

The Causes, Influences, and Countermeasures of Middle School Chinese “Less Emphasis on Grammar” Teaching

Chong Wang

School of Literature, Journalism and Communication
Inner Mongolia University
Hohhot, China 010070

Abstract—“Less emphasis on grammar” refers to the phenomenon of neglecting the teaching of grammar theory of Chinese teaching in middle school. From syllabus to textbooks, to test papers, to actual teaching, there is a phenomenon of paying less emphasis on grammar. The teaching concept of “less emphasis on grammar” is actually not conducive to teachers’ in-depth research, nor to the long-term development of students. From a more profound perspective, it will lag behind the development of Chinese. In view of this, grammar teaching can be strengthened from many aspects such as new curriculum standards, examination outlines, and textbook preparation.

Keywords: Chinese, grammar, less emphasis, countermeasures

I. INTRODUCTION

“Less emphasis on grammar” refers to the phenomenon of neglecting the teaching of grammar theory in middle school Chinese teaching. It is mainly manifested in the fact that the content of grammar knowledge is too simple, grammar knowledge lacks systematicness and accuracy, and terminology teaching is neglected. [1] Grammar teaching is one of the most controversial focuses in Chinese teaching today. Grammar teaching has always been in an awkward state with a weak status. On the one hand, it reflects the continuous exploration of grammar teaching, and on the other hand, it reflects that people still have doubts about how to teach grammar. Although less emphasis on grammar teaching caters to the “teaching” of teachers and the “learning” of students, after further exploration and analysis, it will be found that in fact it is not conducive to the in-depth study of teachers and the long-term development of students. From a perspective, it will lag behind the development of Chinese, and its serious consequences can be imagined. At present, grammar teaching has been diluted in many schools, but practice has proved that grammar teaching is important and it should not be diluted.

II. CAUSES OF “LESS EMPHASIS ON GRAMMAR”

As early as the 1950s, Mr. Zhang Zhigong was distressed when he heard the reflection of “difficult and useless”

grammar when he presided over the construction of a “temporary Chinese teaching grammar system” and wrote middle school Chinese textbooks. Later, Mr. Zhang first put forward the idea of establishing “Chinese theory of poetry and prose” and called for attention to the practicality of grammar research, so that Chinese theory of poetry and prose can become a bridge between the basic knowledge and basic theories of language and the practical use of literacy skills. But to this day, from Chinese syllabus to textbooks, to the test papers, and teaching practice, there is a phenomenon of less emphasis on grammar.

A. The guiding role of junior and senior high school Chinese curriculum standards

The “Full-time Compulsory Education Chinese Curriculum Standards” promulgated in 2011 clearly stipulates that basic grammar knowledge should be understood at the junior high school level. This can not only help students understand the language difficulties in the text, but also allow students to develop the ability to modify their composition in writing so that they can make the words smooth. The new curriculum standard also adds an appendix to the “Key Points of Grammar and Rhetoric Knowledge”. But at the same time, the new curriculum standard also proposes that although it is necessary to guide students to learn the necessary grammar knowledge with the text, it is not necessary to carry out systematic and concentrated grammar knowledge teaching. And the curriculum standard under the “Reading” item clearly states: “Grammar and rhetoric knowledge are not taken as the content of the examination.” Although the above regulations emphasize the students’ autonomy, inquiry and comprehensiveness, they also represent the innovation of teaching methods, but they undoubtedly reduce the difficulty and requirements of grammar teaching. The “Key Points of Grammar and Rhetoric Knowledge” is not only a selection of grammar knowledge, but also a streamlined grammar teaching content. In particular, it is clearly stipulated that the grammar content is not for exams. “Not for exams” means that the purpose of grammar teaching is to cultivate and improve the students’ ability to use language. Originally it represents the progress of educational ideas. However, in today’s exceptionally

utilitarian education, the exam is actually a baton for teaching. "Not for exam" means "no need to teach" and "no need to learn".

The senior high school curriculum standard divides the Chinese curriculum into compulsory and elective parts. When studying the 2013 General High School Chinese Curriculum Standards (Experimental), it can be found that only in the "Reading and Appreciation" section of the compulsory curriculum, it listed the grammar teaching requirements of classical Chinese: "it requires understanding and sorting out the meaning or usage of common classical Chinese words, classical words, and classical Chinese sentences." The other parts of the compulsory curriculum did not mention the relevant matters of modern Chinese grammar teaching. The content of modern Chinese grammar mainly appears in the "language application" part of the elective course: "it requires understanding the relevant content of language regulations, enhancing the awareness of norms, learning to identify and correct errors, and improving the correctness and effectiveness of language applications." The processing of grammar knowledge by the curriculum standards issued by the Ministry of Education comes from years of continuous reflection on grammar teaching. It is scientific and reasonable. But unfortunately, the majority of Chinese teachers have seriously deviated from the understanding of the "curriculum standards" and mistakenly believed that grammar was insignificant.

B. The content of the grammar assessment in the college entrance examination language is less

The 2014 Chinese college entrance examination test outline is based on the requirements of freshmen's cultural quality in regular colleges and universities, and the test content is composed according to the "Regular Senior Middle School Curriculum Program (Experimental)" and "Regular Senior Middle School Chinese Curriculum Standard (Experimental)" issued by the Ministry of Education in 2003. The examination outline in the "Ancient Poetry Reading" section mainly examines the meaning of common classical Chinese words, the meaning and usage of common classical Chinese words, and examines sentence patterns and usages different from modern Chinese, such as predicative sentences, passive sentences, object prepositions, and parts of speech at the same time. The examination outline in the "language application" section mainly examines and analyzes and modifies the sick sentences, extended sentences, compressed paragraphs, and transformed sentence patterns. However, in the reading of classical Chinese texts in the first and second volumes of the country in 2015, about the content concerned about grammar, there was only one question of translating the classical Chinese into modern Chinese (Question 7), and there was only one faulty wording or formulation question about modern Chinese grammar (Question 14). In addition, the grammar part of the examination papers in other provinces in the country is very few. It can be seen that the grammar content in Chinese examinations is not enough.

C. Influence of textbook layout system

The current versions of Chinese textbooks have greatly reduced the proportion of grammar knowledge. Teachers are affected by the new textbook layout system so that it is easy for them to ignore the grammar teaching. Taking the Chinese textbook in PEP edition for junior high school as an example, grammar knowledge is generally listed in the "Appendix" at the back of the book. There are no relevant grammar knowledge points and practice questions, and individual grammar knowledge only appears sporadically in some text exercises. Most teachers will explain according to authoritative textbooks. The importance of reading, writing, oral communication, and comprehensive learning in textbooks determines that the "Appendix" of textbooks is rarely valued by teachers. In addition, teaching grammar is inherently laborious and unpleasant things, so the phenomenon of "less emphasis" is understandable. [2]

III. PROBLEMS WITH "LESS EMPHASIS ON GRAMMAR"

Grammar is the basis of a language, and it is a combination rule between language symbols. Grammar guides people to form expressive sentences according to certain rules. Without grammar, the language will be disordered, and the language will not be a human communication tool. Chinese ability is supported by grammatical knowledge. Completely expunging grammatical knowledge from the Chinese classroom is detrimental to the improvement of Chinese ability. Under the teaching concept of "less emphasis on grammar", students' comprehension ability, reading ability and writing ability are all damaged to varying degrees.

A. It is not good for language norms and development

Judging from the current situation, many students are influenced by English in the expression of written or spoken language, and they like to mix Chinese and English. This makes the language expression nondescript and violates the basic grammatical rules of Chinese. And after the popularity of the Internet, the network language quickly infiltrated into people's lives. Students use these mutated languages to write, and often there are unconventional problems in composition. The occurrence of these phenomena is closely related to the lack of grammar knowledge. Less emphasis on grammar leads to the majority of students not having basic part-of-speech discrimination and understanding of the structural rules of phrases and sentences. If grammatical errors occur when writing an article, it is difficult to find and correct them. When students of this quality enter the society, their language habits will also have an adverse impact on society. Chinese carries the unique thinking of the nation. People rely on it to talk, use it to think, and record by it. However, the pursuit of online languages, the input of foreign languages, and the neglect of Chinese grammar learning have made Chinese people weaker and weaker in the ability of using Chinese. Therefore, grammar teaching is an urgent task, and learning grammar has a positive meaning for cultivating correct language habits and establishing language norms.

B. It hinders the improvement of students' writing ability

To write an excellent article, it is not only sufficient to have profound thoughts, but also to have profound language skills, because thoughts are expressed by language. A large amount of reading accumulation will make students' language more beautiful and even poetic, but if they want to create their own language that has both depth and beauty, they need to understand the grammar and the rules of language combination to ensure the smoothness of the text and the beauty of the text. It can be found that in recent years, whether in junior and senior high school students' composition training, college entrance examination composition papers, even undergraduates' academic thesis, graduate graduation thesis, grammar errors such as typos, sick sentences, and disordered sentence-group relations are common. These flaws greatly reduce the quality of the article. This is because students have a weak foundation in grammar, and they do not have the ability to correct grammatical errors in writing, nor the ability to further consider and adjust these problems. Therefore, without a certain level of grammar knowledge, students' writing skills, reading comprehension, and language analysis will be greatly hindered. [3]

IV. COUNTERMEASURES

A. The junior high school Chinese curriculum standard needs to strengthen grammar teaching content

The teaching concept promoted by the "Regular Senior High School Chinese Curriculum Standards (Experimental)" is conducive to the promotion of students' individuality and the all-round development of students. It is in line with the requirements of teaching reform, but some specific methods need to be further discussed. It is known that high school hours are intensive, and elective courses will affect the overall resources of high school courses. The status of elective courses in high school is not ideal, and that's why many schools basically do not use elective materials. This makes the specific requirements in the curriculum standards barely play the role. Under the guidance of the current curriculum standards, the study of modern Chinese grammar knowledge in the high school stage exists in name only. Therefore, it is recommended that the teaching of grammar should be included in the compulsory courses of the curriculum standard to guide teachers to strengthen grammar teaching.

B. The test points of grammar knowledge should be added to the middle and college entrance examinations

Grammar content has become unnecessary in all kinds of language examinations. There are almost no grammar questions in the senior high school entrance examination papers, and the grammar questions in the college entrance examination papers seem to be limited to modifying sick sentences and translating ancient texts. In fact, in the middle school entrance examination, some basic grammar examination contents can be appropriately added to make the grammar teaching in junior and senior high schools more closely connected. In addition to the sick sentence questions,

the college entrance examination can add some new question types that examine other content of the grammar, such as part-of-speech analysis in different language environments, structural classification of single sentences, and logical relationships between various clauses in multiple repeated sentences. Combining with the senior high school and college entrance examinations, it can increase the motivation of teachers' teaching and students' learning.

C. Grammar teaching should be added in the composing process of mainstream textbooks

Grammar content should not be isolated language knowledge. It exists in texts. Grammar teaching requires appropriate textbooks as the basis for teaching. There must be corresponding texts suitable for grammar teaching in junior and senior high schools. In terms of composing textbooks, most of the after-school exercises in the PEP edition and the SJ edition are literary content, and there are very few exercises involving grammatical content. Therefore, editors should carefully select the content of grammar in the process of writing textbooks, work hard on the content and methods, and present the grammar in a popular, rigorous, vivid, and concrete way, so that grammar knowledge can be used in junior high school Chinese textbooks and let grammar knowledge system become an important part of the Chinese curriculum construction in junior and senior high schools. The Chinese syllabus once proposed the principle that composition should be "essential, easy to understand, and useful" for the teaching of Chinese knowledge. Now it is necessary implement this principle when composing grammar teaching.

D. Teachers can change teaching strategies

Teachers can use the principle of combining grammar teaching with reading teaching and composition teaching. In ordinary reading teaching, teachers can mention grammar knowledge with the text. They do not need to explain systematically. They just need to make students be able to understand it easily, and guide students to actively participate in discussing grammar problems. Teachers' appropriate directions will connect the accumulation of lessons in class and form a knowledge system in the students' minds. At the same time, students are required to refer to relevant knowledge points after class to supplement classroom learning. Teachers should also teach grammar along with ancient Chinese passages, so that part-of-speech knowledge will be organically integrated with classical Chinese knowledge, which not only completes grammar teaching, but also completes the implementation of key words in classical Chinese. In order for students to write articles that are both literary and beautiful, they must let students master the rules of grammar and try to avoid grammatical errors in the composition. Therefore, combining grammar teaching in composition teaching can not only improve students' composition level, but also enable students to learn grammar and enhance their awareness and ability to use grammar knowledge to solve practical language problems. What's more, specific strategies for grammar teaching can be skillfully designed. Grammar is highly general and abstract

knowledge, but it can be taught by using specific and vivid language, thereby enhancing students' interest in learning. Training can be carried out through practice or thematic knowledge competitions, so that students' attitude towards grammar knowledge would be changed from passive acceptance to active thinking and active participation.

V. CONCLUSION

To learn grammar well, it is a must to take reasonable measures and appropriate methods. It is also a must to proceed from the programmatic documents of the teaching. The mainstream textbooks must also have clear requirements. Only then teachers will pay attention to grammar, and arrange reasonable time to teach grammar, and students will study grammar seriously. The current practice of abandoning grammar teaching in middle schools is questionable, but excusable. This is a question worth pondering in the new curriculum reform. The solution of this problem also requires the joint efforts of people from all aspects of teaching and research.

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