Study on The Design of Exercises for Chinese Teaching Material Cultural Project for Jewish Students

——A Case Study of "Easy Steps to Chinese "

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to analyze the exercise design of the cultural program "Easy Steps to Chinese" and evaluate its adaptability and effectiveness for Jewish students to learn Chinese. It is found that Jewish students have a strong interest in communicative culture and national culture, and the current exercise design basically meets their learning needs and language level, but there is still room for further improvement. This paper puts forward some suggestions for the design of exercises and the teaching of teachers. It is suggested that elements related to Jewish culture should be added, repeated examination of language and characters should be reduced, scientific and artistic achievements should be paid more attention, multi-level exercises should be designed, and cultural items should be updated regularly, so as to enhance the sense of participation of Jewish students and enhance cultural identity and language learning effectiveness.

Keywords: Chinese textbook, Jewish students, cultural project, exercise design

1 Introduction

With the global boom in Chinese learning, cultural projects play an increasingly important role in Chinese teaching. Cultural project is a cultural circle of Greater China composed of detailed cultural elements, and is an important means to promote students' cross-cultural understanding and identity. This study will start with "Easy Steps to Chinese"——a Chinese textbook selected by Jewish schools in Hong Kong, to investigate the learning characteristics of cultural items of Jewish students' exercises, and put forward suggestions for the design of cultural items exercises in Chinese textbooks for Jewish students.

Most of the current studies start from the overall design of textbooks, language elements and texts, and the systematic research on exercises in Chinese textbooks and the cultural project of exercises integration has not received much attention. Moreover, the existing studies also lack special research on Jewish students. Lin Chaoyi chose Filipino students as the object to study the overall design of teaching

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materials [1]. CAI Yaqi mainly studied the design ideas of exercises themselves, but his research did not consider the level of students [2]. Yang Huiyu compared the exercises in the two textbooks, but did not investigate the cultural items [3].

This study will take “Easy Steps to Chinese” as an example, according to the classification of cultural items in the table of New Cultural Items by Zhou Xiaobing [4] , combined with Weir's social cognitive effectiveness framework [5], discuss the cultural items in the exercise design of this textbook, study the matching degree between exercise design and Jewish students, then focus on the uniqueness of Jewish students and the social effectiveness framework.This study provides suggestions for the design of textbook exercises suitable for Jewish students, as well as suggestions for textbook users. At present, there are few studies on cultural items in exercises for Jewish students. This study is an attempt to study the practice of nationalization, hoping that more and more studies of different countries, languages and nationalities will appear. With the deepening of related research, the deficiency of cultural project practice can be properly solved.

2 "Easy Steps to Chinese" Cultural Project Exercise Analysis

2.1 Data Statistics of Exercise Cultural Items

This study conducted data statistics on exercises in all 8 volumes of “Easy Steps to Chinese” , and concluded that the content of exercises in this series of textbooks was relatively high, accounting for 81.4% of the total content. Zhou Xiaobing et al. pointed out in the table of “New Cultural Items” that cultural items are the most important part of the cultural outline, and the division of cultural factors is more detailed and can refine the way of communication. Cultural items are divided into five categories: national conditions culture, communicative culture, daily life culture, achievement culture and concept culture [4]. There are 687 cultural items in the 8 volumes of “Easy Steps to Chinese”, of which the highest proportion is daily culture (41.23%), followed by national conditions culture (20.62%) and communicative culture (18.81%), achievement culture (13.70%) accounts for a relatively small proportion, and the smallest proportion is concept culture (3.31%).

The cultural items of the 1-3 textbook exercises represent the primary level, they focus more on the language in daily life and achievements, which is in line with the characteristics of primary students' exposure to Chinese from daily life; The number of cultural items in the 4 ~ 6 textbook exercises representing the intermediate level has generally increased, and the communicative culture has increased significantly from the category of daily life. The cultural items in 7 or 8 textbook exercises representing the advanced level show an increasing trend, among which the national culture takes the first place and the conceptual culture increases significantly. The number and categories of cultural items in the exercise “Easy Steps to Chinese” will change with the improvement of students' language level, and the number of various items will generally show an increasing trend, and the distribution range of project categories will be wider.

Daily life culture: From the frequency of occurrence, the most frequent exercise is food culture, which is mainly reflected in listening, dialogue practice, sentence completion, group discussion and other common types of questions, involving the name of dishes, festival food and so on. The second is about clothing, living, family life, study and work, and the lowest frequency is life celebration and life safety.

National conditions culture: National conditions culture in the investigation of exercises mainly biased to geography, including urban scenic spots, cultural venues, etc., the types of investigation questions include dialogue, speaking, listening, sentence making, project design, etc. Secondly, the exercises also focus on education and cultural heritage, such as dragon and lion dance with Chinese characteristics, traditional Chinese painting, etc. However, the exercises do not pay attention to the content of economy, religion, social security, etc., and cannot properly take into account the language needs of students of different religions.

Communicative culture: In the aspect of communicative culture, the exercise design selects a large number of cultural items about the norms of communicative situations, including polite expressions in various scenes, and examines them in the form of dialogue practice and oral practice. It consists of two parts: verbal communication and non-verbal communication. The former is mainly based on polite words and appellation words, communicative situational norms and cross-cultural communication words, while the latter is mostly presented in the form of pictures, including digital gestures and handshakes. Cross-cultural communication focuses on cultural comparison, but the cultural comparison in the textbook is not diversified enough, and it is mostly compared with the United States and the United Kingdom, which doesn‘t take into account the cultural environment required by Jewish students.

Achievement culture: The most exercises designed are language and characters, the primary stage is mainly based on words, the intermediate stage began to appear idioms, and the advanced stage began to appear idiomatic expressions. The second is art and culture, covering almost all artistic directions, with the least appearing science-related content.

Conceptual culture: The exercises in the textbook start from the fourth book to join the investigation of concepts, mainly including educational views, career views, marriage views, etc., mainly in the way of group discussion.

2.2 Stage Analysis of Cultural Project Exercises

Although the emphasis of cultural projects varies at different stages, these cultural projects are not independent of each other. In the arrangement of cultural items, the series of textbooks follow the principles from few to many and from easy to difficult, reflecting the gradual teaching law and conforming to the learning characteristics of learners [6]. The following will introduce the exercises in different learning stages.

The primary stage mainly focuses on cultural content related to daily life and communication. With the improvement of students' language level and the extension of learning time, the difficulty of exercises has also increased, but the selection of cultural items is still simple. The cultural content of the intermediate stage has increased correspondingly, covering five types of cultural items, and the proportion of

content arrangement is relatively reasonable. The cultural projects in the primary stage will be repeated in the middle stage, emphasizing the reproduction and practice of cultural knowledge. The advanced stage covers a wide range of cultural content, mainly thinking questions, dialogue exercises to answer questions, but the overall difficulty is low, the lack of conceptual culture and national culture, can not fully meet the requirements of students for deep thinking.

3 The Learning Characteristics of Jewish Students' Cultural Project Exercises

Through the half-year internship in Hong Kong Jewish School, the author observed the exercise completion of 36 Jewish students between the ages of 11 and 16, and found that the Jewish students showed unique learning characteristics. This paper summarizes the characteristics of Jewish students' Chinese learning and their attitudes and needs towards "Easy Steps to Chinese".

3.1 Analysis of Cultural Background and Characteristics of Jewish Students

Classroom performance shapes their attitudes and approaches to language learning. First, Jewish culture emphasizes inheritance. Jewish families value academic achievement and encourage their children to pursue knowledge. This enables students to demonstrate a high level of motivation in their studies and a willingness to invest time and energy in mastering new knowledge. In the classroom, Jewish students actively discuss, ask questions and share insights.

Second, Jewish students are good at critical thinking. Jewish students tend to work on numbers and science rather than language and culture. They prefer to understand and analyze knowledge. This way of thinking enables them to think deeply about the cultural connotation and use scenarios behind the language when learning Chinese, thus improving their cross-cultural understanding ability.

Jewish students have a multilingual background, many Jewish students speak Hebrew, English, etc. Chinese is mostly a third foreign language, the multilingual environment makes it easier for them to compare and transfer languages when learning Chinese, and can combine the existing language knowledge with the new language, helping them to master Chinese grammar and vocabulary faster. So it will be easier for them to achieve the language of the culture.

Through observation, the author found that Jewish students prefer high interaction in learning style, and their exercises prefer group cooperation and role playing, which enhances their language practice ability and promotes cultural exchange. In this interaction, they are able to have a deeper understanding of Chinese usage scenarios and incorporate their own cultural background into their learning.

In addition, students are interested in the culture of daily life and expect to be exposed to Jewish culture while learning Chinese. This cultural identity makes them more engaged in the learning process and enhances their learning enthusiasm. In this

way, they can not only learn the language, but also enhance their understanding and identification with different cultures.

3.2 The Matching Degree Between the Exercises of The Cultural Project "Easy Steps To Chinese" and the Needs of Jewish Students

Learning Motivation and Learning Attitude. There are two main reasons for Jewish students to learn Chinese. On the one hand, Jewish students are interested in Chinese. Since Jewish students live in Hong Kong and Chinese is of high application value, most of them will take the initiative to learn Chinese. On the other hand, there are external motivations mainly from the requirements of parents and schools. Many Jewish students have parents who instill in them the idea of doing business with China and the importance of learning Chinese. It is found that most Jewish students maintain a positive attitude towards Chinese culture and Chinese language, more than 90% of the students are willing to participate in the Chinese New Year, and more than 60% of the students recognize the role of Chinese language in class.

Needs of Jewish Students for Cultural Programs (Cultural Programs). Although the exercises can not be written in accordance with the interests of learners, in order to maximize the role of exercises and reflect the cultural content to the greatest extent, we must take into account the subject of learners and take the actual needs of learners as the starting point of exercises. Design more targeted, resonant exercises.

In daily conversation, the author found that Jewish students are most interested in communicative culture and national culture, and the design proportion of cultural exercises in teaching materials is different from the actual. The specific analysis is as follows:

Communicative culture is the cultural item that Jewish students pay the most attention to, but there are no exercises specifically designed for students to learn in the textbooks, and the design proportion is not quite in line with Jewish culture. The number of exercises about communicative situation norms is too large, and the exercises about cross-cultural communication are insufficient, which is not conducive to promoting the mutual understanding between Chinese culture and Jewish culture. The second is the daily life culture. Food culture is the daily activity that Jewish students are most interested in, but they are not very interested in Chinese food. Students expressed a desire to add taboo superstitions and symbols to the culture of daily life.Jewish students are very interested in Chinese economy, people's livelihood and traditional culture, especially Chinese traditional festivals, as well as intangible cultural heritage such as Hanfu, Cuju, diabolo, dragon and lion dance, but this part is not too much reflected in the exercises. In the part of achievement culture, Jewish students generally like science and mathematics, and are not interested in exercises that heavily examine language and characters, hoping that the exercises can focus on the selection of significant Chinese artistic achievements, science and technology, rather than grammar and characters. At present, Jewish students have no obvious bias

towards conceptual culture, they have their own religious beliefs and social order, and do not have to pay special attention to conceptual culture in the design of exercises.

Feedback of Jewish Students' Exercises (Exercises Themselves). It was found that about half of the students recognized the cultural items contained in the exercises of "Easy Steps to Chinese", but the other half of the students still had some questions about the contents examined in the exercises. It can be seen that although the Jewish students were satisfied with the selection of cultural items in the exercises, there were still some problems.

In terms of content, students once pointed out that the food and cultural items designed in the exercises did not conform to Jewish eating habits, and many contents mentioned pork, which was contrary to Jewish beliefs. It indicates that students believe that exercise cultural items need to be screened reasonably. From the way of presentation of exercises, some students think that the number of exercises designed for cultural items in "Easy Steps to Chinese" is too much, and some students think that the design of exercises is too repeated, which leads to the emergence of new and old knowledge, and the number of exercises is too large. Most students think that the exercise design is too simple, for example, the achievement culture is mostly to practice words and grammar, are adopted in the form of completed sentences, and lack of in-depth thinking questions.Mechanical exercises accounted for more than 80% of the total. Students said that the mechanical exercises lacked interest, and students lost their patience in paying attention to the cultural items in the exercises. The daily cultural exercises are closely related to the text and are used repeatedly, resulting in the lack of practical exercises in the"Easy Steps to Chinese" series of textbook exercises, which cannot attract students' interest and is not conducive to Jewish students' learning Chinese. National conditions culture types involve too little, and most of them are reflected in the inserted pictures, which can not meet the needs of practice. In the process of completing the exercises, the students suggested that they would like to have more diverse forms of exercises.

4 Suggestions for Jewish Students to Practice Chinese Teaching Materials and Cultural Projects

The research is based on the social cognitive efficacy framework proposed by Weir [5], combined with the student trait, situational validity, cognitive validity, rating validity, consequence validity and criterion association validity proposed by Bordon[7], Dimitrova-Galaczi[8] and Bandura[9] for language skills testing [10]. The following suggestions are put forward for exercise culture project from two perspectives of exercise and users.

4.1 Suggestions for Modification of Cultural Project Exercises

Country-Specific Revision of Exercise Design. Starting from the characteristics of students, in order to better reflect the contrast between Jewish culture and Chinese culture, and highlight the characteristics of the textbooks, it is suggested to add Jewish festivals such as "Hanukkah" and "Eid al-Fitr" to the daily cultural celebrations, so that students can feel and understand the cultural environment they are familiar with while learning Chinese. At the same time, the exercises should include a brief introduction to Jewish culture to help students establish a connection with cultural identity. This country-specific revision can not only enhance students' participation and interest, but also facilitate their self-reflection and comparison of culture in the process of learning.

Design Multi-Level Exercises. At present, Jewish students think that the levels of textbook exercises are not clear enough, the depth of thinking is insufficient, the basic training is too much, and the advanced level exercises are too little. Considering the differences in Jewish students' abilities, multi-level exercises should be designed to accommodate students of different learning levels. Exercises at the basic level help students identify and understand basic cultural knowledge, exercises at the intermediate level encourage students to analyze specific application scenarios, and exercises at the advanced level stimulate critical thinking and in-depth discussion, prompting them to reflect on what they have learned and explore the complexity and diversity of China's national conditions.

Improve the Update Speed of Exercises. In order to maintain the learning interest and cultural sensitivity of Jewish students, the cultural items in the exercises should be updated regularly to ensure the timeliness and relevance of the content. As society and culture continue to change, the cultural items included in the exercises should also be adjusted to reflect the latest cultural developments. Provide students with access to the latest cultural information to help them better understand and apply what they have learned.

4.2 Suggestions on the Use of Teaching Materials for Teachers

Create an immersive language environment. Jewish students like interactive exercises, and create an immersive language learning environment in classroom teaching to improve students' language ability and communication skills by converting exercises into interactive classroom activities, such as combining games and converting exercises into group activities. This teaching mode can stimulate students' interest in learning and help them better understand and apply what they have learned.

Setting Differentiated Scoring Criteria. The ability of Jewish students is also different, and the development of differentiated scoring criteria can effectively

improve the validity of the assessment. By setting corresponding scoring standards for Jewish students of different levels and abilities, their learning outcomes and performance can be more accurately assessed, avoiding a one-size-fits-all evaluation method, promoting personalized development of students, and stimulating students' learning motivation.

Integrating Science and Technology into Cultural Teaching. Teachers can introduce modern technological means, such as multimedia teaching and online resources, to enrich the form and content of cultural exercises. This will not only increase students' interest in learning, but also enhance their understanding of cultural projects. For example, the use of video, audio and interactive game software allows students to intuitively feel the cultural content, contact more real cultural cases, and promote a vivid and effective learning experience.

5 Conclusion

This study takes the design of exercises for cultural items in Learning Chinese with Ease as the object of investigation. From the perspective of the proportion of categories of cultural items, the frequency of daily culture, national culture and communicative culture is high, while the frequency of conceptual culture is low. The design of exercise cultural items follows the principle from few to many, from easy to difficult, and generally conforms to the language level and understanding ability of Jewish students. It can basically meet the needs of students for the organization and expression of language. However, the design can not well adapt to the religious background and scientific thinking tendency of Jewish students, and can not meet the unique needs of Jewish students for communicative culture and national culture.

In order to better adapt the exercise design to the actual needs of Jewish students, this study suggests that the exercise design should increase the types of deep thinking questions and cultural items related to the background of Jewish students, reduce the frequency of repeated cultural items, enrich the examination forms of exercises, design multi-level exercises to adapt to different learning levels, and regularly update cultural items. Teachers should create an immersive language environment, implement differentiated scoring standards, and enrich the forms of cultural exercises to stimulate students' interest in learning and improve students' sense of participation and understanding.

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