



## Empirical Study on the Construction Teaching for Improvement of Thailand students

### Chinese Composition Ability

-- Taking the Chinese Separable Words as an Example

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#### Abstract:

Based on the Construction theory, taking the Chinese separable words as an example, we undertook this Empirical study to explore the effectiveness of The Construction Teaching in improving students' Chinese composition competence through the classroom activities of input, absorption and output. The results show that The Construction Teaching has more effects on the student's Chinese competence than words teaching. The Construction Teaching which accords with the Thailand students' learning habits can help improve students' practical Chinese competence.

**Key words:** The Construction Teaching; Thailand students; Chinese composition ability; Chinese separable words

#### 1 Introduction

It is easy to find that there are not much of problems for Thailand students' understanding and memory of many words in Chinese classroom teaching, but the main problem is how to use vocabulary appropriately, especially how to search out from the mental lexicon as soon as possible when they are required in composition expression.

Explore the Construction Teaching to construction theory as the foundation, which has a practical significance and practice significance to improve the current Thailand students' Chinese composition application ability. Chinese separable

words are an important content of Chinese teaching, and also a difficult problem of Thailand students using. This paper taking the teaching of Chinese separable words construction as an example, discussed the related problems of construction teaching for Thailand students through experimental study.

#### 2 Theoretical bases

The rise of construction grammar offers new perspectives on many old problems. Under the framework of construction grammar, lexical categories are schemas that emerge from language

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use, and also constructions that pair form and meaning. Lexical categories of linguistic expressions are inseparable from the constructions in which they occur [1].

Construction Teaching, based on Construction theory, takes words or structures as an integral whole and stored in memory, can not only improve the language resource information processing efficiency, but also can greatly improve the language output, fluency, idiomaticity and vitality, is conducive to the students' Chinese language application ability to be improved, but also conforms to the students' learning and cognitive features.

### 3 The experimental design and process

#### 3.1 The experiment purpose

Taking Chinese separable words as an example, through the construction teaching, we want to explore a

#### 3.2 The experiment method

This experiment selected 207 Chinese separable words from the "Chinese Level Standards and Grammatical Syllabus" [2] as teaching material. According to Construction Teaching of Chinese separable words, through a series of teaching and learning activities of input, absorption, and output, the experiment guide students to identify, study, use and accumulate Chinese separable words and its construction, to make students master them effectively and skillfully in using Chinese separable words and its related construction, improve the comprehensive application of Thai students composition expression ability.

#### 3.3 The experiment subject

The experimental subjects were 65 Thai Intermediate Chinese learners who had learnt Chinese about 12 months. They were randomly divided into two groups, one experimental group

(Participant), 32, using Construction Teaching of Chinese separable words, and another group was the control group (Reference), 33, using conventional teaching, during one semester (about 18 weeks). At the end of the experiment, we compared the usage condition of Chinese separable words of students' Chinese composition expression and some problems related of the two groups, according to qualitative and quantitative analysis.

#### 3.4 The experimental hypothesis

1) Chinese separable words Construction Teaching has a greater impact on language comprehension and application capabilities than simple Chinese separable words teaching.

2) Accuracy and fluency of language use in the experimental group of students has greatly improved, and their Chinese composition skills improve greatly.

#### 3.5 The experimental process

The teaching Experiment process was divided into four steps:

##### 1) First step

Based on specific composition material, on the basis of the students to prepare in advance, let them master prototype of Chinese separable words, including phonetics, semantics, etc.

##### 2) Second step

This step is mainly to push students understand the discourse structure of composition material. It is advantageous to understand construction of Chinese separable words after students grasp the whole article context and discourse structure clearly.

##### 3) Third step

Composition teaching is mainly under the main line of Construction Teaching, through input, internalization, and output as a series of teaching and learning activities, guide students to identify,

study and use Chinese separable words construction, so that the students can effectively master and skillfully use the construction, improve the students' ability of application. The following is the whole process of the text teaching:

#### A. Identifying the Chinese separable words construction

The experimental group students was asked to pre-view before class, acquire information of articles and mark Chinese separable words construction of accruing information. This identification process by attention, analysis, and memorization is a formation process of positive language knowledge construction, not only cultivates the students' ability to identify construction, to enhance the students' consciousness of construction, but also paved the way for the implementation of Construction Teaching.

#### B. Identifying the Chinese separable words construction

On the basis of students preparing in advance, firstly, by asking questions, let them find Chinese separable words step by step, then, ask them to make sentences by adding middle section or translation to drill. For instance, when we learn the Chinese separable word "meet (见面 jiànmiàn)", in order to practice the mode of "AXB" construction, we can let the students make the following sentence.

Add "le(了)": 我们昨天见了面。 (Wǒmen zuótān jiàn le miàn.)

Add "guo (过)": 我们昨天见过面。 (Wǒmen zuótān jiàn guo miàn.)

Add "de (的)": 我们昨天见的面。 (Wǒmen zuótān jiàn de miàn.)

Add "complement": 我们见不成面了。 (Wǒmen jiàn bu chéng miàn le.)

Add "numeral": 我们明天见一面吧。 (Wǒmen míngtiān jiàn yí miàn ba.)

Add "quantifier": 我们昨天见了一次面。

(Wǒmen zuótān jiàn le yí cì miàn.)

Add "ge(个)": 我们明天见个面吧。 (Wǒmen míngtiān jiàn ge miàn ba.)

#### 4) Fourth step

##### A. Construction Accumulation

Teacher requires students to find out constructions when doing exercises, to cultivate their ability to recognize and identify constructions. As far as difficulties, teacher questions students firstly, and then explains them further, when handling exercises. For some useful construction, such as idiomatic expressions, teacher should explain and comment them, and let students make a tag for memory and dictation.

Construction Teaching not only requires students to accumulate construction in the text, and they are asked to accumulate construction of exercises. For a period of time, teacher should examine students' accumulation by extension of making sentences, and results recorded as the important basis of ordinary times.

##### B. Construction Application

Students are required to use the expression learnt to fulfill output task, so as to examine the effects of internalized absorption. In the output, new knowledge is brought into the existing knowledge structure, and was made to be systematic knowledge to facilitate memory storage and retrieval. For speeding up the internalized absorption process of construction, prompting students to use and master new construction, they are asked to make oral composition according to titles and related meaning given, or complete the following tasks through discussion in small groups:

Make up stories according to construction of text.

Make up stories according to construction of exercises.

Oral composition or group discussion can not only stimulate students' learning interest and enthusiasm, help them memorizing and using construction, promote the internalization of language and output, and also enable them to creatively use construction.

#### 4 The experimental results and analysis

##### 4.1 The questionnaire survey

At the end of the experiment, as compared with classroom teaching effect of Construction Teaching and conventional teaching, we investigated the experimental group and the control group of 65 students conducted a questionnaire survey. See Table 1:

Table1 contrast of the two groups

Items	Participant				Reference			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
1.classroom atmosphere	20	11	1		15	11	6	1
2. teaching organization	27	1	3	1	18	12	2	1
3. interact between teacher and students	30	2			10	20	3	
4. teaching effect	28	2	2		13	10	6	4
5.learning interests	28	2	2		13	10	8	2
6. mastery of knowledge	31		1		19	7	7	
7. thinking training	28	4			9	18	3	3
8.ability training	30	2			11	21	1	
9.learning a chievement	27	3	2		17	12	3	1

(A , B, C, D means different levels from good to bad)

It is obviously that the experimental group is better than the control group in many items by contrast from table 1.

##### 4.2 Statistical analysis of Construction mastering condition of the two groups

At the end of the experiment, we chose 10 com-monly used Chinese separable words as following 睡觉(shuì jiào), 见面(jiàn miàn), 帮忙(bāng máng), 结婚(jiéhūn), 操心(cāoxīn), 理发(lǐfà), 担心(dānxīn),

上课(shàngkè), 伤心(shāngxīn), 拼命(pīnmìng), to make a test of 100 questions, 1question 1point. After score statistics of the 65 students, we used SPASS to do the ANOVA; and the statistical results are as follows:

Table2 the descriptive statics of the two groups

	N	Mean	Std. Devia-tion	Std. Error	Descriptives		
					95% Interval of for Mean		
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Participant	32	82.56	6.599	1.167	80.18	84.94	66 94
Reference	33	76.21	9.113	1.586	72.98	79.44	56 91
Total	65	79.34	8.535	1.059	77.22	81.45	56 94

Table3 the ANOVA of the two groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	ANOVA	
				F	Sig.
Between Groups	655.164	1	655.164	10.300	.002
Within Groups	4007.390	63	63.609		
Total	4662.554	64			

According to table 3, the P value of significant comparison between groups is 0.002, which is less than 0.05, and has a significant difference. The ANOVA shows that the influence of language comprehension and application ability of experimental group's Construction Teaching is greater than the control group's.

##### 4.3 Contrast of composition score of the participant and the reference group

We gave the experimental group and the control group students a 30 minutes test of written composition respectively at the beginning and the end of the experiment. Average contrasts are shown in table 4.

Items	Full marks	Average of participant			Average of Reference		
		Initial test	End test	discrepancy	Initial test	End test	discrepancy
Fluency	5	3	4	1	3.2	3.6	0.4
Accuracy	5	3.5	4.6	1.1	3.2	4	0.8
Idiomaticity	5	2	4.3	2.3	2.2	3.7	1.5
Coherence	5	4.3	5	0.8	4.2	4.1	-0.1
Logic	5	4.1	4.4	0.3	4.2	4.2	0
Integrity	5	4.2	4.8	0.6	3.8	4.3	0.5
Diversity	5	2.1	3.9	1.8	2.2	3.5	1.3
Total score	35	23.2	31	7.9	23	27.4	4.4

It can be seen from the results in table 4: there is almost no gap between the composition scores of the two groups at the beginning of the experiment. But at the end of the experiment, all the data of the experimental group's are much better than the control group. As the experimental group students usually pay attention to the accumulation and application of construction, therefore, their language expression is more in accord with Chinese habit, meanwhile, the control group students use words is unitary, and there are also much of inconformity of Chinese expression habit.

## 5 Discussion and thinking

It is not hard to see after a semester of experimental teaching, that the Construction Teaching is effective to improve the students' Chinese language application ability.

### 5.1 The Construction Teaching is in conformity with the Thai students learning habits.

Table 1 is the contrast of the participant and the reference group. It can be obviously found that the experimental class is better than the reference class in many items by contrast. Items 1-4 are evaluation of teacher's teaching, items 5-9 are evaluation of students' learning. Therefore, it can be said that the Construction Teaching is in conformity with the Thai students learning habits.

### 5.2 The Construction Teaching is good for memory and storage, and is in accordance with the basic rule of language cognition.

Construction is a combination of syntax, semantics and context, and has its internal structure and the meaning of conditionality. Part of Construction can help recall another part, which be remembered more easily than the words out of context, but also can extract directly. Students put a lot of construction stored in the memory, and to extract to use as a whole. This kind of procedure is convenient, quick and accurate, which requires time and effort are much smaller than making sentences words by words.

### 5.3 The Construction Teaching is beneficial to improve language fluency, accuracy and Idiomaticity.

Students accumulate and master a lot of Construction in written communication, which can quickly extract and direct use to improve the degree of automation of language expression, so as to ensure the fluency of language and semantic coherence. Since the construction is extracted as a whole, it does not need to take time to make a sentence according to the word or grammatical rules set, thus reducing the pressure of composition. And at the same time, students can choose more real, more appropriate, more vivid, and more accurate words to avoid a lot of hard, ambiguous, and confused sentences.

## 6 Conclusions

The teaching practice of Chinese separable words construction to Thai students shows that the Construction Teaching is in conformity with Thai students' learning habits, and is good for improving Thai students' Chinese comprehensive application ability.

The Construction Teaching advocates memorizing and accumulating construction in learning. It can greatly enhance students learning Chinese accomplishment, make their language output more fluent, more accurate, more authentic, more appropriately, so as to improve the automation degree of language information processing.

The teaching practice proved: the amount of construction has more influence on students' Chinese language application ability than the amount of words. The Construction Teaching to Thai students is a practical and feasible approach which can effectively improve the way of the Chinese language application ability, is supposed to further research and exploration.

## References

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