

Research on Picturized Characters in Recent Thirty Years

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Abstract: This paper aims to introduce the research of picturized characters in recent thirty years. Then the writer analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of these researches. Finally, it points out the importance of picturizing the characters and suggests the researchers should try to spread Chinese languages and cultures by picturized characters.

1. Introduction

Recent years, with the rapid promotion of China's position in international stage, the research on "going out" of Chinese culture gradually attracts academic circle's great concern. [1] At the same time, "going out" of Chinese culture has made a great progress and achievements. However, western countries' focus is still on superficial culture, such as tea, silk, china, kung fu, and so on, without real, influential, essential thoughts and culture. Culture exporting should reflect the soul and taste of our nation, which touches the soul of other nation's people. Therefore, to spread our country's culture, it is of importance to seek the root and the core of our culture's thoughts and values; and it is of vital to adapt to the psychology of other nation's people. Chinese characters bears our nation's cultural development and thousands of civilization; what's more, it is the cultural crystallization of human history development. [2] Therefore, Chinese characters, the fundamental symbol of Chinese civilization and culture, become the carrier and supporter of culture exporting.

2. Domestic Research on Chinese Characters

The research on Chinese characters has gone through over thousands of years. It was in the Zhou Dynasty that the first works about Chinese characters emerged. [2] The most influential and valuable works about Chinese characters was *Origin of Chinese Characters* by Xu Shen, which first analyzed the origin and the form of Chinese characters and presented the theory of six categories of Chinese characters. It was the fundamental works of Chinese Characters and Chinese linguistics. Later, many other researches of Chinese Characters based on it, especially in the Qing Dynasty. Since 20th century, the research of Chinese characters continued and deepened. Many researchers, free from the theory of the six categories of Chinese characters, tried to establish a new system for the research of Chinese characters and made a great progress. For instance, *the outline of Chinese Piphilology* by Zhang Shilu, *Chinese Piphilology* by Tang Lan, *The outline of Piphilology* by Qiu Xigui, and *Chinese Characters* by Wang Ning. Among these works, the most influential was Tang Lan's *Chinese Piphilology*. Mr. Tang proposed the theory of three categories of Chinese characters-hieroglyphs, semasiography, and phonogram, which broke Xu Shen's six categories of Chinese characters and was an important theoretical creativity in research of Chinese characters.

Recent thirty years, with more and more researchers, the research of Chinese characters boomed. A great many of works and articles about Chinese characters sprung out and the scope and field of the research expanded and deepened. Wang Ning, a prominent professor of Peking University, contributed greatly to the research of Chinese characters. In one of his works, he pointed out the elements of Chinese characters' structures, and the rules of Chinese characters' structures, which is significant to the research of Chinese characters. In addition, Mr. Wang Guiyuan, in Wang Ning's team, first stated the system and developing stages of Chinese characters.

3. Research on picturized Chinese characters

Based on these great works and articles by many researchers, the research on Chinese characters stepped on the stage. Picturized Chinese characters came into the researcher's eyes. Especially from the end of last century to the beginning of the century, there have been a great number of works on picturized Chinese characters, among which the influential works are the followings: *five hundred cases of Evolution of Chinese characters* by Li leyī (Beijign Language and Culture University Press); *Picturizing the origin of Chinese characters* by Wang Xiangzhi (Peking University) etc. In addition, there were two to four dictionaries about picturized Chinese characters. Above all, for about thirty years, the research of picturized Chinese characters, in part, has made progress. And the category of the research of Chinese character falls into the followings:

According to the forms, there are three aspects:(1) works, books and articles. (2) dictionaries. (3) Tv shows and videos.

According to the means of picturized Chinese characters, It includes: (1) to picturize the Chinese characters by the origin or evolution. (2) to picturize the Chinese characters by Xu shen's six categories of Chinese characters. (3) to picturize the Chinese characters by pictures.

According to the audiences, it covers :(1) for the school age children of our country. (2) For the Chinese learners and fans (not native speakers).

According to the languages, it consists of : (1) Chinese version. (2)English version.

In brief, the research on picturized Chinese characters will have a long way to go, the reasons are the followings:

1) Too few researchers are study Chinese characters, and most importantly, most of whom are not specialists or experts.

2) The books or articles about Chinese characters research are in great shortage.

Only a few books are about picturized Chinese characters. What's more, many of the books are Chinese language, not English, which is not good and convenient for the foreigners to learn and read.

3) The theories about Chinese characters are not well developed.

Many people do a lot of research on Chinese characters, but not on picturized Chinese characters. They don't pay much attention to picturized Chinese characters. But picturized Chinese characters are really very important because they can spread Chinese culture in a vivid, easy way. The foreigners will learn it easily and have great interest in it.

4) The definition of picturized Chinese characters is not clear.

Till now, no experts or specialists propose the definition of picturized Chinese characters, and much few researchers found it is very important for foreigners to learn Chinese culture.

5) It lacks of cross culture research.

We should be very clear that "going out" of Chinese culture should first focus on the target of spreading. We want foreigners to learn Chinese culture, we should first pay attention to their learning method, learning attitude, learning motivation,etc.

6) It is not related to computer technologies or internet.

Computers and internet play a very important role nowadays. If we want to spread Chinese characters, we must apply computer technologies and internet in order that Chinese culture can go out rapidly and smoothly.

4. Foreign research on Chinese characters

For Several centuries, sinologists in different countries studied Chinese characters for all their lives and issued a lot of great works and articles, which had a great influence on in Chinese characters research. However, there were not too many sinologists who studied Chinese characters. Even so, in the process of research of Chinese characters, many research achieved a lot. When it comes to picturized Chinese characters, we may not forget Swedish sinologist---Cecilia Lindqvist, whose *the kingdom of Chinese characters* has had a wide, deep influence, and Japanese

sinologist---Shirakawashizuka's *the world of Chinese characters*.

Cecilia Lindqvist's *the kingdom of Chinese characters* was first published in 1989 and has been translated into several languages. It is the main reading book for westerners to learn Chinese. In 2006, it was published in Taiwan and was the best seller. The book gave an account of the origin of Chinese characters and selected more than 200 Chinese characters which are closely related to our lives to illustrate in details, such as house, tools, animals, vehicles, and roads... It also described the lives and customs of Chinese people to give a deep impression on Chinese characters.

Shirakawashizuka's *the world of Chinese characters* explained the culture meaning of Chinese culture by myth, wars, religions, songs and dances... It traced back the thought of ancient Chinese people, described the process of Chinese characters vividly, and discovered the true culture values, which has had a great influence on the research of Chinese characters.

In this century, the most famous people in the research of Chinese characters is American Richard Sears. In 2002, he established a website of "Chinese characters and origin of Chinese characters, in which he presented the origin evolution of Chinese characters which covers 6552 Chinese characters. In the website, the origin of each Chinese characters has been examined and proved, what's more, each of the Chinese character is explained in English, which is very convenient for the western learners to learn Chinese characters.

Above all, the research of Chinese characters has made progress in some way, but because of many historical and objective factors, the research still needs improving. (1) the research on Chinese characters is not complete and scientific; (2) The researchers who specialize in Chinese characters are in shortage. (3) It is short of cross-culture perspectives. (4) Cross-subject research should be included.

5. Significance of spreading Chinese cultures by picturized Chinese characters

1) Spreading Chinese characters can enhance culture confidence and establish a good image of our nation. Chinese characters carries thousands of years historical culture, which reflect the wisdom and values of Chinese nation. It is the symbol of Chinese nation. If we can spread culture by picturized Chinese characters, the soft power of our nation will be improved and the position of our nation also will be raised.

2) Spreading Chinese culture by picturized Chinese characters is the foundation for the political, economical, and cultural exchanges. By learning Chinese characters, other nation's people can feel the pro-funding culture of our nation. They have the tendency to come to our country to learn our culture and our language. In a word, Chinese characters walk into the world, and many people in the world will learn to know China, to understand China, to pay much more attention on China.

6. Conclusion

Familiar with the research of Chinese characters home and abroad, in order to spread Chinese culture, we should emphasis on Cultural meaning of Chinese characters and take advantage of picturized Chinese characters to make it easier and interesting. And we must keep in our mind that no matter it is inheritance or spread, Chinese characters are important intermediary and carrier.[3] The dream of "Going out" of Chinese culture will come true one day.

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