THE CURRENT SITUATION, PRINCIPLES AND TRENDS IN COMPILING CHINESE LANGUAGE SYLLABUS IN RECENT YEARS

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Abstract: It has been more than 60 years from the first publication textbook named "Textbook of Chinese" in 1958. Up to now, China has nearly 20,000 Chinese textbooks more than from 20 different publishers. The development of teaching materials is not based on publishing new teaching materials, but in needing a breakthrough and innovation in the editing of textbooks. Building and compiling textbooks is a complicated job. If only based on a few common principles is not enough, it is extremely necessary to be the combination of the development of disciplines, educational methods and practical experience at work. We need to study and discuss more about the fundamentals of curriculum development and the designing complete teaching materials. In recent years, the current Chinese teaching curriculum inherit the advantages of the previous textbooks, and has had many positive updates and innovations, contributing to improve the quality of teaching learning Chinese.

Keywords: Compilation, syllabus, Chinese language, trends, principles.

I. Introdution

Since Hanban launched the new Chinese Language Proficiency Test (HSK) in 2009, the number of contestants and tutorial centres have been growing all over the world. According to People's Daily (Wang Jinhai, 2014), there has been more than 100 million people studying Chinese all around the world in March 2014. Since the 27th of December 2014 until now, Confucius Institute in Hanoi has observed 5000 candidates who attended HSK and HSKK. Only in January 2020, there was 1200 candidates participating in the exam, in May 2020 there was 1700 contestants.

Based on the report of General Statistics Office, in the first 7 months of 2019, Chinese investors have invested more than 1.78 billion USD into Vietnam. Nowadays, there are a lot of Chinese companies putting money into Vietnam so the demand of human resources is a large quantity. When a person can speak Chinese, it could be an advantage when he/she applies for a job in a Chinese company with competitive salary.

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Beside that, according to the statistics of National Administration of Tourism, the total of Chinese visitors came to Vietnam in the first 8 months of 2019 was 3.372.261, making up 29,82%, having the highest figure among foreigners to Vietnam and this means that the demand for human resources that is proficient in Chinese will increase exponentially in many fields. Facing with such a great demand, it can be said that Chinese documents that is used to learn in general and teaching in particular play an extremely important role.

This article is written based on document researching, summarizing and analyzing both the previous and recent researches of other scholars about some issues like: the current situation, principles of compiling Chinese textbooks and trends in compiling Chinese textbooks in recent times.

II. Researching overview

2.1. Overview of researches on compiling Chinese textbook in China.

In "An overview of the Chinese textbooks of Beijing Language Academy" (1983), Mr. Li Tianmu from America had evaluated that: The content sometimes is too complex, too detailed and too dull; the textbook was lack of cultural topics in the lessons and practical knowledge. Somehow, linguistically, this textbook is not like what you hear on the street because textbooks and exercises are not interesting, lack of practice and communication, speaking and writing skill are not clearly defined.

Song Bingzheng (1991) in "The problem of compiling elementary Chinese textbooks" has showed that the textbooks

compilation had not started from the student's perspective yet and there were a big lack of books compilation for students from other countries.

If the book for people studying Chinese as a second language is added the original meaning of every word, it could help to gain interest and learner will acquire better. In terms of content and texture of the books, we can see that a lot of sentences in the textbooks are rigid, it is like questioning and answering in an interrogation, it lacks of the practical in normal communication and serves only the purpose of describing grammar and grammatical function.

Li Xiaoliang (1996 in "Some issues in teaching Chinese as a languague" thought that some conversations in the book are quite boring because of the effort to add some irrelevant sentences and the main purpose is to example for the grammar in the lesson. This lead to a not so good effect in teaching because the textbook is difficult and less attractive.

Professor Xu Jiazhen- an Australian (1997) in an article "Reviews of Mainland-compiled elementary Chinese textbooks from overseas users' perspective" said that there should be a revolutionary change in the contents and form.

He gave a lot of problems that Chinese textbook is facing. It is because the content was "too Chinese"; some documents are ot suitable for the demand of young learner; the aim of raising the ability to speak is not clear yet; teaching language and teaching culture are not going along; the grammar is not explained sharply and shortly; the systematicity in grammatical structures is not tight; there is no set of textbooks that

fully and effectively integrate four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing; there are a few documents to read or practice, or if so, the content is too difficult and uninteresting.

2.2. Overview of the Chinese textbook compilation in Southeast Asia including Vietnam.

Southeast Asia is one of the central regions of the wave of studying Chinese and the localization of Chinese textbooks is increasingly noticed. However, because of some cultural aspects, geography, custom,... the textbook for students in these regions is still lack of the practical, the uninteresting and high quality. The curriculum is used for this field mostly included:

1. Chinese curriculum that was compiled by some big universities in China. For example: "Practical Chinese" and "Chinese course" by Yang Jizhou are often used in Thailand; textbooks like "Chinese" are used in Indonesia; "Chinese textbook" "Boya", "Developing Chinese" are being used in Vietnam; "Happy Chinese " is popular in Laos.

2. Textbooks that are "localization" by the national university complied and adjusted, like some books that are being used in Thailand, Philippines, Singapore và some other countries, for instance: "Thais Learn Chinese" by Zhang Junsong, ThaiLand.

3. Textbooks are compiled by local teachers in conjunction with Chinese experts, such as: a set of 40 Chinese textbooks selected by the Department of Education in Bangkok, Thailand

4. Some Chinese language schools in Laos use a version of PEP for middle and high schools

5. Traditional Chinese textbooks compiled by the Committee of Overseas Chinese, the Ministry of Education of Singapore and some overseas Chinese are currently being used quite widely, such as: "New Chinese Language Curriculum", Indonesian version "Human Intelligence" (Traditional Chinese) is used in Indonesia, "Chinese for Primary School" is used in Singapore, and "Nurture Chinese" is used in Java....

6. Chinese textbooks that were co-compiled by Chinese and foreign experts, such as "Teaching Chinese for Children" are currently being used in Thailand.

In conclusion, researching and publishing Chinese curriculum in Southeast Asia is rather backward. There are not many Chinese textbooks compiled by mainland experts, mainly using textbooks compiled by Chinese experts in China.

III. The principles of compiling Chinese textbooks

3.1. Classifying Chinese textbooks

According to Lu Bisong, it is based on four different features to classify Chinese textbooks:

Classification according to the perspective of teaching type: General curriculum, preparatory textbooks, specialized textbooks, special-purpose teaching textbooks.

Based on the perspective of textbook type: It can be classified into general curriculum, language skills curriculum.

Based on the perspective of the teaching object: It can be based on different ages to divide into types of curriculum such as: Curriculum for children, curriculum for adults

Classification into level can be divided into elementary, intermediate and advanced Chinese course..

Based on the perspective of teaching methods: Based on the teaching principles and requirements, many types of curricula can be compiled, such as: teaching textbooks for each skill; specialized grammar textbooks, culture and civilization textbooks; general curriculum; specialized curriculum.

According Zhao Jinming, Chinese textbook can be divided into 3 types:

Based on levels: beginner, intermediate, advanced.

Based on the knowledge transmission: phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, writing.

Based on the perspective of skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation.

In the linguistic and cultural comparison, it is possible to compile specific textbooks on countries, native languages, cultural contexts and environments for learners.

Textbooks with specific topics such as: news, journalism, commercial negotiations, business exchanges etc…

Other curricula such as: Accelerated curriculum; short course; curriculum for children; separate curriculum for a target group; continuously updated curriculum, regional curriculum; local language textbooks such as cantonese textbooks, mannan language textbooks; broadcasting curriculum; far-teaching curriculum; Chinese curriculum, etc.

3.2. *Principles of compiling Chinese textbooks*

To compile textbooks is a complicated job that cannot be based on some normal principles. With the development of some majors, the teaching methods are changing everyday as well so summarizing the actual experience is a must. It is needed to research and discuss more about the principles of compiling textbooks to make a good outcome in teaching.

In 2006, Ministry of Education of Chinese published "Standards for compiling Chinese textbooks for mainstream ethnic minority primary and secondary schools", and it had the aim, judge and petition about the principles of compiling, developing and using books. This standards have given some particular petition about Chinese curriculum for people who study Chinese as a second language. Basing on those standards, the scientists have summarized and made the following basic principles or requirements:

1. Guiding principles: Identify the basic trends of the pre-compiled curriculum, including determining the nature of the compiled (qualitative) curriculum; determining the position of textbook compilation (positioning) and regulations on the number of compiled (quantitative) textbooks, including: determining how to teach, what kind of books, w.ho is the object of teaching , what level of books, how many books, how long to study.

2. Target principle: The target principle is based on analyzing the needs of the target audience such as knowledge level, learning purpose, learning time, language background. The goal of teaching materials is the soul and guideline for the design and compilation, the starting point and destination of designing and compiling teaching materials. Textbooks need to have clear goals, this seems obvious, but in fact, it is not doing well. Currently, many of the textbooks were

published but were not being clear in addressing the goals of the books, giving vague or inaccurate goals.

3. The principle of characterization is the design and compilation of textbooks, from theory to practice, from style to organization, considering the difference between pre-edited textbooks and previous similar textbooks. When compiling a textbook, it is necessary to take into account its relationship and difference with previous textbooks, which is a matter of inheritance and development. If there are not new ideas and points in the design of teaching materials, it is necessary to see how valuable such teaching materials are.

When developing and compiling textbooks many scientists have new ideas but it is necessary to consider whether these "new trends" are consistent with the rules of teaching and learning foreign languages or with the characteristics of learners; whether the teaching object is beneficial. It is necessary to be analyzed and evaluated in detail with the scientific way.

Analyzing and understanding the cognitive factors of learners and guiding them, using them appropriately is always a basic requirement and a guideline for researchers to build Chinese textbooks..

4. Principles of the times: in the process of designing and compiling teaching materials, the application of theories in teaching, teaching methods, building objectives of teaching materials, compiling documents, the usage of modern teaching methods, etc., all reflect new results in the research and compilation of textbooks. It also reflects the level and the demand of society.

On the others hand, all aspects related to the compilation of textbooks need to reflect the innovation of knowledge, concepts and teaching methods. It is reflected in the results obtained in this study that a new level of Chinese curriculum compilation is gradually meeting the needs of development and changes of the times.

Some textbooks have overcome the downside that can replaced, omitted or simplified some outdated grammar topics so that the content is closer to reality and the vocabulary has been updated.

5. Principle of distinction: the process of designing and compiling a textbook should fully consider what type of style should be taught in the textbook and consider the stylistic characteristics of the compiled texts. The basic purpose of teaching second language is to help learners master the characteristics and usage rules of different linguistic styles of the language, selecting and expressing the right materials can help learners to use language appropriately and efficently.

Design and compilation need to be carefully planed the style of the curriculum such as conversational style, argumentative style, oral presentation style, political theory style, literatural, scientific style of language and expression, etc. However, each mentioned style can be further classified, for example: conversational style is at least distinguishable into family chat style, general communication style, formal conversation style, etc. and formal writing style can also be distinguished into judicial, administrative, diplomatic, business, advertising agencies, etc.

In recent years, some Chinese textbooks have clearly defined their own style so learners could understand

better about the characteristics and usage rules of different linguistic styles of the language…

6. Cultural principles: the principle of culture requires the awareness of the culture of target language and it should be enhanced in the process of designing and compiling textbooks. At the same time, it must handle well the relationship between the culture of the target language and the native language culture of learners.

Integrating cultural and linguistic elements into the compilation of textbooks is probably not difficult. The difficulty is how to show the content of that culture and how to integrate the two cultures. Only who are fluent on two languages and two cultures can undertake this work. However, compiling any kind of foreign language textbook is inevitable and it is unavoidable of how to deal with cultural factors and cultural connotations, which are determined by the nature and purpose of teaching a second foreign language.

Therefore, the design and compilation of teaching materials need to be selected and arranged the cultural points appropriately. These cultural points must generally be the dominant culture of the target language, modern culture, that is closely related to the communication of the target language and other cultures from the native language of the learner. Attitudes towards different cultures in textbook should be respectful and equal, tolerant and diverse, communicative and understanding, seeking common while preserving differences, embracing trends.

Some new Chinese textbooks published in recent years have not only integrated cultural topics such as customs and folk art into the lesson, but also had an appendix at the end of each lesson as a form of " common sense" so that learners can learn more.

The basic goal of cultural teaching in textbooks is to raise learners' awareness of different culture, improving learners' ability to identify cultural points of the target language. .

7. The principle of interest: The interestingness of textbooks is a common requirement of compiling all kinds of textbooks at all levels, raising the interest of books and it is suitable with the common rule of cognitive and educational psychology. For book compilation, enhancing and stimulating teaching materials plays an important role in maintaining and strengthening learners' learning motivation.

The content of the textbook such as text, vocabulary, grammar, notes, translation, exercises, book format such as cover design, paper size, style, font size, illustrations, photos, type of paper, printing effects, etc are more concerned.

Whether the textbook is attractive or not, it needs to be assessed by the learners and the teacher. The teacher will have more "stage" on the podium so hey will become more interesting in the eyes of the learners that cause a positive effect in the classroom.

The investigating and fully researching on the textbook users in order to grasp the preferences of learners from different countries, cultural traditions, motivations, and personality psychology has been concerned. This is reflected in a number of textbooks recently published and put into use. That is shown through the reasonable layout in the textbook, the careful investment in images and the

interestingness and topicality in the lines and stories conveyed.

8. Principle of practice: this principle requires full consideration of the practical application value of the textbook, the orientation of the text content, the choice of vocabulary and grammar, the content and methods of constructing exercises, the setting of the scenario and sort function items, etc. in designing and composing textbooks. This is beneficial for realizing the general goal of textbooks to meet the actual needs of learners in today's learning and life. Besides, it is also beneficial to meet the needs of learners about the purpose and method of using the target language in the future.

Textbooks need to be written to make learners feel "useful after learning", whether it is for immediate use or in the future. Textbooks with high practicality create conditions for teachers.

IV. The trends of compiling Chinese textbooks in recent years

The Beijing Language University Press which is founded in 1985 has been publishing more than 1000 kinds of printed books and more than 300 kinds of e-books.

Until now, the quality of Chinese textbook for foreigners published is passing 3700 kinds. Some recent typical textbooks include: "New Applied Chinese Textbook"; "Chinese language curriculum", "Chinese language development curriculum", "HSK standard curriculum", "Chinese garden curriculum", "Easy Chinese learning curriculum"; "New Conceptual Chinese Textbook", "360 Standard Chinese Conversation"

Nowadays, there are more than 3000 universities and more than 5000 elementary, secondary and high schools in 178 countries all around the world using the curriculum of Beijing Language University Press. Recent publishes have change according to the trends. Belows are 5 typical trends in compiling Chinese books.

4.1 Combination of study and exam

A new concept has been introduced as "combining examination and teaching", "promoting teaching by examination" and "promoting learning by examination". Some sets of textbooks that can meet this demand include: "HSK Standard Chinese Textbook". The curriculum has changed from the form of "teaching separate exams" to the form of "combining exams and teaching".

Combined "examination and teaching" will link learning and examination activities together, the main purpose is to use the exam to promote students to learn and to use the exam to promote teaching. The transition between "separate teaching and examination" to "combined exam learning" is completely suitable for the actual needs of learners in the current time.

From the perspective of compiling or teaching Chinese, all teachers need to follow the requirements of the "teaching outline", take the exam as the teaching aim, and then combine the compilation of textbooks and teaching materials, content and form of HSK exam as orientation in teaching and learning, establishing Chinese exam as the goal of teaching and learning.

4.2. Localization trend

Based on the data of The Beijing University Press, until 2019, France has had 08 localized titles, Arab has 02 titles, Indonesia: 02 titles, Thailand: 04 titles.

Moreover, Chinese Publish also printed the "Interactive Chinese" with 19 different languages, selling more than 50 thousand copies.

"900 Chinese sentences" that was published from Teaching and researching foreign language Press in 2009 has sold out 500 thousand copies in 14 different languages in 50 countries.

Chinese teaching materials in Vietnam still do not meet the increasing demand for learning Chinese. Most of the Chinese language textbooks are compiled by Vietnamses have low quality, unsuitable for learners and especially not as superior as those published in China. Therefore, most Chinese teaching units use Chinese textbooks of Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong as their official textbooks.

Professor Wu Yinghui in "Discussing the characteristics of existing indigenous Chinese textbooks in Vietnam" said that: (1) Vietnam-China cooperation is the only way before compiling textbooks into success. (2) Integrating Chinese language training courses with various institutions to compile textbooks that are appropriate to local realities; (3) Rectify the current textbook compilation phenomenon; (4) Strengthening the cross-cultural language can highlight the relevance of teaching material.

4.3. The trend of making curriculum interesting

Song Bingzheng (1991) in "The problem of compiling elementary Chinese textbooks ", has shown that "A lot of sentences in the textbooks are rigid, it is like questioning and answering in an interrogation, it lacks of the practical in normal communication and serves only the purpose of describing grammar and

grammatical function".

Li Xiaoliang (1996)- an American in "Some issues in teaching Chinese as a languague" thought that some conversations in the textbooks are quite boring because of the effort to add some irrelevant sentences and the main purpose is to example for the grammar in the lesson. This lead to a not so good effect in teaching because the textbook is difficult and less attractive.

In recent years, many Chinese textbooks have changed and incorporated some interesting elements into the course, sentence formation, or additional readings.

For example lesson 13 in "跟我学汉语" has this dialogue:

马克:需要我带什么东西吗?

Mark: Do I need to bring anything?

玛丽:不用了，你带肚子来就行了。

Mary: No, just your stomach is enough.

Or lesson 5 in "标准教程HSK4（上）" when buying a discount sofa, has this dialogue:

王静：价格好可以，就是不知道质量有没有保证。

Vương Tịnh: The price is resonable, but I am not sure about the quality.

售货员：您放心，质量肯定不"打折"…

Nhân viên: Don't worry, down the price not the quality…

In recent years, with the non-stop development of Chinese, the compilition Chinese curriculum as a foreign language has been pushing with a large number of documents for foreigners.

After a half century of researching, the development of Chinese language teaching materials has made great strides, which can meet the diverse needs of Chinese learners.

4.4. Practical trend

The principle of practice of teaching Chinese is that the content of the teaching materials for teaching Chinese as a foreign language must be based on the needs of the learners, is necessary for the learners to proceed, which can be applied right in life, and are also a concern for learners to master.

With the development of dharma in teaching second language and the rise of schools that emphasize the practicalities of language teaching, such as functional and cognitive methods, it is increasingly recognized that practicality plays an important role in second language teaching, and the practicality of the curriculum is especially important. Only practical teaching materials can help people communicate, and only practical teaching materials can arouse learners' enthusiasm for learning. The principle of pragmatic practice in compiling Chinese teaching materials for learners has also become the focus of attention in recent years. However, practical problems in the curriculum for teaching Chinese as a foreign language have not been well resolved, and a lot of problems still remain.

The curriculum needs to be based on the needs of learners, is necessary for learners to conduct communication activities, can be applied right in life, and at the same time, it must make teachers feel convenient in teaching knowledge,

making it easy for learners to absorb.

The compilation of the content of the teaching materials needs to closely link the points of grammar and the practicality of the spoken language, and at the same time optimize the balance between these two factor.

The selection of topics for Chinese textbooks should be based on reality and the selection of topics must be relevant to the learners' daily lives, which means that learners can use them after leaving the classroom.

4.5. The trend of compiling e-books

Teaching a second language in modern society has been increasingly developed when using all the gadgets to apply for a textbook. The design and compilation of teaching materials should not be limited in one or two textbooks, but should be concerned with supporting textbooks, producing audiovisual texts and using current educational methods. The traditional textbook concept is evolving towards the modern broad textbook concept. This entails the design and compilation of instructional materials that include not only the design and compilation of textbooks, but also the compilation and production of workbooks, teacher books, extracurricular reading materials, flipcharts, audio tapes, video tapes and CD-ROMs, electronic documents create convenience for teachers in organizing classroom teaching activities and extracurricular learning activities in a flexible and diverse manner, better connection between classroom and extracurricular learning, convenient for learners. target language through a variety

of media and methods, and better meet the needs of learners with different learning styles.

Access to knowledge through audio, images, 3D, and video, making the approach to knowledge more flexible, interesting, and intuitive, contributing to improving learning excitement for learners. It is a combination of teachers and teaching materials through a flexible, intuitive and fast method of expression. Integrate all teaching materials, learning, study guides, exercises, practical practices, reference materials, extension materials. Convenient for learning and storage.

In summary, teaching Chinese as a foreign language is developing rapidly, textbooks are the basis of teaching. Textbooks should be suitable for local conditions, pioneering innovation, keeping up with the times, and more supportive of the development of Chinese.

V. Conclusion

The trend of compiling Chinese textbooks in recent years has changed in both qualitatively and quantitatively, more specifically, the editor has a better sense of science, and spent a lot of effort on investigating and researching learner mindset, paid more attention to design lesson and scientific book layout, more realistic content, shorter text, more diversity about style and way to approach knowledge.

The work of compiling Chinese textbooks in recent years has achieved many outstanding achievements, but besides that, there are also many problems. How to get a "new" set of textbooks compared to the existing ones, how to get

a set of scientific textbooks, suitable for each age, country and ethnic group; How to have an interesting curriculum to attract learners, improve the interest to learn…. These are issues that scientists always ponder and pursue.

In recent years, special attention has been paid to the localization and electronicization of textbooks, including Vietnam. Hopefully there will be more Chinese textbooks, more E-books and documents that are compiled specifically for Vietnamese people by Vietnamese scientists to contribute self-reliance and improve the quality in teaching Chinese in Vietnam in the future.

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