

“BA” Grammar Teaching to the Elementary Level Foreign Students in the Mixed Chinese-level Class

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ABSTRACT. The “BA” sentence is a special sentence pattern in Chinese and a key research topic in Chinese teaching circles both at home and abroad. Most international students find it difficult to learn and use the structure of “BA”. Based on the characteristics of the Chinese language and the nature of teaching Chinese as a second language, this paper combines theoretical grammar and teaching grammar, and tries to find effective strategy for teaching “BA” sentences from three levels. I also hope that this research can effectively improve quality of teaching Chinese as a second language and edit of teaching materials.

KEYWORDS: “ba” sentences; Three levels; Teaching chinese as a second language; Elementary foreign students

1. Introduction

“BA” is a special verb-predicate structure in Chinese, and it is also one of the language forms commonly used by Chinese in daily communication. It has become a key research topic in Chinese teaching circles both at home and abroad. In the languages of other countries, the language form of “BA” does not correspond to it. It has become a prominent difficulty in teaching Chinese as a foreign language, but it is also a very important and frequently used grammar point in Chinese. It is of great value to pay attention to and strengthen its research.

2. Summary of the Research on “Ba”

2.1 Ontological Study of “Ba” Sentence Grammar

The study of the “BA” sentence began with Mr. Li Jinxi's *New Chinese Grammar* (1924). He pioneered the “Pre Object” theory and has 80 years of research history. During this period, there were a lot of researches and discussions on various angles, which became the most concerned sentence pattern.

The early Chinese researchers were influenced by the perspective of structuralist language, and studied more from the perspective of language structure. The research results reveal the restrictive factors in the use of the “BA” sentence, such as the predicate of the “BA” sentence cannot be a verbal component expressing the meanings of psychology, feeling, existence, possession, etc. (Wang Li 1943) [1] It is a simple form (Lv Shuxiang 1948) [2]. These research results have now been written into our language textbooks and become the basic theory of our teaching.

Later, many scholars put forward some new ideas from different angles and different sides. The more representative are: Zhang Wangxi put forward in the article *Semantics and Pragmatic Analysis of the Structure of “BA” Sentences* that the sentence forms of the “BA” structure are summarized into four forms through corpus analysis. In the category of meaning, when people emphasize this kind of causality, they use the word structure.[3] Yang Suying (1998) studied the “BA” sentence from the perspective of the situation type, and held that “BA” sentence represents that something, someone, or something has undergone a complete process of change, or an event that has ended.[4] Fan Xiao (2001) divided the sentence semantics of “BA” into two types: disposition and causation, and the word “BA” in the disposition of “BA” cannot be replaced by “Shi”, which means “cause”, while the word “BA” can be replaced by “Shi”. [5] Studies in the grammar field focus on grasping the “BA” sentence from the general cognitive law of human beings, which has a great inspiration for our “BA” sentence teaching.

2.2 The Teaching of “Ba” Sentences in the Teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language

Compared with the ontological research, there are few researches on the “BA” sentence in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. There are several main points of view: Zhang Ning and Liu Mingchen (1994) analyzed the problems existing in the teaching of “BA” from three aspects, namely, teaching method and function, and put forward suggestions for teaching students by stages.[6] Xiong Wenxin (1996) used statistical methods to investigate the influence of mother tongue background, level, character, gender and other factors on the learning of the “BA” structure for foreign students, so as to provide targeted teaching of the “BA” structure.[7] Lu Qinghe (2003) thought that the teaching of “BA” sentence should start from the following aspects: teaching sequence, arrangement of teaching materials, spiral recurrence and layered practice design, so as to systematize the teaching of this sentence pattern and make it more scientific.[8]

3. Questions Raised in the Teaching of “Ba”

Grammar scholars have some limitations on the study of “BA”. Especially with the development of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, the existing research results of “BA” sentences can no longer meet the needs of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. The development of teaching has brought new tasks and topics to the study of “BA” sentences.

The “BA” sentence itself has many restrictions. In the early days, most of the teaching emphasis and research angles focused on the grammatical structure, which was difficult for beginners to understand and apply. In terms of teaching methods, they often focus on single-sentence teaching, lack of understanding of the semantic features and use environment of the “BA” sentence, and they are confused and ambiguous. Some international students often avoid using the “BA” sentence when they communicate in Chinese. Various errors often occur even when used occasionally.

From this point of view, students should first understand why they use the “BA” sentence and the meaning of the “BA” sentence, and then tell them how to do it, in order to teach foreign students to use the “BA” sentence to improve teaching effectiveness. The effective combination of the three planes of form, semantics and pragmatics is a more feasible path and an important subject in the field of teaching and researching Chinese as a foreign language.

4. Application of Three Levels Views of “Ba” in Teaching

4.1 Classification of “Ba”

There are usually two forms of “BA” sentences. General “BA” sentences can be converted into ordinary verb predicate sentences, but special “BA” sentences cannot be converted. For this reason, the word “BA” is divided into three categories: “non-convertible”, “conditional conversion” and “free conversion”. It is only briefly introduced here, and will not be repeated here, which are as follows:

(1) The non-convertible type refers to the sentence structure that must use the “BA” structure. The form is fixed and cannot be converted into the active object type. Example: I gave the homework to the teacher.

(2) Conditional transitions refer to those that can be used in a certain context without the “BA” structure. The word “BA” can generally be converted into an active object. Example: Lu Fang ate up the watermelon.

(3) Free conversion is a sentence that can be converted without being restricted by conditions.

4.2 Types and Sequences of Teaching “Ba” Sentences to Foreign Students

The word “BA” is a special sentence pattern in Chinese, with complicated types and usages. It is impossible for foreign students to master all their usages in a short period of time. Therefore, what is taught first and what is taught later is particularly important.

According to the corpus statistics and the *Outline of Chinese Proficiency Standards and Grammar Levels*, the sentence patterns of “BA” and its general ordering should be selected for reference at the primary stage of teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

Sentence 1 S + put + N1 + V + from / to / to / direction + N2

I put the book on the table.

Sentence 2 S + Ba + N + V + Trend complement

He took off his clothes.

Sentence 3 S + basic + N + V + result complement

Mom cleaned the room very clean.

The three kinds of sentence patterns are the basic patterns of “BA” and must use “BA” sentences. They are used more frequently and should be contacted firstly in teaching to meet the basic communication needs of beginners.

4.3 The Specific Teaching Method of “Ba”

According to the perspective of cognitive theory, students begin the initial stage of learning a foreign language. It is advisable to introduce one or two grammar points in a class. As a “BA” sentence for students, they should not be too condensed at first, so as not to cause “confusion”.

In the teaching of “BA” sentences grammar, we adhere to the principle of intensive teaching and practice, and incorporate the teaching principles of “structure, situation, and function” into the exercises, and use the knowledge learned in certain situations to automatically generate reasonable and reasonable sentences.

The practice design of the “BA” sentence has various forms and follows the sequence of exercises proposed by American linguist Bolston, including mechanical exercises, meaningful exercises, and communicative exercises.

While, the representative exercises are as follows:

(1) To form “BA” sentences with the given words, and let students form sentences according to the syntactic structure.

(2) To complete the “BA” sentence to complete the sentence, including choosing words to fill in the blanks, using specified words to complete the sentence and several other exercises.

(3) Scene exercises. By giving a simple context, students can use the corresponding “BA” sentence accordingly. This form can more comprehensively investigate the grasp of “BA” sentences by foreign students.

(4) Game format, and group cooperation. The method of entertaining is more popular. Teachers of Chinese as a second language should also dare to break the traditional teaching mode of “BA” sentences in existing teaching materials, and boldly apply research results that are more in line with teaching laws to teaching practice.

5. Conclusion

The ultimate goal of teaching Chinese as a second language is to improve students' Chinese communicative competence through various teaching activities, so that their interlanguages gradually move closer to standardized Chinese, and finally to master standardized Chinese. The teaching of “BA” requires us that teachers of Chinese as a second language should not only pay attention to the latest research results of their grammar, but also pay attention to the ontological theory, especially the knowledge accumulation and research level of the ontological theory of teaching Chinese as second language. For the foreign students in mixed Chinese-level classes, we should pay attention to studying the different mother tongue backgrounds of students to find out the major differences between their mother tongue and Chinese. Only by applying the right medicine in teaching can we get more results with less effort.

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