Discussions on Inter-character Relations in the Textbook of "Ancient Medical Literature"

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ABSTRACT

Textbook research is an important aspect of teaching research. Only through in-depth and careful research of textbooks, can we prepare and teach well, and finally achieve the teaching objectives. Interchangeable characters (通假字), variant characters (异体字), and ancient-present characters (古今字) are the three most common phenomena in ancient book reading, as well as the three types of inter-character relations highlighted in the textbook "Ancient Medical Literature" ("医古文"). Therefore, in order to explain these three types of inter-character relations (字际关系) clearly in teaching, it is necessary to conduct in-depth analysis of the examples in the textbook. This paper uses the methods of material statistics and textual research in traditional linguistics to analyze the inter-character relationship of annotations in the textbooks of "Ancient Medical Literature" one by one. The fourth edition of "Ancient Medical Literature" in the new century has two kinds of errors: confusion caused by unclear style and errors caused by insufficient textual research. The textbook of "Ancient Medical Literature" needs to absorb the experience of modern dictionaries and Ancient Chinese textbooks ("古代汉语") in dealing with inter-character relations, clarify the style and make scientific textual research, so as to make the compilation of textbooks more perfect.

Keywords: The textbook of "Ancient Medical Literature", Inter-character relations, Interchangeable characters, Variant characters, Ancient-present characters.

1. INTRODUCTION

The fourth edition of the New Century Planned Textbook of "Ancient Medical Literature" [1] (hereinafter referred to as the fourth edition of "Ancient Medical Literature"); which attaches equal importance to both medicine and literature, and has distinctive features. The book adds new contents such as Chinese history and ancient medical books that are not available in the previous textbooks, and modifies and supplements the text notes. Many notes are indeed better than the old version. However, there are still some omissions in the notes of the selected works. This paper puts forward some opinions on the annotation of the relationship between characters in the textbook, hope to get the advice of experts.

In the reading of ancient books, there are three types of common inter-character relations, namely, interchangeable characters, variant characters and ancient-present characters (differentiation characters). They refer to three different types of characters:

Interchangeable characters, also known as borrowing characters, refers to the phenomenon that when the ancients used characters to write words, they originally had their own characters but did not use them, but temporarily replaced them with a character with similar sound. Variant characters refer to the characters created to record the same word with identical sound and meaning, In the process of use, they have no differentiation in function, but in different forms. Ancient-present characters, also known as differentiation characters, mean that a character is divided into two or more characters with different meanings because it undertakes too many recording functions. The later characters are called present characters or later distinguishing characters, while the former characters with undifferentiated functions are called ancient characters or mother characters.

Influenced by the compilation of ancient Chinese textbook, the four editions of "Ancient Medical Literature" are also divided into two parts: basic

knowledge and selected works. The basic knowledge part focuses on the explanation of theory, and the selected works part focuses on the analysis of specific materials in reading practice. Interchangeable characters, variant characters and ancient-present characters are not only the three kinds of inter-character relations discussed in the basic knowledge part, but also the key points of the annotation of the inter-character relations in the selected works. In this way, the organic combination of the two parts can help students accurately understand the connotation of the three kinds of inter-character relations, and then achieve the effect of drawing inferences from one instance and controlling the complexity with simplicity, so as to achieve the teaching goal of improving students' ability to read ancient books of TCM (traditional Chinese medicine), and lay a foundation for students to further study ancient books of TCM. This requires the basic knowledge part to scientifically define and describe these three kinds of inter-character relations, and the selected works part to accurately explain and mark each group of inter-character relations. However, in the annotation of the selected works, there are some omissions, such as the confusion of annotation terms and the error of annotation.

2. THE UNCLEAR TERMS LEADS TO CONFUSION IN THE ANNOTATION OF INTER-CHARACTERS RELATIONS

In modern large dictionaries and ancient Chinese textbooks, the term '通' (tōng) is often used to annotate the interchangeable characters, the term '同' (tóng) is used to annotate the variant characters, and the terms '后作' (hòu zuò) and '今作' (jīn zuò) are used to annotate the ancient-present characters. Because there is no clear rules for the use of terms, the new fourth edition of medical ancient literature textbook notes the relationship between variant characters with 'A, B 的异体字' and 'A, 同 B'; the relationship between ancient-present characters are annotated with 'A, 后作 B', and 'A, 同 B', and 'A, 通 B' at the same time, which leads to the confusion of the annotation terms of ancient-present characters, variant characters and interchangeable characters.

2.1 Confusion in the Annotation of Ancient-present Characters and Variant Characters

Variant characters are annotated with 'A, B 的异体字' as well as 'A, 同 B'. Throughout the whole book, there are only 8 cases with 'A, B 的异体字' annotated for variant relationship, while 76 cases with 'A, 同 B' annotated for variant relationship. For example:

- (1)右神僊十家，二百五卷。【注】僊,"仙"的异体字。[1]P166-167

  Right Works on Immortals, volume 250. Annotate: Xiān (僊), the variant of Xiān (仙).

- (2)断流之水，可以鑑形。【注】鑑,"鉴"的异体字，照。[1]P238-239

  Stagnant water, can shine shadow. Annotate: Jiàn (鑑), the variant character of Jiàn (鉴), reflect.

- (3)我闻在昔，鯀陻洪水。【注】陻,同"堙"，堵塞，指用堵法治水。[1]P146

  I heard that the Tribal leader Gǔn (鯀) used to control floods by blocking. Annotate: Yīn (陻), same as Yīn (堙), blocking, means to control water by blocking.

- (4)而用度箴石汤火所施，调百药齐和之所宜。【注】箴，同"鍼"。[1]P164-165

  And then it is used to study the application scope of Acupuncture, Bian stone, Decoction and Moxibustion, and to explore the proper compatibility of various drugs and the reason of the appropriate disease. Annotate: Zhēn (箴), same as Zhēn (鍼).

Ancient-present characters are annotated with 'A, 后作 B' as well as 'A, 同 B'. Throughout the whole book, 15 cases were annotated with 'A, 后作 B', while 23 cases were annotated with 'A, 同 B'. For example:

- (5)晋侯梦大厉，被发及地。【注】被,同"披"，披散。[1]P156

  Jin Marquis dreamed of a big devil with his hair hanging loose over the grond. Annotate: Pī (被), same as Pī (披), hang down loosely.

- (6)将食，张。如厕，陷而卒。【注】张（zhàng）,同"胀"。腹胀。[1]P157

  Just about to eat, abdominal distension. Go to the toilet and die of collapse. Annotate: Zhàng (张), same as Zhàng (胀), abdominal distension.

- (7)应便拔针，病亦行差。【注】差（chài）,病愈。这个意义后来写作"瘥"。[1]P184-185

  When the patient said "here we are," Huàtuó (华佗) immediately pulled out the needle and soon recovered. Annotate: Chài（差）, recovery from illness. This meaning was later written as Chài (瘥).

- (8)盍锲之，以共天下后世味《太玄》如子云者？【注】共：供给。这个意义后来写作"供"。[1]P232-233

  Why don't you print it and provide it to the world's future generations, such as Yáng Zǐyún (扬子云), to study Zhōuyì ("周易") and write tàixuán ("太玄")? Annotate: Gōng (共), provide. This meaning was later written as Gōng (供).

Above: (1)-(4) four groups of characters are variant character relationship, (5)-(8) four groups are ancient-present characters relationship, because the variant relationship and ancient-present character relationship are annotated with '同', resulting in the reference of the most commonly used term '同' is unclear, students need to distinguish one by one in the process of learning.

Due to the lack of a unified style design, the same group of characters in the new fourth edition of "Ancient Medical Literature" use different terms to annotate the relationship between characters. For example:

县(xuán)—悬(xuán)

- (9)县象著明莫大乎日月，崇高莫大乎富贵。【注】县，同"悬"。[1]P143-144

  Hanging high and showing light, nothing can surpass the sun and the moon, superior position, nothing can surpass the wealth and status. Annotate: Xuán (县), same as Xuán (悬).

- (10)佗术实工，人命所县，宜含宥之。【注】县，维系，后来写作"悬"。[1]P187-188

  Huàtuó's （华佗）medical skill is really brilliant. It is related to other people's lives. We should forgive him. Annotate: Xuán (县), sustain. This meaning was later written as Xuán (悬).

齐(Jì)—剂(Jì)

- (11)以八减之齐和煮之，以更熨两胁下。【注】齐，同"剂"。[1]P178-179

Mix the TCM prescription bājiǎn (八减之齐) together and boil it. After decocting the medicine, apply hot compress under the two flanks alternately. Annotate: Jì (齐), same as Jì (剂).

- (12)疡医掌肿疡、溃疡、金疡、折疡之祝药、劀杀之齐。【注】齐，药剂。此义后来写作"剂"。[1]P153-154

  The surgeon is in charge of application the patients with swelling, ulcer, golden ulcer and broken ulcer according to certain dosage and proportion. Annotate: Jì （齐）, prescription. This meaning was later written as Jì (剂).

彊—强

- (13)凡食无彊厚味，无以烈味重酒。【注】彊,同"强"。[1]P161

  All food, do not taste too strong, do not eat flavor, do not drink liquor. Annotate: Qiáng (彊), same as Qiáng (强).

- (14)平康正直，彊弗友刚克，燮友柔克。【注】彊："强"的异体字。[1]P149

  Peace and staying in the middle is integrity. To be tough and not to be close is to win by strength. To be amiable is to win by softness. Annotate: Qiáng (彊), the variant character of Qiáng (强).

As a result, students can not accurately judge the inter-character relationship of these groups when using the textbooks. In fact, '县—悬' and '齐—剂' are two groups of ancient-present characters. The annotator's annotation of '同' is easy to mislead students to understand them as variant characters. '强—彊' is actually a group of interchangeable characters. Because it is treated as variant characters in the first batch of variant characters arrangement table (《第一批异体字整理表》), it is often annotated as variant characters in the textbook. In the textbook of "Ancient Medical Literature", (13) are annotated with 'A, 同 B', while (14) are annotated with 'A, B 的异体字'.

2.2 Confusion in Terms of Annotation of Ancient-present Characters and Interchangeable Characters

Generally, 'A, 通 B' is marked with interchangeable characters, in which A is the borrowed character and B is the original character. In

the new fourth edition of "Ancient Medical Literature", there are 104 places marked with 'A, 通 B' to indicate the relationship between characters, of which 11 are ancient-present characters. For example:

- (15)医师掌医之政令，聚毒药以共医事。【注】共：通"供"。供给。[1]P152

  Doctors are in charge of the administration of medicine and collect drugs for medical use. Annotate: Gōng (共), is interchangeable with Gōng (供), provide.

- (16)处腹则为张为疛，处足则为痿为蹙。【注】张：通"胀"，胀满。[2]P161

  Stagnant accumulation in the abdomen will cause distension and ascites, stagnant accumulation in the feet will cause atrophy and falls. Annotate: Zh à ng（张）, is interchangeable with Zhàng (胀), abdominal distention.

- (17)经络府俞，阴阳会通，玄冥幽微，变化难极。【注】俞，通"腧"。[1]P215

  The principle of the intersection and connection of human meridians and acupoints with Qi and blood is very mysterious and subtle, and the changes are difficult to thoroughly understand. Annotate: Shù (俞), is interchangeable with Shù (腧).

'共—供', '张—胀' and '俞—腧' are all ancient-present characters. These three places textbooks are annotated with 'A, 通 B', while '共—供' is annotated with 'A, 后作 B' in example (8), and '张—胀' is annotated with 'A, 同 B' in example (6). '俞—腧' is annotated with '同' in "Five Medical Records" (《医案五则》) [1]P278. According to the author's statistics, the general situation of the three types of inter-character relationship notes is as follows: ("Table 1")

Table 1. Statistical table of terms usage

variant characters		ancient-present characters			interchangeable characters
A，同 B	A，B 的异体字	A，同 B	A，后作 B	A，通 B	A，通 B
76	8	23	15	11	93

a   (Note: in addition, there are three groups of '酖—鸩' '麤—粗' and '頓—悴', which are actually interchangeable characters, but they are treated as variant characters in the first batch of variant characters arrangement table, so the textbook uses '同' annotation, which is not included in the above statistics.)

The fact that the same term '同' or '通' is used to annotate different inter-character relationships and the same group of characters are annotated with different terms in the textbook of "Ancient Medical Literature" on the New Fourth Board is not only inconsistent with the theoretical content introduced in the basic knowledge part, but also leads to students' difficulties in understanding, which leads to students' confusion in understanding the concepts of variant characters, ancient-present characters and interchangeable characters. Because it is difficult to achieve the purpose of drawing inferences from one instance by using the relevant laws, students can only mechanically memorize in order to cope with the examination, which affects the learning effect. When students read ancient Chinese medicine books in the future, it is still difficult to distinguish them when they encounter similar characters.

We think that ancient and modern characters, variant characters and interchangeable characters are three different inter-character relations, so it is

necessary to distinguish them in annotation. In addition, with the deepening of the study of the relationship between characters, the understanding of these three kinds of characters is becoming more and clearer, and the distinction is becoming more and clearer in modern dictionaries. For example, in the second edition of the "Chinese Dictionary" (《汉语大字典》) and the third edition of the "Source of Words" (《辞源》), the relationship between interchangeable characters is often annotated with 'A, 通 B' or 'A, B 的借字', the relationship between variant characters is often annotated with 'A, 同 B' or 'A, B 的异体字', and the relationship between ancient-present characters is often annotated with 'A, 后作 B' or 'A, 今作 B'. [2], [3] Therefore, it is also possible to distinguish these three different types of inter-character relations with clear terms, especially the distinction between variant characters and ancient-present characters. From the essence of character phenomenon, variant characters are two characters with the same usage, only with different glyphs, which can be annotated with 'A, 同

B'. However, for a group of characters with ancient-present relationship, only some of them have the same usage, so 'A, 同 B' is not suitable, and 'A, 后作 B' is more suitable. 'A, 通 B' is generally used to annotate interchangeable characters, so it is not suitable to annotate ancient-present characters.

The compilation of the basic knowledge of the textbook of "Ancient Medical Literature" and the annotation of the text are greatly influenced by ancient Chinese textbook. At present, the most influential textbooks are Ancient Chinese Edited by Wang Li of Peking University, Ancient Chinese Edited by Guo Xiliang and Ancient Chinese Edited by Wang Ning of Beijing Normal University and so on. In the notes of these textbooks, ancient-present characters, variant characters and interchangeable characters are clearly distinguished by different terms, so as to facilitate students to accurately understand and master the relevant materials and theories. [4], [5], [6]

3. MISINTERPRETATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHARACTERS CAUSED BY INSUFFICIENT TEXTUAL RESEARCH

In addition to the confusion in the style mentioned above, there are also some misinterpretations of the relationship between characters in the notes of the new fourth edition of "Ancient Medical Literature", probably due to the lack of textual research on the relationship between characters.

3.1 Misinterpretation of Extended Meaning as Interchangeable Meaning

When reading ancient books, only when the original meaning and extended meaning of a character cannot be explained in the context, can we consider whether there is the interchangeable characters, which is the premise of identifying the interchangeable characters. Therefore, we should be cautious in identifying the interchangeable characters, where the original meaning or extended meaning can be interpreted smoothly, it is not necessary to interpret them as interchangeable characters. We think that there are some mistakes in the recognition of interchangeable characters in the textbook of "Ancient Medical Literature". For example:

- 世俗乐其浅近，相与宗之，而生民之祸亟矣。【注】"亟（jí）"，通"极"。[1]^P242

The common doctors in the world like it simple and easy to understand, and pursue it together, but there are more disasters for the common people. Annotate: Jí（亟），is interchangeable with Jí（极）.

According to, although the phonetic symbol of '极' is '亟' and the two characters are similar in ancient pronunciation, it is not suitable to be interpreted as interchangeable character here. There are three defects. First, '极' is a polysemous word, which meaning of '极' is not indicated here, but any meaning of '极' cannot be explained in this context. Second, in the literature, '极' can be borrowed to record '亟', which is the meaning of 'rapidly' 急速. For example, in the book of Xúnzi（《荀子》）recorded that, '出入甚极，莫知其门', Yang Liang explained: '读为亟，急也。'However, there is no case in the literature that '亟' is borrowed as '极'. Third, the extended meaning of '亟' can be used to explain 'frequent' 频繁. The pronunciation should be /qì/. In this sentence, it is an adjective as the predicate.

3.2 The Annotation Error of the Original Character of the Interchangeable Characters

The annotation of the relationship between interchangeable characters mainly indicates the meaning of the character by indicating the original character, that is, the ancients called 'the original character is clear, and then the meaning is clear' (本字明则经义明). The form of the annotation of the relationship between interchangeable characters is 'A, 通 B', in which A is for the borrowed character and B is for the original character. In the annotation of interchangeable characters in the new fourth edition of "Ancient Medical Literature", there are some incorrect interpretations of the original characters. For example:

- 众医皆以为厥入中而刺之。【注】厥，通"厥"，逆气。[1]^P180-181

Many doctors think that it's the adverse Qi from the lower convulsion to the upper retrograde into the abdomen and chest, and use acupuncture to treat him. Annotate: Jué（厥），is interchangeable with Jué（厥），circulation of vital energy in the wrong direction.

According to, when recording the meaning of 'adverse Qi' (逆气), the character '厥' is borrowed, the

character '厥' is also borrowed, and the original character is '瘚' (jué). The original meaning of '蹶' (jué) is 'fall'. The extended meaning is 'frustration, failure' and so on. The original meaning of '厥' is 'shooting stones'. The original meaning of '蹶' and '厥' cannot be extended to the meaning of 'adverse Qi'. The original word recording the meaning of 'adverse Qi' is '欮' (jué), and then the semantic radicals 疒 (nè) is added as '瘚'. Therefore, it should be noted that '瘚：通瘚，逆气。' '厥' is a frequently-used character formed by borrowing the meaning for a long time.

4. CONCLUSION

Textbook is an important basis for students to systematically study the theory of related subjects and accumulate basic materials. In the course of revision, we should absorb the research results of modern large dictionaries, especially authoritative reference books, and the experience of the influential Ancient Chinese textbooks in dealing with the relationship between characters. In addition, the textbook of "Ancient Medical Literature" should further clarify the annotation style of the inter-character relationship, so that each kind of character phenomenon has a special annotation term; scientific research, accurately annotate the inter-character relationship of each group of characters; pay attention to absorb the latest research results, so as to make the textbook more perfect and more convenient for students and teachers.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper is independently completed by Yanhong Zhou.

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