情境与语法在青少年初级对外汉语教材中的呈现方式

——以《你好》和《跟我学汉语》为例的实验

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[摘 要] 教材对对外汉语语法教学有着至关重要的作用。本文旨在探讨教材以何种方式呈现语法点对国际青少年学习语法更有效。本文以"把"字句为例,运用"使用后"的评估方法对《跟我学汉语》和《你好》两套教材的语法呈现方式进行了比较,采用"课堂话语分析"来评估两套教材中"把"字句的呈现方式在课堂上的运用效果。研究结果建议针对青少年的汉语教材在呈现语法点时要让学生能在情景中探索归纳语法点的意义。另外,看图说话的呈现方式对提高学生学习语法的兴趣和学习效果起到了重要的作用。

「关键词 语法呈现; 教材评估; 青少年语法学习

Exposure of Contexts and Grammar in Elementary TCFL Textbooks for Adolescents

-Experiments with Nihao and Gen Wo Xue Hanyu as Examples

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[Abstract] CFL textbooks play a key role for teachers to teach and for students to learn grammar. The present study was an attempt to evaluate CFL textbooks in an international school with respect to the contextualization of grammar presentation. The author employs post-use evaluation to compare the efficiency of the grammar presentation from Gen Wo Xue Hanyu and Ni Hao. Classroom discourse analysis was further conducted to evaluate the imperceptible aspects behind the differences when students learning "ba" sentence. The results shows that it seems as advisable that CSL textbooks should present their grammar points in a manner that can help students explore the grammatical meaning in the context. This study also proves Picture Description places a better position to enhance students' incentive in learning grammar and makes positive contribution to the achievment of grammar learning.

[Key words] grammar presentation; textbook evaluation; grammar learning for young learners

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1. Introduction

With the recent incredible economic achievements of China, Chinese as a foreign language teaching (CFL) has been assuming a more and more important role over the world in recent decades. As a result, this has generated an increasing number of producing CFL/ CSL textbooks. In this market, international schools in China are one of the most popular consumers. Unlike many local schools in China where teachers are limited to use the nationally assigned textbooks, teachers in international schools often can choose and develop their own ones to meet the special needs of their students. Nevertheless, on the other hand, they are inevitable confronted with tremendous challenges to select the right one for their classroom. Consequently, it is important for teachers to understand the features of different textbooks and the relevant materials evaluation techniques. As Tomlinson (1999:11) claims that "the obvious but important point is that there can be no one model framework for the evaluation of materials; the framework used must be determined by the reasons, objectives and circumstances of the evaluation." It indicates that effective evaluation largely depends on the right match between textbook and the specific learning situation. This has driven me to conduct a needs-analysis in my class and the results showed that the main purpose of these students learning Chinese is to communicate with native Chinese people and grammar learning is their biggest challenge.

Arguments concerning formal grammar instruction and implicit grammar instruction have been hotly debated. Several empirical studies (reviewed in Long, 1988; Ellis, 1990) suggest that formal instruction is needed to promote advanced levels of language learning. However, Krashen (1981, 1982) disputes that research and theory show that the best way of increasing grammatical accuracy is comprehensible input and formal language instruction is not useless, but has a limited function. Celce-Murcia (1991) claims that there are other variables can impact this, such as the learner variable. It is most likely that for ESL young learners little explicit grammar instruction is needed. Yet, there is no clear consensus has been made as to the way forward. The author of this study is motivated to design an experiment to look at young learners' acquisition of grammar under explicit and implicit instruction respectively from the presentations of two CFL textbooks.

2. Literature Review

The Role of Grammar in CFL Textbook Design

In the domain of L2 teaching, the English language teaching methodologies more or less have had influenced the development of CFL textbooks. In the following parts the author will examine three major stages of CFL development and its relationship with grammar.

Between 1840 and 1940, Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) dominated second language teaching in European countries and it deeply impacted on CFL intensive reading lessons (Liu, 1999). The method places grammar at the core for language teaching and learning. Students develop their language ability through translation of texts from the target language into the native language and through explicit explanation and analysis of the grammar of the target language (Tse, 2004, cited in Hung, 2008). HanYuJiaoKeShu (Deng Yi, 1958), for example, was the first modern CFL textbook designed based on the constructive syllabus where the grammar points were organized systematically and presented in a deductive way (Liu, 1999). The major criticism of this book are, first, the grammatical points (total 196 items) are too complicated for CFL learners (Liu, 1999), second, students lack enough opportunities to practise their oral skills due too much emphasis on memorizing grammatical rules (Liu, 1999). In one word, in the GTM based textbooks, careful presentation of grammar knowledge was one of most important considerations for textbook designers.

After, 1940s, Audiolingual Approach (AA) was become widely known largely as a reaction to the GTM with the intention that AA could aid learners to have good communicative skills. The grammatical structures are learned through repeatedly practising the sentences structures through various exercises in AA. The sequencing of structures is usually organized from basic to complex (Celce-Murcia, 1991, cited in Hung, 2008). Although the mastering grammar knowledge becomes less important than in GTM and it offers guidance on completion of doing tasks, e. g. "greeting," "expressing regret" etc., AA influenced CFL textbooks are still structure based and compiling sentence structures systematically is still an important measure for good quality CFL textbooks. Chao Yuanren's Mandarin Primer (1934) was the first attempt to employ AA into CFL teaching in 1934. In one word, both GTM and AA based textbooks place their primary concern on the mastering sentence structures or grammatical items rather than formulating new utterances.

In the mid of 1970s, the worldwide popularity of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has greatly impact on the L2 textbook design. CFL teaching therefore then largely designed upon communicative syllabus, which is also known as functional or notional syllabus. According to Johnson (1981, cited in Chen, 2006), "Notions" are rather abstract concepts which are closely related to grammatical categories in English. "Function," on the other hand, refers to the practical uses to which we put language, most usually in interaction with other people. In CLT, there is a tendency of overemphasizing the semantic functional usage of language and the mastering of grammar becomes less prominent. By contrast, some researchers, Hung (2008), for example, argues that grammar training and functional approaches are not mutually exclusive but mutually interdependent. Liu, Deng & Liu (1982, cited in Liu, 1999; 326), for another instance, claims that "it should not

neglect the learning of grammar knowledge and it also should not deny the guiding role of language rules." As a result, this view has influenced greatly on the sequence of grammar points in CFL textbook that authors attempted to integrate both functional syllabus and structural syllabus into textbook compilation, for example, Practical Chinese Readers (Liu Xun) was such a model. The grammatical structures are organized around the conduct of various tasks in such types of textbooks, such as eating in a restaurant, seeing a doctor, etc. It is believed that the students can master grammatical structures better if they are presented in a real situation.

The Need to Present Language in Context

Research has repeatedly suggested that it is important to study grammar in context (Paulston & Bruder, 1975; Celce-Murcia, 2002; McIntosh, 1979; Nunan, 1998a, cited in Hung, 2008). Krashen (1982) reinforces that grammatical structures can be internalized if learners are situated in a particular context, in which they use the structures for communication. However, the question is what kind of context should be considered as appropriate to help students to do so.

First, the previous studies suggest that the context for the presenting and practising of grammar should be psychologically appropriate. Language and psychology are inextricably linked (Burke, 1998) and grammar is embedded in language learning. On the one hand, the enhancement of grammar competence would benefit psychological development; on the other hand, the enhancement of psychology development could also enhance grammar development. This strongly manifests that the appropriate psychological context is beneficial to students' utterances. Stranks (2003:337) echoed that "when practise activities or exercises are given to learners to practise a particular aspects of grammar, it would appear to be desirable that the utterances produced in doing the exercise be ones that (a) are feasible language and (b) bear some resemblance to language that the learners might wish to utter." It reveals that grammar tasks should be created in a rich context that can capture students' interests, knowledge and experience to ensure their learning is meaningful.

Second, the context for learning grammar should be authentic. Learners are motivated by the authentic materials which are considered to be more interesting than invented ones (Peacock, 1997). Robinson (1991:56—58), for another example, argues that authentic materials have greater face validity in terms of the language dealt with and the context it is presented in. However, although many researchers agree that authentic materials intrinsically motivate students, much of its literature mainly shows how authentic material could enhance students reading, little has been examined in terms of its role to enhance students' acquisition of grammar. As Nunan (1998b) argues that, in real communication, grammar and context are often closely related and that the choice of grammatical items for use highly depends on the context and the purpose of communication. This reveals that the acquisition of grammar comes to life when it proceeds in a communicative setting. Therefore, in order to create a real communicative context, the authors of textbooks, not only need to provide authentic language, but also need to provide authentic exercises or tasks to assist students' grammar learning.

As the studies reviewed show that compiling grammar points in meaningful context in CFL textbooks is crucial to enhance learners' language competence. However, most of the previous research is focus on the adult's grammar learning, the relevant research on the young learners have been relatively neglected. Therefore the present study will focus on the young learners and the two research questions are:

- (1) Which method presented in CFL textbooks can serve a better position to help students to apply grammar in authentic situation?
 - (2) Do the students show interesting in studying the material?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants and Materials

The participants for this study were two classes of 17 non-native Chinese speakers (about 14—15 years old) at an International in Beijing. These participants are from diverse cultural backgrounds. Chinese is one of the two major languages in the school alongside English. The textbooks chosen for this study are *Nihao* and *Learn Chinese with Me*, which both are target young learners as teaching objects.

3.2 Method

There are many frameworks to evaluate language books; however, two broad categories of procedures are most commonly used; pre-use and post-use evaluation. Pre-use evaluation is to make predictions about the value of material before applying it into the classroom practice. The methods adopted in this process can be further divided into two dimensions for which the terms macro and micro seem appropriate (Ian, 2002). At the macro stage people could conduct a general overview of the textbooks, typically involving glancing at the author's background and content page and skimming through the organization, layout and visuals. In one word, the purpose of macro evaluation is to weed out obviously unsuitable material so as to make a shortlist for detailed analysis (Cunningsworth, 1995). At the micro stage of pre-use evaluation, the evaluators usually carry out an in-depth comment on their characteristics critically by using the checklists (e. g. Cunningsworth, 1984, 1995; Breen & Candlin, 1987; Sheldon, 1988; Skierso, 1991; McDonough & Shaw, 1993).

Despite the convenience of the pre-use evaluation, Ellis (1997) suspects how scientific such predictive evaluation can be. The pre-use methods are vulnerable to the subjective

biases of the evaluators, as an individual evaluator may tend to attach greater value on one element than the other. Instead, he (1997) proposes a scheme called "retrospective evaluation." In his process, teachers select one particular teaching task at the end of the course to collect views from the users. The advantage of such model is it can draw on the real experience and attitudes of the learners so as to make reliable decisions. As Hamer (1991) and Cunningsworth (1995) claim that the most secure basis for textbook selection is to try out the materials with the students for whom they are intended.

Due to the shortage of resource and a low number of participants, this research is not possible to be carried out as a large-scale quantitative project. For these reasons, the present research will employ a small task as Ellis (1997) suggested reaching this purpose.

- (1) To select same teaching grammar points from NiHao and Learn Chinese with Me.
- (2) Classroom recording of two classes which using the different teaching methods represented in the textbooks.

In order to "respect the rights and dignity of those who are participating in the research" and "avoid any harm to the participants arising from their involvement in the research" (Denscombe, 2003:134), a letter home was to ask the permission for recording from the students' parents. The progress of this research is also reported to the secondary principal for approval.

4. Results

In this chapter, the results of the analysis will be presented and the different features between NiHao(Textbook A) and Learn Chinese with Me (Textbook B) will further be discussed. Both excerpts are transcripts of the dialogue occurring when students were learning "ba" sentences(Appendix I).

Textbook A presents the explanation of "ba" sentences in deductive way. The teacher followed the exact way as the textbook shows to conduct the lesson. It begins with the teacher's explanation of the rules of "ba" sentences. Then the teacher asks the first group students to find out the corresponding elements in the examples. Finally, in order to find out the effectiveness of this method she asks the students to create a dialogue on cooking, which should include some "ba" sentences and five other words. Several features of this excerpt can be identified as the following. First, it appears that the teacher more or less dominates the conversation. The teacher takes 6 turns in the total 11 turns in this sequence (54.5%). Second, it seems that the students show little interest in responding the teacher's questions. Only two students answered the teacher's questions. Third, it also appears that the teacher tends to ask more closed questions. For example, when she asks "What does the S stand for?", she actually expects the students to give a finite set of possible answers (Skidmore, 2003). As for the assessment, three or four groups completed their scripts on time and one group completed on the second lesson (Appendix II). Three groups used "ba" sentences without one exception. Two groups used "ba" only once and one group used "ba" twice in their scripts. Two groups used the exact examples from the textbook and one group created new sentences with "ba".

Textbook B presents an activity called "Picture Description" (PD) instead of an explanation. The second excerpt is one part of transcripts of the S-T dialogue occurring when students are learning "ba" sentences. At the input stage, the students encounter "ba" in the sentence "马明,你把锅拿来. Ma Ming please bring me the pot." The text is about a Chinese cooking. First, the teacher demonstrates several examples of "ba" sentences. Then she asks the students to generate the rule of "ba" sentences based on the examples. Following this the teacher engages the students in practising "ba" sentences through PD. Finally, like example 1, the teacher asks them to create a dialogue which needs to include "ba" sentences.

Several characteristics of this excerpt can be recognized as following. First, the teacher tends to take less turns and allows the students to take more turns in the conversation. Student takes a special active role in the picture descriptions: the teacher takes 14 turns in a total of 40 turns (35%) and the students take the rest 65% turns. Second, it is evident that most students involved in the dialogue. The results show that more than 80% students have participated in this interaction. Third, the teacher in this example tends to ask open questions to help the students build the rules of "ba" sentences. Fourth, many students involved in the picture description. All the four groups in G7 completed their assessments on time(Appendix II). All have used "ba" sentences in their creation. Each group used "ba" more than twice and one group (SG3) even used five times. One group used the exact example from textbook and three groups created new sentences with "ba."

Comparing the two examples, some features are revealed as following. Firstly, since most participants in example 2 involved in the discussion and developed their understanding of "ba" sentences together rather than receiving direct instructions on what to do from the teacher, this embodies the principles of collaborative learning. It also shows that although both deductive and inductive ways can help students learn grammar, the inductive way demonstrates a particular effect to help students discover the rules through meaningful communication than the deductive way. In this example learners have a chance to explore the grammar in examples; therefore, it makes it easier for them to see how and why structures are used.

Secondly, it is fairly likely that the students showed more interest in learning "ba" sentences by describing pictures than merely reading aloud the examples. This may be because, first, pictures can provide students with an appropriate context to practise grammar. Second, PD in Textbook B presents more cognitive and psychological appropriate characters because it captures the students' knowledge and experience through the activities. By contrast, Textbook A lacks activity types and sufficient contexts to

practise the grammar points although the author suggests teachers use the activities provided in the handbooks.

Last but not the least, there is a strong possibility that the PD in Textbook B contributes positively to the positive results of grammar learning. In the assessments of the second example it appears that the students intend to produce more dynamic and complex dialogues than in the first example. Although most students (except SG1) in excerpt 1 also demonstrate the ability to integrate "ba" sentences in their creative scripts, more students in excerpt 2 demonstrate an ability to create new "ba" sentences in their scripts. The students also develop longer conversations than in the first and demonstrate more modifications to the original text. This feature resembles Bakhtin's concept of "internally persuasive discourse," in which pupils retell a story in their own words rather than reciting it by heart (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984; Brandist, 1997; Holquist, 1990; Skidmore, 2000 cited in Skidmore, 2003). This may be because the learners using Textbook B have a chance to practise "ba" sentences via PD before the assessment. It indicates that PD more or less allows learners to explore the grammar in rich context.

5. Conclusion

The present study probed into the analyzing the contextualization of grammar in two CFL textbooks. Several recommends can be summarized as following. First, it seems as advisable that CFL textbooks should present their grammar points in an inductive way to help young learners to explore the grammatical meaning in the context. This probably because it allows young learners opportunities to explore and sense the grammar in the context and the process and the nature of exploration match the learning characteristics of young learners. Second, this assignment proves that activity such as the "Picture Description" presented in Textbook B serves a better position to enhance students' incentive in learning grammar than the merely grammar explanation. Third, it is fairly likely that activity such as "Picture Description" makes a positive contribution to the success of grammar learning. It suggests that CFL textbook editors should provide more such activities to help students learn grammar.

Although this study elicited learners' perspectives, some limitations are expected to be resolved in future studies. Firstly, only 17 learners participated in the research and this has weakened the generalization of the findings. Secondly, the present research focuses on the types of activities of learning grammar. There are more or less other factors contribute to the results, such as the students' motivation, peer environment etc. Therefore it is recommended that more large scope research conduct to gather more in-depth results.

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Appendix I Recording Excerpts

Excerpt 1

- T: 在这个对话里出现了"把"字句。什么叫"把"字句呢? "把"literally means "hold", but does not carry a specific meaning here. It is used in a sentence to introduce an object ahead of a verb to emphasizing how it is dealt with, 比如:
 - · 小明把张老师介绍给他的父母亲。S+把0+V
 - 请大家跟我读一读:小明把张老师介绍给他的父母亲。这里的 S 是谁?
 - S1:张老师。
 - T:0 是什么?
 - S2:张老师。
 - T: V 呢?
 - S1/S2:介绍。
 - T:好,下面我们再看另一个例子。
 - T:下面请大家 create 一个对话,在对话中你要用到以下几个词语和语法点"把"字句。两个人一组。

请在这个 Poster 上用不同的颜色写你的对话。一个人物一种颜色。(老师分组)你们一共有 25 分钟时间。 SG1:我们可以写和书上一样的吗?

T:不可以,你要自己 create! 不同的人物,不同的对话。Try your best! SG1. 好吧

老师给各组做指导。25分钟以后,有三组做好了,SG1没有完成。

Excerpt 2

- T: (The teacher speaks the "ba" sentences as she was doing the correspondent actions)
- 我把书放在桌子上。
- 我把笔放在书上。
- 我把电脑放在书上。
- 我把桌子挪过来。
- 好,现在你们可以告诉我,What's the function of "把"?
- S1:"把"is a measure word?
- S2:"把"can connect words.
- T: "把"可以 connect 什么 words?
- S3: Objects.
- T:很好, object 有生命吗?
- Ss:没有。
- S4:没有,所以我们要用"把",让它可以有 life。
- T:好,东西是没有生命的,只有人才有生命,只有人可以 dispose of 东西。It was used as to dispose of something. "把"是一个介词, preposition。
 - S3:还有动物可以。
 - T:很好,还有动物。谢谢!下面你们可以给出"把"字句的 structure 吗?
 - S2: People+把+object+Movement
 - S5:我知道。是 People/Animal+把+object+Movement
 - T:好,我们可以把 People/Animal generated as "Subject"。
 - S6: So, it's Subject+把+0+Movement+others.
 - T:有时候,不一定是 movement。例如:我把鸡蛋吃完了。
 - T:很好,现在我们来看看练习。请同学们打开练习本练习。请同学们看图然后描写句子。
 - Ss:(做练习)
 - T:好,下面我们一起来看看。第一幅图。李老师在干什么?
 - S1:李老师在上课。
 - S2:李老师把地图带来了。
 - T:很好,李老师把地图带来了。好,下面我们看第二幅图。
 - Ss: 王太太让马明把伞带来。

Appendix II

SG1

- 李:今天晚上你要吃什么?
- H:我想吃麻婆豆腐。
- 李:好。我来准备作料。
- H:好。

李.JH, 你帮我把锅拿来。

H.好,你教我怎么做麻婆豆腐。

李:OK,你把豆腐切成方块。

H.好,很简单。

李:下次我拿别的菜谱。

H:谢谢!

SG2

K:时间不早了。我们应该吃饭了。

I.我们自己做吧! 你们吵着要教我们做中国菜!!!

K:我该学会了,但是我还没有学会。

I:没问题。我们一起学。菜谱来了!

K:太好了。我们做汉堡吧。

I.汉保包非常简单!

K.你来切奶酪。

SG3

妈妈:Ki,你想让我教你怎么做麻婆豆腐吗?

Ki.好,但是中国菜是不是很难做?

妈妈:不,很简单。你先看菜谱。

Ki.好,我先把作料拿来吧。

妈妈:你先把豆腐切成方块,然后放在锅里。

Ki. 真简单!

Group B

SG1

T:好久不见, Ellen!

E:我们今天学什么?

T:我今天教你做麻婆豆腐。

E:做麻婆豆腐简单吗?

T:还行。

E:我们要什么炊具?

T:我们要把锅拿过来。

E:好。我们要什么作料?

T:我们要盐、油和酱油。

E:怎么切?

T:把豆腐切成方块。

E. 我觉得我继承了我妈妈做菜的能力。

SG2

W:李兰兰,好久不见!

L:好久不见,王芳。最近怎么样?

W:我很好。我最近在学习做中国菜。

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- L:真的吗? 做中国菜有意思吗?
- W:非常有意思! 你想学吗?
- L:好啊! 你教我。
- W:我教你做麻婆豆腐。你把酱油、豆腐、葱拿来。
- L:好的。拿来了。
- W:你把豆腐切成方块,再把葱洗干净。
- L:麻婆豆腐很辣,你把辣椒拿过来。
- W:真麻烦。
- L:别着急,一会儿就好了。
- W:现在你把油放在锅里加热,然后把豆腐放(过了十分钟)。
- W:麻婆豆腐烧好咯!
- L:真好吃!

SG3

老:Bob,好久不见!

B:对呀。

老:今天我教你一个简单的中国菜。

B: 是, 麻婆豆腐吗?

老:是啊,你知道很多中国菜谱?

B: 因为妈妈继承给我的。

老:你知道麻婆豆腐的作料是什么?

B:有豆腐、盐、糖、油。

老:好,现在把豆腐切成方块,把豆腐放在锅里煮。

B:好的,现在 ······

B:今天的晚饭是我最喜欢的晚饭!

SG4

- M:好久不见了。啊! 我很饿!
- Y:今天我教你做一个简单的菜。
- M: 先选一个简单的菜!
- Y:麻婆豆腐怎么样?
- M:不要,因为是我不喜欢吃麻婆豆腐。
- Y:那么,我们做拉面怎么样?
- M:好。把锅和作料拿过来。
- Y:好,你把这个萝卜切成方块。
- M:这个作料是我妈妈继承给我的。别的人不知道。它和别的拉面不一样,所以,我们不要买面,要做面。
 - Y:那么,我们现在做拉面吧。你把碗拿来。
 - M:好吧!