

# **CHINESE AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE (CFL) TEACHERS AND TEACHING: THEORY AND PRACTICE**

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> INTERNATIONAL  
SYMPOSIUM ON CFL TEACHERS AND TEACHING**

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# EDITORS' NOTES

As China continues its rise on the global stage, demand for Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) continues to grow in European countries. In universities, enrolment on CFL courses is increasing and there is an emerging need to establish language programs to educate both students and teachers of CFL. However, creating a language field involves more than establishing language programs; among other things, a language field requires a research tradition that identifies and investigates problems related to our understandings of language teaching and learning itself.

Although Chinese has long been taught to Western learners (Lu & Zhao, 2011), empirical research into the teaching of CFL is relatively new (Lo Bianco, 2007; 2011; Wang, Moloney & Li, 2013). Recently, this research has been disseminated among Chinese language teachers and researchers through articles written in both English and Chinese. Articles by scholars both inside and outside China have helped to unite resources across continents and countries. A promising outcome of this research is that there are now major conferences devoted to Chinese language research (Cao & Yu, 2013; Guder, Jiang, & Wan, 2007), and compilations are beginning to appear that apply research to the actual teaching of Chinese (Everson & Shen, 2010).

The current volume is a collection of academic articles accepted by the international conference *Chinese as foreign language (CFL) teachers and teaching: theory and practice*, which was held at Aarhus University from 4–5 December 2014. The articles present studies that are cutting-edge in their approach and international in their authorship. They explore a variety of themes and adopt a range of perspectives, but they all draw upon data from teachers of CFL.

**Zhongwei Wu** (吴中伟) begins this volume by exploring the standards of CFL teaching. These standards represent a general consensus among a variety of stakeholders to articulate a common educational framework in CFL education. Wu puts forward a principle of 形式与内容的平衡 (a balance between form and content), tracing some of the theoretical and methodological foundations that have been tested in the classroom and led to the standards. Wu's article provides an important foundation for both language teachers and researchers to consider three standards: (1) integrated teaching of linguistic structure, pragmatics and cultures, (2) consensus of 'acquisition' and 'pragmatics'; (3) a learner-centered teaching. Finally, his article discusses how these standards will change the way we look at textbooks, teaching methods and the relationship between the teacher and the student; this discussion sets the scene for the remaining articles in the volume, which invite us to examine the standards from various perspectives.

Teaching a foreign language always begins with teaching pronunciation, and teaching CFL is no exception. In the second article, **Sidsel Rasmussen** and **Ocke-Schwen Bohn** explore native English listeners' difficulty in perceiving Mandarin

Chinese fricatives and affricates. Their study examines the perceptual assimilation of the Mandarin Chinese initial fricatives and affricates [ts],[tsʰ],[s], palatal [tɕ],[tɕʰ],[ç], and retroflex [ʈʂ],[ʈʂʰ],[ʂ], [ɻ] by native English-speaking listeners with no knowledge of Mandarin Chinese or any other language with an elaborate fricative or affricate inventory. Eleven native English speakers participated as unpaid volunteers in a speech perception experiment. Participants were auditorily presented with the ten Mandarin Chinese initial fricatives and affricates. They first conducted a mapping task in which they identified these consonants with English consonants before rating each of their mappings on a Likert scale for the quality of match. Rasmussen and Bohn use current models of second language speech perception to predict, on the basis of the perceptual assimilation patterns, learning problems of native English speakers with regard to Mandarin Chinese fricatives and affricates.

It is often argued that, because of its orthographic distance (Scrimgeour, 2011), Chinese is one of the most difficult foreign languages to learn for users of alphabetic writing systems. Since most European learners are alphabetic users, developing strategies to facilitate reading and writing skills is essential for both learners and teachers. The third article, by *Wenhua Hu* (胡文华), investigates how learners adapt to non-alphabetic writing systems. Hu's study focuses on an important element of Chinese characters – the radical, the semantics, and the origin of the characters.

While studies on Mandarin Chinese pronunciation and orthographic difficulty provide an understanding of how learners perceive Chinese phonologically, what researchers predict, and the historical background of Chinese characters, it is inevitable that learners will still make mistakes in both the perception and production of spoken and written language. Making mistakes is a necessary part of learning. The collection, classification and analysis of errors in the written and spoken production of L2 learners has a long tradition in L2 pedagogy; however, within CFL research, only handful of studies have been conducted to define 'error' in a pedagogically insightful way or to empirically investigate the occurrence of errors in linguistic or pedagogical terms. The forth article, by *Xiaoli Wu* (吴晓丽) and *Hongjuan Liu* (刘红娟), investigates Belgian CFL learners' use of comparative sentences in written production. Data were collected from 28 second-year and 26 third-year university students. The students' writing samples were first collected and errors in the use of comparative sentences were then identified and described. The results show that, regardless of task type and proficiency level, students often make errors when using the 比 structure and its negative form 不比. After analysing all the learner errors, a categorization of the grammatical errors when using comparative sentences was developed. This included comparative item related errors, comparative result related errors and blend errors. The results indicate that these errors could be caused by negative transfer from L1 and overgeneralization of grammatical rules and structures. Wu and Liu also discuss the significance of these findings and their relevance to CFL teaching and learning.

The fifth article, by *Shu'an Xu* (许书安), asks questions that concern all Chinese language teachers – how much do learners remember after a week off from learning

Chinese? What teaching tasks can language teachers create to help students memorize vocabulary? This study explores these questions among three groups of intermediate German (L1), Austrian (L1) and Danish (L3) learners of Chinese (L2) by collecting surveys that measure both the learners' language proficiency and the teachers' teaching methods. The survey results underscore that vocabulary memorization correlates with reviewing frequency; in other words, that it is more efficient to review vocabulary regularly than to review everything in one single session. They also suggest that it is easier for students to recall new words or language aspects if the teacher intentionally repeats a word multiple times within one week; the majority of students remember a word that has been repeated five to seven times. This can be attributed to the difficulty of the vocabulary, practicability, and the teaching method. Although this study measures 'how much' the students recall vocabulary, it is perhaps most insightful for indicating that a certain session of repetition within the language-learning framework ought to be redesigned and reconsidered. Furthermore, Xu's study also helps novice teachers to understand and recognize the importance and necessity of applying purposeful repetition sessions in classroom teaching, even though this technique has been undermined and neglected in the modern communicative language.

In the sixth article, *Ingela Yuying Jin* (靳玉英) presents a comprehensive study on how CFL has been taught at Stockholm University, Sweden, from a historical perspective that describes how the teaching methods and tasks have been created and applied by CFL teachers. Based on her years of teaching experience at Stockholm University, Jin explains how she taught tones, radicals of characters, and vocabulary. She reflects upon her classroom teaching, and she further highlights selected teaching tasks that she believes help Swedish students learn CFL. Rather than assessing students in one final examination, a new scoring system has been applied at Stockholm University, which combines the student's attendance, homework, class tests and final tests. Finally, she also discusses the notion of integrating cultural teaching into language teaching.

The seventh article, by *Shubei Xu* (许舒焙), reports that the TFA (Tirocinio Formativo Attivo) has replaced the SSIS (Scuola di Specializzazione all'Insegnamento Secondario) as the only preparation format of teachers for compulsory education recognised by the MIUR (Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research), which stipulates that only those teachers who complete a one-year assessment are qualified to teach in the compulsory education sector. On 31 January 2011, the MIUR promulgated the Gazette No. 24, which outlines general rules for the targets, requirements and models to prepare teachers to teach in elementary, middle and high schools. These rules contain specific regulation for teachers of specific courses regarding the characteristics of each course in order to guide and standardize the preparation of teachers. For this reason, the rules concerning foreign language teachers should also be taken as the standards for preparing any foreign language teachers, including CFL teachers. It is therefore important that CFL teachers are aware of and follow these general rules.

This volume concludes with **Rui Bao's** (鲍蕊) article, which explores teacher feedback and the effects of different types of feedback in relation to learner uptake in CFL classes. By using Lyster and Ranta's notion of learner uptake, the study reveals three types of feedback: learner correction (which was the most prevalent), recast, and explicit correction. The data indicates that all three types of feedback produce a high rate of learner uptake. It is suggested that teacher feedback and learner uptake is highly context-dependent and subject to different contextual variables, such as linguistic features of the target language, opportunities afforded by the teacher, affective concerns by the teacher, pedagogical goal, and the nature of the curriculum. This action research serves as an invaluable tool to help the teacher recognize, reflect upon and subsequently improve his/her feedback move in order to better enhance L2 learning.

This volume could not have been accomplished without the efforts of many people. We would first like to thank the authors who contributed their research studies and who worked patiently with us during the editing process. We would also like to thank the Aarhus University Initiative (AUI), who sponsored the conference, and the Danish Ministry of Education 2014.

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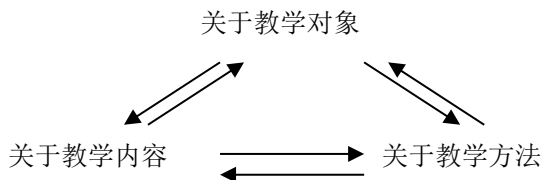
## 形式与内容的平衡——原则与策略

复旦大学 吴中伟

### 1. 基于原则的教学

1.1 随着习得理论和教学理论的发展，人们对于第二语言教学规律的认识也在不断加深。事实上，由于教学对象和教学环境的多样性，没有一种教学法是十全十美的，也没有一种教学法是一无是处的。在后教学法时代，我们主张的是“基于原则的教学”（teaching by principles, Brown 2007）。

1.2 语言教学的三个最基本的原则是：（1）结构、功能、文化相结合，（2）“学”与“用”相统一，（3）以学习者为中心。这三条原则，体现了我们关于教学内容和教学方法及其与教学对象的关系的基本认识。



1.3 “学”和“用”相统一，涉及到几个不同方面的问题：形式和内容、输入和输出、结果和过程、知识和能力。形式和内容相平衡，是“学用统一”原则的重要内涵之一。

所谓形式，是指语言形式，包括语音、词汇、语法、文字等方面，所谓内容，是指表达内容，即通过话语所表达的具体信息和实现的特定功能。在现实生活中，我们关注的是透过语言表达出来的内容；在语言教学中，我们关注的是内容背后的语言运用规律。但是，我们不可能脱离内容而学习“抽象”的语言。当然，也不能只关注话语内容而无视语言形式。要研究语言点和典型交际活动场景的匹配关系。

如何在不削弱语言教学的交际目标的前提下，对于语言形式加以关注，是教学法研究的一个兴趣焦点。然而，如何做到形式和内容的平衡，还需要在教学实践中深入探索。

之所以要兼顾形式和内容，是由我们的教学目标和学习规律所决定的。我们要教给学生的，不仅仅是孤立的语言结构形式，而是结构及其表达功能以及其中的文化因素，只有在有内容的话语中（语篇）中，才能实现这一教学目标，否则，我们教的结构、功能、文化就可能是相互割裂的。从习得规律来看，只有结合有内容的活动，学生才能真正积极地、有效地习得语言。

形式和内容的平衡，是几百年来语言教学法流派发展的一个核心问题，不同流派的差异，在一定意义上，可以归结为是偏重形式还是偏重内容的差异。在今天看来，更加重要的是，应该探讨如何达到形式和内容的平衡。

## 2. 形式和内容相平衡的策略

在实际教学实践中，我们既可以从形式出发，寻求恰当的内容载体，也可以从内容出发，关注相匹配的形式。

### 2.1 从形式出发，给形式加一点内容。

在设计教学活动时，关注以下几个方面可以让教学活动显得更有“内容”。

（1）细化情境。语言的运用离不开特定的语境，离开了语境，就无所谓内容。在教学活动中，设定具体的角色、场景、交际目的，有助于学生体验、学习在特定的语境下如何恰当地使用语言。如，针对“告别”这一功能项目，可设计不同的场景：

张三和李四是大学同学，现在他们毕业了。张三要去南方工作，李四留在北京。他们在车站告别。

张三和他的同学们在上海某大学参加了为期一个月的语言文化项目，今天是结业典礼，张三要代表同学们在典礼上发言，假如你是张三，你会说什么？

（2）制造信息差。语言的重要功能之一就是交流信息。活动参与者之间具有了信息差，活动就在一定程度上具备了交际性。信息差活动有助于激发学

生参与活动的积极性，也有助于增强活动过程中的互动程度。如，针对方位词和“有”字句的教学，比较下面两种不同活动，其中 A 为学习而说，B 则是为交流而说。活动 B 是信息差活动，更具交际性。

A. 大家一起看一幅图，并描述图的内容（这是张三的家。他家后面有一个大院子，院子里有很多花儿……）

B. 双方各自持有一幅图，两幅图非常接近。两人通过反复问答，找出两幅图的差异之处。

（3）增强知识性。知识性可以看成交际性的一部分，所谓知识性，本质上属于信息交流的范围。增加语篇中百科知识内容、反映现实社会生活的内容、体现文化特色的内容等等，有助于增加话语的内涵，激发学生的学习兴趣。如，针对“形容词重叠”这一语言点，我们可以安排“介绍熊猫”的活动，介绍的时候可以很自然地用上：

眼睛大大的，尾巴短短的，身体胖胖的……

再如，针对“比较法”的教学，我们可以让学生查阅相关资料，对北京和上海两座城市的特点进行一个简单地比较。

（4）让活动个人化。让学生置身于语言活动之中，表达自己所要表达的内容，交流个人观点和生活经历，而不是“咀嚼”别人的意思，有利于满足学生的各别学习需求，也有利于让学生体验特定语境下的语言表达方式。对于一些“表现欲”较强的、比较有个性的学生，尤其有助于激发其学习积极性。如，结合程度副词和频度副词的教学，我们可以让学生介绍自己的爱好。他们可以说：

我非常喜欢……，我常常……。我不太喜欢……，我很少……

一旦赋予形式以一定的内容，那么，我们给予学生的输入材料，或者学生的输出内容，就不再是一个或一堆孤立的句子，而是一个语篇。我们不仅仅是在展示语言的用法(usage)，而是在体验语言的使用(use)。

## 2.2 从内容出发，在以内容为中心的前提下适度关注形式。

2.2.1 在以内容为中心的教学活动中，对于形式的关注，体现在任务前、任务中、任务后三个阶段，各有侧重。

在任务前阶段，主要是激活学生已有知识，学习相关词语和表达方式，为学生搭建支架。在任务中阶段，主要是随机地适度地纠正错误，提供帮助。在任务后阶段，教师应给予反馈和针对性操练，强化语言学习效果。如，下面是一个学习“描述物品特征”的系列任务活动：

热身活动：说出几件物品的特征，猜一猜分别是什么。

输入性任务：听听读读——“这东西是他丢的吗”？

准备：看图片，说一说他们在干什么。

完成图片与句子配对活动。

展开：听力活动。

准备：教师略微介绍即将听到的对话的背景情况，带出关键词语。

展开：听一段录音，然后分别看一组彩色图片，判断说话人正到

处打听寻找的是哪一幅图片里的物品。

反馈：教师讲评和操练。

阅读活动。读一则寻物启事，过程大致同上。

输出性任务：A 丢了一个物品，B 帮他写一则寻物启事。

准备：A 向 B 描述所丢失的物品的特征（有图片提示），B 填写表格。

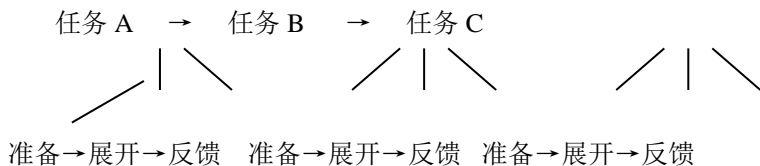
A 和 B 交换角色。

展开：A 和 B 分别根据表格里记录的内容写出寻物启事。

反馈：教师讲评和操练。学生修改。

延伸任务：失主前来认领，核对无误后归还。

从语言教学的角度上，上述任务是环环相扣，层层推进的：



2.2.2 对形式的关注可以结合输入，也可以针对输出。在输入方面，可以把理解性任务和语言形式的教学结合起来，如提高阅读语篇中某个语言现象的复现频率，在印刷的字体、字号、颜色等方面对有关形式加以凸显，等等，即所谓“输入强化 (input enhancement)”。如下面的对话中，“动词+结果补语”结构出现的频率比较高，在书面上，采用了黑体字。

警 察：怎么回事？

行 人：他撞了我。

警 察：你骑车的时候没**看到**她要过马路吗？

里 奇：我穿着雨衣，没**看清楚**。

行 人：他骑得很快，右手还拿着东西。

警 察：你过马路的时候，没**看见**他骑自行车过来吗？

行 人：我打着雨伞，没**看清楚**。

警 察：结果呢？

里奇、行人：我们都**摔倒了**。

里 奇：我的自行车**摔坏了**。

行 人：我的眼镜**摔破了**。

警 察：摔伤了没有？

行 人：不知道。背上有点儿疼。

警 察：这样吧，（to Liqi）你陪她去医院检查一下身体。

（to the pedestrian）检查完以后，你陪他去修自行车。

行 人：可是，我要去上班……

里 奇：我要去上课……

警 察：那你们就——

里奇、行人：再见吧！

（课文引自《当代中文》）

在输出方面，当学习者在表达中发生错误时，教师可以通过手势、表情（如皱眉），语调等暗示对方，用“不突出”的方式纠正学习者的错误。如：

（1）学生：我昨年来了。

教师：啊？

学生：去年，我去年……。

（2）学生：我不买火车票。

教师：你没买，还是打算买？

学生：哦……我没买。我明天买。

（3）学生：我去北京明天。

教师：哦，你明天去北京。



这些手段均是简明扼要的，以不影响交际任务的正常进行，不转移学生对内容的注意力为前提。在这些有意义的互动过程中，学生的目的语系统逐步得到完善和发展。

### 3. “学用统一”

强调语言之“用”，是语言教学理念的发展趋势。“形式和内容相平衡”的原则，是“学用统一”原则的体现；从另一个角度看，“学”和“用”处理方式的不同模式，体现了“形式和内容相平衡”的不同策略。“学”和“用”的处理方式可以有三种模式：先学后用、学用合一、为学而用。

#### 3.1 先学后用

体现“先学后用”理念的，是 PPP 模式，即：展示-操练-产出（presentation - practice - production）。我们也可以把这三个阶段理解为：教师教-学生练-学生用。Willis & Willis（1996:v）是这样概括 3P 法的三个阶段的：

**展示** 教师突出展示某个特定的语言形式。为了体现其意义，展示的时候在一定程度上是结合语境的。教师鼓励学生在教师的严格控制下说出该形式，直至比较熟练。

**练习** 教师开始放松控制。教师通过让学生互相提问，或者利用图片，来引导学生说出相应的语言形式。

**表达** 当教师确信学生可以说出该形式以后，教学便进入表达阶段，或叫自由阶段。这一阶段常常采用角色扮演、讨论、解决问题等活动形式，而这些活动往往都是需要采用该语言形式的。这一阶段很重要的一点是学生不再置于教师的严格控制之下。这一阶段的焦点据说是在于语言运用。教师鼓励学生在一定语境中的意义协商，该语境要求使用相应的语言形式。

三个 P 不应该是截然分割的。presentation 阶段以学为主，但学中有用；production 阶段以用为主，但用中有学。结合任务的教学（task-supported），在教学模式上表现为 PPP，即“先学后用”。

例如“情态补语”这一语法点的教学，按照 PPP 模式，其教学程序为：

A. 展示。

- a. 结合课文，或者结合语境导出情态补语句（如“他跑得很快”、“他来得很早”、“他骑自行车骑得很快”等）。
- b. 让学生把课文里含有情态补语的句子找出来。
- c. 概括情态补语的三种格式：V 得 C，VOV 得 C，OV 得 C，板书，分别举例。
- d. 讲解情态补语的意义。
- e. 强调在使用情态补语时需要注意的要点。

B. 练习。

- a. 完成句子，如：他说汉语说得\_\_\_\_\_。/ 他跳舞跳得\_\_\_\_\_。/……
- b. 组织句子，如：他 起 床 得 早 很 起
- c. 看图，要求对图片中的行为作出评价或描述，如：他们在吃饭，他们吃得真多。
- d. 改错，如：\*他每天睡觉得很晚。

练习的方式可以是多种多样的。

C. 表达。如：请用情态补语句描述你的一个朋友。

### 3.2 学用合一

学用合一，即基于任务的教学（任务型教学，Task-based Instruction）。基本理念是：在学习者目标任务需求分析的基础上，确定教学任务清单，让学生在课堂上演练这些任务。在这种情况下，教学内容和教学手段其实就统一起来了，任务既是教学内容和教学目标，也是教学手段。课堂教学就是通过对于教学任务的演练来让学习者熟悉目标任务，而这些教学任务正是对于目标任务的模拟。所以，Nunan（1989）认为，任务型教学既是教学大纲，又是教学方法。

如果我们坚持传统的区分法，那么任务设计看来是属于教学法范围的，然而，随着交际语言教学的发展，教学大纲与教学法之间渐渐变得难以区分了。我们不仅需要确定内容和任务，而且还需要整合内容和任务，这意味着在课程设计上的宽阔的视野：同时关注内容、方法和评估。（Nunan 1989）

如，一个航空小姐汉语培训项目的任务清单大概是：

招呼：您好，欢迎登机！

提供服务：您要什么饮料？我们有果汁、茶水……

提示要求：请系好安全带……

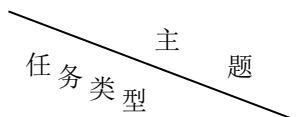
……

### 3.3 为学而用

我们没有必要把任务型教学与结构型、功能型、主题型教学等教学途径对立起来。作为狭义理解的语法大纲、功能大纲、内容大纲等等是可以，并且应该在教学中得到整合(integrated)的。

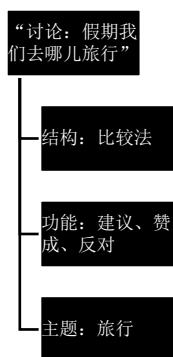
事实上，任务就是语言交际活动中的基本单位，在交际中，结构、功能、情境、内容等本来就是有机结合在一起的。我们完全可以系统地设计相应的任务，把任务作为课堂教学的基本结构单位，来为结构大纲、功能大纲、内容大纲等服务，最终实现发展学习者语言综合能力的目标。当然，这时任务仅仅是教学的手段，而不是教学的目标。

如：下面是主题式教学模式下，围绕“旅行”这一主题设计的任务。在“亲情”、“环境”主题下，我们可以设计类似的任务。



	亲情	环境	旅行
分享信息	?	?	“一张照片背后的故事”
解决问题	?	?	“假期我们去哪儿旅行”
想象性任务	?	?	“我想去月球看看”

在教学中我们需要整合不同大纲，以达到发展学习者语言综合运用能力的目标。如，下面是综合了结构大纲、功能大纲和相关主题后确定的任务：“讨论假期我们去哪儿旅行”。



与“学用合一”不同，这里的任务（即“用”）本身只是手段，掌握深层次的语言综合运用能力才是目标，因此，本文称之为“为学而用”。下面两个任务设计可以更加明显地看出其“手段”的特性：

假如飞机上有四个人：一个怀孕的女士，一个医生，一个科学家，一个儿童，飞机即将坠毁，必须跳伞，可是飞机上只有一个降落伞，你觉得该怎么办？

假如森林有一群动物，他们正在选举山林之王，现在请听一下老虎、猴子、山羊、大象的竞选演说，然后讨论一下，大家选谁做山林之王。

上述任务的价值并不在于任务本身，而在于实施任务过程中的带给我们的可迁移的东西——语言的交际功能。

#### 4. 多元对象和多元环境下的语言教学

后教学法时代的教学，并非不要方法，而是强调在原则指导下的方法的多元性。在对外汉语教学界，历来有一个说法：教学有法而无定法，贵在得法。“教学有法”，即教学应该遵循一定的原则，“教无定法”，即教学的具体方法应该灵活多样，“贵在得法”，即，关键在于应该根据特定的教学对象和教学环境采取相应的教学策略。

本文认为，形式和内容相平衡，是语言教学中的最基本的原则之一。但是，如何平衡，其策略是多样的。多样的平衡策略，产生了多元的教学模式，归根到底，由多元的教学对象和教学环境所决定。由此，就联系到另一个基本原则：以学生为中心的原则。

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# EXPLORING NATIVE ENGLISH LISTENERS' LEARNING DIFFICULTY WITH MANDARIN CHINESE FRICATIVES AND AFFRICATES: A PERCEPTUAL ASSIMILATION STUDY

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## Introduction

The language constellation English-Chinese has been widely studied but usually with English as the target language for native Chinese learners. A growing interest in China and Chinese is, however, likely to increase linguistic studies of the languages of China, or what are often referred to as “dialects” of Chinese. From a cross-linguistic perspective the standard dialect “Mandarin” is most likely to be the main target of future research, since this is the variety used in all official matters as well as for communication between speakers of other languages or dialects in China. It is also the target language for this study, which explores native English speaking listeners' perceptual assimilation of 10 Mandarin Chinese (MC) initial consonants. Describing the theoretical basis for the study, a literature review is first presented, briefly introducing the model and the terminology deployed. A synthesis of the descriptive literature covering MC phonology is then offered for a comparison with English. The English-Chinese language constellation is interesting, not only because it comprises two of the world's most widely, natively spoken languages, but also because of distinct differences in their phonetic inventories. The MC inventory of affricates and fricatives is far more complex than that of many other languages, including English (Ladefoged 2005, Ladefoged & Maddieson 1996). This study explores how MC consonants will be perceived by non-native listeners and mapped onto categories of an inventory that lacks many of the distinctions found in MC

phonology. Apparently, this method has not yet been applied to studies targeting the perception of MC phones as assimilated by native English speaking subjects.

## **1. Theoretical Background**

### ***1.1 Language Learning Models***

Among the many factors that may influence the pronunciation of a second language, the native language undoubtedly contributes importantly to the specific characteristics of foreign accented speech (for a review, see Piske, MacKay & Flege 2001). Two models of cross-language speech perception and second language speech learning attempt to predict the perceptual difficulty or ease which learners experience when they encounter the sounds of a nonnative language: Best's (1995) Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM), and Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model.

Best (1995) argues that mature listeners, unlike infants, are perceptually tuned to their native phonology, so language-specific differences in phonetic implementations must gradually be discovered in the course of L1 acquisition. Best (1995, 184) specifies that "perceptual learning entails discovering the *critically* distinctive features, the most telling differences among objects and events that are of importance to the perceiver. Information that does not serve this purpose tends not to be picked up". In the case of speech input, categorical perception allows for non-standard phonetic material to be perceived as representations of a standard phonemic inventory. However, the inability to distinguish L2 segments from each other, or from the closest L1 segments, causes grave problems for language learners. As the theoretical premise for PAM, Best (1995, 193) proposes that "non-native segments [...] tend to be perceived according to their similarities to, and discrepancies from, the native segmental constellations that are in closest proximity to them in native phonological space". The model outlines how non-native segments may be perceptually assimilated as (1) segments of a listener's L1, (2) uncategorizable speech sounds or (3) non-speech sounds. The possible patterns are further outlined and aim to predict degree of perceptual differentiation, or discrimination ability.

- ❖ Two-Category Assimilation

If two non-native segments are assimilated to two different native segments, they should be easily discriminated.

- ❖ Category-Goodness Difference

If two L2 sounds are assimilated to the same native category, level of expected discrimination depends on their difference in goodness rating.

- ❖ Single-Category Assimilation

If two non-native sounds are perceived as equally poor or good variants of the same native category, they will not be easily discriminated.

- ❖ Both Uncategorizable  
If two non-native sounds are both considered new and are thus not assimilated to any native category, level of discrimination depends on their phonological proximity to each other, or to native phonemes within the same space.
- ❖ Uncategorized vs. Categorized  
If one non-native sound is assimilated to a native category it will be easily discriminated from one that is not perceived as a variant of a native category.
- ❖ Nonassimilable  
If neither of two non-native sounds are neither assimilated to a native category, nor perceived as a speech sound, discrimination should be good, but may vary.

Flege's (1995) SLM was designed to account for non-native speakers' failure to produce L2 phones in a native-like manner. Using the terms "new" and "similar" to describe the relation between the sounds of the L1 and the L2, this model also stresses how perception of L2 segments depends on the L1 phonemic inventory. If an L2 phone is perceived as "new" (i.e., quite unlike any native sound), it will be more easily discriminated, and not be assimilated to an L1 category. If an L2 segment is perceived as "similar" to an L1 category, it will be "equivalence-classified", resulting in inaccurate perception and production of the L2 segment.

According to both PAM and SLM, identification and discrimination of L2 phones depend on the perceived similarity between L1 and L2 segments. This study investigates how the fricatives and affricates of MC are mapped onto the English sound system and refers to the assumptions and predictions of PAM in its methodology and analysis. For a clear understanding of the phonological discrepancies between English and MC, a simplified description of the study's target language is provided. Emphasis is placed on aspects relevant to the perceptual assimilation study of initial consonants, so irrelevant details about syllable structure and tones will be excluded here.

## ***1.2 Mandarin Phonology***

MC has approximately 400 distinct monosyllables, and when accounting for tonal differences the number is estimated to be about 1300-1600<sup>1</sup>. MC syllables are typically analyzed as consisting of an initial, a final and a tone. "The initial is the consonantal onset to the syllable [...] which] always consists of a single consonant" (Ramsey 1989, 138). Table 1 charts 23 initial consonants of Mandarin Chinese,

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<sup>1</sup> Different sources provide different numbers, e.g., Ramsey, 1989 and Duanmu, 2006.

which account for all possible consonantal segments except for the velar nasal, which exists only in final position in MC and in English, and is thus not included.

TABLE 1: Initials are represented first in Hanyu pinyin, with the corresponding IPA symbol below. In each box, voiceless (aspirated) consonants appear on the left, and voiced (unaspirated) consonants on the right.

	<b>Plosive</b>	<b>Nasal</b>	<b>Affricate</b>	<b>Fricative</b>	<b>Approximant</b>
<b>Labial</b>	p [p <sup>h</sup> ]    b [p]	m [m]		f [f]	w [w]
<b>Alveolar</b>	t [t <sup>h</sup> ]    d [t]	n [n]			l [l]
<b>Dental sibilant</b>			c [ts <sup>h</sup> ]    z [ts]	s [s]	
<b>Alveolo-palatal</b>			q [tɕ <sup>h</sup> ]    j [tɕ]	x [ɕ]	y [j]
<b>Retroflex-sibilant</b>			ch [tʂ <sup>h</sup> ]    zh [tʂ]	sh [ʂ]	r [ʐ]
<b>Velar</b>	k [k <sup>h</sup> ]    g [k]			h [x]	

For six pairs of MC consonants there are phonemic contrasts based only on aspiration. The three sets of affricates are unique to Chinese (Lai, 2009).

The series of alveolo-palatals come in complementary distribution with the series of dental sibilants, retroflex sibilants and velars, and have been considered allophones of these. The segments [tɕ],[tɕ<sup>h</sup>] and [ɕ] can only be followed immediately by the high vowels [i] or [y], while dentals, retroflexes and velars cannot be followed immediately by these. Instead of relying solely on cues from the following vowel, orthographic (pinyin) representation, however, assists learners in differentiating the series of palatals from its three allophonic series.

The small number of possible syllables in MC means that it has a large number of homophones. Discriminating syllables is thus important to intelligible perception and production of the language, but such distinctions have been proven difficult in empirical studies. The following literature review includes only research relating to the initial consonantal phonemes of Mandarin Chinese which are deployed as stimuli in this study.

### **1.3 Literature Review**

In a cross-language study, testing adults' and infants' perception of native and non-native contrasts, Tsao et al. (2006) compared native English speakers and native Mandarin speakers in their ability to distinguish Mandarin affricates vs. fricatives. In

accordance with PAM they hypothesized that “adult speakers of the two languages would emphasize different acoustic cues in perception, and that adult speakers of English would therefore find it more difficult to discriminate the Mandarin contrast” (p. 2286). The series of alveolo-palatals were used for contrasting pairs: [tɕ<sup>h</sup>] vs. [tɕ], [tɕ<sup>h</sup>] vs. [ɕ] and [tɕ] vs. [ɕ], and the findings showed that native Mandarin speakers performed better than native English speakers in discriminating these contrasts. Discrimination ability was highest for the contrast of the aspirated affricate vs. the fricative, and lowest for the pair of affricates differing only in aspiration. This was true for both groups of listeners; however, native Chinese subjects had an overall higher score in sensitivity rating. The study found that language experience affects perceptual discrimination for non-native contrasts.

The patterns of the sensitivity scores suggest a hierarchy in perceptual saliency across different subject groups. This hierarchy has been empirically supported in a study by Tse (2000) investigating native Mandarin speakers' perception of the Mandarin dental, palatal and retroflex series. In concordance with the findings by Tsao et al. (2006), Tse (2000) reported a hierarchy in perceptual saliency of first aspirated affricates, then fricatives, and finally unaspirated affricates. For place of articulation the hierarchy seemed to be first retroflexion, then dentality, and finally palatality.

Also relevant in the present context is a study by Lai (2009), who examined the perception of Mandarin affricate contrasts by native speakers of Malay and of Burmese. One surprising finding was a higher perceptual saliency for unaspirated than aspirated affricates (i.e., unaspirated affricates were perceived more correctly than aspirated affricates). Lai (2009) suggests that the discrepancy between his own and Tse's (2000) study may be ascribed to “different phonetic settings under investigation”, and highlights the importance of testing in natural context. Lai also questions the relatively low perceptual saliency of palatals, which is not noted elsewhere in the literature. Lai's study seems to be the first one in which Chinese second language learners rated L2 phonemes on a graded scale to evaluate the “similarity” or “newness” of the Mandarin initials compared with phonemes of their L1. Four MC initials were rated non-native segments, i.e., the dentals ([ts], [ts<sup>h</sup>]) and the retroflexes ([tʂ], [tʂ<sup>h</sup>]). The alveolo-palatals were considered similar to segments in their respective L1s by both groups of learners (native speakers of Malay and Burmese). Like English, Malay and Burmese have voiceless and voiced post-alveolar affricates [tʃ] and [dʒ] which seem to be the L1 categories to which the Mandarin alveolo-palatals are matched. The results of the discrimination task showed greatest difficulties in distinguishing between the Mandarin affricates that were considered non-native. For these contrasts dentalization was the dominant direction of Mandarin affricate merger.

The present study examines the perceptual assimilation of Mandarin Chinese fricatives and affricates to English consonants, and it uses the results of the perceptual assimilations to generate predictions of the ease or difficulty with which native English learners will learn to perceive and produce these Mandarin Chinese consonants accurately.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Stimuli**

We examined the perception of ten Mandarin initial consonants: The three sets of aspirated and unaspirated affricates ([ts],[ts<sup>h</sup>], [tɕ], [tɕ<sup>h</sup>], and ([tʂ],[tʂ<sup>h</sup>]), which “are not universally present in other languages, [and] have been extensively challenging for learners of Mandarin Chinese” (Lai 2009). We included four additional initials ([s], [ɕ], [ʃ] and [ʈ]), which can all be considered fricatives<sup>2</sup>, so that the stimuli represented the complete series (grouped by place of articulation) of MC consonants which constitute learning problems for non-native speakers. Full-series-inclusion furthermore enabled comparison of listeners’ perceptual judgment of the fricatives [ʃ] and [ɕ]. This pair is not easily distinguished by English-speaking learners of Mandarin since “the English sounds *j* [dʒ], *ch* [tʃ] and *sh* [ʃ] fall somewhere between the Chinese retroflexes and the palatals” (Norman 1988, 140).

The initials were produced by a native MC speaker with either the vowel [ɤ] following (after dental and retroflex consonants) or followed by [i] (palatals). All ten syllables were presented in the first tone (high continuing pitch). The stimuli were downloaded from [www.chinesepod.com](http://www.chinesepod.com).

### **2.2 Listeners**

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<sup>2</sup> From its characterization as [ɹ], it follows that the initial should not be grouped with fricatives. The tendency to do so stems from the fact that it is sometimes treated as such in the literature, and transcribed as [z]. This description has, however, also been misleading: “[T]he Chinese *r* is pronounced with less friction than the comparable English fricative, and acoustically sounds much closer to the usual American pronunciation of *r*”. (Norman 1988). For ease of exposition, we group the sound with the fricatives when comparing across manner of articulation.

Eleven native speakers of English<sup>3</sup> participated as unpaid volunteers. Their age ranged from 20 to 50 years (m=29), and they had resided outside an English speaking country for 3 months to 15 years (m=7 years), never exceeding 30% of any subject's life time. All but one participant had studied other languages, three were childhood bilinguals with either Danish (n = 2) or Farsi (n = 1) as the other language. None of the participants had any significant exposure to MC or any other language with a fricative and affricate inventory similar to that of MC (e.g., Polish).

### **2.3 Procedure**

Listeners were individually tested in a sound-attenuated booth listening to the MC syllables over high-quality headphones. They were instructed to listen closely to the initial sound of the syllable, and to disregard the following vowel. We used the TP software developed by Rauber et al. (2013) to present each of the ten tokens six times in randomized order. For each syllable they heard, listeners chose the best matching English sound from a list of response alternatives on the computer screen, which displayed 13 possible responses (see Figure 1).

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<sup>3</sup> Number of listeners across native variety of English:

General American=4, Canadian English=2, Standard Southern British English=4, Australian English=1.

TI - TEST - 06/12/2013

2. Mapping Mandarin Initials

11 / 70

t	d(ue)	ch
d	y(es)	sh
(be)ts	(rou)ge	s
(be)ds	(ba)dge	r
No match		

Goodness-of-fit

1-Poor	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9-Good
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FIGURE 1: Response interface in the perceptual assimilation task. Top: English response alternatives in Standard English spelling. Bottom: Likert scale to indicate goodness of fit.

The experimenter first familiarized each participant with the response alternatives by reading each alternative out loud. Some sounds were exemplified in words where a single letter or digraph would not sufficiently disambiguate the category. Listeners were encouraged to refrain from selecting the “no match” option and to select one of the other 12 categories labeled with English sounds if at all possible. Listeners were then asked to rate their choice of match by selecting a number on a nine-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating “a very poor match” and 9 “a very good match”.

Participants first completed a pre-test during which they could ask questions. All ten syllables were presented once during this familiarization test, the results of which were not included in the analysis of the responses data. The duration of the test was 10 to 25 minutes.

### 3. Results: Overview



Table 2 shows how the native English listeners mapped the MC stimuli (number totaling 660) onto English response categories. Responses are given in percentages to the nearest halves. The data for each column are based on a total of sixty-six responses (6 repetitions of each token x 11 listener responses), with responses totaling more than 9% highlighted in bold<sup>4</sup>. The highlighted data points also provide the basis for all following charts and further discussion to limit the data to the most significant results.

English Consonant Responses	Mandarin Initial Consonants									
	[tɕ]	[tɕʰ]	[ç]	[tʂ]	[tʂʰ]	[ʂ]	[ɬ]	[ts]	[tsʰ]	[s]
/t/	4.5	<b>42.5</b>			1.5			<b>54.5</b>	<b>74</b>	
/d/	<b>41</b>			1.5				<b>14</b>		
/ts/								<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13.5</b>
/dz/										
/dʒ/	<b>9</b>			<b>9</b>	1.5			7.5		
/j/				1.5			4.5			
/ʒ/	<b>12</b>	1.5		<b>12</b>			<b>71.5</b>			
/dʒ/	<b>26</b>			<b>64</b>	1.5		<b>12</b>	1.5		
/tʃ/		<b>54.5</b>			<b>92.5</b>	1.5				
/ʃ/			<b>97</b>			<b>92.5</b>				6
/s/			3			4.5				<b>79</b>
/ʃ/										
No match	7.5	1.5		<b>12</b>	3	1.5	<b>12</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>12</b>	1.5

TABLE 2: Mean percent identification of Mandarin Chinese initial fricatives and affricates (displayed horizontally) to English consonants (displayed vertically) by native English listeners.

Figure 2 (below) shows the relation between response consistency and goodness ratings. The chart visualizes some of the main findings of the present study. According to PAM, a segment assimilated to a native category may be perceived as either a good, an acceptable or a deviant exemplar of the native category. This three-way distinction can be applied here to classify the English listeners' assimilations into three subgroups. A cluster of MC consonants with high goodness ratings (> 6) is located in the top right-hand corner of the figure, with all of the MC fricatives ([ʂ], [ç] and [ʃ]) and only one of the affricates ([tʂʰ]). These MC consonants are very consistently (>75% of the instances) assimilated to English consonants with high goodness ratings.

<sup>4</sup> Percentages in Table 2 may overstate the frequency of responses, i.e. a percentage of 1.5 thus only represents one single response.

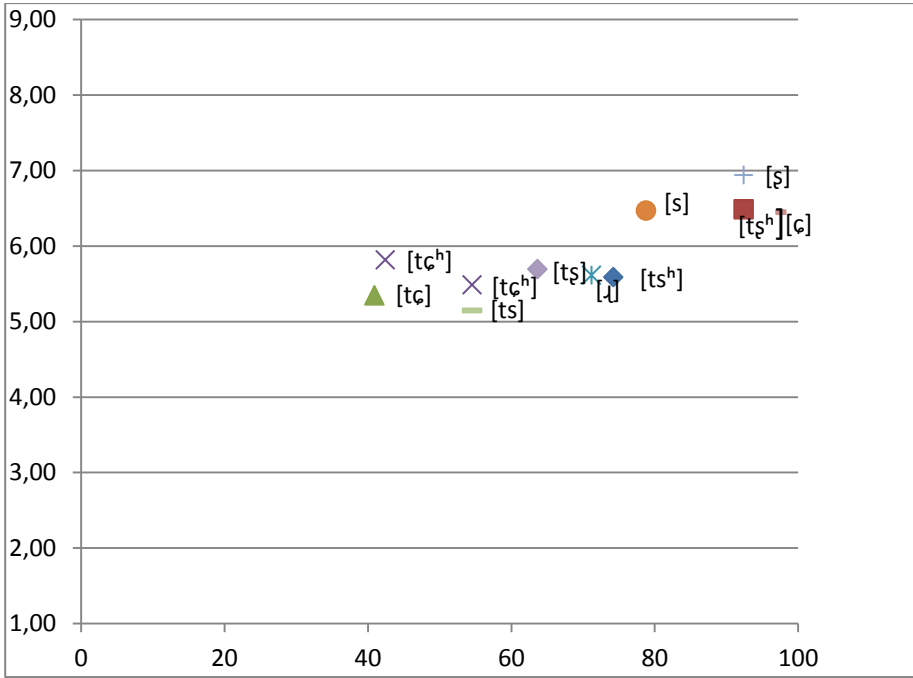


Figure 2: Or: Perceptual assimilation of Mandarin Chinese initial consonants by native English listeners. The figure displays response consistency (most frequent response) on the x-axis and goodness ratings on the y-axis. Note that [tʃʰ] was mapped onto two response categories with nearly equal frequency.

A cluster of more or less acceptable (in PAM terminology) MC consonants has lower mean goodness ratings (range: 5-6) and is assimilated to English consonants in less than 75% of the instances. This cluster contains all of the affricates (except for the “good” match ([tʃʰ]), plus [ɹ]). This MC consonant, which is so inconsistently defined in the literature, is quite consistently mapped onto an English counterpart, the voiced postalveolar fricative [ʒ]. Interestingly, all aspirated affricates tend to both be categorized more frequently and also score higher in goodness rating than their unaspirated counterparts. This finding is consistent with those of previous studies (Tsao et al. 2006; Tse 2000) which suggest a hierarchy in perceptual saliency in which aspiration enjoys higher perceptual saliency than lack of aspiration. The present results similarly indicate that unaspirated consonants are less assimilable than the aspirated consonants.

The palatal affricates are mapped onto English consonants with the least consistency. We find that [tʃ] and [tʃʰ] are assimilated to an English consonant in

less than 50% of the instances, yet with fairly high goodness ratings (>5). The aspirated [tɕʰ] is assimilated equally well to two different categories and may thus constitute a learning problem.

We analyze and discuss the data for the individual MC consonants separately for fricatives and affricates below.

### 3.1 Results and Discussion for MC fricatives and [ɿ]

English Consonant Responses	Mandarin Initial Consonants - Fricatives			
	[s]	[ɕ]	[ʃ]	[ɿ]
/ts/	13.5 (2.7)			
/ʒ/				71.5 (5.6)
/dʒ/				12 (3.9)
/ʃ/		97 (6.4)	92.5 (6.9)	
/s/	79 (6.5)			
No match				12

Table 3: Mean percent identification and goodness ratings (in parentheses) of MC fricatives and [ɿ] (displayed horizontally) to English consonants (displayed vertically) by native English listeners. The goodness ratings are based on a scale ranging from “poor” (1) to “good” (9).

Table 3 shows that MC [s] was very consistently matched with English /s/, and that this match was perceived to be quite good, being the second highest in the present experiment. The other response category for MC [s], English /ts/, was unexpected. The goodness rating for this match was the lowest in the present experiment, and the match of MC [s] to English /ts/ was found for only three of the eleven listeners.

The fricatives [ɕ] and [ʃ] are perceived very similarly by native English speaking listeners. In terms of PAM the two posterior sibilants [ɕ] and [ʃ] represent the Single-Category assimilation type. In concordance with the literature (Norman 1988), the present study finds that both the palatal and retroflex fricatives are perceived as good variants of English [ʃ]. The SLM predicts that, because [ɕ] and [ʃ] are each perceived to be very similar to English /ʃ/, these sibilants could present lasting production problems, even for advanced learners of MC. Since, however, the following vowel is conditioned by the initial consonant, advanced learners may be able to distinguish [ɕ] and [ʃ] by using this additional information. Palatal [ɕ] can only be immediately followed by one of the two high vowels in MC, whereas [ʃ] and the other retroflex initials never precede these high vowels. For simple syllables which contain only a main vowel, minimal pairs contrasting palatals with series

different in place of articulation do not exist. However, for more complex finals, MC has syllables that are not easily contrasted by non-native speakers, as they seem to differ only in the place of articulation of the initial consonant.

The Mandarin initial transcribed here as [ɹ] was primarily perceived as a variant of English /ʒ/ and also (but less frequently) as the affricate /dʒ/. The implications of the respective goodness ratings suggest that English speaking listeners will mostly be able to identify this segment as a fricative, and not mistake it for an affricate. MC [ɹ] was not once matched with English /ɹ/, suggesting that native English speakers do not perceive it as an approximant.

In conclusion, the perceptual assimilation of MC fricatives and [ɹ] to English consonants yields the following predictions for L1 English listeners' perception (and production?) of [s], [ɕ] and [ʃ], and [ɹ]: The less-than-perfect match of [s] and [ɹ] to their English counterparts indicates that L1 English listeners detect some discrepancy from native categories, which is surprising in the case of [s]. However, the fact that English listeners indicate that they perceive MC [ɹ] to be only similar (not identical) to instances of their native /ʒ/ leads both PAM and SLM to expect that, given extensive experience with MC, L1 English learners could eventually produce and perceive MC [ɹ] correctly. The Single-Category assimilation of MC [ɕ] and [ʃ] suggests that native English learners of MC will have considerable problems differentiating these two MC sibilants.

### 3.2 Results and Discussion for MC affricates

English Consonant Responses	Mandarin Initial Consonants - Affricates					
	[ts]	[ts <sup>h</sup> ]	[tɕ]	[tɕ <sup>h</sup> ]	[tʂ]	[tʂ <sup>h</sup> ]
/t/	54.5 (5.2)	74 (5.6)		42.5 (5.8)		
/d/	14 (4.4)		41 (5.3)			
/ts/	9 (3.4)	14 (2.7)				
/dj/			9 (3.6)		9 (5.6)	
/ʒ/			12 (5.5)		12 (4.3)	
/dʒ/			26 (3.5)		64 (5.7)	
/tʃ/				54.5 (5.5)		92.5 (6.5)
No match	13.5	12			12	

TABLE 4: Mean percent identification and goodness ratings (in parentheses) of Mandarin Chinese affricates (displayed horizontally) to English consonants (vertically) by native English listeners.

Table 4 shows that the dental affricates [ts] and [ts<sup>h</sup>] were mostly matched with English alveolar plosives, with only moderate goodness ratings. In addition to these primary matches, the listeners chose other responses or “no match” in a fairly large number of instances, suggesting (in terms of PAM) that [ts<sup>h</sup>] and especially [ts] are Uncategorized nonnative categories.

The palatals [tɕ] and [tɕ<sup>h</sup>] do not overlap in their response categories, but similar mapping-patterns are found for the unaspirated palatal and unaspirated retroflex sibilant, and again for the aspirated palatal and the aspirated retroflex sibilant. [tɕ] is with low consistency perceived as /d/, but for the remaining matches, judgments clearly resemble those found for [tʂ]. MC [tɕ] and [tʂ] are inconsistently matched with three different English phonemes: /dj/, /ʒ/, and /dʒ/. The only L1 voiced affricate, /dʒ/, is a preferred match for both.

The aspirated palatal and retroflex affricates tell a similar story: The matched responses for the palatal [tɕ<sup>h</sup>] are almost evenly distributed between /t/ and /tʃ/, while [tʂ<sup>h</sup>] is quite consistently perceived as /tʃ/. The moderate to high values in goodness rating indicate that these Mandarin phonemes are perceived as fairly good instances of the selected response categories. Comparing palatals and retroflexes, the aspirated affricates are more easily mapped onto English consonants while their unaspirated counterparts have more varying matches.

The predictions generated by PAM and SLM will be presented by considering possible contrasts individually, first with regard to each of the three aspirated-unaspirated contrasts, and then with respect to the place of articulation contrasts.

The listeners showed a very slight difference in their assimilation pattern for MC [ts] and [ts<sup>h</sup>]. Both affricates were primarily assimilated to English /t/, representing PAM's Single Category assimilation type, which is predicted to result in poor perceptual discrimination and, consequently, in incorrect production. The SLM generates the same prediction, because of the perceived similarity of both [ts] and [ts<sup>h</sup>] to English /t/. We did not examine the perceptual assimilation of MC [t<sup>h</sup>] to English consonants, but it seems safe to assume that MC [t<sup>h</sup>] would be unequivocally identified with the equally aspirated English /t/. Thus, taken together, MC [t<sup>h</sup>] on the one hand and the Single-Category assimilated MC [ts] and [ts<sup>h</sup>] on the other represent the Category-Goodness assimilation type, with MC [t<sup>h</sup>] as a good to excellent example of English /t/, and [ts] and [ts<sup>h</sup>] jointly as poor examples of English /t/. PAM predicts that L1 English listeners' discrimination ability will be good, i.e., they will be able to perceptually differentiate between MC [t<sup>h</sup>] and MC [ts] ~ [ts<sup>h</sup>], but, will have problems perceptually differentiating MC [ts] and [ts<sup>h</sup>].

The members of the [tɕ]-[tɕ<sup>h</sup>] contrast are each inconsistently assimilated to different L1 English categories. In terms of PAM, these affricates represent the Uncategorized contrast type. Both PAM and SLM predict that because L1 English listeners detect that both [tɕ] and [tɕ<sup>h</sup>] differ from English L1 categories, L1 English learners will be able to perceptually differentiate [tɕ] and [tɕ<sup>h</sup>], and that they will eventually be able to produce these affricates correctly.

The members of the [tʂ]-[tʂ<sup>h</sup>] contrast are each assimilated to different English categories (PAM's Two-Category assimilation type), which predicts that these affricates will be easily perceptually differentiated. Additionally, SLM predicts that the consistent assimilation of MC [tʂ<sup>h</sup>] to English /tʃ/ will make it difficult for L1 English learners to produce MC [tʂ<sup>h</sup>] correctly because equivalence classification of the MC and the English categories blocks the establishment of a new category for MC [tʂ<sup>h</sup>]. However, the assimilation pattern for MC [tʂ] indicates that English listeners are aware of the discrepancy between this affricate and any English category, which should enable L1 English learners to establish a category for this MC affricate.

Interestingly, the results for the place of articulation contrasts of MC affricates indicate a slightly different assimilation pattern for unaspirated vs. aspirated affricates. The unaspirated affricates [ts], [tɕ], and [tʂ] are each predominantly assimilated to different English consonants with, however, low cross-language identification rates: MC [ts] to English /t/ at a rate of 54.5 %, MC [tɕ] to English /d/ at a rate of 41%, and MC [tʂ] to English /dʒ/ at a rate of 64%. Even though these rates are low, the non-overlapping assimilations indicate that English listeners perceive the difference in place of articulation for these affricates, which in turn suggests that the three-way MC place of articulation contrast for unaspirated affricates is learnable. The picture is slightly different for the aspirated series, where

listeners clearly perceive the difference between [ts<sup>h</sup>] and [tɕ<sup>h</sup>], which are predominantly assimilated to English /t/ and /tʃ/, respectively. However, the split assimilation pattern for [tɕ<sup>h</sup>], which is perceived in ca. half the instances as English /t/ or as English /tʃ/, suggests that the place of articulation contrast for [tɕ<sup>h</sup>] and [tɕ<sup>h</sup>] will constitute a learning problem for L1 English speakers. It is possible that learners will be able to discriminate [tɕ<sup>h</sup>] in simple syllables based on the following vowel. In sets of more complex syllables learners cannot rely on the vowel for discrimination, and may not easily distinguish the palatals from their allophonic counterparts. The implications of this study suggest perception and production problems: These MC affricates are assimilated predominantly ([ts<sup>h</sup>]) or frequently ([tɕ<sup>h</sup>]) to the same English category (/t/), which, according to PAM and SLM, will make perceptual differentiation and correct production of the [ts<sup>h</sup>]- [tɕ<sup>h</sup>] contrast difficult.

#### 4. Summary and Conclusions

To our knowledge, the present study is the first to explore L1 English listeners' perceptual assimilation of MC affricates, fricatives, and [ɿ] to English consonants. Eleven naïve L1 English listeners indicated which English consonant presented the best match for MC [s], [ɕ], [ʃ], [ɿ], [ts], [ts<sup>h</sup>], [tɕ], [tɕ<sup>h</sup>], [tɕʰ], and [tɕʰ], and then rated their responses for goodness of fit. The results of the perceptual assimilation task were used to predict how successfully native English learners of MC would perceive and produce these MC consonants, using as theoretical frameworks Best's (1995) Perceptual Assimilation Model and Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model. Specifically, our results suggest that accurate perception and production of MC [ɕ] and [ʃ] will be a lasting problem for L1 English learners because of the perceived close similarity of these MC fricatives to English /f/, as will be the accurate perception and production of MC [ts] and [ts<sup>h</sup>] because both affricates have similar assimilation patterns to English /t/. We predict that the aspirated affricate [tɕ<sup>h</sup>] presents another leaning problem because its assimilation is split between English /t/ and /tʃ/: In nearly half of the instances, [tɕ<sup>h</sup>] is assimilated to English /t/ and with goodness ratings similar to those of MC [ts], and in the other half of the instances, it is assimilated to English /tʃ/, which is also the near-exclusive response category for MC [ts<sup>h</sup>]. An unexpected finding was that the assimilation patterns for unaspirated fricatives differed from their homorganic aspirated counterparts. Finally, [tɕ<sup>h</sup>] showed overlapping assimilation patterns with both [ts<sup>h</sup>] and [tɕ<sup>h</sup>], which indicates particular learning problems for [tɕ<sup>h</sup>].

The present results were derived using stimuli which were produced by just one talker in just one phonetic context. These results should be replicated using stimuli from several talkers, and it would be interesting to see whether different contexts, i.e., the variations in the tone and the following vowel, affect cross-language assimilation, as has been shown in previous perceptual assimilation studies (e.g., Bohn & Steinlen 2003; Strange, Bohn, Nishi & Trent 2005).

The predictions derived from the present perceptual assimilation results on the basis of the assumptions of PAM and SLM will have to be tested in experiments examining the discriminability of selected MC fricative and affricate contrasts. At present, we have only informal, anecdotal evidence from teachers and learners of MC which, however, support the claims which resulted from our exploratory study.

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# 从汉字字形与音义之间的关系看汉字教学

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## 一、非形声字的字形记录音义的特点与相应的汉字教学策略

### 1. 非形声字的字形记录音义的特点

汉语是音节不算多的语言，除去四个声调，汉语中的音节数在 400 多个，这是为什么汉语中的声调十分重要，调不同，就具有区别意义的职能。相应地，汉语中也就存在很多发音相同或相近的词，我们俗称同音词。在古代，汉语中的词汇 90%以上为单音节，作为记录汉语词汇的汉字，在造字之初，选择方块外形，从记录词义入手，是明智的选择，因为字形的不同，即使读音相同或相近，也能起到区别意义的作用。




#### 1.1 独体字的字形与音义关系特点




汉字中的独体字是指从认知的角度，由一个不可分的，形、音、义俱全的整体构成的，借用许慎《说文解字》中的“六书”概念，在古代往往是独体的象形字、指事字或假借字充当的。如果用符号学的观点，看今天的现代汉字，独体字就是由一个不可分的，具有形、音、义的部件组成的汉字。追溯汉字的源头，我们如今只能从现存最早的汉字字体的构形中窥见古人造字取象的初衷，从而厘清汉字字形与音义之间的对应关系，这种对应关系随着汉字的使用，一直到今天，汉语的语音发生了很大的流变，而汉字的字形依然呈扁长方形外观。




归纳来看，独体字的汉字字形与音义之间的关系呈现如下特点：




##### 1.1.1 汉字字形由古代象形字演变而来，以形表义，字音约定俗成




这一类汉字在我们今天的生活中十分常见，如“女”、“目”、“母”、“止”、“山”、“水”、等。不难发现，这些汉字记录的词在汉语中十分稳定，是汉语基本词汇中的一员。我们不妨看看这些字曾经在历史上的写法：

女，（甲骨文）——（金文）——（小篆）——女（隶书）

目， (甲骨文) ——  (金文) ——  (小篆) —— 目 (隶书)

母， (甲骨文) ——  (金文) ——  (小篆) —— 母 (隶书)

止， (甲骨文) ——  (金文) ——  (小篆) —— 止 (隶书)


山， (甲骨文) ——  (金文) ——  (小篆) —— 山 (隶书)



水， (甲骨文) ——  (金文) ——  (小篆) —— 水 (隶书)



从以上字例的字形演变中，我们看到楷书写法定型的轨迹，这些独体字在造字之初就通过字形来表达汉语中的一个个词义，十分形象，而字音则是当时社会约定俗成的。


### 1.1.2 汉字字形在原有的独体象形字上加注一个抽象的符号，共同表示词义；或者本身就是抽象符号，表达语言中的意义


这一类独体字在许慎《说文解字》中称作指事字，汉字通过字形与一个抽象符号的组合，共同表达词义。这类独体字字形与词的意义更为紧密，通过字形表义，然后加上约定的读音，从而达到记录词的目的。如“寸”、“甘”、“尤”、“本”、“末”等字。

寸，，《说文》“十分也。人手却一寸，动脉，谓之寸口。从又从一。”现在中国传统医学还在用“寸口”这个专门的术语，就是指距离人的手掌一寸的地方，中医号脉之处。

甘，，《说文》“美也。从口含一。”甲骨文写作，是在象形字“口”（一说“舌”）上加一抽象符号，表示“口”（舌）可以尝到“甘”这种美味。今天的“甜”，从字形来看，有些画蛇添足了。日语中“甜”还保留古代汉语中的表达习惯，用“甘”表示“甜”。

尤，，《说文》“异也。”甲骨文写作，像在手指数处加一抽象符号之形，本义是指“疣”。

本，，《说文》“木下曰本。从木，一在其下。”古文字形在象形字“木”树干下面加以抽象符号，表示此处为树根，这个字的本义是“树根”。汉语中“根本”一词，“根”就是“本”。

末，，《说文》“木上曰末。从木，一在其上。”这个字与“本”造字理念一致，古字形就是在“木”的树干顶端加一抽象符号，表示此处是树顶端最末梢之处。

这一类字的字形虽然加了抽象的符号，还是以字形表义为主。还有一类独体字，如汉语中的数字，“一、二、三、四、五、六、七、八、九、十”等，字形本身就是抽象符号，约定表达这些数字而已。

### 1.1.3 原有的独体表意字因为与汉语中的另一个概念读音相同或相近，假借其字形和字音，表达新的词义

这一类字实际上就是我们常说的假借字。常用汉字中，如“我”、“其”等，字形在造字之初都各有其义，由于隐痛或者音近，被借来表示今天我们了解的常用义，这几个字虽然造字时字形是传递意义信息的，但是借来表示今天的常用义，这个字形仅仅通过其音，记录汉语中需要表达的词的音，从而进一步达到形音义的统一。这类汉字，字形已经成为记音的符号。

但是还有一种类型，这个字本身已经表达一定的音义，但是还常常被借去表示另一个同音的词，如“白”表示“白颜色”，但是汉语中“独白”、“对白”、“白字”等词汇中的“白”跟“白颜色”没有关系，只是借“白”这个字形和读音来记录“独白”、“对白”、“白字”等中的“白”。这个“白”，实际上也是字形记音为主的。


## 2. 合体字的字形与音义关系特点


### 2.1 合体字的字形与词义之间的有着默契的关系：造字取象中体现思维的印迹




汉字非形声字中的合体字，一般理解为许慎所言的会意字，是由两个或两个以上的字符组合，表达一个新的意义。这类合体字的字形与所要记录的词义之间是十分默契的关系，从每个汉字字体演变的轨迹中，我们能感受到古人造字思维的印记。

裘锡圭先生在《文字学概要》中归纳表意字时，将会意字分为六种类型：“图形式会意字(如：宿、从)”、“利用偏旁间的位置的会意字(如：正、韦、出、各)”、“主体和器官的会意字(如：见、欠、企、走)”、“重复同一偏旁而成的会意字(如：林、奔、磊)”、“偏旁连续成语的会意字(如：凭、劣)”和“其他”。詹鄞鑫先生则将会意字分为以形会意和以义会意两类。无论会意字分成几种，都有一点相通，那就是，字形组合表达出的意义体现造字思维。会意字的字形与所要表达的词的意义之间关系更直接，更密切。

会意字字形跟字义之间的联系，我们从如下字例可以清晰地感受到：

宿，甲骨文字形写作，从宀，宀表示房屋，屋子里是一个人躺在垫子上的形象。这个字由三个字符组合，字形就表达出造字时要表达的意义。本义是“人在房屋里停留过夜”。今天我们说的“宿舍”，跟“家”是有区别的，“宿舍”只是一段时间住在这里，“宿”这个字的意义依旧在发挥作用。

企，甲骨文字形写作，由“人”和“止”（足）组合而成，指一个人踮起脚后跟的样子，本义是“踮起脚后跟”。今天我们使用“企”这个汉字，在词汇中的意义多由本义发展而来，如“企求”、“企图”、“无法企及”等。

降，甲骨文字形写作，左边的是阜（阜），表示台阶，右边是两只脚，一上一下，脚的方向都对着下方，整个字形组合表示两只脚从台阶上下来。这个字的本义是“下来”。《说文》中小篆写作，这个字今天来看，右边的“夂”同时还标音，这个字是特殊的会意字，也可以算作形声字。

这一类汉字即使到了楷书阶段，字形表意信息依然隆重地保存着，我们稍微回溯一下其字体演变的经过，就能发现字形与字义之间的紧密联系。

## 2.2 合体字的字音记录语言中词的读音，一般是约定俗成的，一个字形一个音节

非形声字合体字的字音一般是造字的时候，所要表达的词的读音约定俗成赋予给它的，一个字代表一个音节。也就是说，要找到合体字的字形表音规律是很难的，学习这类字的时候，对字音的掌握也就需要多动脑筋。


## 3. 非形声字的教学注重字形与词义的关系，也要注重字音的教学

如果用显性和隐性来衡量非形声字的字形与词义、词音的关系，那么非形声字的字形与词义的关系是显性的，字形与字音的关系是隐性的。在汉字教学中，既要注重字形与词义的显性关系，也要注重字形与字音的隐性关系。

对于非形声字字形与词义的关系，在教学中，我们一般会抓住汉字的造字理据。张黎黎在《字的本质与对外汉语教学》一文中认为，“汉字字形在意义表达和理解中所起的强烈的直观作用，是汉字区别于拼音文字的突出特点，也是汉字教学中应充分利用的优势。因此，在教学的初期，我们应强调利用汉字理据性的优势，从理性上把握汉字的特点和基本理论，让外国学生清楚地知道汉字是有自己独特内在规律的符号体系，有助于其确定识记汉字的逻辑起点、逻辑思路和逻辑方法。”（湖北师范学院学报，2010）

### 3.1 独体字汉字教学的策略

#### 3.1.1 表意清晰的，展示字形演变，强化读音

不少的独体字，字形和字义之间的关系，有些通过字形演变的展示就能让学生清楚地了解。如“女”字，甲骨文写作，就是一个人跪坐地上，双手自然合手的侧面形象，以此来表示“女性”，这个字写成楷书“女”，其字形流露的表义痕迹十分明显，这个字的教学，通过展示古字形，简单的解释就能达到效果。再如“牛”、“午”，这两个汉字的字形有细微差异，而字义和音都完全不同，在教学时，通过“牛”和“午”的字体演变展示，学生就对字形与字义的关系有感性的认识，容易识记这两个汉字。但是，这类字的字音需要强化教学。


#### 3.1.2 抽象化表义的，强调笔画，多练读音


对于一些本身以抽象化表义的独体字教学，强调笔画，强调读音，尤其是在具体的语境中联系其形音义，是必要的。如表示汉字数字的“一、二、三、四、五、六、七、八、九、十”等。



### 3.2 合体字的教学策略


#### 3.2.1 形义轨迹明显的字以趣味性带动教学


常用汉字中，那些以字形组合表义的会意字，形义轨迹明显的字，教师在讲解汉字造字理据的时候，可以以趣味性的展示和讲解带动教学。

冒，金文字形写作，上部是一顶帽子的形象，下面是一只大眼睛，本义就是帽子，后来“冒”字用了引申义，本义则用“帽”字来专门表示了。

尊，甲骨文字形写作，象两手捧着酒坛的样子，表示向别人敬献美酒。尊在古代也是一种盛酒器具的名称。“尊敬”之义是引申义。



咸，甲骨文字形写作，金文字形写作，从口从戌。在《周易》的卦爻中，“咸”有“杀、伤害”的意思，古字形也印证了这个本义。表示“全部、都”是由于字符“戌”与“悉”音近义通的道理吧。再用来表示食物的“咸淡”，是从“馘”简化而来的。

尿，甲骨文字形写作，字形与要表达的字义之间的关系一目了然。

屎，甲骨文字形写作，这个字也是形象地通过字形组合表义的，与“尿”这个字造字思维相同。

这些会意字的古字形到今天楷书的写法，追根溯源，还能揭示出字形表义的浓厚信息，可以适当用于教学。

### 3.2.2 形义轨迹不明显的字可以用俗文字学的方法教学

由于汉字在使用过程中，形音义都在发展，到现代汉字的字形，由于简化的原因，形义轨迹已经不明显，有些字的教学可以采用一定的俗文字学的方法来进行。如“泪”从“淚”这个形声字简化为从从目的会意结构的字，这个字在教学上，可以引导学生明白，“眼泪”就是眼睛里流出来的水，所以这个字的结构，由和目组成，非常清楚地表达所要记录的意义。

再如“歪”，从拆字法就能让学生明白这个字的字形要表达的意义，“不正为歪”。

“梦”，由“夢”简化而来，楷书字体中才出现，唐代颜真卿的书法中就有写作“梦”的。从林从夕，“林”表示很多树木，“夕”本来指月亮，这里指晚上，“林”与“夕”组合，在夜晚，月亮照在林间，视线若隐若现，“梦”境的朦胧意境显露无疑。“梦”这个字体现了汉语思维中，重联想、重意境的特点。从林从夕的写法，承袭了“夢”造字思维特点，只不过“夢”的构字要素更具体。



### 3.3 非形声字的字音教学方法

非形声字的字形与字义关系，在教学环节，教师很容易重视，但这些汉字的字音的教学一样需要多花心思。对于非形声字字音的教学，我们可以采用一些教学技巧。1) 非形声字的字音教学之朗读法：教师可以在课堂上、课堂下以及学生需要完成的任务中设计朗读的环节，让学生利用能够利用的机会大声朗读有这些汉字的句子、段落甚至短文。一个有良好朗读习惯的外语学习者，获得的语感一定好过从不朗读的人。2) 非形声字的字音教学之情境法：3) 非形声字的字音教学之听说法：可以让学生听后看着汉字复述其读音；可以听后写；可以听后用指定的字组词、组句，甚至表达一段汉语。

## 二、形声字的字形记录音义的特点与相应的汉字教学策略







据不同学者统计，现代汉字中 80-90%的字都是形声字，形声字由形符和声符组成。冯丽萍在《对外汉语教学用 2905 汉字的语音状况分析》一文中统计，《对外汉语水平考试词汇与汉字等级大纲》中规定的 2905 个汉字中，有 1920 个是形声字，约占《大纲》全部汉字的 66.1%。万业馨先生在《形声化——汉字结构方式的简化》一文中，认为“表意字所用直观图示法，构形手段之复杂远远超过形声字，其识认、记忆之难亦远大于形声字，加以记录语词受限之多又远非形声字所有，故由繁复之图示表意到单一结构的形声，当为结构方式的极大简化。也是用字人宁可以形体繁化为代价而采用形声字的主要原因。除了结构方式，形声化对整个汉字体系简化所起的作用以及在形声字中层次上的变化更具意义。”（语文建设，1996）

一般而言，形声字的形符以表义为主，表示这个形声字的义类范畴，而声符则承担标识这个形声字读音的职能。从宋代王圣美开始的“右文说”研究开始，到清代小学家们“因声求义”的研究，学者们发现形声字的声符是有表义职能的，只不过声符表示的义并非这个形声字的意义。许嘉璐先生在《汉字形符的类化与识字教学》（汉字文化，1992）一文中，将汉字形符的类化分为“区分专用型”（如“曼”-“蔓/漫”）、“标示质用型”（如“碗”-“琬”）、“观念演变型”（如“佼”-“姣”）、“视角相异型”（如“婿”-“壻”）和“连绵字型”（如“尚羊”-“徜徉”）五种，归纳出形声字形符类化的主观动力和客观动力。对于形声字声符，许嘉璐先生认为“是有规律、有系统的”。

### 1. 形声字字形与词义之间的关系

### 1.1 形符一般是表义类范畴的，声符是标音的，二者共同完成记录语言中的词义与音的职能

形声字的字形，根据构成要素的职能，分为形符和声符两部分，从理论上分析，似乎形符承担表义职能，声符承担标音职能，而实际上，汉字形声字的字形表义需要形符和声符组合共同完成。形符提示形声字的义类范畴，声符标示形声字的读音，二者共同达到记录形声字的音义的职能。举例说明：

让，“讠”是形符，表示这个字的意义与言语、言辞或者说话有关。“上”是声符，是通过用简单的“上”替换负责的“襄”，简化而来的声符。《说文》释为“相责让”，本义是“用言语责备”。此义怎么来的呢？先看看简化前的声符“襄”。“襄”小篆字形写作，《说文》中的解释是：“汉令：解衣耕谓之襄。从衣𦣻声。，古文襄。”于省吾先生在《甲骨文字释林》中认为，甲骨文中写作、、等的字形，为“𦣻”的初文。“𦣻”与从衣的“襄”字古代通用。《说文》中“𦣻，乱也。从爻工交𠂔。一曰，室𦣻，读若襄。，籀文𦣻。”

这样看来，“襄”已经是从衣，𦣻声的形声字，“让”应该是从与“𦣻”通用的“襄”中分化出来，在左边加“言”而成，本义表示“用言语责备”。

从“襄”字分化出来的合体字不少，如“嚷”、“攘”、“嚷”、“壤”、“瓢”、“攘”、“攘”、“攘”、“攘”等，尽管很多在今天已经不属于常用字，但是从这些字的出现，我们可以看出“𦣻”和“襄”古代通用之后，字义发展影响新字产生的脉络：

嚷：从口，襄声，意思是大声喊叫、吵闹。

攘：从扌，襄声。《说文》释为“推也。”

攘：从女，襄声。《说文》释为“烦扰也。一曰肥大也。”

攘：从示，襄声。《说文》释为“磔攘祀，除癘殃也。古者燧人崇子所造。”

壤：从禾，襄声。《说文》释为“黍稷已治者。”

壤：从土，襄声。《说文》释为“柔土也。”

鑲：从金，襄声。《说文》释为“作型中肠也。”段玉裁解释，“其中肠谓之鑲。犹瓜中肠谓瓢也。”

攘：从系，襄声。《说文》释为“援臂也。”段玉裁进一步解释为“援臂者，捋衣出其臂也。王制。”

瓢：瓜类的肉。《正字通》中解释“按瓢爲瓜中實，與犀相包連，白虛如絮，有汁。”


从以上这组汉字可以归纳出，“攘”、“嚷”、“攘”、“攘”是从“𢦏”分化而来的，“壤”、“鑲”、“壤”、“鑲”、“鑲”、“瓢”是从“襄”分化而来的。“让（讓）”本义表示“用言语责备”，应该也是由“𢦏”分化而来。“讓”中的声旁同时也是提供表义线索的，简化为“让”之后，“上”成为一个标音符号。“讓”这个汉字的构字，像剥笋一样展开，能看到字形与字义、字音之间的微妙联系，也充分展示汉字形声字构成中体现的思维痕迹。

回到“让”这个形声字，其本义是“用言语责备”，以后在发展出“谦让”等意义。形符和声符组合，达到记录汉语中的词的音和义的目的。

## 1.2 随着现代汉字的符号化增强，有些形符实际上已经是记号

汉字造字之初，往往都会有清晰的造字意图，有造字本义，随着汉字记录语言的需要，汉字字形所承载的表义任务也会丰富起来。一个汉字可能从造字本义发展出不少的引申义，甚至假借义。有的形声字，今天所表示的常用义离当初造字时表示的意义，距离很远。形符的提示义类范畴作用原来越不明显，几乎成为一个抽象的记号。比如：

错，这个字从钅，昔为声符。本义是在一种东西上镶嵌进金属材料，今天有个词“错金”，还保存其造字本义。这个意义后来发展出有规律的“交错”、无规则的“盘根错节”，再到杂乱无章的“错乱”，再到“错误”。今天表示“错误”的“错”，这个意义已经是这个形声字的常用义了，对于这个常用义来说，形符“钅”已经起不到提示义类范畴的作用，“钅”就是一个记号而已。初学这个汉字的人怎们能想到“错误”跟“钅”（金属）有何关联？

球，，《说文》“玉声也”，这个字的本义是“玉石之间发出的声音”，今天用来表示运动用的各类“球”，意义与造字本义相差深远，因为

借了“球”这个字的字形与音。对于假借而来，从此这个形声字用于记录其假借义，其形符“王”（玉）已经是记号了。




类似“错”和“球”这些汉字的还有不少，如“特”、“骗”等字，这些形声字表示的常用义，跟他们的形符“牛”、“马”有什么关系呢？不追根溯源去看的话，这些形符都已经沦为纯粹的记号了。这也反映形声字形符是否表示义类范畴，还要看这个形声字在使用过程中表义的发展情况。


### 1.3 声符记录字音的同时，也表达一定的意义

具体说来，综合前人的研究成果，形声字的声符大多有义；同声符的字往往是同源字，在意义上有关联；假借的声符，尽管不同，但是古音相同或相近，意义就是相通的；声符表示的是一种概念义。形声字中还有一类特殊的字，许慎称为“亦声”字，这类字的字符像会意字一样，组合表义，其中一个字符同时也兼记录这个字的读音。我们选取一组同声符的形声字来分析：

※声符“曼”的分析：

“曼”从又，冒声，表示读音的“冒”，变形写成了“曼”上部的样子。

金文字形写作、，小篆字形写作，许慎解释为“引也”，古字形像人头上戴着一顶帽子，手将帽檐往下拉之形，本义为“拉长”。“曼”后来就有“长”的意思，“拉长”帽子，必定要覆盖头部的一片面积，因此，有“曼”组成的字都有“延展”之义。

慢，古字形写作，从忄（心）曼声，《说文》释为“惰也。一曰慢，不畏也。”“惰”的意思是“不敬也”。“慢”的本义是心里不尊敬，因而“态度傲慢”、“态度冷淡”，不能根据许慎解释“惰”而理解为“懒惰”之义。“慢”本义表示“态度傲慢”、“态度冷淡”，我们不妨想一下，一般来说，当我们有这样的态度时，脸部表情会是怎样的？会是一张冷漠、拉长的脸，选“曼”作为造字要素，既能传达要表示的意义，又能兼顾表示读音，这个字的确起到字形记音又记义的作用。从造字思维来看，注重从直观现象到逻辑之间的关系。“态度傲慢”、“态度冷淡”会流露于人的行为举止之中，而人的行为举止又映射出人的内心活动。“慢”从表示态度傲慢，到表示时间的缓慢，是发展而来的意义，从“慢”本身的造字思维出发，因为不喜欢才有“傲慢”、“态度冷淡”，而且“慢”中的“曼”本身就有“拉长”、“长”的意思，用“慢”表示时间长也就自然而然了。

漫，从氵，曼声。《说文》中没有这个字，东汉扬雄的《方言》中解释“溼（湿）散为漫。又水名。”《康熙字典》解释“大水也。一曰水浸淫败物。”“漫”指水太多，溢出向外流。“慢”与“漫”的差别在于，“慢”更多指向时间纬度的“慢长”，而“漫”指向空间纬度的“漫长”。“漫”是水溢出向外流。

慢、蔓、鳎：汉字中有“曼”，一般都有因“拉长”的动作蔓延出占用时间和空间的意向。“蔓”是一种向四周生长的藤本类植物，因此有“蔓延”一词；“慢”，“幕也”；“鳎”是一种河或海里的鱼，长得身形狭长圆润，尾部扁形。

## 2. 形声字的字形与词读音之间的关系

### 2.1 形声字声符标音的准确率不高

由于语音的演变，汉字形声字声符标音的准确率不高。苏培成先生在《现代汉字学纲要》中将形声字声符标音与形声字读音之间的关系分了六类：1）声符与该形声字的读音完全一致（娶、彩、吓、圆、鲸）；2）声符与该形声字的读音只是韵母相同（琶、痴、拍、跑）；3）声符与该形声字的读音只是韵母相近（宾、浴、晚、郎）；4）声符与该形声字的读音即使声母韵母都相同，声调也可能不一样（飘、笨、样、种）；5）声符与该形声字的读音完全不同（狐、弧、孤）；6）声符在不同的形声字中代表不同的发音（怡、贻、治、抬）。

从形声字声符标音的实际情况来看，越是声符标音准确的，要么是比较晚出的汉字，要么不常用。我们有时甚至难以判断这个字是不是形声字，如“戴”是形声字吗？如果是，形符、声符怎样辨别？这个字的确是形声字，声符是“戔”zāi，今天已经是不成字的构字部件，如果不知道这个部件的标音规律，要判断一系列由“戔”充当声符的形声字也就存在困难。这也体现形声字声符标音的不准确，或者说标音规律隐藏太深。

### 2.2 形声字声符的标音存在历时的演变

形声字的声符标音存在历时演变，这也是现代汉字形声字读音与声符读音之间存在距离的原因。如“区”这个字今天读 qū，但是那些以“区”为声符的形声字，如“欧、欧、殴、鸥、怄、讴、瓯”等，都读 ou 这个音节，实际上，这些形声字的读音，反倒很好地将“区”的古音读法保留下来了。类似这样的字例不少。

## 2.3 形声字声符的判断需要对汉字结构有一定的了解

判断形声字形与声的位置关系，看起来没什么麻烦，而实际上，随着汉字字体的演变，楷书的写法从隶书而来，汉字的结构由此定型，有时候，我们常用的汉字，要清晰判断是否形声字是第一步，而第二步，判断哪一个是形符，哪一个是声符，这需要我们对汉字的结构有一定的了解。比如，“载”、“修”是不是形声字？如何判断？如果是，哪一个是形符，声符是什么？

## 3. 形声字的教学策略

对于形声字的教学，我们要从字形入手，要抓住形符的示义作用，也要充分关注声符的标音规律进行。李大遂先生在《汉字的系统性与汉字认知》（暨南大学华文学院学报，2006年第1期）一文中认为，“汉字的系统性体现在形、音、义3个方面，汉字的字形系统因外在的形体联系而形成，汉字的读音系统因内在的读音联系而形成，汉字的意义系统因内在的意义联系而形成。”具体做法上，除了强调偏旁职能和汉字结构之外，我们要时时关注字形与词的音义之间的联系进行教学，让学生尽早感受到汉字字形与汉语词汇的音义之间的微妙联系。

冯丽萍在1999年指出心理学的研究结果：“越是在对不熟悉的低频汉字的语音加工中，声旁的语音提示作用越明显；越是在对不熟悉的低频汉字的语义加工中，人们越懂得利用形旁来推理整字的意义。”（1999）这个结果提醒我们要关注形声字的形符和声符两方面的职能进行教学。



### 3.1 历史上的右文说和因声求义研究结果可以充分用于教学

这种教学策略对教师的要求比较高，需要教师多了解汉字形声字的结构规律，了解常用形声字声符表义的特点，了解前人的研究成果，特别是训诂学的研究成果。如形声字“经、颈、径、茎、涇、胫”等，都是同一个声符，这个声符组成的形声字，都可以归纳出一个抽象的意义——“细、长”。如果教师了解前人的这一研究成果，在学生学习了这一组形声字中的部分字以后，适当归纳出这个声符的表义职能和标音职能，是能帮助学生更有效地掌握这些形声字的。



### 3.2 遵循形声字声符的功能进行教学

形声字声符在形声字的形、音、义各方面都有自己的作用，声符本身是合体字的偏旁，其构形有一定的规律，作为声符，有标示形声字读音的职能，更

深层面，声符也提示一定的表义信息。做好形声字教学，声符的功能需要相对了解。沈兼士先生在《广韵声系》研究中非常重视汉字的形音义之间的关系。举例说明形声字声符表义的功能，我们在教学中是否可以借鉴这一成果？

※非：金文字形写作，小篆写作，《说文》“违也。从飞下𠂔 chī，取其相背。”以“非”为声符的形声字，由于语音的演变，形声字读音与“非”今天的读音可能一致，也存在不同之处。从“非”作为声符的表义作用来看，在“排 辈 悲 靡”等字中，表义“分、违”之义；在“菲 绯”中表示“赤色”之义；在“霏”中表示“飞扬”之义；在“罪、匪”中表示“交错纹路编织的东西”。

此字的分析来自沈兼士先生的研究成果。

※青：金文字形作，小篆字形作，从生，丹。今天的“青”写法是由隶书的写法而来的。《说文》释为“东方色也。木生火，从生、丹。丹青之信言象然。”东方色，按照古代方位与四时、颜色观念，东方色以绿色为主，代表春天。以“青”为声符的形声字，声符“青”可以归纳出“美妙的”、“精华的”意义。“请”表示“拜谒”，那就要言辞有礼，要说美妙的得体之辞；“晴”在《说文》里写作“𣎵”，本义是晚上天空有星星，指“晴天”，晴天是好天；“清”，指湖水碧绿透彻，意思是水干净；“菁”，指韭菜花，是韭菜的精华，所以有“菁英”。“精”指优质米。“静”，段玉裁注解，“彩色详审得其宜谓之静。考工记言画绩之事是也。分布五色。疏密有章。则虽绚烂之极。而无渙浥不鲜，是曰静。”那么，“静”的意思是指“彩色分布均匀”。“靖”，意思是“有才的”。“睛”指眼珠子，当然是眼睛的精华所在。“靖”本义指“立容安静”，有安定、平和之义。由此，再看“情”字的造字，取心（忄）和青都是有表义目的的。

### 3.3 在常用语境中强化形声字的听、说、读、认、写训练

形声字的教学，无论是字的形还是音义，到字的使用，都要置于常用语境中强化其听、说、读、认、写训练，练习方式在不少学者的论文和专著中都有详细的笔墨，在此不再一一展示。

## 三、汉字教学重视字形与音义关系的前景与难度

### 1. 汉字教学重视字形与音义关系的前景

汉字教学的主要任务是让学生掌握常用汉字的形、音、义、用，对于每个阶段应该完成哪些教学任务，应该采用怎样的教学方法，不是本文重点要讨论的内容。行文至此，目的是希望在汉语教学的全过程中都有汉字教学的意识，而充分关注汉字的字形与音义之间的关系，从而在汉语教学的许多场景中充分考虑汉字的形音义用的教学意识，这是汉语教师的责任。做到这一点是有充分条件的，前景可以展望。因为：

1) 汉字字形与汉语的音义之间存在着复杂又有规律的联系，汉字教学中不断归纳字形与音义之间的关系，有利于汉字教学的效果；

2) 目前的汉字部件教学、字理教学、追根溯源法等，都是以字形为抓手的；

3) 汉字字形表达的信息跟别的文字不同，可以表达语言中的概念；

4) 心理学实验证明：高频汉字的识别过程是以字形为切入口的。

陈宝国、彭聃龄在《汉字识别中形音义激活时间进程的研究(I)》（《心理学报》，2001年第33期）一文中，通过实验得出结论：(1) 高频汉字识别过程中形音义激活的顺序为字形一字义一字音顺序。(2) 高频汉字的字义可直接由字形特征获得，字义的通达不一定必须经过语音的中介。(3) 高频汉字识别过程中语音是自动激活的。

陈宝国、王立新、彭聃龄在《汉字识别中形音义激活时间进程的研究(II)》（《心理学报》，2003年第35期）一文中，通过实验得出结论：(1) 低频汉字形、音、义激活的时间进程表现为字形激活在先，字音与字义的激活同时进行。(2) 采用基于语义的还是基于语音的任务，并未影响低频汉字形、音、义激活的顺序，但实验任务影响了低频汉字字音、字义激活出现时间的早晚。

这些实验成果都告诉我们关注汉字字形与音义之间的关系，不能偏重字形与字义，也不能偏重字形与字音，要综合考虑。

## 2. 汉字教学重视字形与音义关系的难度

重视汉字的字形与音义之间的关系，更大的难度也许在于字形与字音之间的关系，因为汉字是方块字，其字形中积淀的表义信息已经称为汉字的独特魅力，汉字是可以用视觉阅读的文字，但是相对而言，其字形见形知音的能力非



常弱，或者说表面看不出来，要把握好汉字字形与字音之间的规律，需要教学者对汉字深入了解，这是需要一定的专业知识的积累的。

另外，要做到在汉字教学中充分关注汉字字形与音义的关系，需要系统归纳常用现代汉字字形与音义之间关系的特点，字形与字义之间的关系方面的研究成果，以及对于这层关系在教学中的重视，已经形成习惯，但是怎样加强字形与字音之间的关系的分析和教学，还需要系统的研究和论述。万业馨先生在《略论形声字声旁与对外汉字教学》（世界汉语教学，2000）一文中指出当前汉字教学中重形不重音的偏向，更提出“怎样认识汉字表音能力及阅读汉字时的语音转录过程”的思考，值得借鉴。

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# ERROR ANALYSIS IN TEACHING CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: THE CASE OF BELGIAN LEARNERS' USE OF COMPARATIVE SENTENCES IN WRITTEN PRODUCTION

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## Introduction

Making errors is an inevitable and necessary part of language learning. An error occurs when the learner incorporates a particular erroneous form into his or her grammatical system, i.e. an interlanguage (Selinker, 1972; Ellis, 1994). This learner's version of the target language is systematic, which is likely to occur repeatedly and is not recognized by the learner as an error. Since Corder first raised the significance of error analysis (1967), a great deal of work (e.g. Richards, 1974; Schachter, 1974; Corder, 1992; Ellis, 1994; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005) has been carried out within the field of second language acquisition (SLA). The general consensus from previous research is that errors are not just to be seen as something to be eradicated, but rather they provide evidence of the state of a learner's knowledge of the L2. As evidence of learners' underlying rule-governed interlanguage systems, errors can be of great significance to both the researchers and the teachers.

In the field of SLA, most of the empirical studies have been focused on an alphabetic language, particularly English, but few studies on how to study L2

Chinese development have been found (Jiang, 2009). At present, research in Chinese L2 acquisition does not match the increasing demand to learn Chinese as an L2 and the need for understanding the difficulty of L2 Chinese learning. It is important that the existing research findings from SLA can be extended and applied to study L2 Chinese development. The purpose of the current study is to examine the theoretical and practical relevance of the error analysis approach in CFL by investigating the case of Belgian learners' use of comparative sentences in written production through a cross-sectional design.

## **Review of Error Analysis Research on the Use of Comparative Sentences in L2 Chinese Production**

Prior to the current study, we conducted a literature review on the error analysis of the use of comparative sentences in L2 Chinese on the database of China Academic Journals (CAJ). However, it is found that the majority of the articles on error analysis do not report empirical studies. This is probably because CFL research in general is still at its beginning stage, and there is no substantial systematic accumulation of empirical evidence yet. In the next selection phase we went through the abstracts of the found articles, and selected those that met the following criteria: (1) the study reported in the paper has to be an empirical study with descriptions of the research method; (2) the study has to be about Chinese language learning as L2 (3) error analysis has to be the approach used in the study. In the end, we found five articles (Chen & Zhou, 2005; Liu, 2009; Qian, 2012; Song, 2011; Xiao, 2012) that roughly meet our criteria, which will be discussed below.

Firstly, studies on L2 learners' use of comparative sentences have increasingly been paying attention to the role of learners' L1 backgrounds. Learners with different L1s tend to have different error productions. In Song's study (2011), she found Cambodian students of Chinese tend to have sequencing errors when using comparative sentences, e.g. \*金边很热比中国. This kind of wrong word order remains problematic even when students reach an advanced level. Based on the relevant linguistic data, Xiao (2012) analysed the Vietnamese students' most frequent errors in using the comparative structure 'NP1+ comparative marker 比 + NP2 + AV'. In Chinese, intensifiers cannot occur before the adjectival verb in the 比 comparison pattern. Vietnamese students frequently add intensifiers, e.g. 很 'very', 非常 'extremely', 太 'too', wrongly in front of the AV. Similar errors are also produced by Korean and Japanese students (Qian, 2012). The results from these studies seem to suggest that in the acquisition of the Chinese comparative structure, learners from different L1 backgrounds may have their distinctive errors and also share some similarities. Therefore, thorough analyses of different errors generated by different students are of great benefit for strengthening the relevance of teaching and material development for targeting different learners. It is worth mentioning that

current studies in China have a inclination for Korean, Japanese and South Asian learners. In our study, we are interested in investigating production errors generated by European learners, particularly Dutch speaking learners of Chinese, when using the comparative sentences.

Recent studies also start to pay attention to analysing errors on the semantic and pragmatic levels instead of merely focusing on syntax. This shift of attention is particular important when analysing the error productions of learners from intermediate and advanced levels. Liu's study (2009) shows that when using comparative sentences, intermediate level students produced more semantic and pragmatic errors than learners at the beginning level. Chen and Zhou's study (2005) found that learners at the beginning and lower intermediate levels used the comparative structure 'NP1 + comparative marker 比 + NP2 + AV' and its negative form with 没有 more often than learners at the higher intermediate and advanced levels. Interestingly the error rate when using the same structure was also quite high among learners at the beginning and lower intermediate levels. According to Chen and Zhou (2005), it was because of the influence from L1 and the mixed use of affirmative and negative sentences of 比 structure. For example, \*上海的天气比北京不冷。 By further comparing the use of comparative sentences of Chinese native speakers and L2 Chinese learners, Chen and Zhou (2005) revealed a striking difference. The native speakers used the 不比 structure up to 87.5% in the contexts where they considered it necessary. In contrast, even for the advanced L2 Chinese learners, the use of 不比 structure in the same contexts was only 27.3%; for the rest groups of learners, it was all below 20%. The L2 Chinese learners, on the contrary, used the structure more often in the contexts where a native speaker would not use. This result clearly shows that 不比 structure is more difficult than other negative sentences of comparative structures, and L2 learners are often not aware of its linguistic and pragmatic requirements. Therefore teaching 不比 structure to learners at the beginning level and treating this structure as a simple negative form of the comparative structure 比 would not be effective.

Despite the encouraging developments, previous error analysis studies of Chinese L2 have been limited in many ways, and one of the main concerns is about the research methodology (Jiang, 2009). Studies were rarely conducted by employing a clear research method and by collecting empirical data. The five studies reviewed basically reported empirical data, which provide us with at least some empirical evidence on the acquisition of comparative sentences by L2 learners. Nevertheless methodology remains an issue.

## Research Questions

In the current study, the following specific research questions are raised.

- What are the most frequent grammatical errors made by Dutch L1 learners of Chinese when using comparative sentences in their written production?
- Are there any differences regarding types and frequencies of errors between learners at different levels of proficiency?
- Are there any differences regarding types and frequencies of errors between free written productions and controlled written productions?

## **Method**

### *Participants*

Students enrolled in the Sinology department at the University of Leuven in Belgium participated in the study. Considering the acquisition of comparative structures maybe different for students from different proficiency levels, two different proficiency levels were included in the study: second year students (n = 28) and third year students (n = 26). They were all native Dutch-speaking Chinese L2 learners in their early twenties.

### *Written Production Data Collection*

In this study, students' written production data from their writing course was collected. Writing enables the language user ample time to think and to prepare before the language production. Therefore, the written data can provide realistic information on learners' actual interlanguage development. Additionally, comparative sentences in essay writing appear in contextual settings, therefore pragmatic aspects of the data can be elicited. Students' written samples were collected through two writing tasks. The first writing task was done during normal class hours of their writing courses. In order to ensure the comparability of the writing tasks, all groups were given the same task. In this writing task, students were required to write a passage that makes a comparison of two subjects. A list of comparative structures was provided in this task to help students to express comparisons. There was a time limit of 40 minutes to finish the writing task in the class. The second writing task was to write a comparative essay of about 600 words. This task was one of the regular homework writing assignments that are included in the teaching syllabus. In this task, students worked individually. No list of comparative structures was provided in this task. In total, 53 written samples from students of two proficiency levels were collected for the current study, which includes 27 paragraphs writing with time constraint in the classroom from both level groups, and 26 homework essays from the third year students.

### *Procedure of Data Analysis*

The data were analysed according to the following steps. First, errors were of comparative sentences were identified. We selected the sentences with obvious comparative markers, such as the following sentences:

- 1) 'NP1 跟/和 NP2 一样,不一样, 差不多等' illustrating the differences or similarities between two persons or two things.
- 2) 'NP1 没有 NP2 + W' indicating one thing is of a lesser degree than another with 没有.
- 3) 'NP1 比 NP2' comparing the difference in property or degree between two persons or two things. The property can be expressed as an adjectival verb, a stative verb, or a verb phrase with a modal verb.
- 4) 'NP1 不比 NP2' indicating the two things being compared may be equal or one thing is of a lesser degree than another by using 不比, what is specifically stated is that NP1 is no more than NP2.
- 5) 'NP1 不如 NP2' indicating one thing is of a lesser degree than another with 不如.
- 6) '更/最+Adj/V' indicating a comparative degree by placing the intensifier 更 or indicating a superlative degree by placing the intensifier 最 before the stative verb or adjectival verb.
- 7) '越来越+Adj/V' denoting a progressive change over time of more and more of the adjective or V.
- 8) '跟 NP1 比起来,NP2...' telling the result of comparing.

There are also comparative sentences that are grammatically correct. However, in a certain context, they do not meet the pragmatic requirements. Such sentences would be considered as a pragmatic error in using the comparative sentences. If the same kind of error repeats in one written sample, only one error was noted. As to other forms of comparison without evident markers, we did not select them as comparative sentences, and thus they were not included in the data analysis.

## Results

### *Comparative Sentence Error Rates across Proficiency Levels in Controlled Written Production*

Table 1 shows an overview of error rates that were found in both groups' written production. The results show that comparative sentences produced by the second year students are more focused on the use of two structures: (1) NP1 跟/和 NP2 and (2) NP1 比 NP2. The third year students used the structure (5) NP1 不比 NP2, but unfortunately none of the sentences was used correctly. This structure was completely avoided by the second year students. In addition to the frequently used structure (1) and (2), the third year students produced more sentences by using the structures (3) and (4) than the second years. By far for both years, the most frequent error made is with the use of structure (2).

*Table 1* Error rates across proficiency levels in controlled written production

Comparative Structures	Proficiency Level					
	2nd Year			3rd Year		
	Errors	Total	Rate	Errors	Total	Rate
1) NP1 跟/和 NP2	3	20	15%	0	10	0%
2) NP1 比 NP2	21	61	34.4%	6	27	22.2%
3) NP1 没有 NP2	0	5	0%	2	9	22.2%
4) NP1 不如 NP2	0	6	0%	1	11	9.1%
5) NP1 不比 NP2	0	0	0%	4	4	100%
6) 更/最+Adj/V	0	1	0%	0	0	0%



7) 越来越+Adj/V	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
8) 跟 NP1 比起来, NP2	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Total	24	93	25.8%	13	61	21.3%

*Comparative Sentence Error Rates in both Controlled and Free Written Productions*

In this section, the most frequent errors that were found in both the controlled and free written productions from the third year students are presented. Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference with regard to the total error rate in both conditions. Structures (1) and (2) were used more frequently. The error rate when using (2) was also quite high among learners. Again, the highest error rate is with the use of (5) NP1 不比 NP2. Meanwhile, the use of the negative form of comparative structures (3) is also quite problematic.

*Table 2* Error rates in both controlled and free written productions for the 3rd year students

Comparative Structures	3rd Year					
	Free Writing Production			Controlled Writing Production		
	Errors	Total	Rate	Errors	Total	Rate
1) NP1 跟/和 NP2	5	42	11.9%	0	10	0%
2) NP1 比 NP2	12	41	29.3%	6	27	22.2%
3) NP1 没有 NP2	6	15	40%	2	9	22.2%
4) NP1 不如 NP2	1	4	25%	1	11	9.1%

5) NP1 不比 NP2	1	2	50%	4	4	100%
6) 更/最+Adj/V	4	12	33.3%	0	0	0%
7) 越来越+Adj/V	0	1	0%	0	0	0%
8) 跟 NP1 比起来, NP2	0	2	0%	0	0	0%
Total	29	119	24.4%	13	61	21.3%

#### *Comparative Sentence Error Rates according to Categories*

After analysing all the learner errors, a categorization of the grammatical errors with using comparative sentences is developed, which include three main categories, i.e. comparative item errors, comparative result errors and blend errors. Comparative item errors are errors related with the comparee NP1 (i.e. what is compared) and the standard NP2 (i.e. to what the comparee is compared). Comparative result errors are the problem with the use of a predicate that describes the positions of comparee and standard. When the learner is uncertain of which structure to use, they may blend two different phrases or sentence patterns. These errors are categorized as blend errors. Figure 1 presents the error rates for all the writing samples according to categories.

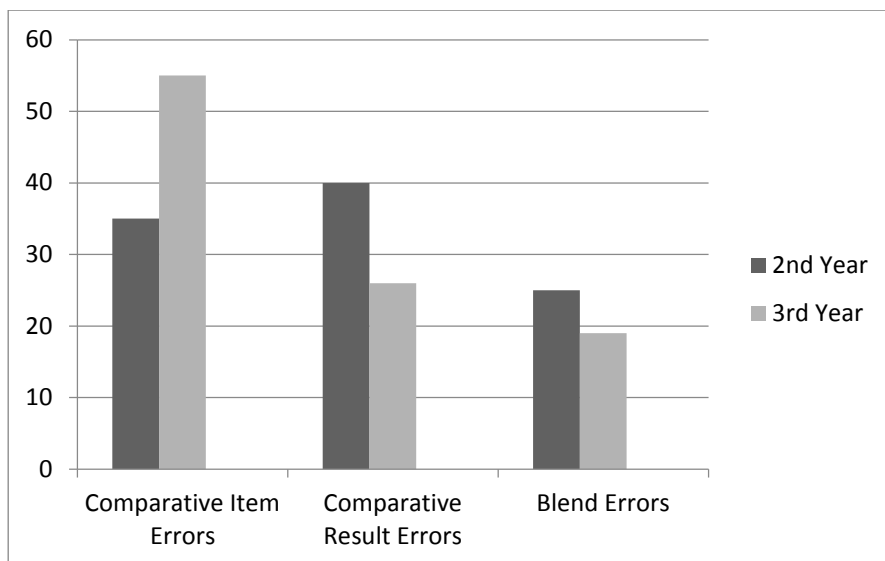


Figure 1. Overview of all error categories as percentage of the total number of errors in both groups.

## Discussion of Error Categories

### *Comparative Items Errors*

Comparative items related errors mainly include two types of errors. The first type of error is the items being compared, i.e. comparee NP1 and the standard NP2, are not semantically equivalent for comparison. In example (1), '单身' is a state of being single, but 结婚的人 refers to married people. They are not of the same types and are not semantically equivalent for comparison. This type of error could easily happen because of a careless mistake. However, the high frequency of such errors leads us to believe it is more than just a slip of the tongue. In Dutch, the words 'vrijgezel' or 'single' can refer to both an unmarried person and the state of being single. The direct mental translation of the L1 word when producing L2 sentences could be the direct cause of using semantically non-equivalent words for comparison in the sentence (1).

1) \* 单身比结婚的人自由得多。

The second type of error with regard to the use of comparative items is error of omission. When the two elements for comparison both before and after the preposition 比 or 跟 are nominal endocentric phrases and the modified nouns are identical, the modified word in the nominal endocentric phrase after 比 or 跟 is often omitted. However, what the students omitted, for example, in sentence (2), are the modified words before 比 and 跟. If the attributive indicates the relationship of possession when the modified word is omitted, the structural particle 的 must be used. In example (4), learners wrongly left out 的 after 男人. This type of error might be induced by teaching as well as the intralingual overgeneralization of simple comparative structures. If the teacher or the learning tasks do not clearly present the rules of omission when using nominal endocentric phrases for comparison, learners are likely to overgeneralize what they have learnt (in this case, the use of 的) to omit elements in comparative items.

2) \* 我以为比利时和荷兰的荷兰语差不多一样。

3) \* 女人的身体没有男人那么强大。

Besides nouns, pronouns and nominal endocentric phrases, the comparative items before and after the preposition 比 can also be V-O phrases, and S-P phrases, such as sentences (4) and (5). These sentences are frequently used by native speakers. However in the collected data, it is worth mentioning that no students used V-O phrases, and S-P phrases as comparative items.

4) 坐飞机比坐火车快。

5) 你去比我去好。

### *Comparative Result Errors*

In the comparative sentences, the predicate of a 比 sentence indicates the result of comparison. The result of the current study found that learner errors on the comparative result are mainly about the use of adjectives and certain verbs.

Our result shows that students were familiar with the use of an adjectival predicate in a comparative sentence. However, errors often occur when students want to express the difference between the objects being compared, e.g. examples (6), (7) and (8). In order to indicate the difference, complements can be added after the adjectives. 一点儿, 一些 can be added as a quantity complement to indicate that one object is *a little bit more* adjective than the other. Degree adverbs such as 很, 非常, 比较, etc. can never occur before the predicate after the 比 phrase. Thus

the correct sentence for (6) should be 同居比结婚好一些。When the difference between the objects compared is great, the degree complement 得多, 多了 can be added. Thus in (7) and (8), there is a 多 missing in both sentences. If the learner wants to indicate the specific difference between the two objects compared, numbers or N-Ms phrase can be added as a complement. Thus the correct form of (8) should be: 意大利的人口比比利时的人口多两千万。The above listed errors are mainly influenced by the negative transfer from L1. To tackle this problem, teachers can consider using a sentence formula, such as NP1 比 bi NP2 + adj. (+ 得多/多了/一些/一点/数量短语) to drill the comparative sentence until a certain degree of automaticity has been reached.

6) \* 同居比结婚比较好。

7) \* 大学生喝酒喝得比中学生多了。

8) \* 意大利的人口比比利时的人口两千万多了。

Another type of error we observed within the comparative result category is the addition of adverbs 更 or 还 in front of the predicate. The adverb 更, 还 or 还要 as adverbial adjunct can be used after the 比 phrase and before the predicate to denote a further degree. Therefore, sentences like (9) and (10) are correct if they are examined purely from a syntactic perspective. However, if we look at the contexts where these sentences appeared, we can see that the problem lies in the addition of 更 before the predicate. For a native speaker, the sentence 意大利的天气比比利时的更好 implies that the Belgian weather is good, and the Italian weather is even better. 比利时的天气很好, 而意大利的更好。What the student really meant in his/her text is that Belgian weather is terrible, and in his/her opinion, the weather in Italy is better. These errors remind us that learning a L2 one must learn more than just the pronunciation, the lexical items, and the grammatically correct sentences; one must also learn the appropriate way to use those words and sentences in the L2.

9) \* 单身的生活比结婚的生活更孤独。

10) \* 意大利的天气比比利时的更好。

The third type of error in this category is the errors generated when students used verbs as the predicate in comparative sentences. In comparative sentences, verbs (or auxiliary verbs) can act as the predicate after the 比 phrase. But the verbs are limited to the following conditions: a) verbs or auxiliary verbs that can express wish, interest or mental activities; b) verbs that indicate increase or decrease; c) auxiliary verbs with the meaning of 'be good at' and the verbs following them, as in 能吃, 会唱会跳. d) verbs that can take complements of degree, such as 起得早, 走得快. When learners tried to use verbs as the predicate in comparative sentences, they

often had problems in choosing the right verb. In example (11), 觉得 can not act as the predicate in a comparative sentence. It is a mental verb, but it does not have the semantic features of 'change' and 'degree', thus it cannot be used in comparative sentences. The problem with sentence (12) is also the choice of verbs. It is better to change it to: 比利时人比中国人能喝一点儿.

11) \* 法国人没有比利时人觉得学习和工作那么重要。

12) \* 比利时人比中国人会喝多一点儿酒。

### *Blend Errors*

Belgian students' mix use of different sentence patterns frequently occurred in the following structures: a) NP1 比 NP2 and NP1 跟/和 NP2; b) NP1 不比 NP2, NP1 没有 NP2 and NP1 不像 NP2. Blending arises when two alternative grammatical forms are combined or misused to produce an ungrammatical blend. This study shows that the blend errors that are related to the use of comparative sentences are often the confusion with the use of different comparative markers. The first type of blend errors that students tend to make is to mix the comparative marker 比 and 跟, e.g. sentence (13) and (14). The sentence pattern NP1 跟/和 NP2 一样 (不一样, 差不多等) is used to illustrate the differences or similarities between two objects. It only tells if the two objects being compared are same, different or similar. The sentence pattern NP1 比 NP2 compares the difference in property or degree between two objects. Students used the 比 structure much more frequently than 跟 when they wanted to make a comparison.

13) \* 中国人比比比利时人差不多。

14) \* 中国人的生活比比比利时人的生活不一样。

The second type of blend errors is the use of 不比, e.g. (15), (16) and (17). When students wanted to express a negative comparison, they tended to use 不比 rather than 没有 or 不像. 不比 and 没有 are all considered the negative forms of 比 structure. However, they are used under quite different pragmatic conditions. Students are often not aware that 不比 is the negation of 比 in form, but it is not necessarily its negation in meaning. It is actually quite often the negation in pragmatics, prefixed condition, or the objective rules or knowledge. The context where 不比 structure would be used is to refute the interlocutor's argument. The result from this study verifies the findings from the previous study on L2 Chinese learners' use of 不比 structure (Chen & Zhou, 2005). The pragmatic requirements of

using 不比 are more difficult for learners than other negative sentences of comparative structures.

15) \*李老师的衣服不比狄老师的那么奇怪。

16) \*单身的人不比夫妇吵架吵得多。

17) \*男人不比女人那么乱说话。

## Conclusions

The main findings from the current study revealed that regardless of task type and proficiency level, the 比 structure has been found to have the widest application in students' written productions, and meanwhile the error rate when using the structure was also among the highest among learners. Secondly, the use of 不比 structure is very problematic, being avoided by the second year students and the highest error rate for the third year students. Finally, among the three categories of errors, the comparative item related errors have been found to have the highest error rate for third year students.

When introducing the grammatical function of making comparisons in Chinese, in addition to the 比 structure, it is also advisable to provide other sentence patterns at the same time, such as NP1 跟/和 NP2. The purpose is to avoid the over-use of 比 structure as a result of transfer. The over-indulgence of the form of 比 structure in L2 Chinese acquisition can occur as a result of intralingual processes such as overgeneralization, which could lead to blend errors of confusing functions of NP1 比 NP2 and NP1 跟/和 NP2. Our study also suggests that the teaching of the 比 structure requires strengthening from time to time. It needs to be reinforced when learners reach an advanced level when they are able to use longer and more complex structures and vocabularies in the target language to express comparison. It is possible that more errors could occur due to the increase in complexity of the language used, as suggested by this study.

Given that in this study the use of 不比 structure became more problematic for third year students. It is recommended that the teaching of negative form 不比 structure start at later stage of learning instead of at the very beginning. Providing 不比 structure together with the teaching of 比 structure at the beginning of learning can confuse learners and lead to unnecessary use and inappropriate use. 不比 structure is recommended to be taught to learners with higher intermediate level or even an advanced proficiency level of Chinese, because this structure functions at the pragmatic level, requiring a high proficiency in the target language. Learners at a

lower proficiency level would find it difficult to understand the pragmatic requirements, even with examples provided.

While acknowledging the significance of L2 Chinese learners' errors both in learning and teaching, some limitations of the current study should also be noted. The sample of participants in this study only included students from the second year and the third year based on institutional status. An ideal cross-sectional study should include learners from low, intermediate and advanced levels. Because of practical reasons, the written sample from participants could not include the data from the second year students in a free writing condition. Future research could examine the instruction effect of different designed tasks by comparing data obtained from different groups of learners in a controlled study, so as to allow more solid evidences and conclusions to be drawn.

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# METHODS OF TEACHING INTERMEDIATE LEVEL EUROPEAN STUDENTS

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## **Introduction**

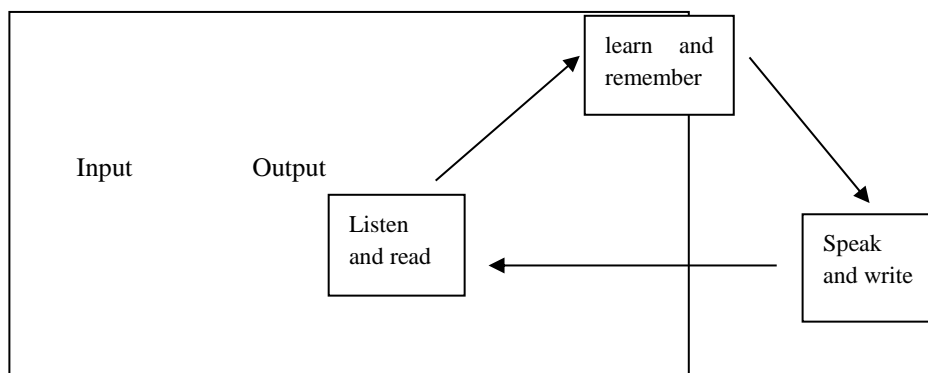
A good theoretical basis is derived from the study of language itself. Nowadays, more and more Chinese teachers focus on putting the theory into practice for more effective teaching. In this paper the writer did some language acquisition surveys which are based on theories of cognitive psychology and second *language acquisition* to discuss how teachers can help students acquire a foreign language.

Intermediate Chinese learners face an increasing number of vocabularies. First of all, in order to help students cope with the burden of memorisation, teachers should know how people acquire a second language. According to the famous psychologist Robert Mills Gagné (August 21, 1916 – April 28, 2002), who put forward the information-processing model, only about seven pieces of information can be stored in the short-term memory (working memory) due to its small capacity<sup>[1]</sup>. However, Chinese is a language consisting of ideograms, therefore the learning methods have to be different from Latin languages. With the increase of vocabulary, students can remember the words easier. Everyone knows we have to learn and review, but not enough is known about how to remember the vocabulary effectively by better adopting a regular pattern of memory. Teachers need to try more teaching methods. Therefore, the second part of this paper takes the vocabulary teaching and text teaching as an example to put the theory into practice.

## **I. Cognitive Psychology and Second Language Acquisition Theories**

## **A.Memorization is the biggest obstacle to language learning**

Language learning is a process of: Input - Master and Memorize - Output. (picture1)



Picture1

The survey which has been done on 36 German and Austrian Chinese learners found that 34 of them think that remembering is the most difficult part in this process.

## **B.The information-processing model of Robert Mills Gagné**

According to the information processing theory, Robert Mills Gagné explained: "Learning is the set of cognitive processes that transforms the stimulation from the environment into the several phases of information processing necessary for acquiring a new capability."<sup>[5]</sup> and "Continued practice results in improved timing and smoothness of performance ." <sup>[5]</sup> The following example illustrates a teaching sequence corresponding to the nine instructional events for the objective, to master a new Chinese word:

1. Gain attention - show the new word and give a condition.
2. Identify objective-pose question: "How to express or describe it in Chinese?"

3. Recall prior learning - review the words learnt before, and make a sentence with both the new one and old one.
4. Present stimulus - give definition of the words. For example: explain the original meaning of the characters. The writer suggest that teachers can explain the cultural intention related to the character or word, this way selective perception can help the students storing the knowledge in their long-term memory.
5. Guide learning- show an example of how to use the word in different conditions.
6. Elicit performance - ask students to create different examples with the partner.
7. Provide feedback - check all examples and correct.
8. Assess performance- provide scores and remediation. For example, do some elaboration exercises, retell the text with the given words.
9. Enhance retention/transfer - The teacher provides varied practice to generalize the capability, for example, providing a topic related to the new knowledge.

Note that although the information in short-term memory disappears quickly, some of them were kept in sensory registration. Registration information is retained for seven days, but you have to repeat if you want to keep the information in the long-term memory.

### C.Chinese Vocabulary Memorization Survey

German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus did a survey on adults learning syllables vocabularies<sup>[2]</sup>. (picture 2)

time	memorized	forgotten
0.33	58.2	41.8
1	44.2	55.8
8.8	35.8	64.2
24	33.7	66.3
48	27.8	72.2
6*24	25.4	74.6
31*24	21.2	78.9

## Picture2

The research shows that without reviews only half of the vocabulary had been memorized the next day. In his research, he uses syllables called "nonsense syllables" (also known as the CVC trigram). These syllables might be less likely to have a specific meaning and therefore it is difficult to make associations with them for easier retrieval. Since Chinese is an ideographic language, with the increasing vocabulary, the difficulty and time it takes to acquire a new word are different from the effort to learn syllables. Based on this phenomenon, the author made a series of investigations which are based on Ebbinghaus's experiments to try to find the best way of acquisition of the Chinese language.

### a) The survey of review frequency

The author selected five new words with unfamiliar morphemes, for example: “利润”. The students had learned neither “利” nor “润”. The teacher divided 12 intermediate students into two groups. For the first group, the teacher read and translated the new words without explanation, and then asked the students to remember them mechanically. After five different ways of mechanical memory, students could read, write and translate these words. The first questionnaire was done after 20 minutes, and then the group reviewed the new words by translation method until the students recalled all these words again. The same survey took place after 1 hour, 1 day, 3 days, 1 week, 2 weeks and 1 month. One example of the results as follows:

Study time: 11 分钟      participants: 7      repetitions: 1      time: 0.33hours

	method	repetitions in class	reading	meaning	writing	remarks
利润	translation	1	71%	85%	14%	Teaching methods : collective reading , phonetics , translation, morphology。
往返	translation	1	71%	100%	28%	
就 业 率	translation	1	100%	85%	57%	
损失	translation	1	57%	85%	57%	

企业	translation	1	57%	100%	57%	
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Picture 3

It is not difficult to find that, as an ideogram, most of the students can also remember the Chinese words with about seven repetitions in a period of time, if we ignore the positive transfer and other favorable factors.

In the second group, the teacher gave the students simple explanations, for example “往返”: “往” means “去”, “返” means “回”, “the round trip tickets” is “往返车票”. The result of the survey shows that explanations can help students to form a better understanding that is easier to remember. Although the teacher had to spend four more minutes, the result was more promising. Furthermore, it can help us make good use of the positive transfer which is good for Chinese character learning.

#### **b) Factors that can influence efficiency of memorizing**

Memorizing syllable words in some way relies on the mechanical memory. Because the Chinese character is an ideograph with the integration of sound, meaning, and format, ~~with~~ the increase of vocabulary and positive transferring, language acquisition becomes easier and easier. The survey II of 12 students does not only confirm this theory, but also finds other factors which influence the efficiency of memorizing Chinese words. The words can be divided into the following several kinds: vocabulary acquisition by positive transfer, for example: “分公司”; practical vocabulary, for example: “员工”; vocabulary neither familiar nor practical, for example: “外派”. The survey was done after one day, two days, one week, two weeks, and two months. One example of the results is illustrated in the table below:

Date of study: 2014-9-1 date of survey: 2014-9-2 survey number: 1 time: 1 day

	method	Repetitions in class	reading	meaning	writing	remarks
员工	meaning of syllables + associations	5	100%	90%	100%	
经验	situational method	3	70%	70%	60%	
热情	meaning of syllables + associations	3	80%	60%	60%	
分公司	word fields	2	100%	90%	100%	
竞争	situational method	2	40%	50%	50%	
厉害	additional	2	30%	30%	20%	
外派	situational method	1	70%	50%	30%	
人事部	meaning of syllables + word fields	1	100%	80%	100%	

Picture4

This study identifies four factors possibly influences memory efficiency:

#### 1. Possible influence of morpheme knowledge

Let us take the word “人事部” (human resources department) as an example, of which students have already learned “人“ and “事“: these two already familiar



characters are of great help to understand and memorize “人事部”. As their language proficiency increases, ideographs help students to rely less and less on the teacher's assistance for understanding words. For instance, a higher level student who reads the phrase “厚德载物” for the first time will have the following understanding of those characters: “厚: 很厚” (thick) “德: 品德” (moral character) “载: 装” (carry) “物: 东西” (things) without the teacher's help. “People of good character have a lot of things.” Even if this translation is a bit far-fetched, one can't deny the importance that positive transfer has within a higher level student's learning process.

## 2. Repetition rate and opportunity

If we carry out a one-by-one analysis, we can discover that the higher the repetition frequency is, the easier is it for the students to memorize new words. At the same time, using both seven day and 14 day studies, we can see that these previously memorized new words are easily forgotten if there is no repetition during these two time periods.

## 3. Practicality

The last survey was conducted after two months, the greatest difference was demonstrated by the word “厉害”(strict, intense, severe). This word originally didn't appear in the text's new vocabulary, but due to its practicality, the rate of successful memory of the phrase increased from 20% to 60%.

## 4. Relation to student's interests

This point especially relates to how the teacher in the classroom explained the word “分公司” (company branch). She first explained the difference between “总” and “分”, then explained “母公司” (parent company)'s correspondent “总公司” (head company). After that she let the students guess what “分公司”'s correspondent was. To their surprise, the students learned that the Chinese use “子公司” (literally “son company”) and not “女儿公司” (literally “daughter company”). This led them to reflect on cultural differences, and stimulated their selective memory.

# II. Examples of teaching method for European intermediate Chinese Learners

## Morpheme Teaching method

Many things cannot be expressed without grammar; Nothing can be expressed without vocabulary. It shows the importance of vocabulary. As the ideogram, each Chinese character has its own meanings, the meaning of a word relates to the meaning of both characters in the word. Understanding the original meaning of each character is necessary for intermediate Chinese learners. The following methods can be used for reference.

### **a) 1000 High frequency Chinese characters**

When learning English, it is only necessary to mentally build a connection between the phonetics of a given word and its meaning, whereas when learning Chinese the connection has to be extended to include three distinct parts: phonetics, meaning and form (the Chinese character). Without a doubt this adds an extra layer of complexity. To reduce complexity and strengthen the student's confidence, it might be correct to first establish only the connection between the phonetics of a word and its form. For this purpose one could use around a thousand frequently used words as learning material, spending about five minutes each day letting the students recognize and read aloud words, starting with 30 words a day, steadily increasing the number by about 20 to 30 each session. During the reading task the teacher should note down words the students have difficulties remembering and revisit them in future exercises. Each session there should first be a repetition of at least 50 words already learned before introducing new words. The teacher should let the students take turns reading aloud the words and correct their pronunciation. After one term the connection between these words' phonetics and their written form should be firmly established.

### **b) Distinguishing words:**

A lot of basic characters or character components are pictographic, associative compounds or ideogram. The teacher can explain the meaning of the characters' or components' forms and use pictures to provide the students with visual impressions that stick. An example is the Chinese term “木”, its form appearing in several other words as a component (root 本, fruit 果, forest 森, rest 休). When learning other more advanced words, the teacher can also explain the idea behind the ideograms or the story behind some pictograms, which are not so easily recognizable. For the word book volume 册, the teacher could explain: “In ancient China, before paper was invented, people wrote on dried bamboo stripes, later binding them together to form book volumes (册).”

### **c) Explanation of original meaning**

According the *Theory of Cognitive Development*, “teachers have to stimulate the intellectual capacity of adult students. Building upon a thorough understanding of the text and its grammatical structure, one should encourage the active and creative use of the language”<sup>[4]</sup>. To help the students better understand the text, the teacher should have a firm grasp of the original meaning of the Chinese characters. Several words in the written language often occurring in texts of intermediate courses have specific and distinct patterns of usage; for example negation words like “无, 勿, 未, 免”. When for example explaining the character “未”, one should first look for a word the students are already familiar with, for example “未来” (future). Then one can explain that “未” means “not yet” and “来” stands for “到来” meaning “arrive”, “未来” thus meaning “that which has not yet arrived”. Students will immediately realize the connection, deepening their understanding of the word “未来” on the one hand and also teaching them the original meaning of the character “未”. Afterwards the teacher can then ask further questions like “what is the meaning of “未名湖” to introduce other applications of the character and test if the students understood the meaning. Other original meanings of characters that are important to comprehend for students of intermediate courses are: 此、本、其、资、增、减、涨、如、交、费、政、物、具、价、相、制、算、行、部、者、员、事、售.

#### **d) Enlarging Vocabulary**

Building upon the thorough understanding of Chinese characters, the teacher can then help the students to expand their vocabulary. When the teacher is explaining new vocabulary the students only have limited time for remembering the new meaning. In this instance it is better to connect the new input with words the students have already experience with. This way the new knowledge does not stand on its own. For example when explaining the word “事件” (incident/event), the teacher can refer to other words using the same character like “同事” (colleague) “故事” (accident). This will help the students remember the new vocabulary. At the same time the teacher can also expand the vocabulary by introducing new words using the same character, like “心事” (worry) “心想事成” (have one’s wishes come true), enriching the understanding of the character and helping the student to acquire the Enlarging Vocabulary.

In addition, in some cases students doing this kind of exercise will tend to *overdo* the expansion of these words. For example when doing the exercise with the character 相 (another/each other), the correct expansion would yield words like “相

爱 (love another), 相思, 相恋 (love another)". But some students will come up with incorrect usages like “相打”, “相说” or “相按摩” overdoing the expansion. To prevent such over-expansion, the teacher must take measures in anticipation. The teacher should for example write incorrect usages like “相按摩” on the black board after explaining the exercise and ask the students if the usage is correct and then tell them that the correct usage is in fact “互相按摩”. The teacher thereby stresses that not all verbs can be used in conjunction with “相”.

**e) Give more complex vocabulary a context.**

So called “more complex” words are words that are very important but cannot simply be understood by referring to words already known to the student and that are also impossible to comprehend by looking at the form of the character or by referring to the original meaning of the character. For example the word “凭” used as a preposition is often rather difficult to comprehend for foreign students. In such cases it is advisable to create a context the students can directly relate to:

“你去故宫，到了门口，但是你没有票，你可以进去吗？为什么呢？”

(When you go to the Forbidden City and get to the entrance, will they let you in? Why not?)

Afterwards the teacher should write example sentences like these on the blackboard

我            进入故宫。（没票？不可以。）

我 凭票 进入故宫。（凭票）

Afterwards the teacher can ask the students to interchange other words for the underlined parts and continue the exercise. In line with Ebbinghaus’s theory, the teacher should try to encourage the usage of words learned in the previous seven days.

Besides that, the teacher can also try to act certain situations to give the students a meaningful context when explaining new words. This is also an effective way of preventing the over expansion of words mentioned above. One student for example

built a sentence like this: ”我凭钱买书”. This sounds like one only has to show the money to get the book and not actually spend the money. The teacher can then act the situation described by this ambiguous sentence in front of the students to clarify the difference. From this example can be seen, that when explaining “more complex” words, a direct and visual approach can be very helpful to the students, because a comprehensive and correct context of the usage of the new word is of great importance.

## **A.Text teaching**

### **a) Process of the text learning**

From the students’ perspective, the process of learning a new text can be divided into the following different parts:

#### **Step 1: Read the whole text and grasp the basic idea of the text**

If the text is a conversation between two people or if the text is rather short, the teacher can ask the students to close their books and read the text to them while enacting parts of the content. This way the student’s focus is solely on understanding the content of the text. It is of course necessary then to read at a slow pace and with an animated voice so the students can easily follow. If the text is rather long or contains a conversation of several people, the teacher can divide the text into different parts based on the content and alternately let the students read the text and ask them questions about the content, clarifying things if necessary. The teacher can also assign different roles to the students and let them read aloud. It is important though to not spend too much time on all of this, otherwise time might run out and the teacher will not be able to convey a comprehensive and thorough understanding of the text. The teacher should not let the students’ focus trail off by focusing on difficult new words or complex sentences, but instead should intentionally ignore some difficult new words or grammatical structures and make sure that the students understood the basic idea of the text.

#### **Step 2: Explain the language points to break the language barrier**

Let the students alternately read aloud, sentence by sentence. After each sentence the teacher should explain the sentence, clarify grammatically or semantically difficult parts and correct the student’s pronunciation. For this part the teacher should use approximately twice to thrice as much time as for part 1.

### Step3: Reciting the whole text

The teacher can lead the class reading aloud and/or let them all read together in unison. Here I want to specifically mention some advantages of this often critically viewed method. Most European languages do not have an equivalent to the tonality of the Chinese language, but rather use the pitch contour of their speech as a device to express emotions, lacking the rigidity of the tonal system of the Chinese language, in which the pitch of words cannot simply be changed at will. Reading together requires a certain level of conformity from the students, which could be compared to humming a melody. In that way learning Chinese pronunciation is not that dissimilar from learning a song. Reading in unison forces the students to make sure they stay in tune with the rest, especially paying attention to their pronunciation. When teaching a class of 10 or more people, it is near impossible to correct each student's pronunciation every day, but letting the students read in unison allows for an opportunity to give guidance to their tones. Therefore I would recommend this method for teaching large classes with problematic pronunciation.

### Step 4: Separate the students into groups to read

Because of the heterogeneity of most classes and selective memory of students, there is no single student who remembers and completely understood all of the content that was discussed by the teacher. The goal of letting the students read the text in groups is to give them the opportunity to discuss among themselves and help out each other on minor questions. This is also a good time for students to raise some personal or rather specific questions.

### Step 5: Repetition

### Step 6: Discussion

I would advise to pose some open questions and let the students discuss in groups before asking the question to the whole class.

### **b) Retelling methods**

Retell involves both content and vocabulary, In the process of retelling, in order to reduce the difficulty to increase the enthusiasm of the students, do not emphasize The memory of the content, but show the key words or a general outline to Prompt the general meaning of the text. The key is how to express complete thought both new and known words, so as to help the students be familiar with and memorize

vocabulary thus helping the students to remember the new words. The following three methods for reference.

The first method, outline retelling method: The teacher write the outline of text on the blackboard (picture 6), and lead the students retell. The sample of instructional words as follow:

- 1.ECLC 是北大欧洲中国语言文化交流项目，我们的教室在国际关系学院。
- 2.项目主任是穆老师，她的办公室在 319 房间，她负责帮助学生解决问题。
- 3.北大图书馆是中国第五大图书馆，有三千多万册书，学生可以凭学生证借书。
- 4.北大有很多食堂，最大的是农园，我最喜欢家园，因为又便宜又好吃（Speak freely）
- 5.北大有很多小摊儿，我最喜欢卖煎饼的小摊儿（Speak freely）
- 6.校园里有很多银行：工商银行、农业银行、中国银行，在那儿可以换钱、取钱。

初到北京大学（课文概括）	
一、ECLC: _____	教室在:
二、主任: _____	办公室: _____ 负责:
三、图书馆: <u>  5  </u> <u>  3000  0000  </u>	_____ 借书
四 食堂: 农园 燕南园 家园 学一 学二 学五 .....	

Picture 6

The second method, retelling with key words: Write the key words on the blackboard to lead the students retell. This method is effective for a passage memorizing .The key words on the blackboard (picture7) from the text: “90 年代的姑娘，尽管对文凭、长相也考虑，但对一个没有钱，收入又没保障的小

伙子，即使是大学生，也难动芳心，除非原来就有感情基础。姑娘们在男方的职业、收入可心的前提下，才看你的文化素养如何、身高及家庭状况。” If have enough time, the teacher can only keep the underline key words, also depends on the Chinese level of the students.

90 年代姑娘的择偶标准

尽管文凭 长相，但 没有钱 收入没保障 ，即使大学生也 \_\_\_\_\_。

Picture 7

The third method, link up the key words and the corresponding data or information: The first student link up; The second one summarize the content in their native language or English; The third one summarize again in Chinese. And then the students retell it with their partner. Take a paragraph in the economic textbook as an example: “农民工的工作常常是最苦、最累的最危险的，而他们签订劳动合同的只占 43.9%，交养老保险、工伤保险、医疗保险、失业保险和生育保险的比例分别是 14.3%、24%、16.9%、8.4%和 6.1%。”

农民工的社保情况	
签订劳动合同	6.1%
养老保险	16.9%

Picture 8

Doing these retelling exercises well can help students not only manage thread of thought, grasp the major idea, but also remember the new words in the paragraph.



## **B.Games In The Class**

### **a)You said I guess**

The teacher choose several important vocabulary, write one or two words on each paper, everyone cannot see other one's words, 1 minute for preparing, then a student to explain, the other students guess. Or the students cannot see their own card, holding the card slip over the head, everyone can see others words but cannot see their own, then other students describe, the one who has the card guess.

### **b)You read I clean**

The teacher write about 20 important words on the blackboard, give students 2 minutes to prepare, divide the students into two groups, each group choose one representative to the blackboard. Then the teacher or a student read a word, the one who find and clean the new word first and can read and translate the word correctly win, the group members can help the representative to recall, if he/she is the only one who clean the word.

### **c)Flash card memory**

The teacher flash the word card to the students for a second (or more), and then let the students write down the word immediately.

### **d)Play a drama:**

Teacher prepare character cards which include a task, for example after learning the lesson "see the doctor", the teacher can prepare the following character card:

中医: your job is to diagnosis by taking a patient 's pulse, massage, advise patients acupuncture

西医: you suggest the patient take a chemical examination, and give the patient a lot of Western medicine.

挂号处: you give the patient registration, collect fees for everything

药房: you give the patient Chinese medicine and Western medicine.

病人: headache started from 3 years ago, especially in the rainy days.

病人: you have a cold and diarrhea .

导演:teacher or a student who knows the real condition of China.

### **III Conclusion**

Repetition is an essential method of learning a new language, but the process is quite dull. Besides being well informed about teaching methods and theory, it is also the task of the teacher to create a lively and interesting learning experience that is also efficient. The new words should be repeated at least five times during this process of learning in the class. If we do not account for heterogeneity among the students, the new vocabulary should be repeated two to three more times to effectively help the students memorize the new words. These two to three more times of repetition should be spread over time, repeating the vocabulary within one week, again within two weeks and optimally again within a month. While the teacher is finished teaching this text, the new vocabulary from the text should still be memorized well, so that the teacher can repeat important vocabulary in future exercises. If one assumes the results of the above mentioned survey to be generally true, the teacher can only release the grip on the students when a word has been repeated for at least seven times, thereby making sure that the word is embedded in the long term memory of a large portion of the students.

One should also remind the students to not be frustrated when they forget new vocabulary and that remembering is not merely a thing of the distant future, but that they get one step closer to embedding the vocabulary in their long term memory with every repetition. And every single character in their long term memory is meaningful, acting like a tool to ease their future study of the Chinese language.

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# CHINESE TEACHING PRACTICE AT STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY

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## **Introduction**

Swedes have been fascinated by oriental civilization since middle ages when the big popularity of French culture was over. The Oriental civilization gradually infiltrated the country after founding of Swedish East India Company. In 1745, the first East Indiaman Gothenburg ship was loaded with tea, porcelain, silk and spices, and started trading with China. In 2005, a ship with the same name, sailed to China along the ancient routes. Trading with China enhanced culture exchange between the two countries.

Swedish started to research sinology 300 years ago. Over the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century, the Chinese studies in Sweden had never been interrupted. Swedish explorer Sven Hedin (Sven Hedin, 1865-1952) did his desert expedition. G. Adersson's archaeological activities in Northern China were coordinated under the Swedish-Chinese Research Council. Swedish kings and princes donated a lot to the Far East funding for heritage collections and museums [1]. Karlgren (Bernhard Karlgren, 1889-1978) was not only a distinguished sinologist in Sweden, but also the western world's most outstanding sinologist. He used his whole life to study Chinese culture, history and phonology with a big enthusiasm. His research covered most subjects of ancient Chinese culture; Another famous Swedish sinologist is Ma Yueran (Göran Malmqvist 1924- ). He made excellent achievements in his research that covers a big number of subjects, ancient Chinese, Sichuan dialect, Chinese grammar, translation of contemporary poems and classical novels.

Over the last decades, Chinese economic development created more opportunities for Swedish industries, which offered many employment positions to young people. It is expected that the future relationship with China could be enhanced with this trend. The driving forces of most students at our department to study Chinese are their interests on Chinese history, culture or philosophy, and the requirements from work and career. Needless to say, their love on Chinese cuisine is also one of the reasons.

We teach different level courses from freshmen to post graduate. Our students have learned Chinese before starting their university study. Our language curriculum for basic education stage is listed below: Modern Chinese (4 hour/week), practical Chinese skills (4 hours/week), the dialogue course (2 hours/week), knowledge about China (2 hours/week), the ancient Chinese (2 hours/week), Chinese literature (2 hours/week), etc. The courses of Chinese social history and culture are opened for students at their 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> semesters.

To enhance the speak capacity for students, open speeches to whole department are organized on each Monday. Students have total 16 hours courses per week.

As foreign language teachers, we should analyze the characteristics of students and make an individualized study plan. Based on the result of the analysis, we determine what level and contents of Chinese the student should learn in order to achieve the objectives in the study plan. The major goals of Chinese program at Stockholm University are to set up systematic teaching methods according to the characteristic of each student and to set up stable basements for their further study.

### **Part A, Practice a teaching model**

Teaching Chinese as a foreign language is a complicate task. The teaching method should be carefully investigated according to the evaluation of students and teaching materials. The classroom teaching as the main form of teaching should be carefully designed to match the majority of students.

Lu Jian Ji [2] said: "Our teaching philosophies and principles should be verified through teaching practice and approved to be effective. So we should make a plan of teaching practice when we propose teaching philosophies and principles. Don't only talk about ideas, more important is to summary of the relevant experience."

How to optimize and coordinate the teaching and learning practices and to get the best teach effect?

In fact, Chinese teaching at Stockholm University has been continuously progressed

through analyzing the feedback from teaching practice. In the mid-1970s to the 1980s, Chinese teaching was mainly focused on listening, speaking, reading and writing capacities. From the 1980s to now, sub-skill teaching mode has been adopted. Language skill training is emphasized on and the courses of reading / writing, listening and speaking were offered. The intensive reading course is the key for whole teaching practice [3]. Such teaching courses are systematically arranged and formed a complete teach system.

Today, multimedia has been widely applied. How do we use it to upgrade our Chinese teaching /learning mode? After investigation, we coordinated the advantages of internet and multimedia and different teaching modes, and set up our own teaching mode:

### ***1. Self-study stage***

Students preview the text, read background information, self-learning cards, preview text and words and find difficult words and grammatical phenomena. During this stage, students are asked to spend some efforts in advance. For Chinese teaching as a foreign language today, the classroom teaching /learning should be supported by student self-study. We send all teaching materials and study plans via a website ([mondo.su.se](http://mondo.su.se)) to all students and encourage self-study in advance or afterwards.

### ***2. Coordinate visual and auditory teaching materials***

We spent efforts to coordinate visual and auditory teaching materials to make "new word studying process" more active and interesting. From a psychological perspective, human mainly obtain information via visual and auditory perceptions. If we only use our visual perspective to learn a foreign language, our learning efficiency is only 60%. If we only use our auditory perspective alone, our learning efficiency is 70%. However, if we used both visual and auditory perspectives simultaneously, our learn efficiency will increase up to 90% [3]. Therefore, in our Chinese teaching practice, we encourage students to fully use visual and auditory perspectives, to produce multiple stimulus to their brains, thus improve their learning efficiency.

As a hieroglyphs language, Chinese is developed from a long history. For students, it is very helpful to remember Chinese characters if they know the rules of how to compose Chinese characters as "pictures" from different components (radicals). We teach new characters by analyzing their structures of "radicals" and illustrate the

reasons and stories behind and comparing them with similar characters. By doing so, students can systematically remember Chinese characters much easier and faster.

In order to deepen the student's first impression to new words, so that they firmly remember them, we make PowerPoint coursewares, in the form of drawings to explain the structures and story behind them, sometimes using Flash animation, video and other forms to show spelling, tone, meaning and example sentence for the words. After reading a few times, students will be able to master the correct pronunciation and how to use these words.

## ***2. Application of foreign language translation methods***

Direct translation method has become a science in foreign language teaching system since a hundred years. It is a method of teaching Chinese as a foreign language using mother tongue. Mother tongue and Chinese are often used together in the teaching practice. We find that appropriately using Swedish in translation exercises is helpful for students to compare characteristics and rules between Chinese and Swedish and to reduce their anxiety, psychological burden and pressure, to remember the words and to improve their skill of expressing in Chinese.

Translation method using Swedish in Chinese teaching practice can be treated not only as a teaching purpose but also as a teaching tool. By doing so, students significantly increased their knowledge and capacity to read and understand Chinese as a foreign language.

We believe that during the stage of the text reading and digesting, it is more effective to use the translation method. Illustration the content of the text and grammar in Swedish is helpful for students to understand the content and meaning of the text, especially to understand the contexts of sentences and to master key sentences. After classes of reading and comprehension, to improve the understanding of the text, teachers will give illustration and explanation on the difficulties in the sentences and grammar, and to rise questions to students according to the text content.

## ***4. Grammar Teaching***

We often use PPT courseware in Chinese teaching, showing major Chinese grammar, with example sentences, explanation and interpretation. Our efforts are focused on the explaining grammatical structure, semantics and sentence functions. During teaching practice, we use both mechanical repetitions, such as reading, extensions, replace sentence, sentence conversion, and communicative exercises.



Some grammatical phenomena do not need to explain for the native Chinese speakers but should be emphasized to Swedish students, such as measure words and idioms. Another example is phrases in Swedish, such as time, place and method, are placed at the end of the sentence, however, in Chinese they must be placed after the subject and before the verb. Swedish students often make this kind of mistakes when they write Chinese, so we should clearly point out the difference between Chinese and Swedish. The differences between Chinese and Swedish are indicated and emphasized.

### ***5. Multi-type training***

Here, in addition to textbooks and homework books to practice on, speaking exercises is arranged. It should be noted that speaking skill is a very important goal in Chinese teaching. In the past, we often correct pronunciation and intonations at the beginning of the term, but to the end of term, we often forgot or ignored these. To correct the intonation in daily dialogue should be an important task through whole teaching practice. Otherwise, some students will not be able to speak correctly and become a "dumb" student. In order to improve students' speaking competence, we have arranged conversation classes to enhance the speaking capacity on daily life. Students got a lot of practice to speak. The procedures of narrative, answering questions, group discussion, playing different roles and other manner in teaching practice are arranged. All students like them very much.

The intonation "shengdiao" is more important in Chinese than in other languages. Speaking with correct intonations is often used as criteria to distinguish native Chinese speakers and foreigners. We spent a lot of efforts to help and encourage students to speak Chinese with correct intonations.

### ***6. Grading Standards***

How to assess a student's academic performance? In past performance evaluation, semester exam was the only test to assess student learning outcomes. Final score was given based on the result of this semester exam. At that time, many students pay little attention to attendance and the routine practice, they seldom hand-over homework, there may even use on "google translate" to do the homework, all word translation may be ok, but be completely wrong in the means. Now, we abandoned the old scoring system, made a reform by adopting a new scoring system. That is: each semester is divided into two sections, A and B, respectively. A comprehensive exam is arranged in each stage. Additionally, a small test is held in each week. 60% of the total scores is based on the comprehensive exam scores, 30% of the scores is

based on small test for each lesson, 10% is based on homework performance, and we also use the factor of course attendance and classroom activities as a reference, so that it avoid the disadvantage of old scoring system, i.e. all scores are based on a final exam, and at the same time, take into account of study attitude of students. After doing so, we find that the student increase their study enthusiasm, more carefully complete their homework, percentage of class attendance increased, and students behavior more actively during classes. We all realize that Chinese learning should be at a steady style and be a continuous process. Student should write characters, read text, listen and speak every day.

## **Part B. Teaching methods and techniques**

Teaching skills are important and basic elements for classroom teaching. No matter how classroom teaching is conducted, but in reality it is the process that certain appropriate classroom skills are performed by teachers. One can say that there is no successful classroom teaching if there is no classroom teaching skills. Therefore classroom teaching skills, as a science, should be carefully investigated and summarized [4]. 4

There are several teaching steps in classroom teaching. Teachers can only make an outstanding lectures if they know well teach steps and teaching skills. Teaching Chinese as a foreign language is just an art. The teach steps and skills are manners to show the artistic charm. Teachers should carefully prepare the teaching in advance and accumulate experience.

A multi-pronged teaching style is adopted. In a class, all students affect with each other, therefore, teachers should try to encourage students to help each other and build up a positive and pleasant class atmosphere. It includes an in-depth understanding of the students' national psychology, individual characteristics, motivation, mother language, learning capacity.

We spent efforts to make an individualized teaching plan. Considering our students have different ages and experience, to improve their study interests and motivation, we treat each student in an individualized way. We recognize that enthusiasm and entertaining are very important to Chinese study, therefore we often praise and encourage our students when they made any progresses.

Passive teaching should be avoided. We try to make our lectures more interesting and with humor sense. Our classes are often started with five minutes funny stories or jokes, when classroom atmosphere is warmed up we start our main tasks. Some Swedish students, more male than female, are very shy and have lack of self-confidence. It creates some barriers for their Chinese study, especially for their

speaking capacity. How to deal with these shy students? We first chat with them and encourage them to build self-confidence and give them more chances in speaking courses to talk about the topic they know better than others.

We have set up a Q & A class per week. During these Q & A classes, we not only help students to learn grammar, answer questions, but also chat with those students with less self-confidence, to understand their characters, personal interests and give them special support. Under our help, these shy students can often gradually catch up the class.

### **Part C. Chinese Teaching and Cultural Factors**

The cultural and traditional background should be simultaneously introduced during whole Chinese teaching process. From our previous experiences, we found that it is rather difficult to teach Chinese only as a language without giving enough cultural and tradition background.

Language is the carrier of culture, is also an important part of culture. Learning a culture is a basic part of the study of the corresponding language. All languages are inseparable from the culture, history, economy and other social factors. Therefore, we need to introduce Chinese culture to our students. Without knowledge on a language, one cannot understand the culture. Without understand the culture, it is difficult to master the language. Language teaching/learning practice cannot be completed without understanding the relevant social knowledge.

There are many four-character idioms in Chinese and often used in articles and daily conversations. Understanding and use of idioms are often big difficulties for foreigners who study Chinese. Behind each idiom, there is a cultural background or an interesting historical story.

Commonly used idioms, their cultural background and applicable scenarios are an important part in our teaching program to mater candidate students. By doing so, students' enthusiasm increased and at the same time their Chinese level improved.

Moreover, cultural factors can be easily compared and easily resonated by students. If a student has interests on Chinese culture, he or she will be very eager to participate in the discussion on the culture difference, during this process he or she obtains more knowledge about Chinese language.

For example, it is helpful for students to study Chinese if they know the differences on cuisine tradition, festival culture and marriage customs. Students are asked to discuss and write a small essay on the following topics:

#### *Food tradition*

What cuisines you tasted in China and Sweden?

The difference between Swedish and Chinese cuisines;

What is traditional Swedish food?

What cuisines are famous?

#### *Festival culture*

Comparative expression of Chinese and Swedish cultural festivals;  
Chinese: Spring festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival.

Swedish: Christmas and New Year, Midsummer Day and Easter.

#### *Marriage customs*

Chinese: dress, floats, groom, bride

Swedish: church, countryside, rings, cake.

In order to introduce cultural factors and expand the students' knowledge, our department organize Monday open lecture. This is a traditional program at our department. Experts and scholars from different universities are invited. The contents of open lectures are about Chinese history, culture, art, philosophy, opera .etc. Sometimes, the Chinese films are shown, instead of open lecture. These activities require students to participate, and to comment, answer some questions, so broaden their knowledge and understanding about Chinese culture.

In last five years of teaching practice, we not only get the experience, but also to get some lessons.

Huang Xiaoying said: If we always eat with food in our whole mouth, without enough jawing, we will definitely get indigestion. The same is true for language teaching / learning. Teachers can't be successful if they quickly show all new knowledge to the students, without understand difficult points, with digestion. Therefore we should pay attention on this point in our teaching practice [5].]

At the beginning, we also tried to give too much knowledge to our students and wanted them to improve fast. In the dialog class, we selected reading material that is far more difficult to most students. We wasted a lot of time and students do not get enough opportunities to speak. If students find a text with many new vocabularies, even they can find the meaning of the vocabularies from a dictionary; they still can't understand the meaning of the entire sentence.

If we ask students to read an article with more than 30% new words, they will lose interest immediately; it is the called psychological aversion. This proves that suitable teach material selection is the very important step for Chinese teaching program.

We find that a rule in selecting homework reading materials selection: the maximum new word percent for students should be under 5%. We find it is important to keep our moderate teaching step that enable students to overcome reading difficulty, avoid psychological aversion and create a pleasant reading environment. The difficulties of reading materials are gradually increased with the students' reading capacities.

#### **Part D. Summary**

Teaching Chinese as a foreign language is an art. Successful teaching and learning depend on many factors. Analysis of student characteristics, continuously accumulated teaching experience, carefully select teaching materials and arrange courses, properly use different teaching methods and suitable teaching materials are all important. Moreover, in our teaching program, we paid attention to gradually introduce Chinese culture, tradition, customs, history, philosophy, economy, etc., in order to allow students to improve their Chinese level during the class and in the future.

In a recent assessment conducted by Swedish ministry of education, our Chinese teaching team at Stockholm University has been evaluated to be at an outstanding level. We would like to share our experience in Chinese teaching at the same time learn from our counterparts from different universities at the 2nd Symposium on CFL (Chinese as Foreign Language) teachers and teaching: theory and practice in Aarhus.

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# TFA-CHINESE: PREPARATION OF HIGH SCHOOL CFL TEACHER IN ITALY

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## **I. Brief Introduction to Chinese Language Teaching at High Schools in Italy**

The compulsory education in Italy consists three periods: primary, middle school and high schools. Currently only high schools offer both curriculum and extracurricular<sup>2</sup> Chinese language courses whilst the primary and middle schools offer only limited extracurricular ones.<sup>3</sup> Italian high schools started to offer Chinese courses in the year 2000, when the Italian government signed agreements with Chinese government for cultural and educational cooperation and started pilot programs to launch Chinese language courses at high schools.<sup>4</sup> In the school year

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<sup>1</sup> The research focus on training of Chinese language teachers for curriculum courses at high schools while the training of Chinese language teachers for primary and middle schools are not included as they have only extra curriculum Chinese language courses.

<sup>2</sup> It's called curricolare and extra-curricolare in Italian.

<sup>3</sup> Professor Gisella Langé, inspector of Italian Ministry of Education and the Regional School Office for Lombardy, holds that "This is not only because primary and middle schools lack experiences, but also because of the lack of legal stipulation that require courses of language besides european ones in primary and middle schools". Gisella Langé, Poste Italiane SPA, *L'insegnamento di Lingua e Cultura Cinese nelle scuole Italiane*, 2010. p.4.

<sup>4</sup> Davor ANTONUCCI, Serena ZUCCHERI, Facoltà di Studi Orientali, *L'insegnamento del Cinese in Italia tra Passato e Presente*, La Sapienza Orientale-Ricerche, 2010. P.113. It reads in the book "The Italian and Chinese governments signed agreements for cultural and educational cooperation, since when the Chinese language programs in universities have seen obvious increase and the debut of Chinese language education pilot in high schools."

2003-2004, it's the Lombardy<sup>5</sup> that first declared that "Chinese courses can enter into secondary schools as curriculum and extracurricular courses."<sup>6</sup> In the school year 2004-2005, schools represented by Language High School "A.MANZONI" Milan<sup>7</sup> lead the trend of incorporating Chinese into the course systems. On January 23, 2008, the MIUR<sup>8</sup> Minister Mariastella Gelmini announced that: "Chinese language will be incorporated into the graduation written exams for high school language majors"<sup>9</sup> and the first pilot exam was held in 2009. The new *Regolamento*<sup>10</sup> and the *Indicazioni Nazionali*<sup>11</sup> promulgated by MIUR in 2010 for high schools officially authorised educational institutions to offer courses of foreign language on their own discretion.<sup>12</sup> Since then, each high school can choose languages other than European ones to be curriculum or extracurricular courses. Till 2012, there were more than 100 schools offering opportunities for students to learn Chinese, distributed in almost every region.<sup>13</sup> Besides, in the school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, students from nine high schools have set the Chinese graduation exam.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Lombardy is one of the 20 regions of Italy. The capital is Milan.

<sup>6</sup> Gisella Langé, Europa Vicina, *L'insegnamento di Lingua e Cultura Cinese nelle scuole Italiane*, 2010. p.4. During the school year 2003-2004, the Regional School Office for Lombardy, launched the "Speak Chinese, Japanese and Arabic—Understanding other cultures", or "Parlare cinese, giapponese, arabo in Europa per incontrare altre culture" in Italian, officially announcing that the Chinese language course can be a curriculum or extracurricular courses.

<sup>7</sup> Called *Liceo Linguistico "A.MANZONI"* in Italian.

<sup>8</sup> Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, called *Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca* in Italian, shortly as MIUR.

<sup>9</sup> Davor ANTONUCCI, Serena ZUCCHERI, Facoltà di Studi Orientali, *L'insegnamento del Cinese in Italia tra Passato e Presente*, La Sapienza Orientale-Ricerche, 2010. p.113.

<sup>10</sup> A law and regulation of MIUR for high schools.

<sup>11</sup> An MIUR guideline for high school teaching.

<sup>12</sup> Gisella Langé, Europa Vicina, *L'insegnamento di Lingua e Cultura Cinese nelle scuole Italiane*, 2010. p.4.

<sup>13</sup> Gisella Langé, Europa Vicina, *L'insegnamento di Lingua e Cultura Cinese nelle scuole Italiane*, 2010. p.4.

<sup>14</sup> From the MIUR.



## II. Introduction to the preparation of primary and secondary teachers in Italy

For the assurance of the quality and teaching performance of teachers, the MIUR requires that teacher candidates must obtain the *Teaching Certificates*<sup>15</sup> and be included in the *State List of Language Teachers for Primary and Secondary Schools*<sup>16</sup> (hereafter referred to as *State List of Teachers*) to become an officially recognized teacher for primary and secondary education. Since the school year 1999-2000, MIUR had launched the SSIS<sup>17</sup> to standardize the enrollment, preparation and certification of teachers for primary and secondary education and authorized each regional school office to administer and allocate the teachers and posts autonomously. Since the school year 2011-2012, TFA<sup>18</sup> has replaced SSIS to be the official preparation and certification of teachers for primary and secondary schools. In 2011, MIUR promulgated Gazette N. 24<sup>19</sup> to standardize the preparation of teachers for primary and secondary schools.

Gazette states that the aim of preparation of teachers for primary and secondary schools is: to ensure and improve the quality of teachers through their mastering of the skills that enables the learners to reach their learning targets stipulated in current decrees, mastering of relative knowledge of the pedagogical psychology and teaching methods, acquiring necessary organization and communication abilities.<sup>20</sup> For high school teachers, the Gazette additionally required that their English level

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<sup>15</sup> Called *Abilitato* in Italian.

<sup>16</sup> Called *Graduatoria* in Italian. It's the threshold for teachers to enter into primary and secondary schools. Each region will release one of such list and only those listed candidates can enter primary and secondary schools to be official teachers.

<sup>17</sup> Called *Scuola di Specializzazione in Insegnamento Secondario* in Italian, an organization administered by MIUR and each Regional School Office, from which one has to obtain certification to teach primary and secondary schools. The organization started operation in the school year 1999-2000 and was replaced by TFA in school year 2011-2012.

<sup>18</sup> Called *Tirocinio Formativo Attivo* in Italian. As stipulated by *Supplemento ordinario alla "Gazzetta Ufficiale" n.24 del 31 gennaio 2011-Serie generale*, the original SSIS was replaced in school year 2011-2012.

<sup>19</sup> Called *Supplemento ordinario alla "Gazzetta Ufficiale" n.24 del 31 gennaio 2011-Serie generale* in Italian. Regulations and content about MIUR and TFA hereafter all have their originality there.

<sup>20</sup> Art. 2. Obiettivi della formazione iniziale degli insegnanti, *Supplemento ordinario alla "Gazzetta Ufficiale" n.24 del 31 gennaio 2011-Serie generale*, p.2.

shall meet or surpass the B2 described in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)*<sup>21</sup> adopted by the European Council in 1996, their digital literacy for teaching, and their mastering of teaching methods for disabled students.<sup>22</sup>

The preparation of primary and secondary teachers is comprised of four major aspects: pedagogical knowledge; 475 hours of *direct*<sup>23</sup> and *indirect*<sup>24</sup> internship (including 75 hours for disabled students) at schools led by the tutor<sup>25</sup> who will give guidance and comments that candidates can integrate into practice, including instruction observation and practice; building connection between teaching and learning to master the teaching expertise of that subject; workshop with a conclusion of teaching practice and internship.<sup>26</sup> Instead of putting forward requirements for each subjects, the Gazette asked every institution to design its activities, course portfolios and school internship autonomously.

Assessment measures of the preparation of primary and secondary teachers include: evaluation of internship which will be completed by the tutor of internship; introduction to how the teaching activities will be organized and conducted based on the topic picked by the Examination Committee; and discussion of the internship

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<sup>21</sup> Called *Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue* in Italian, European Council, 1996.

<sup>22</sup> Art. 3. Percorsi formativi, Supplemento ordinario alla “Gazzetta Ufficiale” n.24 del 31 gennaio 2011-Serie generale, p.2.

<sup>23</sup> In school internship includes class observation and teaching practice, which should be completed under the guidance of the tutor of internship.

<sup>24</sup> Outside school internship includes discussions over training courses, reflection on teaching practices, and the guidance to assessment report, which should be completed under the guidance of the tutor coordinator.

<sup>25</sup> There are two kinds of tutors, i.e. tutor coordinator and tutor of internship, called *Tutor coordinator* and *Tutor dei tirocinanti* respectively in Italian. The former is responsible for guiding and administering the candidates’ training courses and final assessment and evaluation while the latter assumed by teachers from hosting schools to be responsible for all the internship of candidates.

<sup>26</sup> Art. 10. Istituzione e svolgimento del tirocinio per la formazione degli insegnanti della scuola secondaria di primo e di second grado, Supplemento Ordinario alla “Gazzetta Ufficiale” n.24 del 31 gennaio 2011-Serie generale, p.5.

report.<sup>27</sup> Candidates passed the final exams will be granted the *Teaching Certificates* and be included into the *State List of Teachers*.

### III. Preparation and Certification of Chinese Language Teachers in Italy

#### 3.1 History and Status Quo

Regarding the preparation and certification of Chinese language teachers, “the SSIS of Veneto<sup>28</sup> has offered specific course for future teachers of Chinese language in 2007.”<sup>29</sup> In 2010, the SSIS granted the certification thereof to 10 teachers<sup>30</sup> and then it has been suspended. Since there has been no *State List of Teachers* during the period from 2010 to 2012, the Regional School Office for Lombardy had released the list of Italian and native Chinese language teachers<sup>31</sup> qualified to teach at high schools in the region each July to provide reference and suggestions for selecting Chinese language teachers for high schools in the region. The list is different from the *State List of Teachers* in that it is not mandatory for one to become a high school Chinese language teacher, instead, it’s just a reference when the high schools are hiring Chinese language teachers.

During the school year 2012-2013, MIUR included Chinese language teachers into the TFA system (hereafter referred to as TFA-Chinese). Candidate must pass the preliminary selection, i.e. written and oral tests, to enter and survive the one-year training program, the internship, and the assessment to obtain the teaching certificate granted by MIUR and be included into the *State List of Teachers*. Then the regional school office will try to match the local educational needs and allocate teachers to different schools taking into account their willingness. At that school year, TFA-

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<sup>27</sup> Art. 10. Istituzione e svolgimento del tirocinio per la formazione degli insegnanti della scuola secondaria di primo e di second grado, Supplemento ordinario alla “Gazzetta Ufficiale” n.24 del 31 gennaio 2011-Serie generale, p.5.

<sup>28</sup> Veneto is one of the twenty regions of Italy. The region's capital and largest city is Venice.

<sup>29</sup> Davor ANTONUCCI, Serena ZUCCHERI, Facoltà di Studi Orientali, *L'insegnamento del Cinese in Italia tra Passato e Presente*, La Sapienza Orientale-Ricerche, 2010. p.111.

<sup>30</sup> The training is conducted at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, the Italian name is Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia.

<sup>31</sup> Italian foreign language class in high schools usually has both Italian teachers and Chinese teachers teaching together. Therefore the teacher certificates here include two kinds with different requirements.

Chinese offered a quota of 115 and there were finally 9 people<sup>32</sup> passed the preliminary test and another part were also enrolled into the program as waiting candidates<sup>33</sup> as per regulations of each university, and there was still another part of them failed to pass the test and was excluded from the training. For example, there was only one person in the University for Foreigners Siena<sup>34</sup> in Tuscany<sup>35</sup> passed the preliminary test to be officialy taken into the program and another 15 as waiting candidates. At the end of that shcool year, 5 people in Lazio<sup>36</sup> survived the preliminary test and the program and were granted the certification, and in Tuscany the number is 14. During the school year 2013-2014, MIUR suspended the TFA<sup>37</sup> and in the school year 2014-2015, it has been resumed by MIUR.

### 3.2 TFA-Chinese

In the school year 2012-2013, MIUR assigned the task of TFA-Chinese to Sapienza University of Rome<sup>38</sup>, the University LUSPIO<sup>39</sup>, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, the University for Foreigners Siena, and Kore University of Enna<sup>40</sup> respectively. As required by the Gazette N. 24, all the candidates must obtain 60 credits for the four sections: Education Sciences (18 credits), Subject Teaching and Workshop (18 credits), School Internship (19 credits), Thesis and Internship Report (5 credits).<sup>41</sup> Any university undertaking the task of TFA must incorporate these four sections into their programs, evaluation and assessment. But regarding the specific courses and the model of training for these four parts, the university has the authority to decide on their own discretion. The writer chose two universities with the most

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<sup>32</sup> Source: <http://diventareinsegnanti.orizzontescuola.it/2012/08/01/tfa-cinese-solo-in-6-svolgeranno-la-prova-scritta-i-corsi-pero-dovrebbero-partire-in-ben-5-universita/>.

<sup>33</sup> Called *Ammesso con riserva* in Italian.

<sup>34</sup> Italian name: University for Foreigners Siena.

<sup>35</sup> Tuscany is a region in central Italy. The regional capital is Florence

<sup>36</sup> Lazio is one of the 20 regions of Italy. The region's capital is Rome.

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.adiscuola.it/adiw\\_brevi/?page\\_id=10127](http://www.adiscuola.it/adiw_brevi/?page_id=10127).

<sup>38</sup> Italian name: Università degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza".

<sup>39</sup> Italian name: Università degli studi Internazionali di Roma.

<sup>40</sup> Italian name: Università Kore di Enna.

<sup>41</sup> TABELLA 11. Supplemento ordinario alla "Gazzetta Ufficiale" n.24 del 31 gennaio 2011- Serie generale, p.48.

candidates as examples, i.e. the Sapienza University of Rome<sup>42</sup> in Lazio and the University for Foreigners Siena<sup>43</sup> in Tuscany to elaborate on the activities, course portfolios and assessment methods for preparation of Chinese language teachers. Additionally, the author interviewed Dr. Federica Casalin, the head of TFA-Chinese of Sapienza University of Rome and several other candidates taking the training at both two universities to better understand how universities design and implement the training and assessment.

### 3.2.1 Teaching Activities of TFA-Chinese

According to the Gazette N. 24, TFA-Chinese is composed of four sections with 60 credits. Training activities and credit distribution of Sapienza University of Rome:

Table 1: Training Activities for TFA-Chinese of Sapienza University of Rome<sup>44</sup>

	Section	Content	Credit	Subtotal of credit
1	Education Sciences	General Pedagogy	6	18
		Special Education and Teaching	6	
		Experimental Pedagogy	6	
2	Subject Teaching and Workshop	Chinese Culture Teaching	6	18
		Chinese Language Teaching	6	
		Modern Languages	6	
3	Internship (475 hours)	75 hours, only for handicapped students	3	19
		150 hours' indirect internship	2	
		250 hours' direct internship	14	
4	Thesis and Internship Report	Thesis and Internship Report	5	5
	Total			60

<sup>42</sup> 4 people from the University took part in and passed the training.

<sup>43</sup> 16 people from the University took part in the training and 13 of them passed.

<sup>44</sup> Called *Tabelle attività didattiche TFA* in Italian, provided by Dr. Federica Casalin, head of TFA-Chinese of Sapienza University of Rome.

Training activities and credit distribution of the University for Foreigners Siena

Table 2: Training Activities for TFA-Chinese of the University for Foreigners Siena<sup>45</sup>

	Section	Content	Credit	Subtotal of credit
1	Education Sciences	General Pedagogy, Social Pedagogy/ History of Pedagogy (36 hours)	6	18
		Special Education and Teaching (36 hours)	6	
		General and Experimental Pedagogy (36 hours)	6	
2	Subject Teaching and Workshop	Chinese Language Teaching <sup>46</sup>	6	18
		Chinese Culture and Literature Teaching <sup>47</sup>	6	
		Language Education <sup>48</sup>	6	
3	Internship (475 hours)	75 hours, only for handicapped students	3	19
		400 hours, including school internship, workshop and self-study	16	
4	Thesis and Internship Report	Thesis and Internship Report	5	5

<sup>45</sup> Called *Piano attività didattiche classe A111* in Italian. Resource: [http://www.unistrasi.it/323/1681/Tirocinio Formativo Attivo 2012.htm](http://www.unistrasi.it/323/1681/Tirocinio%20Formativo%20Attivo%202012.htm).

<sup>46</sup> Attendance to lectures of 18 hours bears 3 credits and the workshop of 36 hours bears 3 credits.

<sup>47</sup> Attendance to lectures of 18 hours bears 3 credits and the workshop of 36 hours bears 3 credits.

<sup>48</sup> Attendance to lectures of 18 hours bears 3 credits and the workshop of 36 hours bears 3 credits.

	Total		60
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The first sections of Tables 1 and 2, i.e. the section of *Education Sciences*, are instructed by experts thereof invited by universities and the content is the same as other subjects of TFA.

The second section *Subject Teaching and Workshop* means mastering teaching skills through classroom instruction<sup>49</sup> and workshop. The Chinese language part consists of teaching of Chinese language, culture and literature and the knowledge of linguistics and language education. Regarding the course portfolio, each university is authorized to make its own decision by drawing its strength and meeting its demands. In the following the author will compare and analyze the course portfolio of both universities.

The third section *School Internship* means that each and every candidate must go to a high school to complete 400 hours of general internship and 75 hours of internship to handicapped students under the supervision of the Tutor internship. For this section, the Sapienza University of Rome divided the 400 hours internship into direct and indirect internship. The former consists 250 hours conducted at schools under the supervision of the Tutor internship, including class observation and teaching practice. The latter consists of 150 hours conducted outside the internship school under the supervision of the Tutor coordinator, including reflection and discussion over their teaching practice such as how to design a class or a teaching activity, how to design an exam, or how to conduct evaluation under certain circumstances. Besides, discussion and revision of internship thesis are also included. The University for Foreigners Siena, although divided it into three kinds, i.e. school internship, workshop and self-study, has similar contents and requirements with Sapienza University of Rome.

The fourth section *Thesis and Internship Report* see same requirements from the two universities. The thesis refers to a paper of 10 to 20 pages with 2000 letters per page written by the candidate based on his / her school internship experience under the guidance of his / her tutor coordinator. The *Internship Report* refers to the evaluation of the candidate made by his /her tutor of internship based on the performance of the intern. This section also serves as a part of the assessment over the candidate at the end of the training.

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<sup>49</sup> Refers to attendance to lectures.

### 3.2.2 Course Portfolio of TFA-Chinese<sup>50</sup>

The *Chinese Language Teaching* and *Chinese Culture and Literature Teaching* in the second section of tables 1 and 2, i.e., *Subject Teaching and Workshop* is the content specially designed for the subject of Chinese language. The universities are flexible in designing these courses and an introduction to such courses of Sapienza University of Rome and the University for Foreigners Siena will be given as follows.

The courses of Sapienza University of Rome can be divided into seven types, i.e., History and development of Chinese language education in Italy, Chinese language teaching, Chinese culture and literature teaching, Analysis of teaching materials, Seminars, EBCL Program<sup>51</sup> and others. Details are given as following:

Table 3: Course Calendar for TFA-Chinese of Sapienza University of Rome<sup>52</sup>

Type	Course	Duration (Class Hour)
History and Development of Chinese Language Education in Italy	Introduction: History and Development of Chinese Language Teaching in Italy	1.5
	Chinese Language Education: Status Quo	1.5
	History and Trend of Chinese Language Teaching in China	1.5
Chinese	Methods for Teaching Chinese Pronunciation	1.5

<sup>50</sup> Course portfolio here refers to courses of Chinese language, culture and literature, such as what's mentioned in the first section of TFA, i.e. Education sciences is the same with other subjects' training course.

<sup>51</sup> EBCL refers to *European Benchmarking Chinese Language Project*. It is funded by European Union and aims at formulating, based on the CEFR, a basic framework of Chinese language proficiency for Chinese language learners in Europe so that they can refer it to learn Chinese under different conditions, such as life-learning, workplace practice and school teaching. The project was coorganized by four European universities: The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) University of London, Université Rennes 2, Freie Universität Berlin, and Sapienza Università di Roma.

<sup>52</sup> Called *CALENDARIO ATTIVITA' DIDATTICHE TFA LINGUA E CIVILTÀ CINESE* in Italian. Provided by Dr. Federica Casalin, Head of TFA-Chinese of Sapienza University of Rome.



LanguageTeaching	Skills of Teaching Beginners (I & II)	3
	Case Study: Teaching Plan for Teaching Beginners: <i>Impariamo il cinese</i> <sup>53</sup> and <i>Happy Chinese</i> <sup>54</sup>	1.5
	Conversation Lesson for Intermediate (I & II)	3
	Case Study: Teaching Plan for Intermediate: <i>Il Cinese per gli Italiani</i> <sup>55</sup> and <i>XIN HANYU JIAOCHENG: A New perspective: Context, Function and Structure in Teaching Chinese</i> <sup>56</sup>	1.5
	Grammar Teaching-CFL: Principles and Methods	1.5
	Ability-CFL: Materials and Methods	1.5
	Workshop: Conception and Design of DifferentTeaching Units	1.5
	Teaching Plan: Course Plan, The first Class, Teaching of Classic Literature	1.5
	Reviewing of Teaching Plans	1.5
	Online Learning: Support Information for Chinese Language Teaching	1.5
	The Influence of Internet on Chinese Language	1.5
Culture and Literature	New Media in China: A New Way to Know Modern Chinese Culture	1.5

<sup>53</sup> Federico Masini. Zhang Tongbing, Bai Hua, Liang Dongmei, *Impariamo il cinese 我们学汉语 Corso di lingua per studenti italiani*, Hoepli, Milano 2007.

<sup>54</sup> LI Xiaoqi, LUO Qingsong, LIU Xiaoyu, WANG Shuhong, XU Ya Beijing: People's Education Press, 2009.

<sup>55</sup> Federico Masini, Zhang Tongbing, Bai Hua, Anna Di Toro, Liang Dongmei, *Il cinese per gli italiani 意大利人学汉语 Corso di lingua in 40 lezioni*, Hoepli, Milano 2006.

<sup>56</sup> Edited by Li Xiaoqi, Beijing: Peking University Press. 2004.7.1.

	Teaching Planning of a Culture Lesson (I & II)	3
	Teaching of Modern and Temporary Chinese Literature: Materials and Tools	1.5
	Materials for Teaching Classic Chinese Literature: From Han to Sui	1.5
	Materials for Teaching Classic Chinese Literature: from Tang to Yuan	1.5
	Materials for Teaching Classic Chinese Literature: Ming and Qing	1.5
	Material for Teaching Chinese Philosophy to High Schools	1.5
Ananalysis of Teaching Materials	Comparative Analysis of Teaching Materials for Chinese Language in Italy	1.5
	Teaching of Classic Chinese Literature: Available Teaching Materials in Italian	3
Seminars	Seminars on Chinese Language Teaching: Sharing from Eight Teachers	8
Introduction to EBCL Program	EBCL Program: backgroud, targets, methods, biggest challenge and results	1.5
	Further Study of Language Proficiency Suggested by EBCL program	1.5
Others	Revision of TFA Teaching Arrangement	1.5
Total		54.5

According to the content, the course portfolio for TFA-Chinese of the University for Foreigners Siena can be divided into four types, i.e. teaching Chinese language at high schools, teaching culture and history at high schools, ananalysis of teaching materials, Chinese language teaching. The university also made 20 specific topics for workshop and individual activity according to each classroom instruction. Details are as follows:

Table 4: Course Calendar for TFA-Chinese of the University for Foreigners Siena<sup>57</sup>

Type	Course	Duration (Class Hour)
Teaching Chinese at high Schools	Could it be possible to teach Chinese at high schools? - Introduction to TFA-Chinese	3
	Chinese language teaching at high schools in Italy and such experience in other European countries	6
	Chinese language teaching at high schools in Italy Topic <sup>58</sup> : How to conduct the first class for beginners and the way to teach them greeting in Chinese.	6
	Workshop: Chinese Language Teaching at high Schools in Italy	2
	Individual Activity: Chinese Language Teaching at high Schools in Italy	3
	Teaching Chinese Grammar at High Schools Topic: Design a lesson of “程度补语”, “了”, “过”, and “量词” respectively.	3
	Individual Activity: Teaching Chinese Grammar at High Schools	3
	Workshop: Teaching Chinese Grammar at High Schools	2
	Issues of Teaching Chinese Grammar at High Schools in Italy	3

<sup>57</sup> Called *Calendario lezioni cinese (classe A111)* in Italian. Source: [http://www.unistrasi.it/323/1681/Tirocinio\\_Formativo\\_Activo\\_2012.htm](http://www.unistrasi.it/323/1681/Tirocinio_Formativo_Activo_2012.htm).

<sup>58</sup> Topic refers to the topics for workshop and individual activities in each training course around which candidates are required to carry out workshops and individual activities.

	Analysis of Most Frequent Errors Made by Italian Chinese Language Learners  Topic: Analysis of Most Frequent Errors Made by Italian Chinese Language Learners and solutions	3
	Individual Activity: Analysis of Most Frequent Errors	3
	Workshop: Analysis of Most Frequent Errors	8
Teaching Culture and History at High Schools	Introduction to Chinese Culture Teaching at High Schools  Topic: How to prepare a lesson with the topics of <i>Marriage, Family, Filial Duty and Buddhism</i> that suite the language proficiency and culture knowledge of high school students	6
	Teaching of Literature  Topic: Design a lesson to introduce Tang Poems. The lesson must trigger the interests of high school students to Chinese poem, compare the Chinese poems to Italian and even European ones; Design a lesson to introduce Chinese Opera in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century and Chinese Fictions in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century based on the repertoire of high school students on western drama, manifesting the diversified cultural and interdisciplinary vision; Design a lesson for the grade 5 high school students introducing the Chinese-Western Relationship in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century, explaining and justifying the aims and motivation of teaching as well as the methods and materials that will be employed.	6
	Teaching History  Topic: Introduce how to design a lesson of Chinese history for grade one or five, explaining and justifying the teaching aims and motivation as well as the methods and materials that will be employed.	6

	Workshop: Teaching Chinese Culture at High Schools	8
	Individual Activity: Teaching Chinese Culture at High Schools	3
	Workshop: Teaching Chinese Literature at High Schools	8
	Individual Activity: Teaching Chinese Literature at High Schools	3
	Workshop: Teaching Chinese History at High Schools	8
	Individual Activity: Teaching Chinese History at High Schools	3
Analysis of Teaching Materials	Analysis of Teaching Materials Topic: Present opinions on what should ideal teaching materials be like?	3
	Analytical Comparison of Teaching Materials Topic: Give an introduction to the notes about the pronunciation in Chinese language textbooks for colleges and high schools, comparing such contents from at least two textbooks.	6
	Workshop: Analysis of Teaching Materials	2
	Individual Activity: Analysis of Teaching Materials	4
Teaching of Chinese Language	Workshop: Syllabus Topic: Design a syllabus for language and cultural teaching to high school students	3
	Workshop: Evaluation	3
	Workshop: Teaching Unit	3
Total		120

Tables 3 and 4 show that regarding the course content, both universities start with an introduction to the teaching situation, with the Sapienza University of Rome briefs the history and status quo of Chinese language education in Italy and the University for Foreigners Siena on Chinese language education at high schools. On teaching, both universities take in the training regarding teaching Chinese pronunciation and grammar. In addition, both universities include the training of teaching plan design. The University for Foreigners Siena requires the candidates to design a lesson on a given grammar or culture or literature item. Besides the content mentioned above, the training of Sapienza University of Rome also includes methods and principles of TCSL. Regarding language levels, both universities include training courses for teaching beginners and the Sapienza University of Rome also includes the one for intermediates. Regarding the course type, there are trainings of oral course at Sapienza University of Rome, but no clear indication in that of the University for Foreigners Siena. For the course management, both universities design training of syllabus development and evaluation methods. While for teaching materials, both universities provide comparison of existing ones and the University for Foreigners Siena requires the candidates to come up with ideas of ideal teaching materials and compare the introductions to the pronunciation of at least two teaching materials and make relative analysis. Regarding the culture, the training of the Sapienza University of Rome mainly focuses on planning of culture lessons and introduction to the channels that one can reach contemporary Chinese culture — the Internet. The University for Foreigners Siena demands each candidate to design a lesson with selected topics such as marriage, filial duty, etc. according to the language level and cultural knowledge of high school students. For literature, the Sapienza University of Rome gives an introduction to teaching materials for literature, including those for classic literature from Han dynasty to Ming and Qing dynasties whilst the University for Foreigners Siena demands the candidate to design a literature lesson for high school students on a given representative literature genre in a certain period, such as Tang Poem, Contemporary Fiction, Contemporary Drama, requiring the design be able to arouse students' interests to the given literature genre and to develop the students' diversified cultural and interdisciplinary vision. The Sapienza University of Rome focuses on classic Chinese literature and the latter on contemporary ones.

Besides that, the Sapienza University of Rome plays to full the strength of the teacher portfolio of its affiliated Confucius Classroom the High School of Convitto Nazionale of Rome and invited eight teachers worked there to share their experience. As one of the four European universities participating the EBCL, the Sapienza University of Rome gives an introduction to the research results of the standards for the proficiency of Chinese Language based on the *Common European*

*Framework of Reference for Language Learning, Teaching, Assessment*<sup>59</sup>. The University for Foreigners Siena gives introduction to Chinese language teaching at high schools in other countries to encourage and inspire its teachers' learning.

### 3.2.3 Assessment and Accreditation of TFA-Chinese

As mentioned above, the assessment of TFA consists of three parts, i.e. evaluation of internship, oral test, and internship report. Candidates passed assessments can be accredited with the certification of teaching. Details of the assessment at both universities are as following:

1. Evaluation of internship: the internship report, the Tutor of internship describe and evaluate the performance of the candidate during his / her internship, including teaching activity participation and performance;
2. Oral test: The test committee proposes a topic to the candidate, who then needs to describe the teaching process on the given topics, including: how to introduce a Chinese pronunciation, a phrase, a grammar item, or the knowledge of Chinese character; how to instruct on an item of cultural knowledge or the literature knowledge of a certain period; how to design a lesson for beginners, intermediate, or advanced respectively; how to design a lesson of history or literature; how to make teaching plan; how to conduct lesson planing, etc.
3. Thesis: the candidate writes a report based on the experiences of training and internship that is subject to questions by the test committee during assessment.

## IV. Conclusion

The comparison between the teaching activities, course portfolios and assessment methods of the two universities shows that each of them differentiate itself from the other in training courses based on its teacher portfolio and teaching demands. In general, the Sapienza University of Rome is more macro-oriented and the University for Foreigners Siena more micro-oriented, with the former aims more at the design of the teaching plan including language, culture and literature as well as general teaching methods and principles and the latter at improving specific abilities of the teacher through focusing on certain items of language, culture or literature, clearly requiring these training to target at high school students, or even students of certain

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<sup>59</sup> Called *Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue* in Italian and *Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning, Teaching, Assessment* in English. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

grade. What's worth attention is that neither university has trainings over teaching management and strategies of communication with parents, like how to realize an efficient language classroom management, how to create a positive physical and emotional environment and how to maximize effective communication with parents.

TFA-Chinese, as the first national training for Chinese language teachers of high schools<sup>60</sup>, is different from other traditional subjects that are of experience in teacher preparation, as TFA-Chinese has just began trying and exploring detailed course portfolio and internship planning with reference to Gazette N. 24 of MIUR for training aims, the four sections and assessment. The effectiveness, practicability and necessity of its courses and internship still need to be tested and proved through the candidates' teaching practice, which requires the training hosting institution to summarize and reflect over the entire training and the candidates to feedback and finally contributes to MIUR's improvement of its national preparation of teachers for high schools and provide reference for all the hosting organizations to realize proper course portfolio and internship planning.

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<sup>60</sup> As stated above, SSIS in Veneto offered special training course for future Chinese language teachers in 2007. In 2010, SSIS granted certificates to 10 Chinese language teacher candidates. But all these efforts were limited to Veneto, not national.



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# **A SELF-STUDY USING ACTION RESEARCH: TEACHER FEEDBACK AND LEARNER UPTAKE IN CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASS**

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## **1. Introduction**

Classroom interaction has been seen as one of the primary means for L2 learning. One common argument is that during conversational interaction, learners receive feedback on their L2 input, thus noticing the difference between their L2 production and the target form. This ‘noticing’ drives learners to recheck their input with more attention, and then modifies it to be more target-like (Long, 1996; Swain, 1995). This process triggered by feedback from learners’ initial production to their modified production is seen as part of language learning (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Increasing evidence has noted that feedback provided during the interaction facilitates L2 learning (Mackey & Philp, 1998; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Mackey, 1999, 2006; Lotchman, 2002; Ellis, Basturkmen & Lowen, 2001; Mackey, Oliver & Leeman, 2003).

However, the research to date has been mainly conducted in immersion classrooms, adult ESL or controlled setting. Whether and to what extents the findings can be extended to foreign language classroom contexts is an open question. Moreover, much of the research has been conducted from the perspective of outside researchers, the results of which have not been sufficiently used to help teachers to improve their practices. The mismatch between researchers and teachers is due partly to the fact that teachers usually regard this kind of research as irrelevant and remote because no one knows better about their classroom than themselves (Lynch, 1997). To address this mismatch, some researchers have argued the critical need for teachers themselves to observe their own classroom data, reflect on them, and then

make improvements in their local teaching and learning environment (Walsh, 2011). This line of research has been referred to as action research (Wallace, 2010).

Against this backdrop, the current study is set out to explore the efficacy of different types of feedback in relation to learner uptake in Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) class. It is of action-research orientation, intending to raise the teacher's awareness of her use of feedback, and then improve it to better serve learning. To this effect, the following research question is addressed:

- (1) What types of feedback does the teacher use during teacher-fronted interaction?
- (2) How is learner uptake following different types of feedback?

To answer the questions, a qualitative analysis is carried out on the videotapes of teacher-fronted interaction. The efficacy of teacher feedback is measured by learner uptake, referred to as learner immediate response to interactional feedback (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). In what follows, a brief review of feedback and learner uptake in L2 learning is presented. Then, I describe the context of the current study, and procedure of data collection as well as data analysis. Finally, the findings are displayed and discussed, and implications for classroom practice are suggested.

## **2. Feedback, learner uptake and language learning**

Substantial experimental research has noted the positive relationship between feedback and L2 learning (Mackey & Philp, 1998; Mackey, 1999; Mackey & Oliver, 2002). However, given the differences between classroom context and laboratory context as well as the purpose of this study, the following review is limited to the research conducted in classroom.

Under the view that participation in interaction by manipulating L2 use is conducive to L2 learning, a number of classroom-based studies have documented the effects of different types of feedback on learner participation in this process, namely, learner uptake. For instance, Lyster and Ranta (1997) examine the types of teacher feedback and their link to learner uptake in four primary immersion classes. Results reveal that six types of feedback (e.g., recast, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition, explicit correction) are frequently used across classes; among them, recast is the most dominant but elicits the least amount of learner uptake. In other words, recast is the least effective feedback in involving learners to stretch their L2 use. Similarly, by investigating corrective feedback and learner uptake in an adult ESL classroom in Canada, Panova and Lyster (2002) reveal parallel findings with Lyster and Ranta (1997), notably; recast elicits a low

rate of learner uptake. This seems suggest that recasts might be less successful at drawing learners' attention to their non-target outputs, thus leading to a relatively small amount of learner uptake (Lyster, 1998).

However, several studies have reported conflicting results on the efficacy of recasts in relation to learner uptake. Lochtmann (2002) examines the effects of feedback on interaction in analytic foreign language teaching and finds that recast leads to a higher amount of immediate correct response by learners than the other types of feedback. She attributes this result to the advantage that recast has in drawing learners' attention to notice the problems in their own L2 productions. Ellis et al. (2001) examine adult learners of English as a second language (ESL) in an intensive study program and find that recast emerges not only as the most prevalent feedback but also produces the highest amount of learner uptake. The authors suggest two reasons for this: first, learners are partially prepared by the form-focused instruction before the communicative lessons, thus leading them to pay more attention to the teacher's implicit feedback; second, the adult learners pay to improve their English, making them consciously attend to the accuracy of the target language. These conflicting results of these studies indicate that the nature of teacher feedback and their efficacy on learner uptake might associate with different contextual factors. Thus, it is necessary to review the research that has reported the effects of different contextual factors on feedback and learner uptake, although it is not the purpose of this study.

Sheen (2004) examines similarities and differences in teacher feedback and learner uptake among four different instructional settings: French immersion, Canada ESL, New Zealand ESL, and Korean EFL. Results show that recast is the most frequent feedback type across the four settings, however, the efficacy of recast in relation to learner uptake is diverse, depending on its saliency in the specific context and the opportunities afforded by the teacher who allows learners to uptake or not. This seems suggest that teacher plays an important role in determining learner uptake. Mackey et al. (2000) find that the teacher provides more feedback to phonological errors in the ESL context than those in a foreign language context. One account relates to the fact that learners in the foreign language context share the same L1 background and similar interlanguage phonology with which reduces the likelihood of their communicative breakdown. But this does not mean that foreign language context has advantage over the second language context for L2 learning. As argued by Iwashita (2003), the foreign language context is limited in learners' access to the target language, thus impeding their long-term language development as they may have achieved in a second language context. Even within the same classroom, the provision of feedback varies considerably at different point of interaction. Oliver and Mackey (2003) identify four interactional contexts and reveal that the specific

pedagogical purpose in each context directly impacts the extent to which the teacher provides feedback and the opportunities provided by the teacher to respond to feedback.

In summary, the research on feedback has revealed different results across settings, suggesting a variety of factors affecting the efficacy of feedback in relation to learner uptake. As Mackey (2006) argued that different types of feedback may work in different ways for different learners in different contexts. These differing results highlight the need for more research in different contexts in order to gain a better understanding of teacher feedback and improve it to serve L2 learning.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Action research for language teachers**

Different from mainstream research dominated in second language teaching, action research is conducted by teachers in their classroom for their own ends. It is “simply a self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out” (Carr & Kemmis, 1986: 162). The motivation to do action research is often an interest in or concern about some aspects of the teacher’s professional performance (Wallace, 2010). Action research is useful in helping teachers raise awareness of, and improve some aspects of his/her teaching practices (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). It is a recursive cycle, including a few key concepts: the identification of a focus, observation, data analysis and interpretation, reflection. This study documents the first cycle that helps the teacher get a deeper understanding of her feedback and reflect on it for future improvement.

#### **3.2 Context and data**

This study took place in a CFL class in a Danish university. The class constituted fifteen bachelor students under the program of China Area Studies. Participants aged from twenty-two to twenty-eight years old. With the exception of one participant who was from Lithuania but had a near-native proficiency in Danish, all participants were native Danish speakers. None of them has learned Chinese before. The class was two-semester long, focusing on learner oral skills. Participants met for two hours per week, totaling twenty hours each semester. The teacher was a native Chinese speaker, who was also the author of this paper. The teaching includes two parts: teacher-fronted interaction with a focus on practicing new vocabulary and target forms and pair or group work wherein learners perform different tasks in

order to improve their language skills. Given the teacher's low proficiency in Danish and the learners' low proficiency in Chinese, English was used as an instruction language for grammar explanations or activity organization.

Data for this study was collected throughout the second semester. One camera was set up in the corner of the classroom to capture the interactional process. After viewing the videotapes, the recordings of the lessons with a focus on grammar were excluded. Consequently, 5.5 hours of recordings were transcribed and analyzed in this study.

### 3.3 Data analysis

Data analysis focused on the exchange during teacher-fronted interaction. Centered on the research questions, two levels of coding were conducted.

The first level of the coding focused on identifying the types of feedback during the exchanges. To do so, the first step was to identify the learners' non-target utterances, including errors in phonology, lexis or syntax. The teacher's responses to the non-target-like utterances were coded as feedback (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). The types of feedback were either drawn from the existing literature or emerged from the current study. Three feedback types are identified: recast, explicit correction, teacher initiation to learner correction. The former two types were drawn from Lyster and Ranta (1997), and the latter type was grounded from the current data. Their definitions and examples are presented below.

'Recast' referred to the teacher's reformulation all or part of a learner's ill-formed utterance without a clear indication of the occurrence of an error and without changing the meaning (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Due to this, recast was seen as more implicit and less salient feedback as it is embedded in the flow of discourse. Example 1 includes a recast used by the teacher. Transcriptions convention is laid out in appendix 1.

Example 1 (recast)

Am: Liú Xīng eh (3) yǒu eh sānge měiguó rén eh de tóngxué

Liú Xīng eh (3) has eh three american people classmates

T: ah sānge měiguó tóngxué

Ah three American classmates

Translation was also used by the teacher as a response to a learner's request by using English. This translation had the same effect as a recast. Therefore, the occurrence of translation was coded as a recast.

'*Explicit correction*' was that the teacher explicitly pinned an error that has occurred and provided the correct form (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Compared to recast, explicit correction was more salient as shown in example 2.

#### Example 2

Sl: Wǒ xǐhuan hěn dānmài

I like very Denmark

T: you should say wǒ hěn xǐhuan (writing on the board)

You should say I very like

Sl: hěn xǐhuan

Very like

The above two types of feedback primarily rested on the teacher to provide the correct form. However, the type '*teacher initiation to learner correction*' referred to the situation that the teacher did not provide an direct answer herself but directed learners to self-correct or invited learners to do correction (Lochtman, 2002). The data shows five techniques for self-correction: clarification request, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, repetition, and repeating the preceding utterance with slow pace. Except for the term, '*repeating the preceding question with slow pace*' emerged from the current data, the other terms were drawn from Lyster and Ranta (1997). *Clarification request* is valuable as research has shown its beneficial effects on engaging learners in refining or expanding their non-target-like utterances (Mackey & Philp, 1998). *Elicitation* referred to the teacher's feedback that functioned as a prompt to elicit the correct form from the learners by pausing, questioning, elongating, and reformulating (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). By using *metalinguistic feedback*, the teacher gave some directions such as comments, information, or questions related to the learners' erroneous utterances as opposed to directly providing the correct form. In the current study, the provision of explanation on grammar or lexis was also considered as metalinguistic feedback. *Repetition*

referred to the feedback that the teacher only repeated the erroneous part occurred in the preceding turn, but, with a high intonation for learners' attention. *Repeating the preceding question with slow pace* referred to the situation that the teacher asked the same question again with a slow pace to raise learner's awareness of the occurrence of error in their preceding turn. Example of each type discussed above was illustrated below.

#### Example 3 (Clarification request)

Yn: wǒ kàn *qiú* (unclear)

I watch ball game

T: shénme?

what

Yn: wǒ kàn

I watch

T: qiú nǐ xǐhuan kàn qiú zhōumo nǐ chángchang zuo shénme? zhōumo nǐ chángchang zuo shénme?

Cm

ball you like to watch ball game what do you do at weekends? Cm

#### Example 4 (Metalinguistic feedback)

Ck:=yīnwèi wǒ eh (3) měiguó... eh how where should I place 'hǎocài'

= because I eh (3) america...eh how where should I place 'delicious'

T: 'hǎochī' just means delicious so then yīnwèi American food is delicious just like this

#### Example 5 (Elicitation)

Sl: eh hé xīngqītiān wǒmen *qù* chīfàn



eh and we go to eat on sunday

T: wǒmen...

we

Sl: qù

go

#### Example 6 (Repetition)

Ck: oh yīnwèi měiguó cài hǎocài

Oh because american food is delicious

T: hǎocài? (laughing)

Delicious?

Ck: hǎochī

delicious

#### Example 7 (Repeating the preceding question with slow pace)

Pf: zhōngguó fàn shì hǎochī

Chinese food is delicious

T: hǎo listen again nǐ juéde zhōngguó fàn hǎochī ma?

Good listen again do you think chinese food is delicious?

Pf: wǒ juéde eh zhōngguó cài hǎochī

I think eh chinese food is good

In the type of *'teacher initiation to learner correction'*, there are two techniques used for other-correction, namely, the teacher invited learners to correct another. They are inviting learners to evaluate and giving the turn to another to answer the same question. The following two examples illustrated these techniques.

Example 8 (Inviting learners to evaluate)

Ck: I don't remember the word Wǒ xǐhuan wàiguó kàn diànyǐng

I don't remember the word I like to watch foreign movie

T: oh 'wǒ xǐhuan wàiguó kàn diànyǐng' duìma? Dn

Oh I like to watch foreign movie is this right Dn

Dn: Wǒ xǐhuan kàn wàiguó diànyǐng

I like to watch foreign movie

T: wǒ xǐhuan **kàn**=

I like to watch

Ck: =oh yeah

Example 9 (Giving the turn to another to answer the same question)

Am: eh (9) wǒ shíèr èr shuǐjiào

Eh (9) I sleep at 12pm

T: S1 wǎnshang jǐdiǎn nǐ shuǐjiào?

S1 what time do you sleep at night?

S1: wǎnshang èr shíèr diǎn wǒ shuǐjiào

At 22:00 I sleep

T: oh shíèr diǎn Mk?

Oh twelve oclock Mk?

In addition to the above types of feedback, the teacher sometimes combined more than one type of feedback in one turn. According to Lyster and Ranta (1997), this type of feedback was coded as ‘multiple feedback’ as shown in example 10.

Example 10 (Multiple feedback)

Am: zhèshì yí ge bēi yībēi

This is a cup

T: zhèshì **bēi**? zhè búshì bēi zhè shì bēi zhèshì shénme?

Is this a cup? This is not cup is this a cup what is this?

Am: (silence)

At the second level, data analysis focused on coding learner uptake. Learner uptake has been defined differently across the literature. The one used in this study is consistent with what Lyster and Ranta (1997: 49) defined--“a student’s utterance that immediately follows the teacher’s feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher’s intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student’s initial utterance (this overall intention is clear to the student although the teacher’s specific linguistic focus may not be)”. According to Lyster and Ranta (1997), learner uptake is categorized as two types: repair and needs-repair. ‘*Repair*’ referred to the uptake that led learners to successfully repair the errors; while ‘*needs-repair*’ referred to the uptake that still needed more repair. The category of ‘needs-repair’ also includes learners’ acknowledgements to their errors by using “ok”, “ah” or “yes”, etc.(Lochtman, 2002). If learners did not engender any reactions to teacher feedback—referred to as *no learner uptake*, then discourse was continued by the teacher to elaborate or expand the topic or to distribute the turn to other learners. To increase the reliability of data interpretation, multiple perceptions are included (Stake, 2000). I shared and discussed my analysis with other researchers and used their comments to re-examine the accuracy of my coding.

#### 4. Findings

Among 5.5-hours videotapes, 151 corrections are identified. The results of qualitative analysis are displayed in the frequency and distribution of different feedback types and learner uptake to better understand the results rather than

generalization. As for the first research question asked ‘what types of feedback does the teacher use during teacher-fronted interaction?’ Table 1 shows the distribution of different types of feedback provided by the teacher.

Table 1. The frequency and distribution of different types of feedback ( $n=151$ )

Categories	Distributed
1.Recasts	38.7%
2.Explicit corrections	4.6%
3.Teacher initiation to learner correction	50.9%
1) Teacher initiation to self-correction	41.7%
Distributed among:	
• Clarification request	8.6%
• Metalinguistic feedback	14.5%
• Elicitation	11.2%
• Repetition	2.6%
• Repeating the previous question with slow pace	4.6%
2) Teacher initiation to others-correction	9.2%
Distributed among:	
• Inviting learners to evaluate	4.6%
• Giving the turn to another to answer the same question	4.6%
4.Multiple feedback	4.6%

From the above table, we can see that ‘teacher initiation to learner correction’ (50.9%) is the most prevalent feedback through self-correction (41.7%) and other-correction (9.2%). Techniques used by self-correction are distributed differently from high to low: metalinguistic feedback (14.5%), elicitation (11.2%), clarification request (8.6%), repeating the previous question with slow pace (4.6%), and repetition (2.6%). Moreover, when learner fails to self-correct, the teacher does not provide a direct answer but involves another to evaluate (4.6%) or gives the turn to another to answer the same question (4.6%). Compared to a small amount of explicit corrections (4.6%), results seem suggest that the teacher feedback promotes learners’ participation in interaction by encouraging them to modify their L2 productions or testing out their hypothesis about L2 use.

The second research question asked ‘how is learner uptake following different types of feedback?’ The uptake is categorized as ‘repair’ and ‘needs-repair’. Table 2 displays the distribution of learner uptake. In light of feedback techniques with small amount, they are not presented by percentage.

Table 2. Learner uptake following teacher feedback ( $n=151$ )

Categories	Repair	Needs-repair	No uptake
1.Recasts ( $n=60$ )	26(43.4%)	10(16.6%)	24(40%)
2.Explicit correction ( $n=7$ )	5	1	1
3.Clarification request ( $n=13$ )	5	8	0
4.Metalinguistic feedback ( $n=22$ )	8 (36.3%)	10 (45.5%)	4 (18.2%)
5.Elicitation ( $n=17$ )	7 (42%)	10 (58%)	0
6.Repetition ( $n=4$ )	3	1	0
7.Repeating the preceding question with slow pace ( $n=7$ )	3	4	0
8.Inviting learners to evaluate	5	2	0

(n=7)	1	3	3
9. Passing the turn to another to answer the same question (n=7)	2	1	4
10. Multiple feedback (n=7)			

The results show a higher amount of learner uptake following each type of feedback. If learner uptake is an indicator of L2 learning, it is suggested that these types of feedback used by the teacher is favorable in this context. What makes it interesting is that recast produces a higher percentage of learner uptake (60%) in contrast to the findings reported by Lyster and Ranta (1997). Another interesting finding is that among the techniques used for initiation to learner correction, clarification request (8.6%), elicitation (11.2%), repetition (2.6%), repeating the previous question with slow pace (4.6%), and inviting learners to evaluate (4.6%), all instances generated by these techniques lead to uptake. There is only a very small amount of no learner uptake following metalinguistic feedback and giving the turn to another to answer the same question. In addition, a relatively low rate of learner uptake following recast needs further repair (16.6% ) in comparison to metalinguistic feedback (45.5%) and elicitation (58%). This seems indicate that recast is favorable for drawing learners' attention to notice the problems in their productions and reformulate it to be target-like (Lochtman, 2002). Certainly, interpreting this result should be cautious as the amount of some techniques is very small.

## 5. Discussions

Firstly, the findings indicate that the feedback used by the teacher is effective in relation to learner uptake. As shown above, three types of feedback all leads to a high amount of learner uptake. For instance, 60% of recast leads to learner uptake and only one out of seven instances of explicit correction results in no learner uptake. As for the largest feedback type, teacher initiation to learner correction, except for a very small amount of no learner uptake after metalinguistic feedback and giving the turn to another to answer the same question, all instances of the other feedback techniques lead to learner uptake. This high rate of learner uptake indicates learners' active participation in interaction, which creates potential opportunities for L2 learning (Mackey, 1999). Moreover, the more learners participate in interaction, the more opportunities they have to experience the target language, and then enhance their oral skills. In this way, teacher feedback aligns with the pedagogical goal in terms of developing learners' oral skills. This alignment is also conducive to

L2 learning as Walsh (2002) argues that learning opportunity is constructed when teacher language use and pedagogical goal converges.

Secondly, the findings provide another evidence of the prevalence of recast during the interactional process. Given the context of this study, this may be in part due to affective concern about learners' motivation by the teacher. Few would deny the importance of motivation in L2 learning. During classroom learning process, if the teacher explicitly and directly tells learners' errors and correct them, as time goes by, learners may feel frustrated and discouraged. This is especially true with the very basic beginners who learn a foreign language (i.e., Chinese) without any connection with their daily life. Thus, the concern to protect learners' motivation might account for the extensive use of recast due to its less explicit and obtrusive feature. This feature avoids learners' embarrassment or discouragement that might result from explicit corrections, which, in turn, explains the small amount of explicit correction used by the teacher. Another possibility is that recast reduced the likelihood of interrupting the communicative flow by only reformulating erroneous components in learners' responses. This again makes alignment with pedagogical goal for developing oral fluency.

Thirdly, the findings suggest various contextual factors contributing to the efficacy of feedback in relation to learner uptake. As for the high amount of learner uptake, it might be explained by two reasons. One relates to the linguistic features of Chinese language. Chinese language, especially the pronunciation with four tones, provides challenge for foreign learners to master, especially for the very beginners. Thus, when having difficulty or uncertainty in pronouncing the target word, learners are likely to pay more attention to subsequent feedback provided by the teacher. In other words, this linguistic feature may make teacher feedback, especially recast, more salient, thus leading them to modify their productions. This further evidences the extent of learner uptake affected by the saliency of feedback (Sheen, 2004). It also explains the large amount of feedback targeted to phonological errors in the current study, which occurs rarely in the context of English as the target language (Mackey et al. 2003). This seems suggest that the linguistic features of the target language also affects learner uptake following feedback.

Another reason associates with the opportunities afforded by the teacher, supporting the findings reported by previous research (Mackey et al, 2003; Sheen, 2004). The data shows that the teacher often makes an explicit requirement for learners to modify their problematic utterances when learners do not signal to respond to feedback. In other words, the teacher intentionally involves learners' participation in dealing with their L2 use. However, it should be also noted that some instances of no learner uptake result from the fact that after feedback, the teacher either

continued her turn or immediately distributed the turn to another learner for a new topic. This might be explained by the teacher's intention to involve more learners to participate in interaction or the teacher's pressure to move the teaching forward within the limited instructional time. This highlights the role of the teacher played in determining opportunities for learner uptake. It also points to the complexity of feedback and learner uptake as a number of contextual factors may work individually or independently on it. For instance, imagining if the more instructional time were available, the more learner uptake would be allowed by the teacher.

## **6. Reflection**

In this section, both the positive and the negative aspects of the teacher feedback and its efficacy on learner uptake are reflected.

### **6.1 Positive aspects**

Adopting the position that learner participation in interaction is conducive to L2 learning; several features of the feedback identified in this study have benefits for learning.

- By inviting learners to do correction, teacher feedback opens up space for learner participation
- Few instances of explicit correction indicates more learner participation
- At the feedback move, the teacher explicitly requires learners to modify their productions when learners show no sign to do so

### **6.2 Negative aspects**

- Teacher should leave more time for learners to digest her feedback and then uptake before her next distribution, especially after the technique giving the turn to another to answer the same question
- Teacher feedback should create more interactional space for learners to creatively use the target language during the interaction



- Teacher feedback should focus more on encouraging learners to clarify or justify their L2 meanings or understandings

## 7. Conclusion

This action research investigates the nature of teacher feedback and its efficacy in relation to learner uptake. Results show three types of feedback, among them, teacher initiation to learner correction being the most dominate type, followed by recast and explicit correction. Moreover, all the three types of feedback produce a high amount of learner uptake. Note that the purpose of this study is not to examine the effects of contextual factors, however, the findings do highlight the point that teacher feedback and learner uptake is context-dependent, which is subject to different contextual variables such as linguistic features of the target language, opportunities afforded by the teacher, affective concerns by the teacher, pedagogical goal, and the nature of curriculum. Importantly, this action research helps the teacher get a deeper understanding of and increase her awareness of her feedback, thereby making subsequent improvements in order to better serve L2 learning. It also contributes to the teacher's continuous professional development as it made her deeply reflect on part of her teaching practices from her own voice. This reflection is not only beneficial for classroom practices, but serves as the starting point for the second cycle of action research to examine whether and to what extents implementing the transformed feedback lead to L2 learning in relation to uptake.

Note

Part of the data used in this study was also presented in another article.

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### Appendix 1. Transcription conventions.

<b>T:</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
Am/Ck:	Representing different learner
[ I see	overlapping between teacher and student
...	pause of one second or less marked by three full stops
?	rising intonation or questions
=	turn continues, or one turn follows another without any pause
<u>Under</u>	Sentences with incorrect grammar
(Writing)	give an explanation of what is happening in the background
(4)	silence; length given in seconds
<b>Want</b>	boldface words indicate incorrect pronunciation or form
<i>Italicised</i>	Incorrect pronunciation
‘,	represents reading the words from the text

