maintaining a suitable working environment, and ensuring that the craftsman possesses the requisite skill level to produce an excellent piece of craftwork. This illustrates a comprehensive creative philosophy that posits excellent craftsmanship should result from a combination of elements, including the time of day, the weather, the material, and the skill of the craftsman. Consequently, in the design of a ceramic tea set, it is essential to adhere to these design principles, prioritise functionality and aesthetics, and integrate contemporary design concepts and principles, aesthetic considerations, and the utilisation of needs, with traditional cultural elements of modelling and decoration. This approach enables the creation of a ceramic tea set that aligns with the needs of modern users.

A critical examination of the cultural components of traditional cultural elements

The traditional cultural elements are based on the spirit of traditional Chinese culture, and their composition of morphological symbols encompasses both the material and the spiritual levels. From the perspective of morpho-symbolism, the components of traditional cultural elements can be broadly classified into three categories: semantic association, symbolism, and cultural inheritance.

Semantic Associations

The term "semantic associations" is used to describe the connections between concepts that are based on their shared meaning. It is possible that there are substantial semantic links between traditional cultures, due to the existence of analogous morphological structures, comparable vocabulary combinations, or shared cultural connotations within their respective cultural heritages. The field of morphosemantics can assist in the elucidation of these semantic connections and the establishment of links with modelling. In the book *The Beauty of Creation* by Li Yanzu, it is observed that: The construction of modelling is the construction of beauty. The key difference between the modelling of designers and the structural modelling of engineers is that the modelling of designers is a form of art. This includes not only decorative elements such as patterns, symbols, and colours on the surface but also the modelling of rational functional structures. Styling elements, including patterns and colours, serve as carriers of cultural information. They facilitate the dissemination of cultural elements, convey aesthetic interests, and present traditional cultural elements through symbolically marked graphics and styles.

Symbolism

It is frequently the case that traditional cultural elements possess a wealth of symbolic meanings, which may have their origins in historical, religious, mythological, or other cultural factors. By analysing the morphological structure and semantic associations of traditional cultural elements, the symbolic meanings behind them can be revealed, thus facilitating a deeper comprehension and transmission of traditional culture. Once the design objectives have been defined, designers can reuse and reinterpret traditional cultural elements, abstracting, refining, and reconstructing them in a manner that aligns with contemporary aesthetic principles and requirements. This enables the traditional cultural elements to be presented to users in a novel manner.

Cultural Inheritance

Traditional cultural elements play a significant role in the process of cultural inheritance. The constituent elements of traditional cultural elements are influenced and shaped by cultural inheritance, as are their morphological structure and semantic associations. The incorporation of cultural elements imbues the ceramic tea set with a distinctive narrative and intrinsic quality. This represents a synthesis of material and spiritual civilizations. During the design process, designers delve deeply into traditional elements, combining them with innovative techniques to preserve and evolve traditional cultural elements. This enables users to appreciate the allure of these elements while also presenting them in a novel context.

CONCLUSION

The application of traditional Chinese cultural elements in ceramic tea set design is inseparable. By summarising and integrating the resources of traditional cultural elements and applying the theory and method of morphosemantics, these cultural elements can be transformed into a design language to enhance the functionality, aesthetics, and modernity of ceramic cultural elements. Chinese traditional cultural elements as semantic symbols, Chinese traditional cultural elements as ceramic tea set design and decoration of figurative expression, and traditional cultural elements of the shape of style and vessel shape, to ensure the functionality of the tea set under the premise of the use of the principles of morphology will be integrated into the functional design of traditional cultural elements, the use of traditional cultural elements of style and design methods in the shape of the tea set, the pattern and the decorative art way of presentation, not only to create a tea set shape with traditional cultural characteristics, so that it has aesthetic connotation and cultural significance;

The integration of traditional Chinese cultural elements into the design of ceramic tea sets necessitates adherence to established design principles, contextual expression, the selection of appropriate materials, and consideration of functional requirements. This approach enables the effective enhancement of traditional cultural connotations and aesthetic value, while simultaneously expanding the channels of cultural dissemination and promoting innovation and development within the tea set product category.

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