# MODERN VECTORS OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA AND UKRAINE

中国与乌克兰科学及教育前沿研究

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学生汉语学习动机激发策略，努力促进该班学生外在的汉语学习动机内化，让学生从该学、能学逐渐走向好学、乐学。

**关键词**：*海外汉语学习者，汉语翻译专业，学习动机，激励*

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# PROBLEMS AND COUNTERMEASURES FOR ONLINE CHINESE CHARACTER TEACHING AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF HUMANITIES IN UKRAINE

*Abstract: This paper analyses the teaching of Online Chinese characters Ukraine, and the writer found two problems of Online Chinese characters of the National Humanities University. According to the problem and put forward four countermeasures of online Chinese characters: strengthen the analysis of homophones and shapes, improve the sound-speaking utilization, to maintain a tolerance to the Chinese characters, strengthen the Chinese character consciousness, attach importance to Pinyin teaching and use the real corpus to improve online Chinese characters.*

***Keywords****: Ukraine; Online Chinese characters teaching; problems and countermeasures*

## 1. Introduction

Chinese President Xi Jinping has repeatedly pointed out that "the world is experiencing unprecedented changes in a century." In early 2020, the outbreak of the

COVID-19 pandemic changed the way people live, work, and learn. Three years have passed since the outbreak, and people's understanding of the pandemic has gradually deepened. On December 26, 2022, the National Health Commission of China issued a notice renaming the disease caused by the novel coronavirus as "novel coronavirus infection." On January 30, 2023, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, stated that "COVID-19 is still a major global health threat, and it is not yet the time to declare an end to this pandemic". On February 24, 2022, the Russia-Ukraine conflict broke out, and on February 28, all Chinese personnel from five Confucius Institutes in Ukraine were safely evacuated and are still conducting online teaching.

The pandemic and war have forced schools in Ukraine to switch to persistent online learning. For teachers, this has changed the teaching mode, content, methods, and management of classroom teaching. For students, it has affected their learning style, motivation, and language acquisition.

Teaching Chinese characters has always been regarded as the "biggest challenge" in Chinese international education. Many Ukrainian students, especially those at the elementary level, are intimidated by Chinese characters. Mr. Lv Bisong pointed out: "Teaching Chinese characters is the 'key' to teaching Chinese. As long as we firmly grasp this 'key,' the quality and efficiency of teaching Chinese as a foreign language can be significantly improved."

Chinese characters are ideographic characters, different from the Cyrillic alphabet used in Ukrainian. Chinese characters not only represent the sound and meaning in the oral language system but also represent the form and meaning in the written language system. Due to the impact of the pandemic and war, online classrooms have also changed the way Chinese characters are taught and written. Professor Chu Chengzhi once mentioned in his lecture: "In the post-pandemic era, Chinese character teaching is experiencing a change in the era of screen writing, and the advent of the era of screen writing brings revolutionary opportunities and conditions for solving the 'biggest challenge' in international Chinese teaching. Therefore, this article will analyze the situation of online Chinese character teaching at the Ukrainian National University of

Humanities and propose corresponding solutions to improve the skills of online Chinese character teaching."

## 2. Online Chinese Character Teaching Situation at the National University of Humanities

Since September 2021, the author has been teaching Chinese at the National University of Humanities in Ukraine. The classes began as offline courses, but in mid-October, due to the pandemic, the Ukrainian Education Bureau announced a switch to online teaching. In February 2022, the spring semester began as offline classes, but due to the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on February 24th, the classes had to be switched back to online teaching.

Chinese language courses are mandatory for Chinese language students at the National University of Humanities, with a total of six classes, including two classes for juniors and seniors, respectively. There are 100 Chinese language students in total: 18 freshmen, 23 sophomores, 20 students in the junior 1ˢᵗ class, 12 students in the junior 2ⁿᵈ class, 12 students in the senior 1ˢᵗ class, and 15 students in the senior 2ⁿᵈ class.

The course content for the freshmen mainly focuses on oral speaking and calligraphy; the course content for sophomores includes oral speaking and comprehensive studies, while the course content for juniors and seniors includes studies on Chinese national conditions and comprehensive studies. The main textbook used is "HSK Standard Course", supplemented by "Road to Success-Starting Level", "International Chinese Teachers' Handbook of Chinese Character Teaching" and "International Chinese Teachers' Handbook of Pronunciation Teaching". However, regardless of the course type, Chinese characters are closely related. For example, in oral speaking courses, Chinese characters are the bridge of communication when oral communication is transformed into typing communication.

The author mainly teaches Chinese courses for freshmen and sophomores in humanities colleges. The freshmen just entered in the fall semester of 2022, with 160 class hours per semester. Due to the zero-based level, the teaching department of the humanities college arranged for the author and another local Chinese teacher from

Ukraine to cross-teach. For example, the author teaches online on Mondays and Tuesdays, and the Ukrainian teacher reviews on Thursdays and Fridays. "Parallel Learning" and "Separate Learning" are two teaching modes for Chinese character teaching, which are one of the focuses of Chinese character teaching research. The "Parallel Learning" teaching mode draws on the experience of foreign language teaching and is widely used in domestic teaching by teaching characters along with texts. However, it does not fit non-target language environments. Therefore, since Lü Bixiong (2003), many scholars have explored the "Separate Learning" mode. The author also advocates the "Separate Learning" method for teaching Chinese characters in online classes at the Humanities college. After learning the basic phonetics, students will enter characters learning. The Chinese textbook used within the freshman year is "The Path to Success-Introduction", and stroke order and stroke teaching are also incorporated throughout. At first, after each lesson's vocabulary was learned, the author would download a Chinese character grid PDF and send it to the group, requiring students to complete the homework according to the stroke order. However, few students actually completed the homework. Their understanding of the structure of Chinese characters was not profound, and it took a certain amount of time to review characters in class, severely slowing down the teaching progress. The inappropriate teaching arrangement often put the author in a passive position, resulting in the unsatisfactory teaching effect of Chinese character teaching and seriously affecting teaching progress. Therefore, after a semester, some students still rely on pinyin as a crutch. For example, in a reading comprehension test at the final exam, the accuracy rate of the first question was 66.67%, the second was 64.29%, the third was 66.67%, the fourth was 73.33%, and the fifth was 100%. It is clear that without understanding Chinese characters, students cannot extract the correct information.

I started teaching sophomore students in September 2021 and have taught for three semesters. Unlike the situation in the freshman year, sophomore students have shown a strong interest in learning Chinese and have actively completed their Chinese character writing assignments. When I asked them to write new words for five times, some students filled an entire page. Most of them can master the stroke order of

Chinese characters and have a clear understanding of the structure of Chinese characters, except for some homophonic characters, such as "年" and "午", "末" and "未", "令" and "今", which may cause recognition and reading errors. However, they have basically no problem with the recognition and writing of Chinese characters they have learned.

## 3. Problems with online Chinese character teaching at National Humanities University

Chinese character teaching includes two aspects: recognition and writing. However, the online classroom has changed the way Chinese characters are written. Therefore, I summarize and conclude the following aspects from the perspective of cognition and digital writing:

（1）Cognition:

Firstly, students easily confuse homophonic characters. In the final exam of the freshman year, two students mistook "哪里" for "那里", one mistook "九月" for "几月", and in the final exam of the sophomore year, five students mistook "迭帽衫" for "连帽衫" and so on. Secondly, students have a weak awareness of the structure of Chinese characters.

In the second question of the final exam of the sophomore year, students were required to write characters with given radicals and combine them into words. Two students wrote "礻-礼-礼物", one wrote "礻-衬-衬衫", one wrote "礻-视-电视", one wrote "羊-胖-怎么胖", and one mistook "羊" for "半". Similar problems also appeared in the final exam of the freshman year, but at that exam, the students were asked a second question to categorize characters with the same radical. One student wrote "日: 作、明", one wrote "讠-祝-礼", one wrote "讠-说-? (couldn't identify '谢')", one wrote "亻-你-? (couldn't distinguish '做')", one wrote "礻-祝-? (didn't write '礼')", and one wrote "礻-谢-说". It is clear that students may confuse the radicals "衤", "礻", and "讠", so we should strengthen the comparison of similar components.

Lastly, in the age of digital writing, most Chinese characters are written in standard script, and students may have difficulty recognizing some handwritten characters in real language materials. For example, when studying Lesson 4 of "HSK Standard Course 3" - "She Always Talks To Customers With A Smile," the teacher supplemented some real language materials about fruits in class. The handwritten characters in the photos are descriptions of fruit prices, origins, tastes, etc. Some characters are written too quickly or are alternative forms, making it difficult for students to recognize them.

（2）Digital writing:

Firstly, homophones are difficult to distinguish. In a final exam for first-year students, in a test of writing Chinese characters based on their pinyin, one student entered "公座" instead of "工作" and another entered "韩语" instead of "汉语". In a fill-in-the-blank question for selecting a classifier, one student entered "涨" instead of the correct classifier, and in another question for selecting a classifier, one student entered "支" instead of the correct classifier. In a question that required students to answer based on a picture, two students wrote "有机" instead of "邮局" and one student wrote "是点" instead of "十点". In a final exam for second-year students, one student wrote "出驻车" instead of "出租车" and two students wrote "需" instead of "雪". Students also frequently make mistakes when writing their Chinese names. For example, one student whose name is "云歌" accidentally entered "云哥" during class, causing everyone to laugh.

The second issue is related to the input of the character "ü". In a question from the final exam for the first-year students, "_____?我们班有 14 个女生", three students wrote "奴(nú)生" instead of "女(nǔ)生", two students wrote "nu 生", and one student wrote "nusheng" directly.

Finally, the teaching method for character stroke order is limited by the mode of electronic writing. Especially when facing students with zero foundation, the stroke order of Chinese characters is particularly important. When demonstrating how to write Chinese characters to students, the author has tried to use a "pen" for chalk writing on

presentation slides and zoom whiteboards, and then let students write together using a mouse. However, writing with a mouse is not easy to control and it is difficult to achieve the effect of handwriting. Therefore, the main teaching method is to rely on animated Chinese character strokes. However, from the perspective of students' homework after class, the teaching effect of relying solely on images to show Chinese character strokes is limited, and some students still make writing errors in their homework. For example, some students may write the left part of the character "那" as "月".

## 4. Countermeasures for Online Chinese Character Teaching at the National University of Humanities

Teachers are to strengthen the discrimination between homophonic and homographic characters, and improve the utilization of phonetic-semantic characters. After explaining the new words of each lesson, the teacher should explain and practice the homophonic and homographic characters that have been confused in this lesson, and let students type these words on the computer in class. At the beginner stage of teaching, most Chinese characters are "semantic-phonetic compounds", where the semantic part and the phonetic part combine to form the majority of Chinese characters, that is, the so-called "phonetic-semantic characters", such as "left for form, right for sound" and "top for form, bottom for sound". When teaching Chinese characters, emphasizing the "meaning" to infer the "pronunciation" can better facilitate learning. Meanwhile, it is important to focus on the students' Chinese character learning in teaching activities.

Regarding the teaching of stroke order, a tolerant attitude should be maintained, and the awareness of the structure of Chinese characters should be strengthened. Professor Wang Hanwei once conducted a small test on 58 postgraduate students, with 30 Chinese characters in total. The full score was 30 points, and the average score was 20.5 points, indicating the complexity of the stroke order of Chinese characters. Professor Wang believes that for personal writing, stroke order rules are "in fact" not binding rules. Almost no one can strictly follow the stroke order rules, and everyone has their own personal habits. Professors Wang Hanwei, Li Quan, and Chu Chengzhi

have mentioned in their lectures several times that a tolerant attitude should be adopted for teaching Chinese characters to foreigners. Jiang Xin and Xu Jing (2022) studied the relationship between stroke order accuracy and writing speed of Chinese characters among Chinese as a second language learners. The results showed that there is a positive correlation between stroke order accuracy and Chinese character writing speed, that is, the higher the stroke order accuracy, the faster the Chinese character writing speed. However, the relationship between the two varies with the level of Chinese character proficiency: for beginner learners, the two are not related; for advanced learners, the two are significantly related. Therefore, the author believes that stroke order awareness should be established in Chinese character teaching, and the correct writing of basic strokes should be emphasized. It is not recommended to count strokes, indicate which stroke is which, or copy by breaking down each stroke. Instead, the whole character should be copied according to the stroke order, and the awareness of Chinese character structure should be strengthened. Professor Chu Chengzhi mentioned in his lecture that the re-summarization of stroke order rules for Chinese characters is to write two steps from the upper left to the lower right, and to write according to components and strokes at two levels. For a regular character, write each component stroke by stroke. The author subsequently reflected on this in first-year Chinese character teaching, and summarized the structure of Chinese characters in each lesson. In terms of structure, Chinese characters are three-dimensional, and roughly divided into left-right structure, top-bottom structure, left-right-top-bottom structure, surrounding structure, and so on. This characteristic requires us to fully cultivate students' awareness of Chinese character structure in the teaching process and form their understanding of square characters. During the teaching process, we can first classify Chinese characters based on their structural characteristics and summarize the Chinese character structure for each lesson's new vocabulary to gradually develop students' awareness of Chinese character structure.

Value the teaching of Pinyin. In today's era of electronic writing, the status and function of pinyin have greatly increased, while the opportunities for writing Chinese characters have greatly decreased. Inputting pinyin letters and selecting and extracting

Chinese characters and vocabulary have become a new "writing method" and a way of information exchange. Therefore, typing instruction should become an important part of Chinese character instruction. Professor Li Quan mentioned in his lecture that "in Chinese character teaching, while limiting handwriting instruction, students should also be taught typing, inputting pinyin, recognizing and selecting words. In the process of recognition, review and correction of relevant word pronunciation and tones, expanding knowledge of relevant Chinese character structures and combination rules and abilities. For example, inputting 'dazi' will result in '打字、大字、达子、大紫…', with pronunciations of dǎ zì, dà zì, dá zǐ, dà zǐ… and meanings of…". Especially regarding the input problem of "ü", it should be taught to students in the process of pinyin teaching and is the letter "v" on the keyboard. Therefore, the teaching of pinyin should be valued in the era of digital writing, and students should download simplified pinyin input methods before class; during class, teachers should demonstrate how to input Chinese characters using pinyin, and students should share screens to show it. Then, the teacher inputs the pinyin of the Chinese character and allows the students to choose the Chinese character; secondly, the teacher says the Chinese character, and the students input the Chinese character; finally, the teacher says a short passage according to the students' level, and the students write it using digital writing.

Real corpus is widely used. The "International Chinese Language Teacher Professional Competence Standards" issued on August 26, 2022 clearly stipulate that international Chinese language teachers should select appropriate teaching resources based on the actual needs of Chinese language teaching. Professor Joël Bellassen mentioned in an interview that the Chinese curriculum in France has also incorporated real corpus, such as calligraphy on the street and restaurant names. Therefore, real language materials are also one of the teaching resources that can be used to improve the efficiency of Chinese character teaching. Professor Liu Lixin mentioned in his lecture that "the basic characteristics of 'real language materials' that can be used for Chinese language teaching are: natural language materials that are seen, heard, spoken, and used by native Chinese speakers; not specially made for second language learners, and still reflect the original language after being selected or trimmed." Therefore, the

real language materials presented in the Chinese classroom should be typical, appropriate, and of moderate difficulty, and express as complete a context as possible. Using real corpus can not only enrich students' perception of different Chinese character fonts but also improve their ability to distinguish similar characters.

In summary, the development of information technology and the influence of the pandemic and the war have changed the traditional mode of Chinese character teaching. As an international Chinese language teacher, one should continuously improve their teaching ability, make reasonable use of online teaching tools, and improve the efficiency of Chinese character teaching.

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## 乌克兰国立人文大学线上汉字教学的问题与对策

*摘要：本文通过分析乌克兰国立人文大学线上汉字教学情况、发现国立人文大学线上汉字教学主要存在认知和电写两种问题，基于问题并提出了四种相对应的线上汉字教学对策：加强同音字和形近字的辨析，提高形声字利用率、对汉字笔顺教学应保持宽容态度、加强汉字结构意识、重视拼音教学和多采用真实语料，以提高线上汉字教学效率。*

*关键词：乌克兰，线上汉字教学，问题与对策*