

Investigation and Research on Chinese Learning Interest of Central Asian Students Under the Context of “The Belt and Road Initiative”

Shanshan Shao, Zhuoying Ke

Faculty of Humanities, Xi'an Shiyou University, Dianzicheng Street, Xi'an, China

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Abstract: With the increasing influence of China in the world, China's foreign economic and trade, cultural exchanges, international relations are facing with a huge opportunity for development, “The Belt and Road Initiative” has become the necessary way for northwest economic and cultural development toward internationalization. In this context, the exchanges between Central Asian countries and China have become increasingly close, and Chinese language and culture have become important tools for people in Central Asia to seek for communication and development. Relevant studies have shown that learning interest has a significant impact on the quality of students' learning tasks and learning methods. Therefore, understanding learners' interest in Chinese learning is of certain significance to improve the quality of Chinese teaching for teachers and the effectiveness of Chinese learning for students. In the survey of Central Asian students, we found that ontology language, history and culture, social life were the key factors affecting the interest in learning. By constructing visual scenes and dialogue scenes to optimize teaching methods, enhancing the practicability of textbooks and supplementing teaching contents those reflect traditional history and culture, the teaching content and teaching process can be enriched from the perspective of the above three factors, so as to enhance learners' interest in learning and optimize the effect of Chinese learning.

1. Introduction

Researchers believe that interest in learning is an important factor affecting the learning effect of language learners. If students lack interest in learning, even if they have some kind of language talent, it is difficult to achieve the expected learning effect. So far, most of the investigations and researches on students' interest in language learning in China focus on English or other minor languages, while few researches on students' interest in learning Chinese are conducted in Central Asia. Therefore, the investigation and analysis of the Chinese learning interest of central Asian students will help to improve their Chinese learning effect.

2. The Concept and Importance of Learning Interest

It was mentioned in the book “Educational Psychology” that Interest is the tendency of an individual to pay selective attention to someone or something^[1]. From the perspective of educational psychology, learning interest is a psychological characteristic that a person tends to know and study to obtain certain knowledge, and it is an internal power that can promote people to seek knowledge. Students who are interested in a certain subject will continue to concentrate on it and improve their learning effect. For the promotion of learning, interest can be the reason for learning; From the perspective of learning generates new interest and improve the original interest, interest is produced in learning activities, and it can be as the result of learning. So learning interest is both a cause and a result of learning. If students are interested in learning a certain subject, they will actively approach, understand and learn related content of the subject in the learning process. Specifically, he has a strong interest in the subject and related books, and focuses a lot of energy on it. This is because, first of all, students' strong interest in this subject will prompt them to consciously and diligently study this course; Secondly, the accumulation of relevant knowledge will

constantly strengthen their interest in learning the subject, forming a virtuous circle.

The author elaborated the following views in article “Investigation And Research on Learning Interest of Chinese Elective Students in Udon Thani Normal University, Thailand” that, “Learning interest can be broadly divided into direct learning interest and indirect learning interest. The former is directly caused by learning materials or learning activities, which means learning process itself. The latter is caused by the results of learning activities. Indirect learning interest has obvious self-consciousness. Direct learning interest and indirect learning interest are often fused together, that is, there are both direct learning interest and indirect learning interest. Among them, either direct learning interest is the main, or indirect learning interest is the main, or the two are difficult to distinguish. Indirect interest in learning at the beginning is likely to be gradually transformed into direct interest in learning. Direct interest in learning, which is mostly sustained and growing in the long run, is the most beneficial factor in improving the quality of learning.” [2]

Confucius once said: “Those who are curious are better than those who know, and those who are curious are not as good as those who enjoy themselves.” Einstein also said: “Interest is the best teacher. “Many psychologists and educators have shown that interest is more conducive to diligent study than intelligence. Interest in learning can stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning and promote students to obtain more ideal academic results. This is because for the things they are interested in, people usually take the initiative to spend time and energy to study and think, and naturally finish better.

The importance of interest in learning can be discussed from the dual dimensions of learning and teaching. From the perspective of learning, learning interest has a significant impact on students' learning effect. If students are interested in the subject, they will be more motivated to learn and more willing to understand, learn and master the knowledge. This kind of learning enthusiasm will have a certain promotion effect on students' learning, and make them get better learning effect and academic performance. American scholar Lazarus confirmed the positive correlation between learning interest and academic performance with relevant reading experiments, that is, the higher learning interest could be, the better students' academic performance achieved. Students with higher learning interest generally have stronger learning motivation and are more able to overcome the difficulties and challenges encountered in the learning process and give full play to their potential, thus achieving success. When students achieve success in learning and progress in academic performance, they will have a sense of achievement and self-confidence, which makes students' interest in learning deepen. Learning interest and learning effect promote each other, forming a virtuous circle. From the perspective of teaching, it is beneficial to improve the teaching effect of teachers to clarify and further stimulate students' interest in learning. ChenLinlin has introduced the view from former Soviet union educator Skatkin in her paper “Study on Chinese Learning Interest of Junior Middle School Students” that teaching effect depended on students' interest in learning. Using students' interest in learning and teaching methods those are suitable for students, supplemented by targeted teaching materials, is conducive to the improvement of teaching effect, the completion of teaching tasks, and the realization of teaching objectives.[3]

3. A Survey of Chinese Learning Interest Among Central Asian Students

Affected by the COVID-19 epidemic, the author sent an online questionnaire to 20 Central Asian students in online course through a Chinese language teacher. It can be seen from the table below (from Table 1 to Table 6) that the survey questions are divided into three angles, respectively: ontology language, Chinese history and culture and social life, the other additional two problems involving students classroom learning, a total of seven questions, hope we can know students interested in learning Chinese, so this paper will also according to the survey, puts forward Suggestions on the writing of the classroom teaching methods and teaching materials.

3.1 Contents and Results of The Questionnaire

(1) In the process of learning Chinese, which part of the following are you most interested in?

Table 1 Statistics on the distribution of foreign students' interest in Chinese learning

I like and am interested in Chinese (from the perspective of language ontology)	I like Chinese history and culture and I want to know more about it(from the perspective of history and culture).	I like to learn how to use Chinese better in daily life (social life perspective).	Others.
10 people(50%)	8 people(40%)	2 people(10%)	None

(2)Which do you prefer most about Chinese?

Table 2 Statistics of international students' interest in Learning Chinese at the ontological level

I'm interested in the grammatical structure of Chinese (perspective of grammar).	I think Chinese characters are interesting (perspective of Chinese characters).	I think the pronunciation of Chinese is very interesting (perspective of pronunciation).	Others.
5 people(25%)	7 people(35%)	6 people(30%)	2 people(10%)

(3) Relevant questions of international students' interest in history and culture.

①Which item in Chinese history interests you most?

Table 3(a) Statistics of international students' interest in history

China has a long history. I'm interested in it.	Our nation may have a certain historical origin with China.	Others.
12people(60%)	7people(35%)	1people(5%)

②What part of Chinese culture do you like best?

Table 3(b) Statistics of international students' interest in culture

I like Chinese characters, calligraphy, poetry, music and other arts and culture.	I like all kinds of Chinese snacks and the food culture here.	I like various Chinese festivals and am interested in Chinese folk customs.	Others.
7people(35%)	1people(5%)	10people(50%)	2people(10%)

(4) What are your favorite Chinese-related activities in your spare time and daily life?

Table 4 Statistics on the study interest of international students in social life

Watch Chinese movies and TV series.	Read In Chinese.	Chatting with Chinese friends.	Others.
10people(50%)	3people(15%)	7people(35%)	None

(5) Which of the following courses did you enjoy most while learning Chinese?

Table 5 Statistics on the preferences of foreign students in classroom learning content

Courses based on listening and speaking.	Courses based on Chinese knowledge.	Courses based on Chinese culture or history.	Others.
9people(45%)	8people(40%)	3people(15%)	None

(6) What teaching methods or teaching tools do you prefer teachers to use in class?

Table 6 Statistics of foreign students' preference for the teaching methods of Chinese teachers

Teachers use multimedia to play videos and students watch and learn.	The teacher sets the learning content as the scene, and the students learn in the scene.	Teachers ask questions, students discuss in groups and study independently.	Others.
5people(25%)	13people(65%)	2people(10%)	None

It can be seen that 50% of the 20 Central Asian students are interested in The Chinese language itself. The knowledge of history and culture and social life accounted for 40% and 10% respectively. At the level of Chinese ontology, foreign students are interested in Chinese characters, pronunciation, grammatical structure and other factors, accounting for 35%, 30%, 25% and 10% respectively. In terms of history and culture, international students are mostly interested in history because of the long history of China, accounting for 60%, followed by the fact that some students' ethnic groups have a certain history with China, accounting for 35%, and other factors accounting for 5%. At the cultural level, the interest distribution of foreign students is folk-custom culture, art culture, other factors and diet culture, accounting for 50%, 35%, 10% and 5% respectively. In terms of social life, foreign students' interest in Learning Chinese is mainly reflected in watching Chinese movies and TV series, accounting for 50%, followed by communicating with Chinese friends and reading Chinese books, accounting for 35% and 15% respectively. In daily classes, international students like listening and speaking courses most, accounting for 45%; Phonetics, grammar, Chinese characters and vocabulary are the next, accounting for 40%. History and culture courses account for 15 percent. As for the teaching methods and means used by teachers in class, international students prefer teachers to set the learning content as the situation, and students learn in the situation, accounting for 65%; Secondly, they like teachers to use multimedia to play teaching videos and learn while watching videos, accounting for 25%. The number of students who like to have questions raised by teachers and then have group discussions and study independently only accounts for 10%.

3.2 In-depth Interviews

In order to further understand the reasons why international students made those choices, the author made an interview outline based on the questionnaire questions and interviewed a learner.

The interview is as follows:

Which did you choose in Questions 3, 4, 5 and 6? What are the specific reasons or practices?

Which one do you like best in the three lecture methods that were mentioned? Why is that?

According to the interview results, learners are very interested in Chinese pronunciation and Chinese characters in the process of learning Chinese. He found it interesting that there are different tones in Chinese pronunciation, and that different tones can distinguish between meanings. He likes Chinese characters because the shape and structure of Chinese characters are very special, which is very different from the Russian letters used. Moreover, some Chinese characters can express meaning vividly, while Russian only expresses pronunciation, so it greatly stimulates his interest in learning Chinese characters. In Chinese culture, the learner is most interested in Chinese characters, calligraphy, poetry, music and other art and culture, because such traditional art and culture in China is very different from its own. In his spare time and daily life, he likes reading some Chinese books most, so as to review and consolidate the grammar knowledge he has learned daily, accumulate Chinese characters and expand his vocabulary, which is conducive to Chinese learning. In The Chinese class, the learners show some interest in the situation created by the teacher in class, because it can exercise their expression and communication skill.

4. Influencing Factors of Chinese Learning Interest Among Central Asian Students

4.1 Language ontological factor

The statistical results show that language ontology is the most important factor to arouse the interest of the central Asian students in learning Chinese. The author divides this factor into three

main aspects, namely, Chinese characters, pronunciation and grammar.

Chinese characters are the most attractive content for students. According to interviews with learners, it is because Chinese characters are different from the Russian language students have been using. Chinese characters are an ancient pictographic ideogram with unique structure and vivid meaning. They are also one of the earliest characters in the world, dating back to more than 3,000 years ago. From this perspective, Chinese characters are a kind of mysterious and historical characters. When learning Russian, students only need to learn the pronunciation of each letter, you can read a word, there is no connection between sound and meaning. As a unique written symbol system, Chinese characters are not only an auxiliary communication tool, but also carry the history and culture of the Chinese nation. Many Chinese characters have certain historical origins in their glyphs and meanings. At the same time, the types of Chinese characters are very rich, including pictographs, pointing characters, understanding characters and pictographs, which are more unique than other national characters.

Phonetics also attract students because Chinese phonetics have tones compared with Many other languages such as Russian and English. According to the book "Contemporary Chinese Language", in Putonghua, there are four tones of Chinese pronunciation, namely Yin ping, Yang ping, Up tone and Down tone, as well as light tone, and different tones have the function of distinguishing semantics and tone^[4], which does not exist in the mother tongue of Central Asian students and the second language of Russian. Students will feel novel and have strong interest in learning.

4.2 Historical and cultural factors

According to the statistics, the most interesting thing for foreign students is the long history of China, followed by the fact that their nation has a historical origin with China. As an ancient civilization, our country has a long history, from pangu, Nu Wa, Hou Yi and other mythological times have more than five thousand years, is one of the world's oldest countries, and our economy, culture, science and technology has been the world's attention. Chinese, as the carrier and communication medium of Han culture, is closely connected with the history of Han nationality. Therefore, in the process of learning Chinese, students can understand Chinese culture, national psychology, aesthetic thoughts and even thinking mode through contact with historical knowledge. This not only enriches students' Chinese learning process, but also deepens their understanding of China, thus arousing students' interest in learning to a great extent. In addition, it is worth mentioning that the Kyrgyz (kirgiz of China) is a nation with long history, and it has a deep historical origin with China. According to written records in the third century BC, most of Kyrgyzstan was first incorporated into China's territory during the reign of Emperor Wudi of the Western Han Dynasty. Today's Kyrgyzstan was mostly incorporated into China's territory from the Western Han Dynasty to the Western Jin Dynasty, and again during the Tang Dynasty. This shows that Kyrgyzstan and China have always stayed a close and long-standing ties. In addition, in the article "Kirgiz Traditional Musical Instrument -- Kumzi" mentioned that there is a very early record about the activities of their ancestors in Chinese historical books. Li Kun, or Ge Kun, is the name of the ancestors of the group. In the history of Chinese historical books, there are different translations of the name, such as "Jian Kun" in the Han and Jin dynasties; From the Southern and Northern Dynasties to Sui Dynasty, it was called "Jiegu", "Qigu", "huosu", etc. Tang is called "Creases". Historical records on the name of the ethnic group has been changing, until 1935, Xinjiang provincial government officially confirmed that the name of the ethnic group was translated as "Kirgiz", which is still used today.^[5] This shows the deep relationship between Kyrgyzstan and Korea. As a result, Kyrgyz students from Central Asia are willing to learn more about the history and their interest in Learning Chinese is improved.

In terms of culture, students are most interested in folk culture. This is because there are many folk festivals and legal holidays in China, as well as many different ways to celebrate them, and many traditional festivals have their historical origins. For example, behind the Dragon Boat Festival is the patriotic story of Qu Yuan, the poet of Chu, behind the Mid-Autumn Festival is the myth of Chang 'e flying to the moon, behind the Lantern Festival is the historical story of pacifying

Lu and so on. Understanding these festivals can enable international students to get in touch with Chinese culture and life, and better integrate into the life of studying abroad, which also enhances their interest in learning Chinese. In addition, Chinese calligraphy and traditional Chinese poetry and music, as a unique Chinese art and culture that enjoys worldwide fame, are the portrayal of China's splendid history of five thousand years. To a large extent, they have attracted the attention of international students and have a positive impact on their interest in learning Chinese.

4.3 Social life factor

According to the statistics, in daily life and social interaction, overseas students are interested in watching Some Chinese movies and TV series most, accounting for 50%, followed by chatting with Chinese friends, accounting for 35%. From the point of the interview results, students are like to watch some Chinese TV dramas in their spare time, because in the process, the hearing can be promoted, the actors in the process of dialogue is pure natural pronunciation and language flow change, accord with Chinese culture and thinking of words to use the expansion of Chinese vocabulary and help students improve understanding ability. At the same time, it also let the international students understand the social life and customs of China. If it is a film and television work with historical themes, it can also help overseas students understand Chinese history. The reason why international students like to chat with Chinese friends is because of the nature of language -- a tool for communication. People learn a language for the ultimate purpose of using it as a communication tool in their daily lives. International students are no different. Communicating with Native Chinese students is a good opportunity for them to practice their Language, make new friends and better integrate into Chinese life. Therefore, chatting with Chinese friends is also one of the effective ways to promote international students' interest in Learning Chinese.

5. Suggestions on Teaching Methods and Textbook Compilation

5.1 Suggestions on teaching methods

According to the statistics of foreign students' preference for the teaching methods of Chinese teachers in the questionnaire, foreign students prefer teachers construct situations according to the learning content most, so that they can learn and practice in the situation. The author puts forward the construction method of visual situation and the construction method of dialogue situation, hoping to provide some help for the situation teaching of TCSL teachers.

The first is the method of visual scene construction. The author believes that in the specific teaching process, the knowledge and concepts in textbooks are relatively abstract. If the knowledge is directly instilled into foreign students, it may be difficult for them to truly understand and accept due to their unskilled Chinese and different thinking logic from Chinese students. The construction of visual scene can be changed from abstract to concrete, so that students can have a more thorough understanding and more profound memory of the knowledge they have learned through intuitive perception. In the construction of the visual scene, the author thinks that the wall chart method and object display method can be used. The wall chart method is not only practical, but also not too difficult to implement, because the picture itself is the most intuitive scene. For example, in the actual class, teachers can show a picture suitable for the teaching content in class, and then construct a situation, so that students can use the situation for oral expression training, and tell a story according to the picture, tell their own experience or ideas. This method will abstract knowledge concepts and intuitive pictures or things closely linked, is the simplest and most direct way for students to understand the concept and meaning of their knowledge.

The second is the construction of dialogue situation, the author believes that the simulation of the situation in the classroom dialogue, can divergent students' thinking, and improve the ability of expression. Teachers can give students a topic and construct a scene according to what they have learned in class. For example, A and B are going to have dinner together. They don't know what to eat. The classroom scene simulation teaching method, can make the students in the process of Chinese learning practice is not confined to textbooks, but expand into the daily life, can not only

spread the words of the students thinking, and also improve the students' oral communication ability, and can active classroom learning atmosphere, strengthen the communication and cooperation between the students and create a more efficient classroom.

5.2 Suggestions for textbook compilation

According to the statistical results of foreign students' favorite courses in the process of learning Chinese in the questionnaire, it can be seen that the Central Asian students prefer courses focusing on listening, speaking and communication. The second is grammar, pronunciation, Chinese characters, vocabulary based courses, and students are most interested in Chinese characters among them. Therefore, in the compilation of teaching materials, the author believes that the following points should be paid attention to:

First of all, we should enhance the practicability of teaching materials, and increase the proportion of listening and speaking communication training in the teaching materials, so that students can learn theoretical knowledge at the same time, expand the content of communication training, such as dialogue practice, topic discussion and so on. According to the content learned, for foreign students of different Chinese levels, they can finish a text or a unit of learning, can have a short dialogue practice according to the content learned; For international students with a high Level of Chinese, they can expand based on what they have learned and design a topic for discussion or small debate. In this way, it not only summarizes and reviews the contents learned, but also expands the thinking of foreign students, improves their ability of expression and communication, further enhances their interest in learning, and thus improves their learning effect.

Secondly, enrich the teaching content of Chinese characters in textbooks. According to the statistics, in the process of learning Chinese, Chinese ontology knowledge is the most attractive to foreign students, among which Chinese characters are the most interesting. This is due to the unique ideographic function and long history of Chinese characters. Therefore, we can enrich the teaching of Chinese characters for foreign students and improve their interest in Learning Chinese by adding glyphs and history in the textbooks:

Glyph. Because Chinese characters are ideographic, we can start from the connection between Chinese character and meaning, so that students can understand and learn Chinese characters through the motivation of Chinese characters, and appreciate the unique cultural charm of Chinese characters. This will not only help them learn Chinese characters, but also enhance their ability to learn, understand and write Chinese characters. Pictographs, for example, are the most powerful in character construction and the most vivid in meaning. They are pictorial and intuitive. Therefore, relevant pictures can be compiled in the textbook and Chinese characters can be displayed to students intuitively through pictures. For example, the character "Ya" means branching, which can be directly reflected in the oracle bone inscriptions of "Ya", as shown in Figure 1.

In addition to pictographs, the other three forms in "Six Books" are also applicable: reference, meaning and form and sound. For example, the Zhishi character "Xiu" (as shown in Figure 2) is added to the left side of the character "wood" on the oracle bone script, indicating that people are leaning against a tree, which means resting. Another example is the meaning of the word "Sen" (as shown in figure 3), which is composed of three "wood" characters, meaning that there are many trees.



Figure 1 The character "Ya" Figure 2 The character "Xiu" Figure 3 The character "Sen"

(1) History. International students are most interested in Chinese characters because of their long

history. Therefore, some contents related to the history of Chinese characters can be added to the teaching materials, such as how a certain character evolved from the initial structure to the present shape, so as to deepen the understanding of Chinese characters for foreign students and help them memorize them. For example, the Chinese character che means wheeled vehicle on land. The current configuration of "Che" word (which means "car") is through the long evolution of Oracle script - small zhuan - regular script, as shown in Figure 4.

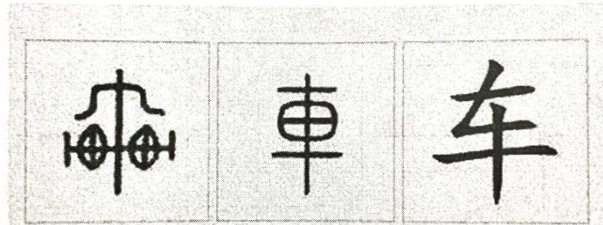


Figure 4 The evolution of the character "Che"

It can be seen from Figure 4 that the character "Che" went through three stages of evolution before it came into being today's shape, which also reflects the long history of Chinese characters. Because Chinese characters are not only phonetic, but also complex strokes, students are not easy to memorize, easy to burnout. In this way, it can help students to understand and memorize, and at the same time enrich the classroom content, enhance students' interest in learning, and improve their learning efficiency.

6. Conclusion

According to the above statistical results and analysis, it is clear that in the process of Chinese learning, students are most interested in The Chinese language itself, followed by knowledge related to history, culture and life. At the angle of Chinese ontology, central Asian students are most interested in Chinese characters. On a historical angle. What attracts international students most is its long history; At the cultural angle, foreign students are most interested in folk culture. In terms of social life, international students like to consolidate and improve their Chinese ability by watching Chinese movies and TV dramas and chatting with Chinese friends. In the process of learning Chinese, students are most interested in listening and speaking training courses and Chinese characters in knowledge courses, and they also like the situation constructed by teachers for them to practice. Therefore, in terms of teaching methods, the author puts forward two kinds of situational construction methods, which are visual situational construction method and conversational situational construction method respectively. In the compilation of teaching materials, emphasis is put on the application of teaching materials, and in addition to the knowledge of glyphs and history to provide some reference for teaching Chinese as a foreign language teachers.

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