Research on Suitable Stroke Orders in Teaching Chinese Characters to Foreign Students

Wei-Yan MA\textsuperscript{1,a}, Zhi-Gang REN\textsuperscript{2,b} and Hong ZHU\textsuperscript{1,c}

\textsuperscript{1}Bohai University, Jinzhou, Liaoning, China
\textsuperscript{2}Jinzhou Gardening Management, Jinzhou, Liaoning, China
\textsuperscript{a}jessie_mwy@163.com, \textsuperscript{b}5423488@qq.com \textsuperscript{c}546588612@qq.com

Keywords: Stroke Orders, Teaching Chinese Characters, Foreign Students.

Abstract. Chinese character writing has always been difficult for foreign students. Correct stroke orders can make students acquire proper writing habit and form a kind of thinking on character writing. This paper mainly discusses the current stroke orders in foreign students’ textbooks, through comparing different teaching materials of words in order to promote teaching Chinese characters in the future and to help foreign students have ability to write Chinese characters correctly and quickly.

Introduction

As the long-term healthy development of the economy and the rising international status of our country, more and more foreigners begin to learn Chinese. “Mandarin fever” promotes the development of teaching Chinese as a foreign language at the same time exposes some of the difficulties and problems in teaching Chinese especially for character teaching. In fact, no matter for teachers or for learners, different stroke orders sometimes made them feel confused when they teach or learn character writing. Chinese difficulty is largely due to the difficulty of writing Chinese characters.

With the current development of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, its study also develops quickly. A lot of good books and papers have been published in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. But the study of Chinese characters’ stroke order is still relatively weak. Chinese character teaching and writing is one of the difficulties for both the teachers and the learners. Every year the Confucius institute test volunteers on their ability to write correct character strokes, which shows that Chinese character teaching is an important part of Chinese teaching.

In teaching Chinese characters to foreign students, if teachers could give students a unified and suitable basic stroke order for Chinese characters, the international students will acquire Chinese characters fast, accurately and fluently. However, nowadays’ accepted Chinese character teaching materials for foreign students are not unified which not only set up obstacles for teachers’ teaching, but also bring confusion for students to learn Chinese characters. In 1997, Language Committee launched “Modern Chinese Stroke Order Specification” (hereinafter referred to as the “Specification”) which gave standards of character strokes on 7000 Chinese characters. “Specification” provided most of the unity of the Chinese characters stroke order which played a positive role, but there are still some problems existing in the process of Chinese characters stroke order in practical writing that need to demonstrate in order to promote the publication of a more suitable order.

This paper tries to contrast the “Specification” and other character writing books and then hope to inspire later Chinese characters stroke order study, thus to make the unity or accommodation of the character stroke in the future to improve character teaching for foreign students.

Comparison of the Books

According to “Specification”, some basic Chinese character parts, such as “shùxīn”, the order is “zuǒdiǎn, yòudiǎn, shù”, but in some foreign textbook, the order is “zuǒdiǎn, shù, yòudiǎn”, and in some textbook, the order is “shù, zuǒdiǎn, yòudiǎn”.

311
“wàn” which means ten thousand, the order for it in “Specification” is “héng, héngzhégōu, piě”. Some textbooks choose this stroke order of “Specification”, which is also “héng, héngzhégōu, piě”, but in some books, the stroke order for this character is “héng, piě, héngzhégōu”. And “fāng” is also in this case.

“bǐ” which means to compare, the order for it in “Specification” is “héng, shùtí, piě, shùwāngōu,”. Some textbooks choose this stroke order of “Specification”, but in some textbooks, the order is “héng, shùtī, shùwāngōu, piě”.

“huǒ” which means fire, the order for it in “Specification” is “little up diǎn, little up piě, big piě, ná”. Some textbooks choose this stroke order of “Specification”, but in some textbooks, the order is “little up diǎn, big piě, little up piě, ná”.

“lǐ” which means inside, the order of the last three strokes in “Specification” is “shù, héng, héng”. Some textbooks choose this stroke order of “Specification”, but in some textbooks, the stroke order for this character is “héng, shù, héng”. And “zài, zhòng and so on” are the same case.

“guàn” which means birthplace, the order for it in “Specification” is “shùzhé, héngzhé, shù, héng”. Some textbooks choose this stroke order of “Specification”, but in some textbooks, the order is “shùzhé, héngzhé, héng, shù”.

From the above examples we can clearly see that for students to write Chinese characters teaching material is not strict in accordance with the Specification of the stroke order to write Chinese characters. Even the same publishing house’ different textbooks have different Chinese characters stroke order. These different stroke orders of Chinese cause a lot of problems for Chinese teachers and foreign students. If those characters could have unified standard, it will provide solid guarantee for students to master Chinese characters.

**Things to be Taken into Consideration**

By comparing stroke orders of different Chinese characters teaching material, we can see that those words standardization is imperative. The unified Chinese character stroke orders for has important significance for foreign students to master the writing of Chinese characters better and faster.

What’s more, some Chinese characters’ stroke orders in “Specification” are difficult to explain. For example, the characters of “tǔ, wáng” which mean soil and king should be written in this order “héng, shù, héng” according to the “Specification”, but characters of “lǐ, zhòng, tóng, zài” which mean inside, heavy, children, again should be written in this order “shù, héng, héng” which seems to be inconvenient.

And also the author believes that “shān” which means mountain and “chū” which means go out should have the same stroke order, namely the order for “shān” is “long shù, shùzhé, short shù,” and “chū” should be “long shù, upper shùzhé, upper short shù, below shùzhé, below short shù” to make a coordination.

**Conclusion**

Characters play a very important role in Chinese teaching and writing, some teachers who teach Chinese as a foreign language believe that if the provisions of stroke orders are different from their normal writing stroke orders, then their writing Chinese characters can sometimes be a little difficult This is especially true for foreign students, if you can’t grasp the words at the beginning of the study, not in the brain to form the correct stroke order, it will affect students’ memory and writing of Chinese characters. If students can grasp the structure of the basic Chinese characters, the characters will be faster to stay in their memory and help them to learn Chinese better.

This paper is not to judge which version of the stroke orders is right or wrong but to let scholar begin to notice that there are many inconsistencies in character writing, which caused the problems in teaching and learning, and then hope that through joint efforts, scholars will launch a more unified version of specification for Chinese characters stroke order in the future to reduce differences, and expand the common.
Acknowledgement

This research was financially supported by the Center of Educational Reform and Teaching Quality Evaluation, Bohai University. Project Name: Research on Teaching Practice Design of Chinese Language Elements Teaching for Class and Extracurricular Teaching. Project Number: BDJG-15-YB-C-019; supported by Liaoning Province Educational Reform Project. Project Name: Research on In-Class Practice Model of Major Theory Courses Based on “Zhuandong Classroom”. Project Number: 475; supported by Ministry of Education. Project Name: Survey on Liaoning Chinese Dialect- Xingcheng. Project Number: YB1606A002.

References


