

7. *Dunaway, M. K.* Connectivism: learning theory and pedagogical practice for networked information landscapes / M. K. Dunaway // Reference Services Review. — 2011. — Vol. 39. — № 4. — P. 675—685.

8. *Downes, S.* Connectivism and connective knowledge: essays on meaning and learning networks / S. Downes. — URL: https://oerknowledgecloud.org/sites/oerknowledgecloud.org/files/Connective_Knowledge-19May2012.pdf (date of access: 12.02.2025).

9. *Goldie, J. G. S.* Connectivism: A knowledge learning theory for the digital age? / J. G. S. Goldie // Medical Teacher. — 2016. — № 38 (10). — P. 1064—1069. — DOI: 10.3109/0142159X.2016.1173661.

UDC 372.881.1

A. S. Zalesskaya

Institution of Education “Baranavichy State University”, Baranavichy, the Republic of Belarus, anastasiazalessckaya@yandex.by

USING MNEMONICS IN TEACHING CHINESE WRITING

The article explores the effectiveness of mnemonic techniques in teaching Chinese writing, particularly for non-native learners. Given the complexity of Chinese characters, mnemonics offer a creative and memory-enhancing approach to mastering stroke order, radicals, and character meanings. By associating characters with vivid imagery, stories, or familiar concepts, learners can improve retention and recall. The article reviews various mnemonic strategies, their application in educational process, and their impact. It concludes that mnemonics not only make learning Chinese writing more engaging but also provide a valuable tool for overcoming the challenges posed by the language's unique script.

Key words: mnemonics; Chinese writing; teaching; memory aids.

А. С. Залеская

*Учреждение образования «Барановичский государственный университет»,
Барановичи, Республика Беларусь, anastasiazalessckaya@yandex.by*

ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ МНЕМОТЕХНИКИ В ОБУЧЕНИИ КИТАЙСКОМУ ПИСЬМУ

В статье исследуется эффективность мнемонических приемов при обучении китайскому письму, особенно для учащихся, не являющихся носителями языка. Учитывая сложность китайских иероглифов, мнемотехника предлагает творческий подход к запоминанию порядка черт, радикалов и значений иероглифов. Ассоциируя иероглифы с яркими образами, историями или знакомыми понятиями, учащиеся могут улучшить запоминание. В статье рассматриваются различные мнемонические стратегии, их применение в образовательном процессе и их влияние. Делается вывод о том, что мнемотехника не только делает изучение китайского более увлекательным, но и является ценным инструментом для преодоления трудностей, связанных с уникальной письменностью этого языка.

Ключевые слова: мнемотехника; китайское письмо; обучение; средства запоминания.

Introduction. Considering the People's Republic of China's significance in today's world and the depth of Chinese culture, learning Chinese is highly valuable. However, Chinese presents unique challenges, especially when compared to languages that use alphabets due to its distinct grammar. The most significant hurdle for learners is the Chinese writing system, which relies on thousands of complex characters (hieroglyphs). Each character requires memorization of its specific form, meaning, and pronunciation. Many students rely on rote memorization (or “cramming”) when learning characters, a method which is ultimately ineffective for Chinese. This is largely because the unique characteristics of the Chinese language are often overlooked.

Main part. According to Karapetyants and Tan Aoshuang, “Chinese, which is spoken by a fifth of the world's population, is indeed “different”, its sign system uses other ways of encoding” [1, p. 3]. Unlike the writing systems of European and numerous other languages, Chinese writing was primarily visual, focusing on recording what was seen rather than what was spoken. This approach simplifies the process, as it did not require the differentiation of sounds from speech or the development of a complex system of symbols — like letters — to represent those sounds. Instead, the Chinese originally employed drawings, leading to the creation of the first hieroglyphs, which included pictograms and index symbols. Pictograms represent objects through simple illustrations (for example, “月” for “moon,” “下雨” for “rain” and “日” for “sun”), while index symbols abstractly depict basic concepts (such as “上” for “top” “下” for “bottom” and “中” for “middle”).

According to the “Law of the People's Republic of China on Common Language and Writing”, the national language is Putonghua (普通话 pǔtōnghuà), and the written language is the normative hieroglyphic script (规范汉字 guīfàn hànzi). A hieroglyph is a written sign in Chinese language that has spelling, reading, and meaning.

A hieroglyph can be a syllable or a whole word, or even a syllable without inherent meaning. Each syllable is represented by a unique character, and to proficiently understand the language, learners must acquire knowledge of at least 6,000 to 7,000 different characters, each with its own appearance. The shape of Chinese characters can express a certain meaning. “A syllable in Chinese is not recorded by one Chinese character. There are more than 400 Chinese syllables, but it is represented by tens of thousands of characters” [2]. In total, there are up to 107,000 hieroglyphs in the Chinese language, of which 8,105 are commonly used hieroglyphs. Each hieroglyph has: 1) pronunciation (reading) of “yin” (音 yin); 2) graphic form of “xing” (形 xing); 3) the meaning of “and” (义 yi) (2019). More precisely, the structure of the Chinese character can be represented as a three-level system: strokes, graphemes, and a complex character (hieroglyph) (Figure 1).

As it is seen from the Figure 1, the stroke is the smallest indivisible part of a Chinese character, is the fundamental building block for forming graphemes or classifying characters. The precise number of these strokes is debated. Some scholars identify 24 to 35 features, with Russian linguists, according to Kravtsova (1999), identifying 28 to 32 basic features, potentially reaching 40 when including derived features. Ivchenko, Mazo, and Li Tao (2020) identify 35, while Zadoenko and Huang Shuying (2017) list 24 (8 main, plus various hook and broken variations). The Chinese document “Standardized order of writing the strokes of commonly used hieroglyphs” developed by the State Committee for Work in the Field of Language and Writing in 2021, identifies 2 types of basic strokes (zhǔbǐ xíng) and derivatives (附笔形 fùbǐ xíng). There are 5 main strokes: horizontal (横 héng) (一), vertical (竖 shù) (丨), flip (撇 gǎn) (丿), point (点 diǎn) (丶), broken (折 zhé) (㇇). Stroke order, the sequence in which strokes are written, is crucial. Character components, also known as graphemes (部件 bùjiàn), are created from individual strokes. According to Zadoenko and Shuin (2017), a grapheme is more complex than a stroke and is a significant part of a hieroglyph. Gottlieb (2019) defines a grapheme as the smallest functional unit within a writing system, which has a specific meaning but cannot stand alone as a complete symbol. Different sources contain different numbers of graphemes. Zadoenko and Huang Shuin (2017) identify up to 200 graphemes. The current list of graphemes, developed by the State Committee for Work in the Field of Language and Writing in 2009, includes 214 graphemes [3].

Complex hieroglyphs are also constructed from graphemes. In the process of the development of civilization and the evolution of mankind, it became possible to record more and more complex phenomena and concepts, and simple hieroglyphs-graphemes were no longer enough. This is how two more types of hieroglyphs appeared. The most interesting hieroglyphs are composite ideograms or ideographs. In such hieroglyphs, there are often two elements, each of which has its own meaning, and when added together they give a new meaning. Examples of such hieroglyphs: 笔 “brush” (bamboo and wool), 看 “see” (hand and eye). Phonoideograms or phonoidographs are the most common type of complex hieroglyphs. In such hieroglyphs, one element is responsible for the meaning, and the second is phonetic, for reading. Phonoidographs appeared as follows: to the graphemes already existing in writing, bearing one meaning or another, they decided to add phonetic elements, which became either existing graphemes with the same or similar sound, or combinations of graphemes that were given a certain sound. Thus, semantic elements, determinants, often called keys, and phonetic elements are distinguished in phonoidographs. There is always one key in a hieroglyph, and there may be several graphemes. The example of phonoideogram is a hieroglyph 嘴, which means “mouth”, where the left part refers to the meaning, and right part to the phonetic.

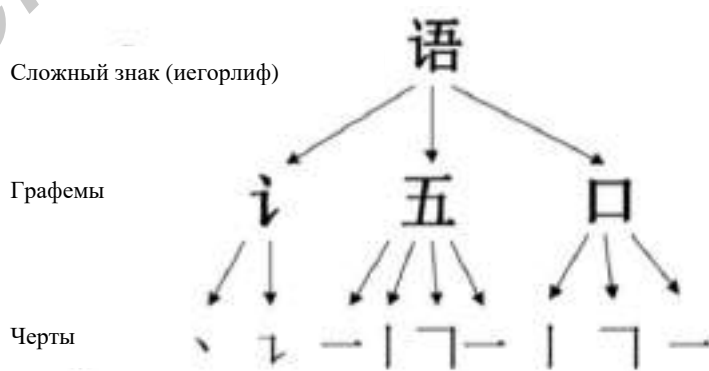


Figure 1 — Structural levels of hieroglyph 语

Considering all these aspects of Chinese writing, it's seen that such method like "cramming", or copying is ineffective. Currently, there are many techniques for mastering Chinese characters, for example, visual methods such as flashcards, tables, stickers, lists, Frank's method, the method of the Memory Palace, and many others. Their use is effective to varying degrees, due to the specificity of Chinese characters. The most productive method that would be suitable for learning Chinese as a foreign language may be the use of mnemonics. Ziganov gives the following definition: "Mnemonics — from the Greek *mnemonikon* — the art of memorization, means a set of techniques and methods that facilitate memorization and increase memory capacity by forming artificial associations" [4, p. 337]. Kozarenko emphasizes that when a person connects several visual images in his imagination, the brain captures this relationship [5]. And later, when recalling one of the associations, the brain reproduces all previously connected images. In the context of studying Chinese characters, associations can be used to associate images of characters with their meanings or pronunciation. Both Russian and Chinese methodologists studied mnemonic techniques. Based on their research, all mnemonic techniques can be classified into mnemonics:

- 1) based on the etymological analysis of the hieroglyph;
- 2) based on a structural analysis of its parts.

Zdorovyeva describes the method of associations based on the etymological analysis of hieroglyphs in her work [6]. This technique involves explaining the meaning of a hieroglyphic sign based on its constituent parts — graphemes. This technique can be implemented in two ways. First, the teacher himself offers ready-made schemes for memorizing hieroglyphs. And secondly, children independently determine the meaning of a hieroglyph, creating their own images for memorization, which makes this method even more effective. This method contributes not only to the solid memorization and comprehension of hieroglyphic signs, but also introduces students to some of the features of ancient Chinese culture, with the traditions and customs of the Chinese people.

For example, such character as 药 yào "medicine" — contains the components "herb", "thread" and "spoon". In ancient China, various herbs served as medicine, and before they were sold to a patient, the herbs 卅 were "spooned" 勺 into a paper bag and tied 纟 with a thread [7]. The meaning of the hieroglyph 孕 is "drawn" by the meanings of its constituent signs: from above — a woman's breast, from below — a child, an infant. Imagining a woman who carries a child under her heart, the meaning of this hieroglyph becomes clear — pregnancy. Character 怕 "scare" consists of the character 心 and 白, which means heart and white. The meaning can be the following: we become white and heart beats very fast when we're scared.

Zadorozhnykh also separately examines the study of hieroglyphs through their origin [8, p. 183]. The mnemonic technique developed by a Chinese linguist belongs to the same technique. Shaolan Xue [9] is a method of teaching hieroglyphics through an image. She turns each hieroglyph into a picture to show how a particular sign appeared. Then, combining several pictures, he explains more complex hieroglyphs. For example, Shaolan depicts the character for "man" 人 as a person walking in profile. If you put two people 从, we get the value "follow". One person leads, the other follows. "Two people are a company, three are a crowd" — putting three hieroglyphs for "person" next to each other, we get 众 "crowd".

When using associative techniques in practice, it is important to use different types of memory and take into account the specifics of the Chinese characters. You can use:

- creation of visual associations, when students can imagine an image of a hieroglyph in the form of a specific object or scene that is associated with its meaning or pronunciation (鼠, 猫);
- Creating auditory associations where students can associate the pronunciation of a hieroglyph with a specific sound or word in their native language (猫);
- The use of associative chains when students can create connections between several hieroglyphs to memorize them together [10].

The effectiveness of mnemonic techniques in the study of Chinese characters is based on practice. Their use at the initial stage is very difficult and time-consuming and cannot solve the problem of complete memorization of hieroglyphs. Nevertheless, the use of mnemonics can make changes in the learning process, and with constant practice, the use of figurative-mnemonic techniques occurs automatically, which can make the process of memorizing and storing hieroglyphs the most durable, because this is the development of visual thinking. In addition, they stimulate cognitive activity, increase the general intellectual level of student's development, and introduce them to various aspects of the life of the country of the language being studied: culture, everyday life, literature, and history. Such techniques undoubtedly contribute to the development of interest and increase student's motivation in learning the language.

Conclusion. In conclusion, we can say that the search for visual associations contributes to the development of visual thinking, which is necessary when working with hieroglyphic writing. Associations can greatly simplify the process of memorizing hieroglyphs, as they allow you to create connections between the image of

a hieroglyph and its meaning or pronunciation, allow you to memorize several hieroglyphs at the same time and visualize them, which makes them more accessible and easier to remember. In addition, the development of imaginative memory, the ability to operate with visual images helps to solve not only problems related to memorizing hieroglyphs, i.e. it is effective not only in the process of learning Chinese and other foreign languages, but also in solving problems from related fields.

References

1. *Карпетьянц, А. М.* Учебник китайского языка: новый практический курс / А. М. Карпетьянц, Тань Аошуан. — М. : Вост. лит., 2003. — 640 с.
2. *Федоренко, Н. Т.* Изобразительно-образная природа иероглифики / Н. Т. Федоренко // Китай. Япония: история и филология : к 70-летию академика Николая Иосифовича Конрада / редколл: Ф. С. Быков, С. Л. Тихвинский (отв. ред.) [и др.]. — М. : Изд-во восточной литературы, 1961. — 333 с.
3. *Гурулева, Т. Л.* Декомпозиционная структура китайского иероглифа / Т. Л. Гурулева, А. Р. Абдрахманова // Филологические науки. Вопросы теории и практики. — 2024. — № 1. — С. 31—39.
4. *Зиганов, М. А.* Мнемотехника. Запоминание на основе образного мышления / М. А. Зиганов, В. А. Козаренко. — М. : Школа рационал. чтения, 2000. — 173 с.
5. *Козаренко, А. В.* Учебник мнемоники. Система запоминания Джордано / А. В. Козаренко. — М., 2007. — С. 6.
6. *Здоровьева, Н. С.* Мысль, запечатленная чертой : метод. пособие / Н. С. Здоровьева. — Владивосток : Изд-во Дальневосточ. Федерал. Ун-та ; Ин-т Конфуция, 2009. — С. 33—38.
7. *Васильева, Д. С.* Мнемонические техники как способ введения иероглифики на начальном и среднем этапах обучения / Д. С. Васильева // Теоретические и методологические проблемы иноязычного образования и межкультурной коммуникации : материалы науч.-практ. интернет-конф., Благовещенск, 16—18 февр. 2016 г. / Д. С. Васильева. — Благовещенск, 2016. — С. 10—14.
8. *Задорожных, Д. П.* Методика преподавания китайской иероглифической письменности / Д. П. Задорожных // Вестник науки Сибири. — 2014. — № 1(11). — С. 183.
9. *Сюэ, Шаолань.* Chineseasy: Китайский — легко! / Сюэ Шаолань. — М. : Изд-во Манн, Иванов и Фербер, 2015. — 192 с.
10. *Бузникова, М. В.* Ассоциативный прием в обучении иероглифике китайского языка / М. В. Бузникова // Наука и образование-2024 : сб. ст. Междунар. науч.-практ. конф., Петрозаводск, 11 апр. 2024 г. / М. В. Бузникова. — Петрозаводск, 2024. — С. 60—64.