



Applying the stroke extraction method in learning Chinese characters for Vietnamese students

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ABSTRACT :

This article focuses on applying the stroke extraction method to Vietnamese students' learning of Chinese. The stroke extraction method is a scientific basis that has been experimented and researched; however, in learning Chinese characters, Vietnamese students have yet to be popularized or have not had the opportunity to apply this method widely. This article will focus on providing general scientific information about the feature extraction method and proposing the application of this method in improving the quality of Chinese learning for Vietnamese students. This article uses survey and document collection methods to conclude the practical applicability of the word extraction method in learning Chinese for Vietnamese students.

Keywords: the stroke extraction method, learning Chinese, learning Chinese for Vietnamese students

Introduction :

According to UNESCO's assessment of complex languages to learn, Chinese is considered the world's most difficult language. Although this language is gradually becoming popular and necessary, many Vietnamese students have diffused, especially with memorization. Many students use many methods to remember Chinese characters, but their effectiveness must still be high.

To solve students' difficulties when learning Chinese, we need a method that focuses on the meaning of Chinese characters. The stroke extraction method can help us solve this problem. This is a method of analyzing Chinese characters' shapes and words' sounds and meanings. China has long valued this method in teaching Chinese characters to international students. The word extraction method has achieved specific research results, has been confirmed in its effectiveness for learners, and is applied in China. We can mention some research works by Wang Ning (王宁) (Hanzi et al., "汉字构形学," 2015), Jin Wen Wei (金文伟), Ceng Hong Wen Li (曾红温莉) (Hanzi et al., "汉字教学常用字形义解析," 2012). For research articles on applying the extraction method in teaching in Vietnam, we can mention the article by Phan Dang ("Some thoughts about teaching Han Nom," 2004), Le Quang Sang ("Comments on the scientific basis for applying the stroke extraction method in current teaching Chinese character," 2018).

Purpose of Research :

Realizing that Vietnamese students learn Chinese characters with an ineffective method, making learning Chinese characters difficult, researching this method helps students find a new, better, and more effective method of learning Chinese characters. At the same time, it helps students clearly understand Chinese characters and Chinese culture. With a broader meaning, the research proposes an effective teaching method, improving the inadequacies in teaching and learning Chinese in Vietnam today.

Research questions and hypotheses :

Research questions:

- What is the stroke extraction method?
- What are the popular methods of learning Chinese characters among Vietnamese students?
- What are the popular methods of learning Chinese characters among Vietnamese students?

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Hypotheses:

- The stroke extraction method is used to identify the components of Chinese characters by examining the structural components. By identifying the components of Chinese characters, learners grasp the structure of Chinese characters and understand their meaning in detail.
- Vietnamese students are often exposed to traditional methods of learning Chinese characters, such as writing over and over, writing Chinese characters, and making sentences containing the Chinese characters to be learned...
- Vietnamese students often struggle to remember and write Chinese characters while learning Chinese characters.

Research methods :

The article used some basic methods as follows:

- Analysis - synthesis method to analyze information about the stroke extraction method, then synthesize them to have an overview of this method;
- Survey method to survey the level of understanding of Chinese students about the stroke extraction method;
- Evaluation method to evaluate the method's effectiveness in teaching and learning, thereby proposing applying the stroke extraction method in teaching and learning.

Overview :***The origin of the stroke extraction method***

Chinese dynasties have paid attention to the study and analysis of Chinese characters since ancient times. The Zhou, Qin, and Han dynasties had books such as Fang Yan ("方言"), Shi Zhou Pian ("史籀篇")... These books laid the foundation for the birth of Shuo Wen Jie Zi ("说文解字"). The stroke extraction method originates from the book Shuo Wen Jie Zi ("说文解字") written by Xu Shen (许慎), a scholar and philosopher of the Eastern Han Dynasty. This is considered the first dictionary in China and even the world. The book established a system of theories related to Chinese characters, which substantially impacted later generations [1]. This is also the first work in Chinese history to analyze Chinese characters systematically. Later, later generations of research on stroke extraction methods, such as Shuo Wen Jie Zi Xi Chuan ("说文解字系传"), Shuo Wen Xiao Yi ("说文校议"), Shuo Wen Jie Zi Jiao Quan ("说文解字斟诠").. are based on this book [2]. To this day, we still do not have a specific definition in China of the extraction method, but the book Shuo Wen Jie Zi ("说文解字") refers to this method.

In the "Vietnamese Dictionary" edited by Hoang Phe (2009, p.216), it is written: "Stroke extraction analyzes characters (talking about Chinese characters) into each element to predict good and bad events according to an ancient divination technique. Based on the meanings of the constituent elements, determine the meaning of the whole word or word" [3]. The second sentence in the definition of the "Vietnamese Dictionary" mentioned how Xu Shen (许慎) analyzed Chinese characters in the book Shuo Wen Jie Zi ("说文解字"). He analyzed it based on image, sound, and meaning. This method has been widely applied at different levels in Chinese teaching [4].

The popularity of the stroke extraction method

The stroke extraction method analyzes the original meaning of Chinese characters, then deduces the expanded meaning and solves problems related to the meaning of words. The method focuses on the relationship between sounds and forms of words to derive meaning. Regarding teaching, the stroke extraction method helps learners learn Chinese characters more easily, remember them more efficiently, and remember them longer.

China has long valued this method and applied the stroke extraction method to elementary school students in this country. In writing "Wenzhong shuo shijie zi li jie qian kun" (文中说世界 字里解乾坤) posted on Zhongguo Jiaoshi Bao (中国教师报) mentioned the application of the stroke extraction method in the Chinese curriculum. In the educational program of Xushen Primary School, Yuanhui County, Henan Province, China, teaching Chinese characters using the stroke extraction method has become a highlight. For students to recognize Chinese characters from the abstract to the concrete, the school has focused on teaching primary characters that are difficult to remember and easy to mistake so that students can establish a system for themselves, develop an awareness of Chinese characters, gain a deeper understanding of the Chinese language, and use these characters accurately and standardly. The school also offers a curriculum based on this method for six grades; the program's focus between these grades is different: In grade one, the school exposes students to the origins of Chinese characters and shows students hieroglyphs in astronomy, geography, people, etc. In second grade, the school will let students master some primary characters. Students will be presented with fun ways to create a character by third grade. Fourth graders will learn about characters with exciting morphology. Fifth-grade students will be introduced to ancient characters. By sixth grade, students will continue to learn special characters. Not only that, the school also integrates extracurricular activities so that students can better understand culture and Chinese characters. Students at this school have significantly improved their language literacy and cultural acquisition by teaching using the stroke extraction method [5].

On the website Baidu Xueshu ("百度学术"), there are currently many research articles (on applying the method of character extraction to elementary and middle school students in China. A typical example is the article Qian xi shuo wen jie zi zai xiaoxue di nianji jiaoxue zhong de yingyong ("浅析说文解字在小学低年级教学中的应用") by Zhang De Mei (张德美) posted at Zhangqiao Scientific Research. The article analyzed the benefits

of the word extraction method and confirmed the effectiveness of applying this method [6]. Western countries currently have articles analyzing the achievements of this method, including the article "The Shuowen Jiezi Dictionary and the Human Sciences in China" by Françoise Bottéro and Christoph Harbsmeier [7]. However, no specific research has been conducted on applying the extraction method to education.

Level of interest in learning Chinese characters

Based on Google Trends data, a public web service from Google that helps users compare search results, the authors used the keyword "learn Chinese" for three years, from 2020 - 2023, to identify the demand to learn Chinese. The numbers below the data table represent the search interest level compared to the chart's highest point in a certain period and area. One hundred points represent the highest popularity of that phrase. Fifty points means that the semester is worth only half the overall score. 0 points means there is not enough data for this term.

Specifically, in 2020, interest in learning Chinese generally had a stable growth rate, with the lowest being 44 points from January 19-25 and the highest being 100 points from April 5-11. (Table 1)

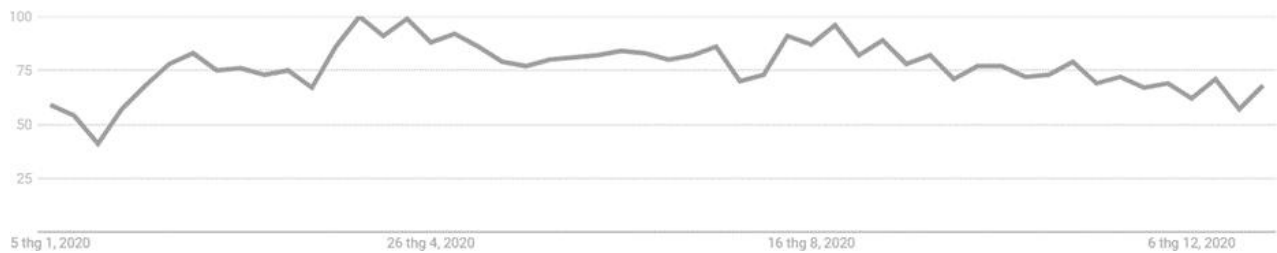


Table 1. Demand for learning Chinese in 2020

During 2021, interest in learning Chinese continued to increase, peaking in two periods of 100 points from February 28 to March 26, July 4 to July 10, and July 25 to July 31. The lowest point reached 39 points from February 7 to February 13, then maintained a stable growth of around 75 points. (Table 2)



Table 2. Demand for learning Chinese in 2021

In 2022, the level of interest in learning Chinese remains stable at 75 points, reaching 100 points once from July 3-9 and then decreasing slightly. (Table 3)



Table 3. Demand for learning Chinese in 2022

In 2023, the level of interest in learning Chinese remained stable at 75 points, reaching 100 points once from June 25 to July 1, then decreasing slightly and gradually increasing from the end of 2023. (Table 4)

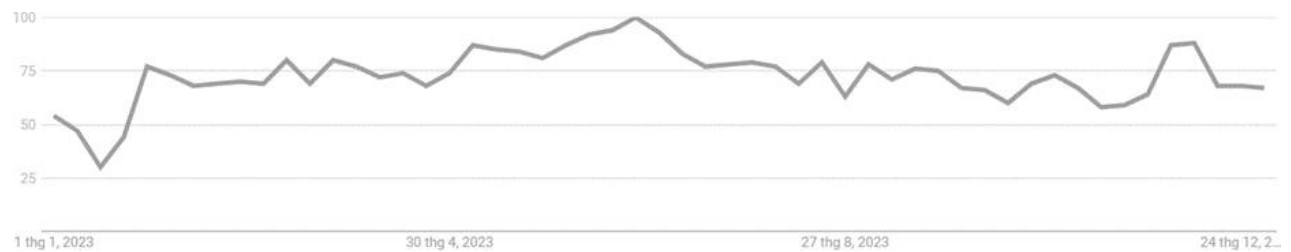


Table 4. Demand for learning Chinese in 2023

The survey data shows that the level of interest in learning Chinese characters is increasing. It is predicted to continue to increase enormously and become popular in the coming years. Therefore, for learning Chinese characters to be scientific and practical, using appropriate methods is a mandatory and prerequisite condition.

Methods of learning Chinese characters of Vietnamese students

To determine the popular methods of learning Chinese characters among Vietnamese students, the authors used the results of 300 Vietnamese students as a database and, through Google Forms, investigated the current status of methods of learning Chinese characters. The authors synthesize the results from analyzing survey data and make inferences and initiatives.

Survey results show that, out of 300 students participating in the survey. There are 12.5% of students at the beginner level of Chinese, 54. 2% at the intermediate level of Chinese, and 33% at the advanced level of Chinese. (Table 5)

Your current level of Chinese:

300 responses

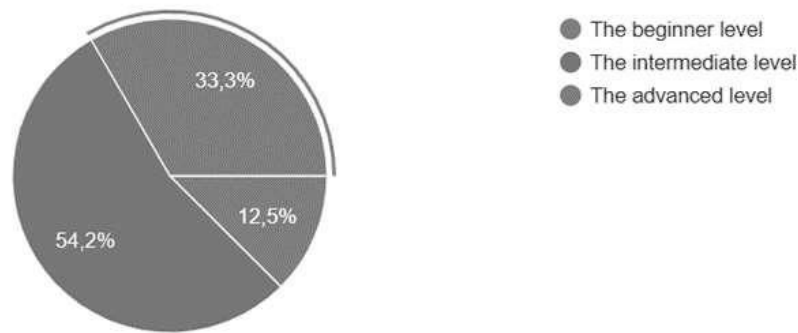


Table 5. Chinese level of Vietnamese students

When surveying Vietnamese students' difficulties in learning Chinese characters, 54.2% of students could not remember Chinese characters, 33% thought that the total number of Chinese characters was too large, 8.3% could not remember the Chinese stroke order, and the remaining 4.2% encountered the above difficulties. (Table 6)

The difficulties of learning Chinese characters:

300 responses

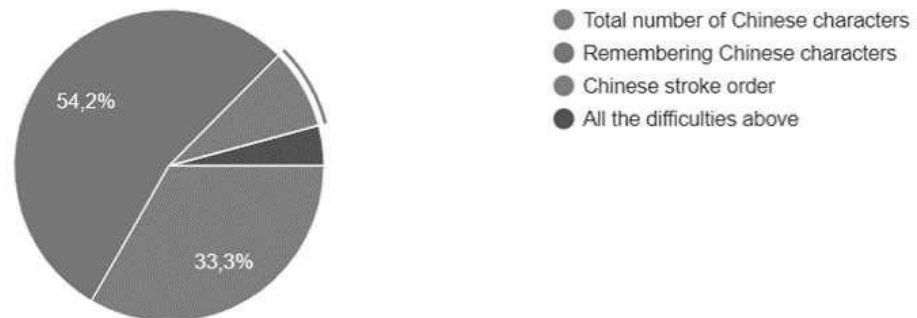


Table 6. The difficulties of learning Chinese characters

Based on the results of the methods of learning Chinese characters that Vietnamese students are using, up to 91.7% use the method of looking and copying, 62.5% learn Chinese characters through movies, books, and newspapers, 29.2% learn Chinese radicals, 16.7% learn with Chinese flashcards, 3.5% learn with the stroke extraction method. (Table 7)

Table 7. Methods of learning Chinese characters

Question: <i>What methods of learning Chinese characters do you often use?</i>		
Total	Methods	Results
300 responses	Looking and copying	91.7%
	Movies, books, and newspapers	62.5%
	The Chinese radicals	29.2%
	Chinese flashcards	16.7%
	Stroke extraction	3.5%

Surveying Vietnamese students' methods of learning Chinese characters partly reflects the essential information that students are using and

the problems they are encountering. This shows the need to change to a new, scientifically based learning method to help solve difficulties and improve learners' quality.

Recommendation :

The method of stroke extraction arises based on awareness of the shape of Chinese characters, how to combine radicals, and how to arrange sets and parts of characters. In some ways, the method of stroke extraction is a flexible and creative application of Chinese character analysis. Moreover, it does not just stop at pure Chinese character analysis; it moves into literature and engaging and exciting intellectual games.

If the method of stroke extraction is applied in learning Chinese characters, it also helps students practice the virtue of being careful. When writing Chinese characters, they should not have protruding, indented, missing, or extra strokes. Students can start learning how to extract characters from primary Chinese characters with the following examples:

Example 1:

When extracting the character "good" (好), we see that the character "good" (好) has two radicals: radical women (女) and radical son (子). In particular, Radical Women (女) is about girls and women, and Radical Son (子) is about boys and children. According to ancient Chinese beliefs, a woman giving birth to a child is a good thing, so this word has many excellent and beautiful meanings, such as sound, delicious, and beautiful.

Example 2:

The character "man" (男) is a combination of the radical field (田), and below is the radical strength (力). The radical field (田) means a field, and the radical strength (力) represents a man using his strength to work. The implication is that ancient Chinese men who went to work in the fields would have to use their physical strength to work.

Example 3:

Five radicals form the character "virtue" (德). The radical step (彳) means slow, gradual, leisurely, long steps. The chain in the word virtue can be understood as wanting to practice "virtue" or any quality; it takes time to practice, and it must be accumulated little by little, not achieved in one step. The radical ten (十) means ten, implying many, complete, ten perfect, ten beautiful, ten parts, and ten, also implying four directions and eight directions. That means that no matter where people are, they must always use virtue to treat others. The cross appears in the character "virtue" (德) with the meaning that no matter where, in any direction, we need to use morality and virtue to treat others. The radical eyes (目) mean eyes, eyes (目) are horizontal, meaning that a virtuous person is someone with sharp eyes, able to distinguish between right and wrong, true and false. The character one (一) means one, one (一) means whole, whole, whole, meaning that a virtuous person takes significant matters seriously, does not seek personal gain, rules all things as one, and has one heart. one mind, no mind, no distracting thoughts, no entanglements. The radical heart (心) means mind, and heart (心) refers to the inner self. If you want to cultivate virtue, you need to rely on cultivating the inner mind. The heart is inside; it is sincere and loyal. The radical heart (心) is the bottom part of the character "virtue" (德), which means "virtue" (德), which means that deep down in the heart, there is no self-interest or self-interest. A person who wants to cultivate morality must cultivate it internally.

Example 4:

The character "emotion" (情) includes the radical heart (忄) and the radical blue (青). Expressing the noble and pure heart of a person standing in the vast sky is too lovey-dovey and poetic. In ancient times, wherever the moon was clear and the wind was calm, people's hearts would rise; the emotional environment created beautiful poems and songs.

Example 5:

The character "happiness" (福) extract includes: On the left is the radical altar (礻), which means worship and wishes. In this character, "happiness" (福), the meaning is people's wishes and desires, dreaming of something substantial. To the right of the character "happiness" (福) in Chinese are three sets of radicals. At the top is the radical roof (宀), which refers to a roof. This means wishing for a prosperous, happy life, having a roof to live in, and settling down. Below is the radical mouth (口), which refers to your personality, your mouth. This set has meaning; in the house, the members' chatting and laughing are happiness. Warmth and joy also come from communication and conversation. At the bottom is the radical field (田), which refers to land and fields. Not only do people need to have a house, but they also need to have fields to cultivate and create wealth to improve their quality of life and become rich. Thus, the character "happiness" (福) in Chinese includes three radicals of characters that express human wishes. These desires are essential, not extravagant. Therefore, the character "happiness" (福) is considered the source of all happiness and luck in the world.

Conclusion :

This article analyzed the history and origin of the word extraction method and then pointed out how widespread this method is in some countries. This article investigated students' learning of Chinese using this method and the effectiveness of learning by that method. To improve the quality of teaching and learning Chinese, we need a more effective method to help students correctly perceive Chinese characters. We proposed teaching Chinese using the stroke extraction method during the research and survey process. In teaching this method, teachers need to dig deeper into Chinese characters, focusing on the relationship between the three aspects of shape, sound, and meaning in Chinese characters. In addition, teachers need to incorporate Chinese characters into certain situations and organize activities to increase understanding of Chinese culture. From there, students can better memorize Chinese characters and gradually develop the ability to analyze Chinese characters, thereby being able to synthesize and be creative in learning Chinese

characters, achieving efficiency and effectiveness goals in education.

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