

# Research on the Significance and Problems of Heroes in the Textbook Compilation

Jiawan Pu\*

School of Humanities, Southwest Jiaotong University, Langzhong, Sichuan, 610031, China

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history

Received: 5 February 2023

Revised: 12 March 2023

Accepted: 30 March 2023

Published Online: 19 April 2023

### Keywords:

Ministry edition

Heroic image

Significance of compilation

## ABSTRACT

A large number of texts depicting heroes have been compiled in the ministry edition of Chinese textbooks in junior high school, such as Deng Jiaxian, a scientist who has ardent love for the motherland and is fearless of difficulties and dangers; Wen Yiduo, a patriot who is devoted to study and has a strong sense of righteousness; Ye Shengtao, a scholar who is noted for his meticulous scholarship and attends to everything personally; Alizer Buffy, an unknown old man who is devoted to tree-planting in obscurity, and so on. The analysis, understanding and reading of these heroic stories and the interpretation of the significance and value of the selection of heroic images into Chinese textbooks are conducive to grasping the core quality of Chinese courses and improving the teaching of heroic images; inheriting and carrying forward the fine civilization and historical and cultural traditions of mankind, and establishing national cultural self-confidence and pride; perfecting the value system of educators and empowering students to grow healthily; guiding teenagers with immature values to establish healthy and upward values.

## 1. Introduction

Heroes are those who have lofty patriotic enthusiasm, firm ideals and beliefs, national consciousness and selfless sense of responsibility. Because of the existence of these heroes, the country will be strong, the nation will be prosperous, and the people will enjoy a good and prosperous life. "A nation without a hero is unfortunately, a hero but don't know respect his nation is hopeless." Yu Dafu shouted in a mournful and regretful tone at the commemoration meeting of Lu Xun, praying that the people at present would not forget the models of our country's history. I think that today, when the anthem of national heroes spread all over the country and the spirit of heroes is regarded as the theme of the era, is an era of cultural prosperity that will not disappoint Yu Dafu.

In the article *Hero and sublimity as an aesthetic form*, Xu Dawei believed that "Hero is an ideal and noble moral personality form, which should have great moral qualities such as working hard and perseveringly, bringing benefits to the people, sacrificing oneself for the public, pursuing justice, saving the world and the people, and setting things right"<sup>[1]</sup>. On this basis, the author explains the meaning of "hero" according to the heroic image in the ministry edition Chinese textbook of junior middle school as follows: with patriotic feelings, for the rise and fall of the country, every common man has his obligation; with national integrity, take death calmly and die rather than submit; with heroic spirit, be fearless of death for a just cause; with professional responsibility, make oneself an example and show selfless devotion to duty; with strong faith, never

\*Corresponding Author:

Jiawan Pu,

School of Humanities, Southwest Jiaotong University, Langzhong, Sichuan, 610031, China;

Email: Bear65cute@qq.com

yield in spite of reverses and persevere in tenacious efforts. This paper takes this as the basis for the selection criteria and concept definition.

## 2. Analysis of Heroic Images in Chinese Textbooks Compiled by Ministry of Education

In the statistical analysis of the articles of the hero images in the Chinese textbooks compiled by the Ministry of Education, the author found that the selected heroic stories take into account the standards of classics, literary quality and beauty, teaching suitability and the characteristics of the times [2]. In addition, based on the statistics of the nationality, age, gender and academic period of the heroes in the selected article, the author found that there are some aspects to be improved. See the following figures for details. (The percentage value is retained as an integer.)

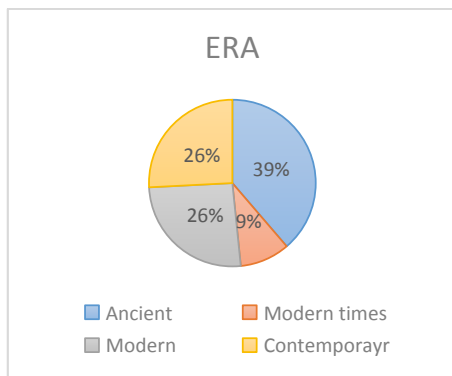


Figure 1. Distribution of hero's era.

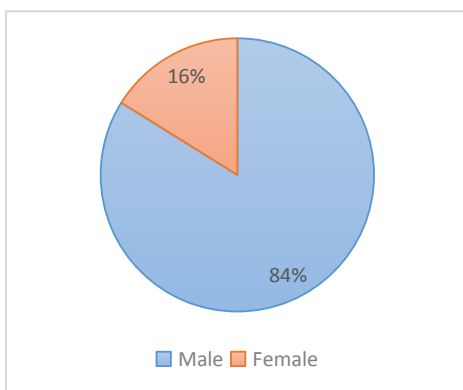


Figure 2. Distribution of hero's gender.

According to the figures above, the following problems can be found:

Firstly, from the perspective of the time distribution of the selected articles, the ancient heroes account for a large proportion. Due to the long history, students can't understand the heroic story very well. For example, while teaching *Sun Quan's Persuasion*, although most students have read *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and have

some knowledge of Sun Quan, they still have a sense of alienation from the etiquette of the ancients and the background of that time. When students understand the heroic story of "Hua Mulan", limited by specific era, they will have many doubts. Although there are quite a number of modern and contemporary heroes in the selected article, due to the great changes of the times, we also found that students have a vague understanding of the era of heroes, and the number of heroes in the present day who are more close to students' lives is insufficient, such as Zhang Guimei, the headmaster of Huaping Female High School in Yunnan Province, and Zhong Nanshan, Li Lanjuan, Zhang Dingyu, who are heroes in the epidemic.

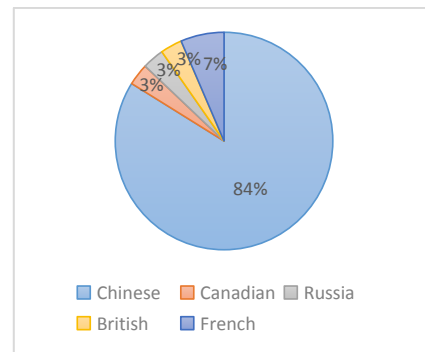


Figure 3. Distribution of hero's nationality.

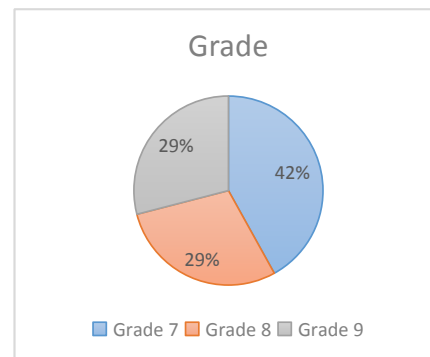


Figure 4. Distribution of heroic stories' academic period.

At the same time, the heroes in the textbooks are mostly adults and young heroes are obviously insufficient. "Heroes are from youngsters." Young hero images have a more direct impact on middle school students. The similarity of age and psychological status is more likely to resonate. They are a group of heroes that cannot be ignored.

Secondly, gender ratio of heroes is unbalanced. The selected female heroes are only Nvwa, Lv Wei, Hua Mulan, the female navigator and Madame Curie, especially the lack of contemporary female heroes. With the awakening of women's social consciousness, many outstanding female characters have been actively emerging from all walks of life in modern times. They should be paid at-

tention to and appropriately selected into the textbooks, which will have a subtle impact on students and bring positive guidance to students.

In addition, there is also a lack of articles about female heroes from a female perspective. Lu Xun recorded by Xiao Hong, can give students a richer feeling, break the past impression of “fierce-browed, I coolly defy a thousand pointing fingers”, and thus students are closer to the heroes.

Thirdly, foreign and minority heroes are lacking. There is no doubt that we need to carry forward the heroes and spirit of the Chinese nation, which will help the young generation develop national self-confidence. In addition to the caravan guys in the *Sliding Cable*, most of the heroes in the textbook are Han Chinese. It is difficult for students of ethnic minorities to know the heroes of their own nation in the textbook so minority heroes can be added in order to make the heroes that students are exposed to are more diversified. In addition, there are only five foreign heroes in the textbook, and according to statistics, it only involves Russia, Britain, France and Canada.

Fourthly, most of the hero images are similar, especially the female heroes with the stereotype of traditional culture, which is not diversified enough. For example, in the teaching what is more prominent is Hua Mulan’s filial piety as a daughter to join the army for her father, her homesickness when she resigns from an official position and goes home, and her bravery in fighting against enemies on battlefields, which will weaken her self-worth of breaking through the secular concept and going to the battlefield.

Fifthly, there is a lack of attention to ordinary heroes. Heroes are first and foremost ordinary people, such as Zhang Fuqing, an old soldier who has paid silently in ordinary posts. Heroes do not necessarily sacrifice themselves and face death in a dignified manner. Heroes are not gods. We should guide students to establish a “people-oriented” view of heroes, and an appropriate number of ordinary heroes should be selected into the textbooks.

### 3. Significance of the Compilation of Heroes

Xi Jinping said, “All national heroes are the backbone of the Chinese nation. Their deeds and spirit are powerful forces that inspire us to move forward.” The heroes selected in the textbooks are of great significance and value in training junior high school students to form the Chinese core quality, cultural research, pedagogy and social education.

#### 3.1 Editor’s Intention

Wen Rumin pointed out that the “Ministry Edition”

Chinese textbooks should have extraordinary depth, which is to reflect the socialist core values, establish morality and cultivate people, clarify the guiding ideology and implement measures. The goal of education is to establish morality and cultivate people. Heroes can serve as examples to encourage students to develop good moral character and aspire to become talents. In terms of the editor’s intention, different times need different heroes. We should integrate the excellent traditional Chinese culture and revolutionary traditional education into the teaching materials so that the heroic image in the Chinese textbooks compiled by the Ministry can “organically infiltrate” the core values imperceptibly<sup>[3]</sup>.

Therefore, the author found that the number of heroic stories distributed in the seventh grade is the largest. Early contact with these heroes is beneficial to broaden students’ horizons and cultivate their moral character; Chinese heroes constitute the majority, which is conducive to highlighting the strength and spirit of China and enhancing the sense of national pride and responsibility; the time span of the selected articles is long, which can reflect the outstanding revolutionary tradition and cultivate students’ sense of inheritance; the diverse images of heroes can help students set up their lofty ambitions and become a new generation of young people with ideals and responsibilities.

#### 3.2 Core Quality of Chinese Curriculum

The textbook compiled by the Ministry of Education redefines the knowledge system of Chinese teaching, and the texts reflect the language points and ability points of the core quality of Chinese, forming a “trinity” teaching system. The selected articles describing heroes include both “teaching reading” and “self reading”, which are distributed among different academic periods. The learning requirements are increasing from the elementary to the profound spirally, which can effectively improve students’ core quality of Chinese.

The basic characteristic of Chinese curriculum is the unity of humanity and instrumentality, with certain aesthetic and practicability. Learning from heroes helps students cultivate good learning habits, accumulate learning methods and enhance learning ability. For example, Ye Shengtao’s rigour is really worth learning. His writing focuses on the correct use of punctuation, which sets a good example for contemporary junior high school students. The example of distinguishing near-synonym “做” and “作” (means do) shows his emphasis on the language normalization, which has a great impact on students’ language learning.

The ultimate goal of the Chinese course is to develop

students' core quality of language, and improve students' Chinese ability through the study of heroic images<sup>[4]</sup>. Students can accumulate rich language materials through learning these articles with literacy and beauty, and can consciously use them in practice through analysis and integration, which is conducive to improving students' ability of language construction and application; the process of students' analysis of hero images, induction, generalization and differentiation of basic language phenomena and literature images, and orderly expression of their own views is the development and promotion of thinking; in the process of interpreting the images of heroes, students can feel the beauty of image and emotion expressed in the works, so as to have elegant aesthetic sentiment and noble aesthetic taste, which is conducive to improving aesthetic appreciation and creativity; the perception of heroes at all times and all over the world is conducive to promoting cultural inheritance and understanding, enabling students to inherit excellent traditional culture and establish cultural self-confidence.

### 3.3 Cultural Studies

"Culture" is the "common psychological process" of people in the same environment. Different groups, countries or regions will form different ways of thinking and different cultures due to their differences in social background and education. "Hero culture" is the epitome of heroes. That is the common characteristics of each hero. Students need to accept such cultural infiltration, so that they can build up the spirit of patriotism, dedication, selflessness and fearlessness from childhood, and then grow into the pillars of society.

The differences in modern society and culture need to be respected. Diversity is objective. It can broaden students' horizons, improve their ideological level, and promote the cultural prosperity and development. The selection of heroes from different countries can enable students to actively participate in cross-cultural communication, hold an inclusive attitude, and perceive the charm of multiculturalism with "harmony but not uniformity"<sup>[5]</sup>.

### 3.4 Pedagogy

From the perspective of pedagogy, the growth of students needs the power of role models. The study of heroes has a great role in the formation of students' outlook on life, world and values, and its educational significance cannot be underestimated. Positive guidance of heroes can imperceptibly infect junior high school students to learn their noble qualities and help students grow into a young man with ideals and responsibilities in the new era.

Growth includes both physical and psychological aspects. The mental health of teenagers has drawn more and more attention in recent years. Learning the spirit and quality of heroes has a positive effect on the psychological health of students, which can help teenagers establish correct outlook on life and form good personality. Especially in the face of setbacks and failures, a good state of mind is extremely important. For example, the optimistic and strong female navigator in the face of adversity in *With Her Eyes*, the persistent Yugong who focused on his goal, and Scott and his team, failed to reach the South Pole first, but tried to prove the performance of others... They will bring positive energy to students, enable them to face up to difficulties, and maintain a healthy psychological state.

Adolescent years is an important period for the formation of life values. Learning these heroes is also to set an example for students and bring a positive guidance. We hope that students can learn from heroes, develop good moral quality, cultivate excellent character, and achieve self-development. For example, after knowing Wang Xuan, who is modest, simple and selfless, students understand that no matter what post they will hold in the future, this should be the basis of their life.

### 3.5 Educating People for Society

"If the young people are strong, the country will be strong." Youths are the hope of a nation and a country in the future. Learning the common characteristics of loyalty and patriotism in heroes is conducive to letting students understand the history of the motherland and cherish the hard-won peace and prosperity, stimulating students' patriotism, enhancing their national sense of mission, pride, and social responsibility, so that they can aspire to serve the country and achieve social development. Tang Ju's courage, resourcefulness and fearlessness in the face of danger let students understand that when the country is in danger, they must be brave to take responsibility and face the situation directly, and at the same time, it's essential to be skillful in strategy and not be bold.

The school is educating people for the society. Learning the excellent qualities of heroes is also conducive to the moral education in the school, so that students can recognize and cultivate heroism, enhance collective sense of honor, stimulate their patriotic feelings, realize self-development, and make contributions to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in the future<sup>[6]</sup>. For example, when learning *The Fight for the South Pole*, students were infected by Scott and his team of five people and understood that some spirits are more valuable than success or failure. Inspired by the collectivism, the class is more united.

#### 4. Conclusions

The Chinese textbook compiled by Ministry of Education since 2012, adhering to the temporal spirit and reflecting the standards of socialist core values, has included a large number of hero stories, and created colorful hero images at all times. In the world civilization and history of five thousand years of Chinese culture, the tough heroes guard the national interests to the death. Learning from the spirit of heroes, inheriting and carrying forward the excellent traditional culture and the socialist core values, are in need of the contribution of young people in the new era.

#### References

- [1] Xu, D.W., 2017. Hero and sublimity as an aesthetic form. *Guizhou Social Sciences*. 01, 32-37. (in Chinese)
- [2] Wen, R.M., 2016. The concept, characteristics and use suggestions of the Chinese teaching material compiled by Ministry of Education. *Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method*. 36(11), 3-11. (in Chinese)
- [3] Wang, B.H., 2017. On the compilation concept of Chinese textbook compiled by Ministry of Education from the eight key words. *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*. (05), 31-35. (in Chinese)
- [4] Wang, J.L., Chen, Y., 2017. Remarkable progress in the four major systems of junior high school Chinese textbooks compiled by the Ministry. *Fujian Jichu Jiaoyu Yanjiu*. (08), 30-32. (in Chinese)
- [5] Tang, J.X., 2017. The difficult exploration of writing teaching -- On the compilation of the writing part of the Chinese textbook for junior middle school. *Bulletin of Chinese Language Teaching*. (08), 65-68. (in Chinese)
- [6] Feng, Sh.L., 2017. Guide to famous work in Chinese textbooks compiled by Ministry of Education in junior middle school: Changes and countermeasures. *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*. (05), 43-46. (in Chinese)