



THE PROBLEM OF FORGETTABILITY OF HIEROGLYPHS IN THE METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

When learning Chinese as a foreign language, especially in the first years of study, the greatest difficulty is in the processes of mastering vocabulary and memorizing hieroglyphs, which is why choosing the right teaching methodology can significantly increase the effectiveness of teaching Chinese. The problem of teaching the Chinese language, as well as the development of effective methods of teaching the Chinese language, still remains relevant and is an acute problem for domestic linguistics and linguodidactics. This article describes part of the experiment, the purpose of which was to analyze the effectiveness of existing methods of teaching Chinese by identifying the features of memorizing Chinese characters, as well as factors influencing their forgetting in the process of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. As part of the experiment, the lexical minimum for studying

Key words

Chinese language, teaching Chinese, teaching methods, Chinese characters, memorizing characters, forgetting characters, vocabulary, lexical minimum HSK 3.

INTRODUCTION

Chinese is the oldest language in the world, one of the six world languages [1]. It ranks first in the world in terms of the number of speakers as a mother tongue and third in terms of prevalence as a foreign language after English. Moreover, the Chinese language is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as one of the most difficult languages in the world [2]. Since the mid-2000s, with the active support of the PRC government, a policy has begun to popularize the study of Chinese as a foreign language through the creation of centers for the study of Chinese language and culture around the world - Confucius classes and institutes [3]. In 2016, at the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Confucius Institutes, it was announced that today there are more than 700 Confucius Institutes and classes in 120 countries around the world, and the number of registered students exceeds 500 thousand people [4]. There are 19 institutes and 4 Confucius classes in Russia [5]. The popularity of the Chinese language is also determined by the growth of China's economic and political influence in the world, the need of the world economy and business sector for specialists with knowledge of the Chinese language [6].

LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODS

In this regard, the relevance of teaching Chinese as a foreign language is extremely increasing. The theory of methods of teaching the Chinese language in our country is actively studied by O.A. Maslovets [7], I.V. Kochergin [8], N.A. Demina [6], V.A. Kurdyumov [9], K.A. Lozovskaya [10], Yu.V. Lelyukh [11]. However, in Russia, the methodology for teaching Chinese is at the formalization stage, which is confirmed, for example, by the lack of an educational standard for teaching Chinese as a foreign language in schools and universities. The problems of teaching the Chinese language, as well as the development of effective methods of teaching the Chinese language, are acute for domestic linguistics and linguodidactics. The main

difficulty that the Chinese language presents when learning, and its main difference from European languages, is the lack of an alphabet and the use of graphic symbols (hieroglyphs) as the main units of speech communication [6]. The peculiarity of hieroglyphic writing determines its main distinctive property: the independence of the sign from its reading. Chinese writing is a kind of mystery, so the process of learning the Chinese language is greatly complicated by the problem of memorizing hieroglyphs, which become an insurmountable obstacle, including memorizing thousands of similar pictures-symbols, each of which has its own sound, meaning and spelling. Many educational and teaching aids offer various ways to memorize hieroglyphs, but it seems that this problem does not have an effective solution, since memorizing hieroglyphs is a complex process, which in any case requires cognitive effort, especially from native speakers of European languages. Recognition of a hieroglyph is possible only by performing two separate operations - reading and translation, whereas in languages based on the alphabet, the reading process is automated and does not require separate cognitive efforts. Thus, when learning Chinese as a foreign language, especially in the first years of study, the greatest difficulty is in the processes of mastering vocabulary and memorizing hieroglyphs. Choosing the right methodology can significantly improve the effectiveness of learning Chinese. In this regard, when developing a methodology, it seems relevant to analyze the process of memorizing hieroglyphs, identifying the most complex and simple hieroglyphs. The distribution of hieroglyphs from the point of view of the difficulty of memorizing them by native speakers of European languages can become an important empirical basis for the development of didactic techniques in the process of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, as well as the compilation of educational and teaching aids. This study is devoted to solving this problem.

Chinese as a foreign language was analyzed, corresponding to level B1 of the Hanban standard, which includes 600 characters required to pass the 3rd level HSK exam according to the Hanban standard. Also, during the study, using the example of students of the philological specialty of Perm State National Research University, the process of memorizing and forgetting the lexical minimum for level B1 of the Hanban standard was analyzed experimentally. Based on the data obtained, the cognitive characteristics and patterns of memorizing and forgetting hieroglyphs were studied, the groups of hieroglyphs most difficult to memorize were identified, the processes of memorizing and forgetting hieroglyphs were described, and the effectiveness of methods for memorizing hieroglyphs was analyzed.

The Hanban lexical standard for B1 levels was introduced in 2014 and includes 600 basic characters, suggesting the development of 300 new characters in addition to the 300 learned [14]. The HSK3 textbook consists of 20 lessons, each of which contains on average 15.7 new hieroglyphs and involves the study of several grammatical structures corresponding to level B1 [15].

CONCLUSION

The conducted research allowed us to draw several general conclusions. As part of the work, an analysis was carried out of factors that may influence the processes of memorization and forgetting: the complexity of writing in terms of the number of features and the frequency of mention. The results of the study showed that the influence of these factors on the processes of memorization and forgetting can be traced in a significant part of the examples. In addition, the study revealed that the hieroglyphs encountered by students at levels A1 and A2 have a higher memorability coefficient. A comparative analysis of the “translation” and “reading” reactions showed that, in general, both reading and translation seem equally complex in the process of learning vocabulary at level B1. However, the low memorability coefficient for the “reading” reaction remains at all analyzed levels (A1, A2, B1). Therefore, when developing methodological and educational materials using the Hanban standard, it is advisable to pay more attention to the study of tones. As part of this work, the process of forgetting is also analyzed. In general, the experiment confirmed the hypothesis about the existence of a forgetting problem. If initially there is a tendency to increase memorability, then by the end of the educational period there is a tendency to forget vocabulary. Of course, taking into account the factors of memorability and forgetfulness of hieroglyphs can become an important tool in solving the problem of memorizing hieroglyphs and can be used in the preparation of educational and teaching aids for studying Chinese as a foreign language.

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