

The Research on Ancient Chinese Teaching in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract—Against the background of advocating quality education, Ancient Chinese course plays an indispensable role in cultivating the humanistic quality of college students. But Ancient Chinese teachers do not pay enough attention to this course; followed by many problems have arisen. This paper analyzes those problems on the basis of practical classroom teaching experience and modern educational theory and puts forward some reform suggestions.

Keywords—*ancient Chinese; teaching research; teaching method*

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1991, the Teachers' Department of the State Education Commission clearly pointed out in the Syllabus of Chinese Language and Literature Education: "Ancient Chinese is a basic course for the major of Chinese Language and Literature Education in normal universities. The purpose of this course is to master the basic knowledge of ancient Chinese, improve the ability to read ancient books, criticize and inherit ancient cultural heritage, and use relevant knowledge to teach classical Chinese so as to improve the teaching level of classical Chinese in middle schools." It clearly points out the purpose of the ancient Chinese course, the teaching effect to be achieved through this class, and the basic role played by the ancient Chinese course in the Chinese language and literature specialty of colleges and universities. Ancient Chinese course is an important basic course for students majoring in Chinese Language and Literature, but the current teaching effect is unsatisfactory. The content and mode of traditional class teaching have been solidified. Many students think that this class is dull, obscure and difficult to understand, which is predominant in this class. It produces a sense of disgust with learning.

Faced with this situation, it is needed to have a detailed understanding and analysis of the current situation of ancient Chinese teaching, and make exploratory reform of the traditional teaching mode by using more and newer teaching methods, so that the ancient Chinese class is not confined to "ancient", but to "modern" and become a new one.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT AND PRESENT SITUATION OF ANCIENT CHINESE TEACHING IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, there has been no syllabus and designated textbooks for the course of ancient Chinese. In many colleges and universities, the content of ancient Chinese teaching is determined by the teachers themselves according to their personal characteristics, the actual needs of college students are not taken into account. Because of the lack of systematicness and standardization, the curriculum standards of ancient Chinese are different, the Selections of Literary Works of Successive Dynasties, the Ancient Chinese Grammar, the Ancient Chinese Vocabulary, the Ancient Chinese Characters, the Ancient Chinese Phonology, the Exegetics in Ancient Chinese and the History of Chinese Language are scattered out. This makes ancient Chinese to be a course which is not clear in content, purpose and nature.

In the early 1960s, Mr. Wang Li edited the textbook *Ancient Chinese*, it symbolizes the systematic and normative formation of ancient Chinese, and until now its influence on ancient Chinese teaching is still very extensive. Mr. Wang Li wrote in the introduction of the textbook that "Ancient Chinese is one of the basic courses in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature. Its teaching aim is to cultivate students' ability to read Chinese ancient books. We must clearly recognize that Ancient Chinese is a tool course. Through the study of this course, we can learn ancient Chinese better so as to read ancient documents and critically inherit the ancient cultural heritage of our country."

Against the background of advocating quality education, the role of ancient Chinese in cultivating students' humanistic quality cannot be ignored. However, the ancient Chinese course in colleges and universities has not received enough attention and development in these decades, there are still some problems in teaching contents and methods. Ancient Chinese teaching and present Chinese education in middle schools have not been well connected. As a result, it is easy for college students who are newly exposed to the ancient Chinese course to get bored subjectively, which affects the teaching effect of the ancient Chinese course in colleges and universities.

In response to this situation, more and more scholars begin to concern about the teaching of ancient Chinese in

colleges and universities. They put forward many suggestions on the compilation of teaching syllabus, the selection of teaching materials, teaching methods and so on. This paper will start from the actual problems encountered in the teaching of ancient Chinese in colleges and universities, analyze and summarize the causes of the problems, and put forward solutions based on the relevant teaching experience of ancient Chinese, with a view to contributing a little to the development of ancient Chinese course in colleges and universities, so as to promote the humanistic quality of college students better.

III. PROBLEMS EXISTING IN ANCIENT CHINESE TEACHING

A. The Nature of Ancient Chinese Course

The nature of ancient Chinese has always been defined as a tool course for reading ancient books, but in today's social context, reading ancient books is generally mistaken for meaningless things by students.

For a long time, China's college graduates have poor adaptability to society and great employment pressure. This is related to the general tendency of China's higher education to emphasize books rather than quality. In this situation, many colleges and universities have reformed their education and begun to pay more and more attention to the cultivation of students' personal qualities and professional skills. It is undeniable that this practice is a beneficial exploration and taste in higher education and has great strategic significance. However, as far as the current situation of these educational reforms in colleges and universities is concerned, more attention should be paid to the cultivation of students' practical ability. Many colleges and universities have carried out the reform of Vocational colleges, which will certainly solve the employment problem of college graduates to a large extent, but it still has general defects in persistently shaping students' psychology, personality and morality. Overemphasizing the practicality of education will make school education to be utilitarian, and students will naturally not be interested in learning how to read ancient books.

If studying the ancient Chinese textbooks carefully, researchers will find that besides explaining the methods of reading ancient books, these textbooks also contain many classics for students to read, so it should not define them only with the word "tool". It necessary to let students know that in the course of Ancient Chinese, besides making them master some theoretical knowledge of Ancient Chinese, more importantly, it will take them to read classics and help them understand classics, so as to cultivate their humanistic quality and bring benefits to their long-term development.

B. Ancient Chinese Textbooks

At present, Wang Li's *Ancient Chinese* is the most popular textbook in colleges and universities, and it is indeed a classic textbook. Later, the other textbooks also use it as a model, which has not changed much in form and content. According to the investigation, in these decades, Chinese textbooks in middle schools have been revised many times, especially for the study of classical culture. *Historical*

Records, *Tang Poetry* and *Song Ci* have become the compulsory courses in middle schools, but the ancient Chinese textbooks in colleges and universities have not changed much, and they are still based on the traditional mode. In this way, the two stages of learning cannot be well connected, many college students will feel that some of the content of the textbook is "familiar" and cannot arouse their interest in re-learning, thus it will lead to some preconceived sense of weariness in learning.

C. Ancient Chinese Teaching Method

At present, the teaching way of ancient Chinese mainly adopts the teacher's indoctrination method, which is also related to the course's own characteristics. After all, ancient Chinese knowledge is not common in daily life. For most students, reading ancient Chinese and understanding and digestion of ancient Chinese knowledge are available and difficult. So in the ancient Chinese class, there are few teachers to let students study independently, and the students have no chance to participate in the class. The students can only learn passively and lack the initiative of learning.

IV. A NEW VIEW ON THE TEACHING METHOD OF ANCIENT CHINESE

A. Redefining the Nature of Ancient Chinese Course

The teaching aim of ancient Chinese is to cultivate students' ability to read ancient books. The present syllabus also clearly stipulates it. As a tool course, this teaching aim is undoubtedly correct and must be carried out steadfastly. However, it is obviously not suitable for the needs of the times if it is implemented singly and adjusted without diversification. For teachers, the purpose is too single, and also constraints the diversification of teaching.

In fact, in ancient Chinese teaching, the training of students' ability to read ancient books is only a foundation, and the ability to cultivate ancient books is not simply to explain the usage of words. This requires teachers to guide students to read literary selections, so as to enable students to learn more about the essence of classical literatures. Reading is not just for reading. Reading is only a means to broaden students' horizons and let them understand ancient customs, culture, history, philosophy and other aspects better. Only by broadening their horizons can students find their own interests and motivate them to read ancient books consciously and actively. For example, when teachers explaining Wang Li's Selections of Unit 1 *Zuozhuan* and Unit 2 *Zhangguo Policy* in his *Ancient Chinese*, they should try their best to explain related events to the students, and many students will be interested in this history, and then teachers should recommend the relevant ancient books to them, such as *Historical Records*. There are many repetitions in the contents of *Zuozhuan*, *Zhangguo Policy* and *Historical Records*, but the narration of events is different. *Zuozhuan* is a chronological style, arranged contents according to time, *Zhangguo Policy* is a national style, arranged contents according to countries, and *Historical Records* should be the most coherent in the arrangement of events, and it arranged contents according to the integrity of the events. Through

such recommendations and expansions, students can read selectively, and they will compare the three languages in the three corpus. In the process of reading, they can feel a process of development and change in Chinese.

Therefore, in order to achieve the teaching goal of cultivating students' reading ability, the best way is to let the students read more, and let the students read the ancient books consciously. The best method is to do anything possible to make them interested in the ancient books, which requires us not to stick to the single teaching purpose of "reading tools" in Ancient Chinese teaching.

B. To Use Ancient Chinese Textbooks Correctly

In the study of ancient Chinese teaching, the compilation of textbooks is the key. The *Ancient Chinese* edited by Mr. Wang Li consists of three parts, namely, literary anthology, general theory and common words. Some classical prose and Rhymes from Pre-Qin to Song Dynasty are selected in the literary anthology part. The general theory part mainly introduces some knowledge of ancient characters, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, rhetoric, style and some common cultural knowledge. The common words part explains some common words in Ancient Chinese and identifies some synonyms. These three parts are organically combined to make perceptual knowledge and theoretical knowledge integrated, and their rationality has been recognized by the academic community. After that, most of the textbooks compiled have made some adjustments in this model.

Such textbooks have always been the model of ancient Chinese textbooks, but there are some drawbacks in today's ancient Chinese teaching. Firstly, there are too many repetitions between the selected articles and the classical Chinese selected in the middle school textbooks, so that students can see the same literary selections which make them as to chew wax, and have no interest in learning. Secondly, because textbooks were published in the 1960s, many recent theoretical achievements have not been included, and the theoretical knowledge in textbooks is obviously lagging behind. Finally, the theoretical part of the whole textbook is still lacking systematicness when it is compiled. Without the teacher's thorough explanation, it is difficult for students to complete it by themselves.

Although there are some shortcomings in the textbooks, after all, the textbooks are only a basis for teachers in teaching. For college students, their learning should be free from the textbooks. The way of learning according to the textbooks is no longer practical for them. More knowledge should be obtained from outside the books. Teachers would expand their knowledge and abilities to students. Ancient Chinese teachers always emphasize that the purpose of ancient Chinese teaching is to enable students to read ancient books. However, in the actual teaching process, students can hardly practice reading ancient books independently. The ancient books that students read are just some selected classics that everyone knows well in the textbooks, which often give students a preconceived boredom, and it is inevitable to lose their interests. The excerpts from textbooks

are limited, but the contents that can be expanded through these selections are infinite, which requires teachers to have a deeper literary background, to provide more ancient books for students, and to expand their reading scope.

For the general theory part, teachers need to improve it more systematically on the basis of the knowledge points in the textbook. It is necessary to classify and integrate the original scattered knowledge points in the textbooks, explain them systematically to the students so as to make them more acceptable. In addition, the key point is that when explaining this "dull" theoretical knowledge, teachers must select some examples that can arouse students' interests. Only combined with examples, can students have more specific and image memories. According to this teaching experience, the basic theoretical knowledge of ancient Chinese has been integrated into four parts: grammar, vocabulary, words and phonology. The teaching of these four parts also intersects with the selected classics part in terms of time arrangement.

C. Improvement of Ancient Chinese Teaching Method in Colleges and Universities

1) *Breaking the former teaching pattern, not limited to explaining "language" knowledge:* Ancient Chinese teachers should not only classify ancient Chinese as a tool course, when teachers instructing students to read ancient classics, they should not pay attention to explaining the "language" knowledge only. "Language" knowledge is the foundation, but the contents of history, philosophy, literature and other aspects expanded from it should not be neglected. In any of these contents, as long as it can arouse students' interests, then it can be centered, point-by-point, and face-to-face, so that the relevant "language" knowledge can be naturally applied. Perhaps in this teaching method, they can flexibly achieve the goal of "first guest, second host", so that students will have an active desire for knowledge. So the knowledge of ancient Chinese theory which the students have always felt very boring will become so interesting.

2) *Introduction of multimedia teaching:* In ancient Chinese teaching, the use of modern equipment is not enough, such as multimedia teaching. Multimedia teaching has many advantages. It can show students what they want to learn intuitively and vividly. However, the multimedia courseware of ancient Chinese is not very common now. Even if the courseware is made, its form is relatively single and traditional. The application of multimedia should be an important part of the improvement of ancient Chinese teaching in the future.

V. CONCLUSION

Ancient Chinese is a compulsory course for Chinese linguistics majors. It plays a very important role in the knowledge structure of Chinese majors and in the cultivation of students' humanistic quality. Ancient Chinese is a linguistic tool for reading ancient Chinese literature and books and inheriting ancient cultural heritage, but it is also the basis for learning and studying ancient literature, history, philosophy, linguistics and culture, as well as for further

exploring the origin and development of modern Chinese. Therefore, it is necessary to pay enough attention to the teaching of ancient Chinese, reform the teaching materials, teaching methods and other aspects, cultivate students' interests in active learning, in order to improve the quality of teaching ancient Chinese in colleges and universities.

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