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CHINESE LANGUAGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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The "JCLTA Guidelines for Submission of Manuscripts" is posted on the CLTA website: <http://clta-us.org/jclta.htm>. Authors should carefully adhere to these Guidelines in order to receive due consideration for their manuscripts. The Journal publishes in both Chinese and English. Authors writing in their non-native language are urged to have their articles thoroughly edited by those with native-level proficiency in that language prior to submission.

Readers who wish to comment on articles published in JCLTA may send letters – written in either Chinese or English – to the Editor. Selected letters will be published in the "Letters from Readers" column. These letters will also be shared with original authors, who will have the opportunity to respond in the same issue of the Journal.

JCLTA accepts ads, subject to screening, at a rate of \$250 for a full page, and \$125 for a 1/2 page. Inquiries should be sent to the Editor. Information about ads in the Newsletter is available on the inside front cover of the Newsletter and from the Newsletter Editor.

Abstracts of articles in the Journal are posted on the CLTA website and published in *Linguistics Abstracts*. The Journal is also abstracted in *Sociological Abstracts* and is available through University Microfilms.

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Message from Your New Editor

Dear Readers,

This issue marks my editorial debut at JCLTA (or anywhere else for that matter!). For a smooth transition, I thank our former and guest editors, Vivian Ling, Neil Kubler, Claudia Ross, Marjorie Chan, Debao Xu and Cyndy Ning, for showing me the ropes and doing the guest-edited issues to allow me some breathing room. A special thank to our ever so helpful production manager Minru Li, who is always just an email away.

For their unstinting support and professionalism, a sincere appreciation goes to our JCLTA team—the editorial board members. I thank the outgoing members, some of whom were ‘conscripted’ for a last review. I would also like to welcome the new members, who have already hit the ground running: Professors Marjorie Chan, Cecilia Chang, Mienhwa Chiang, Yu Li and Tianwei Xie. Our Review Editor Professor Michael Everson deserves a special thank for managing the review section of the journal with such finesse. I am also grateful to the many truly ‘anonymous’ guest reviewers who have selflessly agreed to help.

You may have noticed a number of small changes in the format of the journal. To give more prominence to your input, I have listed the authors of the reader letters in the table of contents. The blank spaces between paragraphs have been deleted, to lend a more uniform look to the page. Bilingual keywords are now standard. The online index should be current from now on. Putting all issues of JCLTA online, which has been approved by the CLTA board, will be our next major undertaking.

Our journal will undoubtedly play an increasingly more important role at this time of unprecedented growth of the field. To maintain and enhance the quality of the journal, your support is crucial. We need manuscripts in all areas related to Chinese language instruction, i.e., pedagogy, linguistics, culture and literature; we especially value papers that are theoretically informed and at the same time directly relevant to the teaching of Chinese. We also need your help as reviewers. With your support, let us continue to make our journal the forum that it has been for the dissemination of research and pedagogical innovations.

Sincerely,

Zheng-sheng Zhang (張正生)

San Diego State University

尊敬的编辑，

汉语为什么有声调，在几千年的语言使用、演变过程中声调为什么没有消亡，声调对于汉语交流到底有哪些实际的作用，我们应该如何判断分析声调的意义和功能——这些都是汉语研究和教学中不可回避，必须思考的问题。前辈学人对此多有探讨。《中文教师学会学报》2007 年第 42 期 2 号刊发表了张庭模、谢贵兰两位老师的文章《汉语四声的涵义》，从心理感受和语音表达的关系上论述四声的涵义，是很有建设性的讨论，但同时也令人有不少困惑。我于语言学是门外汉，因学习古典文学，并且这些年来从事汉语教学的缘故，稍稍接触过一点汉语语言学、音韵学的常识，在此不逞识见浅陋，将阅读《汉语四声的涵义》（以下简称《四声》）发现的一些问题提出，与张、谢两位老师商榷，并祈方家斧正。

为批评公允起见，请略述《四声》一文要点，同时一一讨论。

《四声》写作的主旨，在文章开始就说得很明白。作者认为声调作用不外乎二，一是“寓意”，一是“辨义”。前者“寓意”是文章讨论的主题。¹作者随即指出因汉语“每字一音的单音节特点，不用声调加以区分似难以准确地表达出几万个汉字和各种语句的准确含义”。²这里所说的实际上是声调的辨义作用，而不是声调的“寓意”功能。然而，为强调上引论断，作者举人们在山顶相呼时常将非一声字改为一声为例，如把“天要黑了”喊成“天腰黑了。”其实这个例子声调辨义的作用更明显。平声高而舒缓，去声直下短促，相较之下平声方便呼喊，故改四声为一声，为使他山之人能听明白。若依作者所说，每个声调表达不同的意思，则四声改成一声后其原意就会丢失、扭曲，如此改声非但无益，反而使交流更加困难。

¹ 见《中文教师学会学报》2007 年五月 42 期 2 号刊，12 页。

之后，作者具体提出每一声调所传递的语义（寓意）。先论阴平。据作者观点，“阴平（第一声）所表达的意思常常是：直接的、持续的或明显的状态、事物或动作。”³ 这个定义首先似乎有些语病。形容词“直接”、“持续”用来修饰“状态”、“动作”可以，用来修饰“事物”则让人困惑：什么是“直接的、持续的”事物？定义之后，作者给出阴平高频词举例。大略一数，所举高频词有 81 个，名词、动词、形容词都有。可是，作者却没有挑出任何一个阴平高频词予以分析解释，来证明阴平表达“直接的、持续的或明显的状态、事物或动作。”细观所列高频词，实在看不出如“妈”、“一”、“东”、“西”“吸”、“新”等为什么是直接的、持续的或明显的。作者又论：“汉语中，当第一声同其他四种声一起使用的时候，就可以明显地显示出第一声所表示的直接性、明显性和持续性。”⁴这里出现了同样的问题，作者还是没有分析例证，所以看不出怎样“明显地显示”。比如说：“江河”、“飞行”、“花果”、“空气”四词中第一个字都是阴平，第二个字分别是二声、三声和四声，“江”为什么比“河”、“花”为什么比“果”直接、明显或持续？又如“哭闹”，前字阴平，后字去声，第二个字动作性不比第一个字隐晦。

作者认为“阳平（第二声）所表达的意思常常是：质疑、提醒、扩展、渐强地状态、事物或动作。”⁵且不论跟阴平定义同样的语病（质疑的事物？），作者对所举 87 个阳平高频词竟无一加以讨论分析。相反，在列出这 87 个高频词后，作者转而谈起英文、俄文、西班牙文、捷克文和日文中上升声调所表达的诧异、质问的意思。作者语言上涉猎诚广，然而问题是还是没有分析任何中文例句。揣摩列举的 87 个词，“谁”、“啥”、“何”等可以解释为有

² 同上。

³ 前引，13 页。

⁴ 同上。

质疑的意思，因为这三个都是疑问词。可是想来想去，还是不明白为什么如“鱼”、“擒”、“红”等如何“质疑、提醒、扩展、渐强”。作者的意见似乎有些牵强，不敢苟同。

上声（第三声）是作者认为的“最复杂的一种汉语声调。它的涵义常常是：繁复、辨别、质疑、变换、处置。”⁶既是最复杂，所列高频词也最多，计 130 个之多。找出这 130 个词作者应该是花了时间的。它们排列在一起也颇为整齐可观；然而，就支持作者论点来说这 130 个词却仅做了看客。作者没有把它们中的任何一个拿出来分析比较，给出令人信服的结论。相反，作者认为现代汉语普通话中属于疑问类型的词语几乎“是被第三声和第二声包办了。”⁷但是，举例来说，在口语和日常对话中频繁出现的疑问句“为什么”的“为”却是四声。至于作者所说的“多”字作为疑问词时常被发为“夺”，即它的音是一声后迅速转二声，这似乎更是北京话的习惯，而不是普通话的音。关于方言语音，下面还会提到。

撇去找出的 130 个高频词不论后，作者转而从文化心理的角度上论证第三声具有的曲折、变换或质疑的含义。其论之一是：在常见的有正反义词的词当中，若将组成部分分为正端和负端，如“大小、长短、正反”等，负端常是第三声字，因为第三声有曲折、变换或质疑的含义。这种说法实有以偏概全之嫌。举例来说，“难易”、“善恶”、“前后”、“清浊”、“上下”这些词中所谓“负端”都是第四声而不是第三声。作者又解“左”“右”两词中缘何“左”为三声、“右”为第四声。照作者看来，因在文化心理上“左”字有“特别、与众不同或谬误的含义”，故有质疑的含义，用第三声；而“右”

⁵ 前引文，14 页。

⁶ 前引文，15 页。

⁷ 前引文，15 页。

字有“常规、正确”的意思，故用第四声。如果我们同意“左”代表错误，“右”代表正确为一般大众心理所默认，则文革时“右派”应被称为“左派”，“左派”应叫作“右派”才是。

除此之外，作者又引《礼记 王治》篇来证“左”“右”文化心理上的正邪之分。作者言“王治”篇曰：“执左道以乱政，杀”，因“左”为邪，且具令人质疑的含义，故用第三声。同时，“古人以右为尊。”故“右”不用第三声。且不论在上古汉语中“左”是否为第三声，古人以左还是以右为尊并不是可以简单地地下结论的。⁸读先秦两汉文史的人都知道，除了以右为尊外，古人还有以左为尊的习惯。翻检先秦古籍，以左为尊的例子比比皆是。随手略举一二：老子《道德经》曰：“君子居则贵左，用兵则贵右。”盖老子认为兵者不祥之器也。又言：“吉事尚左，凶事尚右。”左明显比右为尊。在过去影响巨大的阴阳五行观念中，左为东，为春，为生；右为西，为秋，属金，主杀，为死。古人葬，出西门。因西为秋，死之象也。以左为尊最简单的一个例子就是通常人们所说的“男左女右”。过去男尊女卑，所以男为左，女在右。综上所述，既然在文化传统上有以左为尊的习俗，那么作者所说的“左”因有质疑的含义而得第三声的看法似乎站不住脚。

作者对于第四声的解释是：“去声（第四声）所表达的意思是：直接的、利落的、分明的、不曲折的、开门见山的动作、势态或事物。”并且“在第四声中动词和形容词所占的比例较大。”⁹这里第四声的意义似乎和第一声的没有什么本质的区别。作者对第一声的定义是：“直接的、持续的或明显的状态、事物或动作。”¹⁰作者列举了96个第四声高频词，但还是没有拿这

⁸ 关于上古汉语是否有声调的问题，学术界尚存争论。

⁹ 前引文，17页。

¹⁰ 前引文，13页。

些词中的任何一个来阐释。这些第四声词的寓意（若有的话）为什么是作者所定义的那样完全留给了读者去猜测，可是猜测却又往往得不出任何合理的、符合逻辑的答案。比如说，作者举出的高频词中“乱”“站”“气”三个词，我们应该怎样解释它们是“直接的、利落的、分明的”呢？

如上所述，作者对每一个声调所罗列的高频词不可谓不多，可这些众多的高频词对作者对声调涵义的界定不但没起任何帮助作用，反而让读者感到疑惑和费解。大凡论说文都要遵从论点、论据和论证的原则。鲜明的论点需要有可靠的论据和合理的论证来说服人。作者的观点应该是很明晰的，但同时有很大的争议性，这就更需要有扎实的论据和强有力的论证来支持。可惜，总计 394 个高频词占了文章相当的空间，却未经任何检验，论据部分因此不十分牢靠。至于紧密相关的论证则基本没有。整个文章由此中气不足。

让人不解的是，在一篇讨论汉语四声涵义的文章中竟然没有一处比较普通话和方言声调的异同以及解释古今语音的流变。众所周知，现代汉语有七大方言，且不论与普通话发音差距较大的南方方言，即便是与普通话发音比较接近的北方方言，其与普通话在语音上也常有较大的差异。举例来说，普通话与邢台话和汉口话的对应关系如下表：

普通话	55	35	214	51
汉口话	55	213	42	35
邢台话	55	53	54	21

除阴平相同以外，普通话阳平的汉口话对应近三声，邢台近四声。普通话三声在汉口和邢台都与四声类似，调值向下。而普通话四声在汉口话中则是第二声。以作者所举高频词为例，普通话二声的“谁”有质疑的意思。而“谁”

在那台话中则成了 53，类似第四声，依作者理论，第四声表达直接的、分明的、不曲折的意思，简而言之，第四声没有质疑的含义，如此一来，则邢台人在问“你是谁？”的时候就已经知道答案了，不需质疑了吗？同样，邢台话中没有普通话的第三声 (213)，那么我们可以依作者的理论总结说邢台话不表达“繁复、辨别、质疑、变换、处置”的意思吗？答案很明显是否定的。¹¹

再拿两种南京话来和普通话来比较。一种南京话是 20 世纪现代南京话，以袁家骅《汉语方言概要》为据，另一种则是 17 世纪所谓的南京官话，保留在天主教传教士 Francisco Varo (1627-1687) 的 *Arte de la Lengua Mandarina* 中。该书成书于 1682 年，1703 年出版于广东，这里以 W. South Coblin 1998 年关于 *Arte de la Lengua Mandarina* 的研究为据。¹²

下表举出几个简单的例子：

	巴	连	脑	素
普通话	Pa 55	ljen 35	naw 214	su 51
南京话	Pa 32	ljẽ 14	law 22	su 44
南京官话	Pa 33	ljen 21	naw 42	su 45

简而言之，普通话和南京话、南京官话的对应关系为：

普通话	55	35	214	51
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¹¹ Robert Ramsey 提到在四川方言中三声和四声与普通话正好相反。见 Ramsey 氏著 *The Languages of China* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), 88 页。

¹² 袁家骅《汉语方言概要》第二版，语言出版社，2001。W. South Coblin, “Francisco Varo and the Sound System of Early Qing Mandarin,” in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 118, No. 2, 1998.

南京话	32	14	22	44
南京官话	33	21	42	45

其中普通话三声和四声跟 20 世纪、17 世纪南京话差别都很大。这是用张、谢两位作者的理论没法解释的。特别是南京话和南京官话的入声在现代汉语普通话的四个声调中都有对应，这更不可能用作者的理论作出合理的回答。

入声字对两位作者的理论构成最大的挑战。首先，入声字不见普通话却多见于南方方言及近代、中古和上古汉语中。常言说“入派三声”。至于为什么有的入声字变成了平声，有的变成了上声或去声，这个问题非常复杂，非我知识所及，不敢妄言。但似乎无法用《四声》作者的理论来解释。这里来看另外一种例子。元朱宗文撰《蒙古字韵》，为研究八思巴字和元代汉语（临安话？）的重要资料。比较《蒙古字韵》的韵字和普通话，可以看出以下规律：

- 1) 取决于声母的清浊，蒙古字韵平声跟普通话平声（阴平、阳平）对应；
- 2) 不同清浊、类型的声母决定蒙古字韵的上声与普通话的上声或去声对应；
- 3) 蒙古字韵的去声与普通话的去声总是对应；
- 4) 蒙古字韵的入声可变成普通话的任何一个声调。就蒙古字韵的平声和上声而言，它们变成普通话的哪个声调更取决于它们声母的类型而不是意思的区别。¹³

¹³ 关于《蒙古字韵》的研究，参看桥本万太郎, *Phonology Of Ancient Chinese(I)*, Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia & Africa, Monograph Series No.10 (1978), 及 *Phonology Of Ancient Chinese(II)*, Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia & Africa, Monograph Series No.11 (1979). 中古汉语声调中平声演变为现代汉语普通话的阴平或阳平也取决于声母的清浊，而不是涵义。Ramsey 对此也有说明。见前揭 *The Languages of China*, 139 页。关于古汉语声调的演变，Jerry Norman 的 *Chinese* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 有清晰的描述，如该书 52-57 页。

以上所举方言、元、明语音与普通话发音的差别是为了说明汉语的四声并不是由字词的意思所决定的，四声也并不表达作者所描述的那些涵义。作者的观点是一种有益的尝试，但很难站得住脚。¹⁴ 所以我们对汉语四声的讨论，应该从辨义的角度看，从寓意上讲似乎是很难行得通的。

何建军

University of Redlands

¹⁴ 除了论据、论证上的薄弱、缺乏外，《四声》一文没有显示作者对已有研究成果的注意。参考文献列有两种英文百科全书（非语言学专书），一本中文字典（《现代汉语词典》）、吕叔湘、沈炯的通行著作和北大中文系的《现代汉语》。尤其奇怪的是作者引郭锡良等编著的《古代汉语》三册为参考文献，但文章中只字未提古今音流变的问题，令人不解。纵观全文，作者不但未引用大量的中文研究资料，即便是相关的英文学术著作、文章也未提及。Jerry Norman 的 *Chinese*, Robert Ramsey 的 *The Language of China* 以及 Edwin Pulleyblank 的古汉语研究的文章应该是任何讨论汉语的人不可忽视的。

尊敬的编辑，

本刊(JCLTA)2008年5月第43卷第2期第17-46页发表了Liang TAO和Lijuan GUO两位先生的文章 *Learning Chinese Tones: A Developmental Account*。本人拜读完以后，想就其中的一些问题与作者及读者进行一些探讨。

该文在开始的部分对汉语声调习得的西文文献作了精要的回顾和简要地分析，这有利于读者对这个题目有个总体的了解。还有，该文在搜集材料方面、实验设计方面也颇为谨慎，对容易产生争议的地方做了不少数学分析。另外，该文的结论以及建议也能给汉语教师不少启发。以上这些都是该文毋庸置疑的优点。

不过笔者想提出以下问题就教于作者和读者。

第一，数据的问题。表1、图1、图2、图3、图4、附录表1、附录表2中的数据都显示第三声的正确（或可接受，下同）率第一次测验为47.94（约为48），第二次为57.22，所以应提高9%，可是第29页第一行和第30页第三段末行两次提到19%，这应是不小的差距。还有，第二个学生在该文中举例时很重要，几次提到。但是在第42页附录表1的数据中有一个明显的错误，该生的第三声的总数是23，正确的个数是13，但是正确率是17.4%。根据我们的观察，后来所有的数据都是建立在17.4%的基础上的，所以我们逆推，可以知道该学生的正确的个数应该是4个，4和13相去甚远。另外，关于小数点后的位数问题，文中出现了保留一位、两位和三位几种方法，似乎不是用同一程序得出，当然这不是大问题。

第二，算法的问题。第31页倒数第二段提到第二个学生用3.5秒说了6个字，所以每个字平均0.58秒。这种说法容易产生误解，因为每个字用0.58秒的话太长了。还有，文中很强的一个立论说第二次测验的时候学生的语速比第一次快了很多，除了从学生所说出的字的个数看以外，还有没有其他实验测量的数据？还有，笔者认为学生自由报告的部分跟即席回答的部分应该分开统计，结果可能会有不小的差距，尤其是差生。

第三，方法的问题。请一个中国本地人作好坏的评判是个很好的想法，他们有赵元任先生所谓的土人感。但是让他们来用五度值来记录声调调值就不那么容易了。做方言调查的人都知道，除非天生乐感很好的人，一般是要经过训练才能记录好方言的调值的，而美国学生发出的声调的奇怪程度不会怎么逊于中国方言声调调值的复杂程度。

下面讨论平均值方法的使用在本文中是否合适。如果样本极大或者样本性质接近，可以使用平均值的方法。但是本文只有16个样本，并且样本的性质差异很大。例如附录表1中第一个学生在第一次测试中的表现相当差，多少影响了平均表现。还有，关于第二声的个体差异非常大，可以说是悬殊，

但是平均的结果却是差强人意了。

第四，解释的问题。只根据正确率来说明道理，似有“头痛医头、脚痛医脚”的嫌疑。笔者曾经做过一个个案研究，过程在此省略。结果如下：

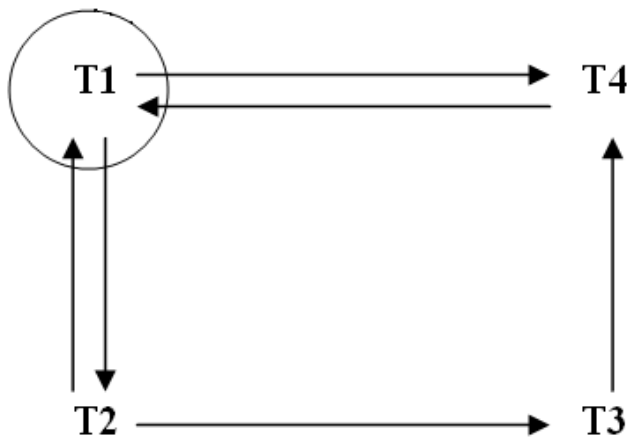
第一声			第二声			第三声			第四声		
正确 个数	总 个数	正确 率	正确 个数	总 个数	正确 率	正确 个数	总 个数	正确 率	正确 个数	总 个数	正确 率
9	12	75%	3	9	33%	5	8	63%	10	11	91%

如果我们认为这个学生的错误主要在第二声，那我们很可能错了。请看下一步的分析。我们进一步分析了这个学生究竟错在哪儿，得到的结果如下。（T1, 2, 3, 4 代表第一、二、三、四声，下同）

结果及百分比 声调及总数	T1	T2	T3	T4
T1(12)	75%	8%		17%
T2(9)	11%	33%	56%	
T3(8)			63%	38%
T4(11)	9%			91%

从上表中我们看到这个学生的多数第二声都错成第三声了，那我们就努力纠正第二声和第三声吧。如果这样，那我们可能又错了。

我们再把错误的用示意图表示如下：



其实问题的关键在第一声。我们发现，第一声可以错成第二声和第四声，第二声和第四声也可以错成第一声，其他声调错误则呈单方向，并且第一、二、三、四声形成一个循环，循环的源头在第一声。发现了这个特点以后，我们对这个学生进行了针对性地训练，效果较好。

所以笔者以为，平均值的方法并不是不可取，但是平均值的方法往往掩盖个体差异，而我们更关心个体差异，从个体差异中找出问题的本质，然后有针对性地进行教学。

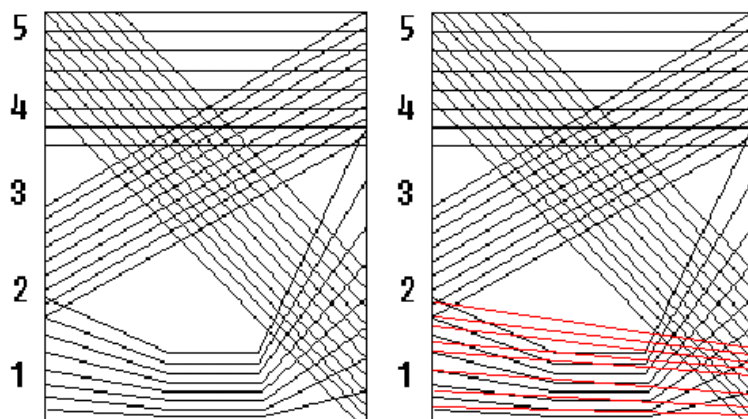
第五，教法的问题。我们同意作者提出的学生在习得句子的阶段仍然不能忽视对声调的教学。但是林焘教授曾引用赵元任先生及北大的教学情况，指出我们现在的语音（包括声调）教学远远不够，尤其是最开始的阶段。诚然，用美国主流的教学法（交际法）来教学的话，在开始的阶段反复练习发音，学生大概是不容易接受的。如何能够既有效、又有趣地教学生发音、尤其是声调，应该是汉语教学者所共同努力的。笔者鄙陋，谨提出两条主要原则就正于各位同仁。

一是调音定调。所谓调音，就是让学生在说汉语的时候如果不能说得自然准确，就把音域拉大。这一点在我们讨论的文章的文献中也提到了。拉大调域，也就放大了不同调形之间的区别，有利于学生区分不同的调形。等学生发音准确之后，就会慢慢趋于自然。所谓定调，就是第一声一定要准，为了训练第一声，我们可以采用延长法。有两种方式，第一种是拉长单个音节，单元音韵母可以拉长，可以叫学生拉长至 3-5 秒。学生在如此长的发音中，能够感受到声带振动的方式。第二种是长句法。沈炯教授曾找出“西安

飞机公司加工波音七三七飞机机身”这样的句子，我们可以练习语义稍微简单一些的“加州出租车司机星期一开波音七三七飞机”等等。学生如果能把这样的句子说得清准、准确，第一声应该不至于太难。

从我们讨论的文章的第 42、43 页的数据看，第一声差的学生，其他的声调也较差，这从第一次测试的第一个学生和第二次测试的第十六个学生可以明显看出。但是为什么有的学生的第一声很好，可是其他声调却不太好呢？下面是我们的分析，也是我们提出的第二种训练方法：注重格局。

声调格局的观念由石锋教授提出，如下面左边的图，如果再加上上半三声就成了右边的图。根据此图，我们可以告诉学生四声的差别不在乎调值稍微高低，而在于调型区别一定要明显。



四声，就像一个四边形，如果我们通过调音定调，固定住了一个角（即第一声），其他声调的相对位置也就固定住了，这样四个声调的调值就会发得准；四声，还像四个座位，通过格局的观念，我们就能够让学生明确哪个声调该入哪个座位，这样四个声调就不会乱，各入其位。

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尊敬的编辑，

非常感谢能为我们提供这一机会对我们的文章进行探讨及商榷(JCLTA, 2008年5月第43卷第2期第17-46页 *Learning Chinese Tones: A Developmental Account*)。同时我们也非常感谢焦老师对本文及汉语教学提出的建议。

首先我们非常感谢焦老师对本文提出的宝贵意见。由于作者的疏忽，没有仔细检查 Excel 中的计算公式，从而导致了文章中的两处失误：一、42页附录表1的数据中第二位学生的第三声可接受率应该是 56.5%，以此类推，第29页与第30页中所提到的两次测验中第三声的提高率应为 7%。二、由于以上的失误，表1、图1中 Test 1 第三声的可接受率应为 50%。因此图1、图3、图4、均有变化。现将改正后的图1、3、4附录如下：

Figure 1. Percentage Distribution of Acceptable Tones in Test 1

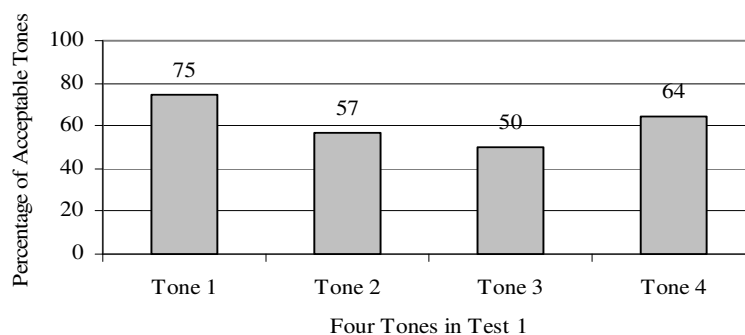


Figure 3: Percentage Distribution of Acceptable Tones in Tests 1 and 2

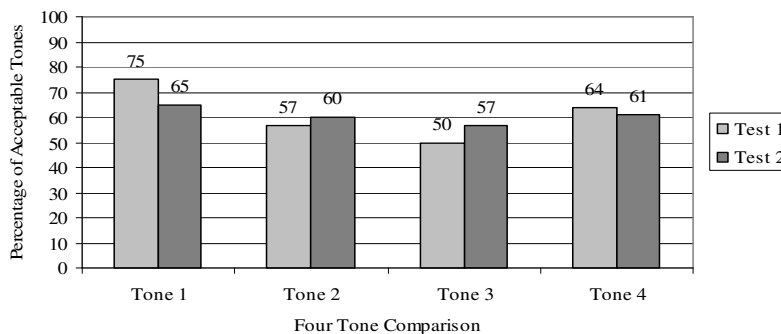
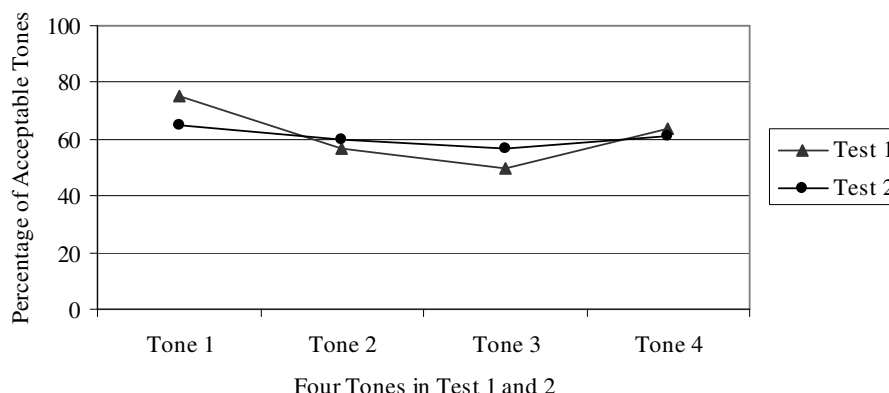


Figure 4: Percentage Distribution of Acceptable Tones



另外小数点后的位数不统一也是本文的疏漏之处。我们都为这些失误感到非常惭愧，并对此所产生的不良效果向编辑和读者表示诚挚的歉意。唯一值得欣慰的是，两次失误并未改变本文所提出的基本论点，因本文所报道的统计结果均由原始数据经 SPSS 软件计算得出。

关于焦老师所提出的第二至第五个问题，我们提出如下几点看法，希望与焦老师和读者探讨。

第二个问题主要是关于怎样分析学生在第一、二次测试中的语速问题。第 31 页倒数第二段提到第二个学生用 3.5 秒说了 6 个字，所以每个字平均 0.58 秒。这种说法确实容易产生误解，“因为每个字用 0.58 秒的话太长了”。我们承认本文所做的分析并非最精确的，因而在下面的分析中我们就谈到了这个具体例子，目的是想说明这个学生实际上利用拉长元音发声时间和‘词组’间距的方法使一句话中每一音节的发音尽量接近于单音节发音。我们认为这个学生是利用这一方法尽量准确地控制四声的发音。实际上每个音节的发声并未占用 0.58 秒，而是词组之间元音拉长了，并增加了停顿时间。这一现象在第一次测试中较多，但在第二次测试中基本消失了(见第 31 页同一段内的讨论)。

另外有关 MLU 的讨论，我们是参考总的测试时间(两次均为 50 分钟)来谈学生的语速变化的。也就是说在同一测试时间内，学生所用句子的增多加上 MLU 的增长说明了学生用词量的增多和语速的提高，同时也说明学生语法知识的增加。当然我们还可以将每个音节的发音时间测量出来做进一步说明，但其结果与 MLU 的结论应该是类似的。

我们知道自由报告的部分跟即席问答的部分应该有所区别。只是因时间

限制未将两者分开分析。不过我们在分析原始数据时发现两者差别不大,特别是因为即席问答均占整个测试的比率极小。鉴于此研究力求从宏观的角度探讨美国学生在学习掌握使用汉语四声的发展规律(此点在下面还要谈到),因此还有很多具体细节在此研究中未提及。我们计划在下一步研究中对语料进行分析时将两者分开。

关于请一个中国本地人作评判,我们的出发点是希望能从另一个角度来测试评估的可靠性。基于所做的研究完全取决于对学生发音的评估,评估的可靠性非常重要,而仅由语言教师评估难免会有偏见之嫌。然而没有跟美国汉语学生接触经历的中国本地人可以更客观地评估我们的语料。所幸我们经审慎筛选后,认为所请的第二位评估员条件最合适:母语为普通话,并有三十几年声乐演唱及三种乐器演奏背景。除此之外,本人亦有非常严谨的科学研究背景(中国大陆高校博士生导师)。为本次研究,这位评估员经专业语言教师培训,非常认真地学习了五度值。最重要的是,虽然这位评估员并未接触过美国的汉语学生,但他所得出的评估结果与我们的汉语教师所得结果相近,并未产生质的区别($p > 0.1$, 见本文第 26 页),证实了我们汉语教师评估的可靠性,也即我们这次研究基础的可靠性。

接下来谈一谈平均值方法的使用在本文中是否合适的问题。基于本文旨在探讨美国学生对汉语四声发音的学习掌握趋势(即从宏观的角度探讨这一趋势),我们认为平均值以及与之相关的统计结果最能说明问题。当然我们决不否认教师应该了解学生学习期间的个性差异并据此发现最佳解决办法。不过我们亦认为这是从两个不同的角度探讨教学方法:了解基本趋势有助于教学大纲的设计并且有准备地帮助学生;而针对学生个性差异所做的分析则可以有针对性地因人施教。

第四点是关于解释的问题,我们首先希望说明本文并未谈发声的‘正确率’,而是‘可接受率’。二者存在不小的差异。我们都知道,在实际应用中学生的发音往往并非绝对‘正确’或绝对‘错误’,而是常常介于两者之间。因此我们放宽了评估尺度,对每个声调的评估分成了‘不可接受’、‘无法确定可否接受’以及‘可接受’三个评估点。本文仅就第三点,发音的‘可接受率’进行了讨论。在两次测试中,从四声发音的‘可接受率’的变化提出对汉语教学所应注意的方面。另外两点留待后续研究项目中进行。

此外我们也特别希望提出几点对于汉语声调学习的看法与读者探讨。从认知的角度来看,语言的发展都有一个从必然王国到自由王国的发展。在必然王国阶段学生虽然需要有意识地控制自己的声调,但仍然做不到每次都能准确地发音,也就是说,声调意识和发音器官的协调并未固定下来。而到

了自由王国阶段，通过一段时间的学习之后，学生的记忆中则已形成的四声的固定框架，发音器官有了相应的固定位置，可以象中国人一样随口而出，四声皆准。

这一发展过程需要相当长的时间，而汉语教师的责任就在于如何帮助学生尽快完成这一发展转变过程。在学习汉语四声初期，我们同意焦老师的提议，教师应该拉大调域，使学生尽快能够定调并尽可能地主观意识到每一声调的定位。在我们的测试中，我们可以看到有的学生在第一次测试中尽量拖长声调以便可以尽量准确地控制四声的发音。这显示出，在必然王国阶段，学生对四声有了一定的主观定位意识。事实表明，很多学生在这一阶段会有意识地控制自己的声调。然而，汉语四声在这一阶段并未在学生记忆中形成固定格式或框架，因此四声的发音仍然不稳定。特别是在连贯的句子中，四声的定位往往受到前后声调的影响，不象单音那样容易定位。

我们还认为，汉语教学初期的另一重要方法是把声调与词组结合起来进行反复练习。基于汉语交流是教学的最终目的，而汉语四声的应用最终是要在句子中实行，把声调练习结合在词组及句型练习中也可以有效地帮助学生掌握四声发音。这一方法借鉴于儿童第一语言习得，即幼儿对汉语四声的掌握是结合在与成人语言交流中发展完善的。

经过近一年的学习之后，我们的学生对四声的处理渐渐向自由王国发展，即学生逐渐不再需要用极大的努力来控制自己的声调，而是可以更多地注意交流中的语意。但是在这一阶段，学生有可能认为已经建立了正确的四声框架，因而淡化了继续提高的意识。我们在课堂上也常常会发现，教师一个手势的指点就可以使学生意识到某一词组的声调不对，马上进行正确的调整。这说明学生已经具有初步的四声框架，但还不能熟练正确地控制使用这个框架。因此在这一阶段四声的教学可以融入句法和会话中继续进行。

如上所述，从这一阶段发展突变到在交流中能够准确、地道地掌握汉语声调的自由王国还需要一段很长的时间。究竟用什么方法能够最快、最有效地帮助学生完成这一发展还有待学者同仁在教学与研究中摸索总结。

再次感谢编辑和焦老师跟我们一起探讨这些问题。

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中美学生元音发音中的母语迁移现象研究¹

Study of Language Transfer in Vowel Articulation by Chinese and American Students

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摘要: 在第二语言习得研究领域, 母语知识对第二语言的影响是众多语言学家所探讨的重要问题之一。这种影响称为第二语言习得中的语言迁移 (language transfer) 现象。本文按照语音格局的分析思路, 采用声学实验的方法, 对中国学生的英语元音发音和美国学生的汉语元音发音中存在的母语迁移现象进行了深入的分析, 揭示了元音发音中母语迁移现象的规律, 并对语音教学工作提出了建议。

关键词: 母语迁移 语音格局 正迁移 负迁移 语音教学

Abstract: The paper is a detailed study on the phenomena of language transfer in English vowels produced by Chinese students and Chinese vowels produced by American students. Following the analytic framework of canonical vowel pattern and making use of acoustic experiments, it reveals the regularities of language transfer in vowel production. Some suggestions are put forward on the teaching of pronunciation in the future.

Key words: language transfer; sound pattern; positive transfer; negative transfer; phonetic instruction

一 语音迁移

在第二语言习得研究领域, 母语知识对第二语言的影响是众多语言学家和语言教师所关注的重要问题之一。这种影响称为第二语言习得中语言迁移 (transfer) 现象 (Ellis, 1986)。语言迁移成为第二语言习得领域中的研究课题已有多年的历史。早在 1957 年, 拉多 (Robert Lado, 1957) 就在研究跨文化语言学指出: “学习者往往将祖国的语言和文化中的结构、词义和词序迁移到外国的语言和文化中去” (Odlin, 2001)。从此, 迁移在语言学习中的作用一直是第二语言习得研究中一个极其重要的话题。

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语言迁移分为积极迁移和消极迁移两种：当母语规则与目的语规则相同时，迁移为积极的，称为正迁移（positive transfer）；而当母语与目的语之间出现差异时，迁移为消极的，称为负迁移（negative transfer）（Odlin, 2001）。

语言迁移出现在语音、语法、词汇以及语义等各个层面上。其中语音上的迁移是最基本的，也是最普遍的。语音的正迁移会促进学习者的学习。例如，see 和 miss 这两个词中的辅音/s/是英语里很常见的，它在汉语里同样存在，如洒/sa/、色/sə/、素/su/等，因此中国学生在学习这个辅音时会比较容易。负迁移则会引起学习者发音的偏误。例如，中国学生常常会说他们看见了田野里的船（ship），事实上，他们指的是羊（sheep）。这是因为汉语中的元音/i/和/ɪ/不区别意义，属于同一个音位，学习者在连贯的说话中容易把/i/跟/ɪ/混淆起来（温宝莹 2008）。

由此可见，语音学习是学习者第一语言和第二语言相互作用的最初的领域，也是母语迁移最为明显的领域。元音是一种语言语音系统中的音节核心。本文将对中国学生和美国学生第二语言习得过程中在元音发音上的迁移现象加以研究。

二 基础元音的格局

每一种语言和方言的语音都是成系统的，表现为各自的语音格局（sound pattern）。语音格局的分析是把语音学和音系学两方面联系在一起的。比较不同语言和方言的语音格局，具有语言类型学的意义。元音格局是元音系统性的表现，包括的内容可以有元音的定位特征、内部变体的分布、整体的配列关系等等（石锋 2008）。

每种语言中都存在着基础元音，基础元音是整个元音系统的基础，反映了元音的基本特性。在汉语中，出现在单韵母中的元音是基础元音，也可以叫做一级元音（石锋，2002）；在英语中，能够单独组成音节或单独出现在辅音之后组成音节的单音节词中的单元音是基础元音。基础元音的格局是全部元音格局的基础，具有典型的代表性。因此，本文所述元音格局专指基础元音格局。

三 实验说明

1. 实验对象。参加实验的有八位南开大学的学生。其中四位中国学生来自于北京，均为男性，平均年龄为 25.6 岁，说普通话，英语为第一外语。四位美国学生分别来自于美国堪萨斯州和犹他州，均为男性，平均年龄为 19.3 岁，母语为普通美国英语（General American English）。

2. 实验过程。为两国学生设计的汉语和英语发音材料相同。汉语词表

为含有汉语基础元音的七个单音节字。英语词表为含有英语五个基础元音的两组共十个单词。实验在南开大学中文系语音实验室中进行。中文词表每位发音人按正常语速朗读三遍；英语词表设计了两组，每位发音人朗读一遍。使用南开大学开发的电脑语音分析系统“桌上语音工作室”（Mini-Speech-Lab）进行录音、测算和统计作图。

3. 声学元音图。在语音分析中，元音的音质主要决定于第一共振峰（F1）和第二共振峰（F2）的数据。利用语音实验测得元音的共振峰频率，可以绘制声学元音图，又称声位图。在声位图坐标的选择上，不同学者采用的方法不尽相同。Joos 型声学元音图（1948）提出以元音的第一共振峰（F1）的频率为一维，第二共振峰（F2）的频率为另一维，F1 和 F2 的标度都是对数的。Ladefoged 型声学元音图（1976）是以 F1 作纵坐标，线性标度，F2-F1 作横坐标，对数标度。在本文中，我们选取 F1 为纵轴坐标，F2 为横轴坐标。同时，为了接近实际的听感距离，对纵轴用线性标度，横轴用对数标度，并把坐标的零点设在右上角（石锋，2002）。这样做出来的声学元音图跟我们熟悉的生理舌位图有很好的对应关系，便于直观考察元音发音的特点。

4. 实验任务。我们利用声学元音图对中美学生发音的元音进行比较。首先对汉语和英语的元音格局进行实验分析，并通过对中国学生和美国学生发音的英语元音的比较以及中国学生和美国学生发音的汉语元音的比较，来考察第二语言的学习中，语言迁移在元音发音上的表现。

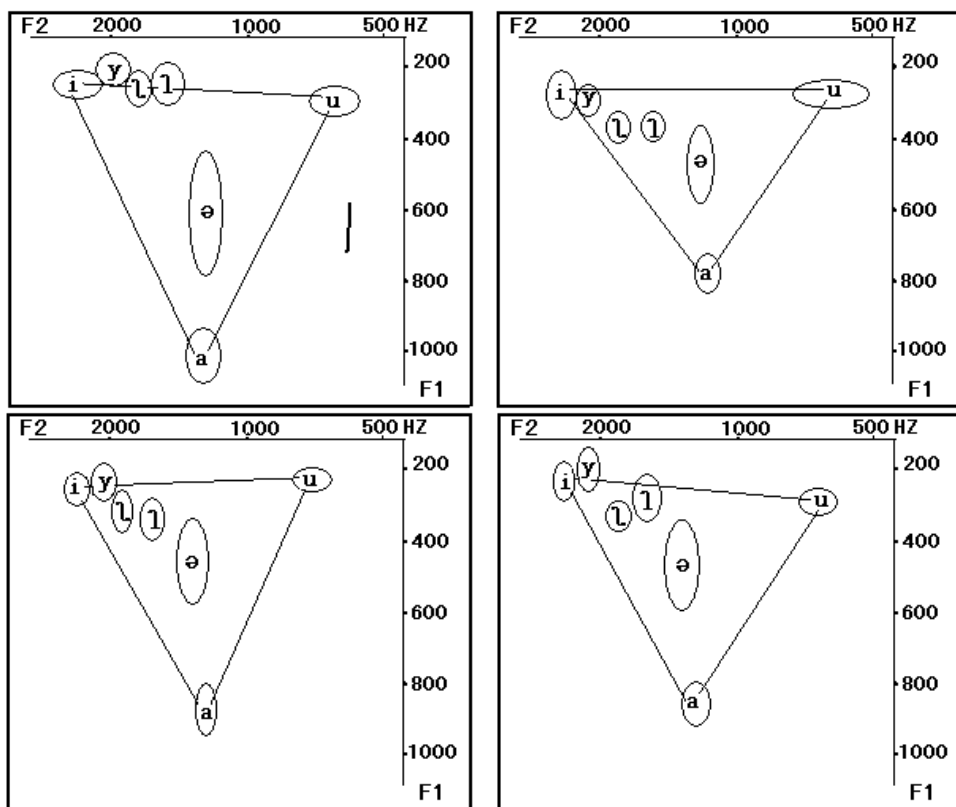
四 汉语的元音格局

在汉语中，基础元音是在单韵母中出现的元音。一般认为普通话有十个单元音，然而并不是一种语言或方言中出现的所有元音都能成为基础元音。从音系学观点来看，汉语的语音形式可以分为单字音、派生音、边际音三种。单字音、派生音、边际音与语法、语义的关联不同：单字音的构成成分不与特定的语法、语义因素相联系；派生音的构成成分出现在特定的语素环境且可以由单字音根据派生规则推测得到；边际音则只出现在特定的意义条件下且与该意义有映象性联系。也就是说，单字音中出现的是本身没有意义但能区别意义的语音单位，分布自由，不可预测；派生音和边际音中出现的则是本身与语法、语义有直接关联的语音单位，分布不自由，可预测。如儿化韵、小称变音等都属于派生音。只出现于语气词、感叹词、应答词和象声词中的语音成分属于边际音。可预测的音能够以不可预测的音为基础，利用一定的规则推测出来。不可预测的音是本源性的，可预测的音是派生性的（王洪君 1999）。因此，单字音是本源性的，是分析语音系统的基础成分；派生音和边际音是派生性的，需要另外进行分析。

根据这种观点,在普通话的十个单元音里面,有三个元音需要提出讨论。元音 $\hat{e}$ [ϵ]做单韵母时只出现在象声词、语气词和叹词中,属于边际音,所以不列入基础元音。元音 o [o]独立成音节时也是只在象声词、语气词和叹词中出现,应为边际音;在前面有唇音声母时,由于唇化作用的影响,实际发音是[$u\epsilon$],带有韵头 u ,因此也不属基础元音。卷舌元音 er [ϵ] r 的实际发音是[ϵr],带有卷舌韵尾,因此不属基础元音。

这样,普通话的基础元音就有*i*、*y*、 $\imath$ 、 $\imath$ 、 ϵ 、*a*、*u*/七个,其中*i*、*y*、*u*/为高元音, $\imath$ 为中元音, $\imath$ 为低元音, $\imath$ 、 $\imath$ 为舌尖元音。

下面我们就利用声学元音图对四位中国学生所发的汉语普通话的基础元音进行分析。



图一 中国学生所发的汉语元音声位图

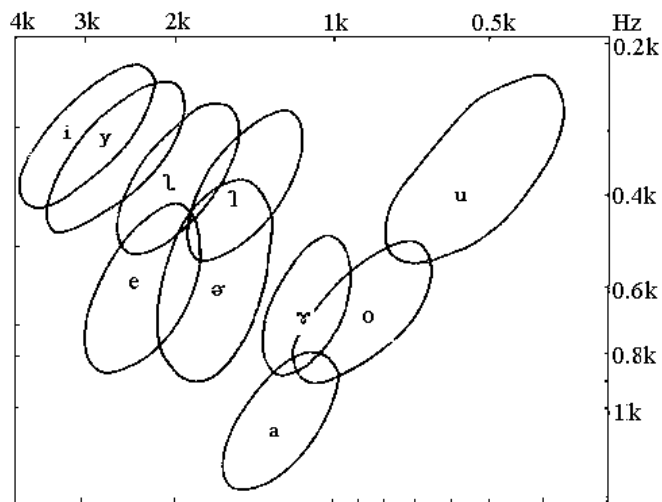
综合图一中的各图,我们可以归纳出汉语普通话元音格局的特点:从整

体框架来看, 格局呈三角形展开, 高元音/i、u/和低元音/a/分别占据了元音三角形的三个顶点位置, /a、i/连线和/a、u/连线大体呈对称性分布; 后高元音/u/比较靠后, F2 数值在 800Hz 以下, 低元音/a/比较靠下, F1 数值都大于 800Hz, 前高元音/i/的 F1 数值大约在 250Hz 左右, F2 数值在 2100Hz 左右, 格局整体分布区域比较大。

从位置的前后来看, 高元音、舌尖元音和中元音的横向分布次序为/i、y、ɿ、ʅ、ə、u/; 元音/y/是在元音/i、u/之间, 距/i/较近; 舌尖元音/ɿ、ʅ/在三角形上部稍靠前的位置, 彼此呈水平分布。这里要特别注意, 舌尖后元音/ʅ/的位置是在舌尖前元音/ɿ/之前。一般所说舌尖前元音实际上是舌尖对齿龈前, 又称平舌音, 舌头自然放平; 舌尖后元音是舌尖对齿龈后, 又称翘舌音, 舌尖翘起来, 舌体一定要前伸才行。

从位置的高低来看, 元音/i、y、u/高度大体一致, 在最上层; 舌尖元音/ɿ、ʅ/多是居于其下; 中元音/ə/位于中间, 它的分布是一个从上到下的狭长带, 动程明显, 具有游移性; /a/元音在最下层, 分布较集中。

图二是男女各十位发音人所发的普通话十个单元音的声学元音图(吴宗济 1986)。图中每个椭圆圈都有互相重叠的现象, 有的重叠部分还相当大。这是因为把男女共二十人的原始数据放在同一个图中造成的。对于每个发音人来说, 不同的元音是彼此区分开的, 如图一那样。对比图一和图二中的七个基础元音, 它们的相对分布位置是大体一致的。



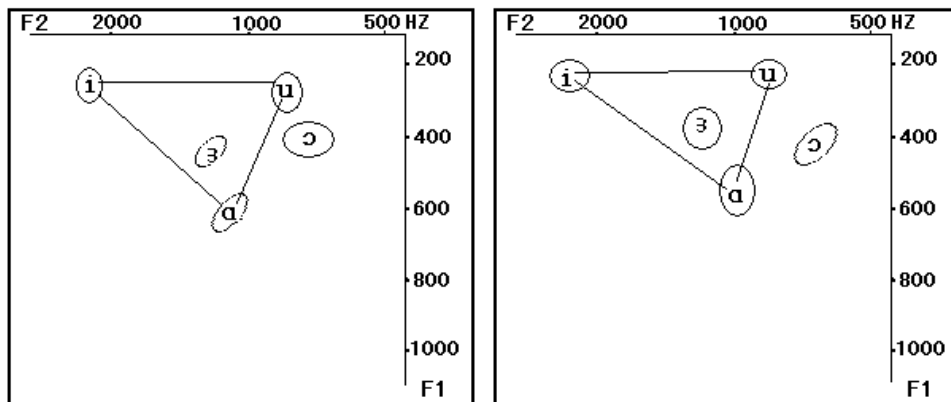
图二 普通话十个单元音的声位图(据吴宗济 1986)

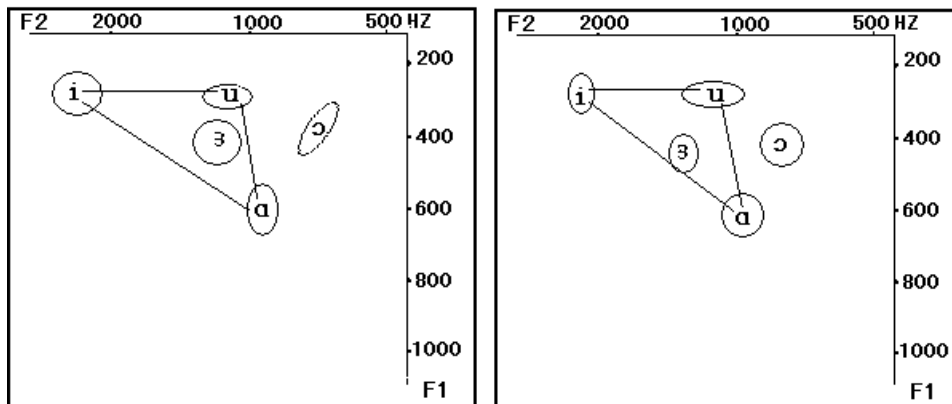
五 英语的元音格局

在英语中，单元音共有 12 个，包括 /a、ʌ、i、ɪ、u、ʊ、ɔ、o、ɜ、ə、æ、ɛ/ (J.C.Wells,1990)。这 12 个单元音中，元音 /ʌ、o、æ、ɛ/ 不能出现在单词末尾。按照对基础元音定义，能够单独组成音节或单独出现在辅音之后组成音节的单音节词中的单元音是基础元音，所以这四个元音不属于基础元音。元音 /ɪ、ʊ、ə/ 只在弱读时可以单独组成音节或单独出现在辅音之后组成单音节词。一般我们并不把弱读音节中的元音列为基础元音。因此，美国英语的基础元音就应该只有 /a、i、u、ɔ、ɜ/ 五个。其中 /i、u/ 为高元音，/ɔ、ɜ/ 为中元音，/a/ 为低元音。

美国英语的方言和汉语相比，差异要小得多。然而美国英语区域特征亦较复杂，不少区域的某些语音特征正在合并或者推移。本文的四名美国发音人来自犹他州和堪萨斯州。需要注意的是，堪萨斯州东部位于美国英语许多重要的同言线的边缘 (Labov *et al.* 2005)。发音人所说的是普通美国英语，他们元音发音的分布格局也表现出一定的差异。

下面我们就利用声学元音图对四位美国学生所发的英语元音格局进行分析。

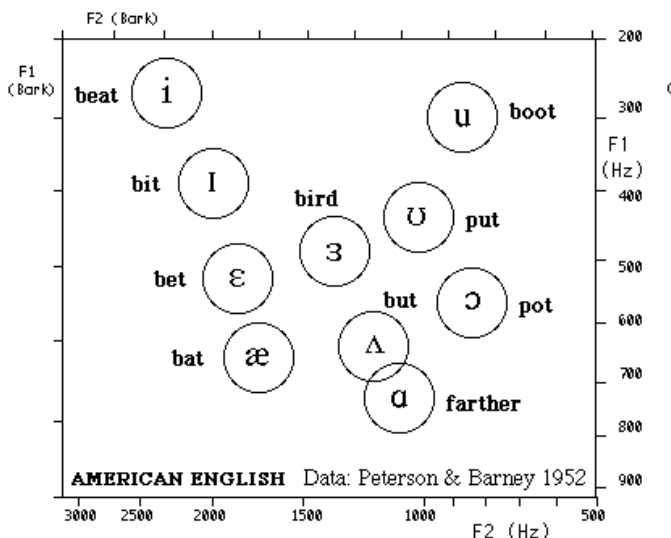




图三 美国学生所发的英语元音声位图

综合图三中的各图，我们发现，美国学生所发的英语元音格局分为两种情况：上面两幅图为锐角三角形格局，下面两幅图为钝角三角形格局。这是元音/u/在前后维度上的发音差异造成的。下面的两位美国学生发音的[u]是比较新派的，也就是发音部位前化(Labov *et al.* 2005:101)。其他元音的分布则是相当有规律的，四幅图中五个元音的相对位置大体是一致的。

我们可以归纳出英语元音格局的特点：从格局整体框架来看，高元音/i、u/和低元音/ɑ/呈三角形展开，/i、u/连线和/i、ɑ/连线大体呈对称分布，形成以元音/i/为顶点，以/i、u/连线和/i、ɑ/连线为两腰的等腰锐角三角形；或者/u、i/连线和/u、ɑ/连线大体呈对称分布，形成以元音/u/为顶点，以/u、i/连线和/u、ɑ/连线为两腰的等腰钝角三角形形状。后高元音/u/比较靠前，F2数值在800Hz以上；低元音/ɑ/比较靠上靠后，F1数值都在600Hz左右，F2数值在1000Hz左右；前高元音/i/的F1数值大约在250Hz左右，F2数值在2100Hz左右；格局整体分布区域比较小。从位置的前后来看，各元音呈现有序平衡分布：高元音和中元音的横向分布次序为/i、ɜ、u、ɔ/；/i、ɑ/连线和/u、ɔ/连线彼此大体平行；从位置的高低来看，/i、u/高度大致相同，在上面，/ɜ、ɔ/高度大致相同，在中间，/ɑ/在下面；/i、u/连线和/ɜ、ɔ/连线彼此大体平行。



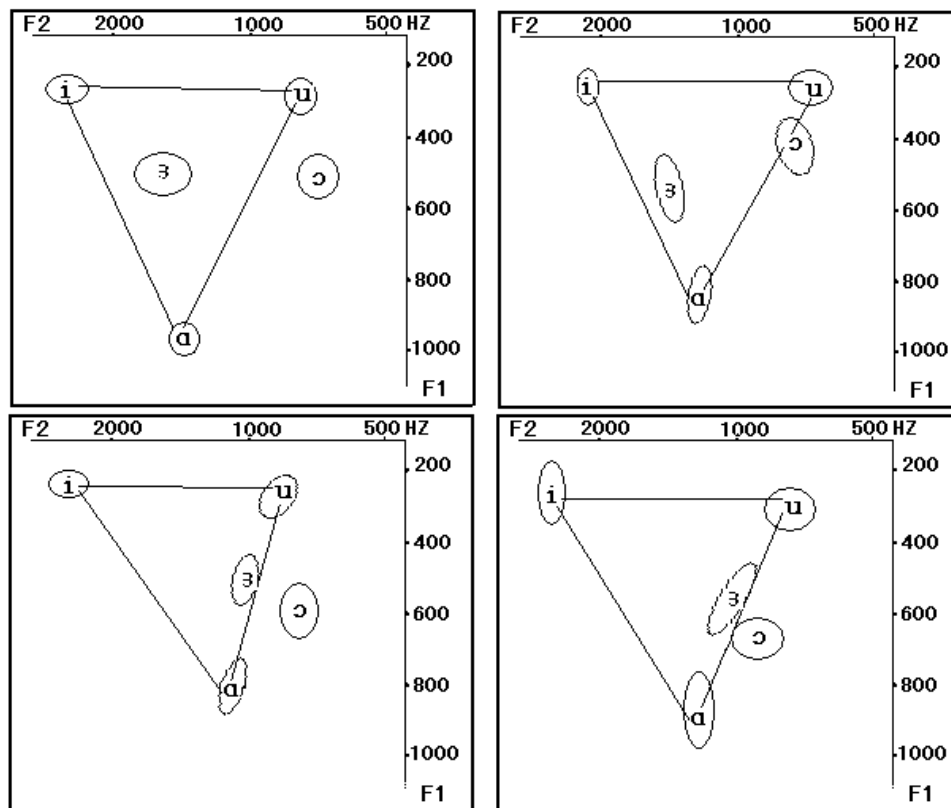
图四 美国英语十个单元音的声位图（据 Peterson & Barney 1952）

图四是男女共七十六位发音人所发的英语十个单元音的声学元音图（Peterson & Barney 1952）。图中数据来自多年以前，从那时到现在已有一些变化，如后高元音[u]。我们对比图三和图四中的五个基础元音，它们的相对分布位置是大体一致的。

Joos (1948) 认为：尽管不同的人所发的同一个元音共振峰的频率不同，但是每个人所发的各个元音彼此之间的相对位置基本上是稳定的。人的大脑正是以这种相对位置为背景来感知各种语音的。因此，把不同发音人的数据放在一起来看，似乎是叠合纷乱、交互混杂，然而对于同一个人来说，则是自成系统，有规律可循的，这就是：相对位置基本稳定，相对关系对应一致。

我们对汉语和英语的元音格局的分析证实了这种说法，同一语言中不同发音人所发的各个元音在声学空间的相对位置是一致的，即同一语言中不同的发音人的元音格局是一致的。那么，一个人的元音格局也就不仅仅代表他个人，而是代表他所说的这种语言。这样，我们就可以通过学习者的发音声位图和母语者的发音格局的比较来分析第二语言学习中学习者在元音发音方面的表现情况。

六 中国学生的英语元音发音



图五 中国学生所发的英语元音声位图

本节我们将对中国学生的英语元音发音的声位图和英语元音格局进行比较，找出其中相似和相异之处。然后对中国学生的英语元音发音的声位图和汉语元音格局进行比较，以便说明产生这种共性和差异的原因。

综合图五各图，我们可以看到中国学生发的英语元音跟英语元音格局相似和相异之处：首先，格局框架三角形不是以*/i/*元音为顶点，以*/i、u/*连线和*/i、a/*连线为两腰的等腰锐角三角形，也不是以元音*/u/*为顶点，以*/u、i/*连线和*/u、a/*连线为两腰的等腰钝角三角形形状，而是呈等边三角形形状。其中，顶点*/i/*的位置与英语格局中的位置接近，第一共振峰（F1）数值大约在250Hz左右，第二共振峰（F2）数值在2100Hz左右。顶点*/a/*趋下趋前，第一共振峰（F1）数值在800HZ以上，第二共振峰（F2）数值在1200HZ以

上。元音/u/发音趋后，第二共振峰(F2)数值较小，在 800HZ 以下。格局区域在横向纵向上都有扩展。

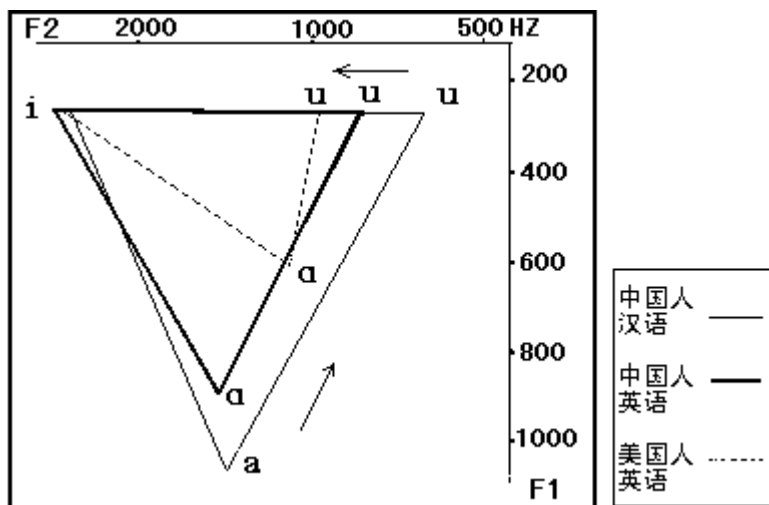
其次，从前后位置来看，各元音分布不平衡，高元音和中元音的横向分布的/i、ɜ、u、ɔ/次序变得模糊或发生改变；元音/u/和/ɔ/大体上呈纵向垂直排列，其连线 and /i、a/连线不平行。

最后，从高低位置来看，元音/i、u/在上面，/a/在下面，/ɜ、ɔ/位于中间。但是/ɜ、ɔ/的相对位置关系不太稳定，水平分布次序关系不明显，多数情况下与/i、u/连线并不平行。以上这些共性和差异应该是受到汉语元音格局分布特点的影响所致。

在汉语中，中元音/ə/具有游移性。中国学生在发英语的/ɜ/元音时也将这种游移性质迁移过来。我们从图五中可以看到，在中国学生的英语发音中，多数情况下/ɜ/元音具有动程。当然，与汉语相比，这种游移程度并不十分显著，说明学生在有意识地克服母语的迁移。

汉语中不存在/ɔ/元音，所以中国学生在发这个元音时，由于在母语中找不到相对应的元音，会发生负迁移现象，因此发音不太稳定。在图中显示为/ɔ/元音的位置分布不确定，不同发音人差异较大，F1 在 400Hz 和 700Hz 之间变化。

图六中用粗线画出的三角形是中国学生所发的英语元音位置，可以跟用细线画出的中国学生发音的汉语元音和用虚线画出的美国学生英语母语发音的元音位置相互对照。在汉语的元音格局中/i/元音属前高元音，与英语格局中/i/元音的位置相似。这样，中国学生在发英语/i/元音时，语言学习中的正迁移就发生了作用。在图六中，三个三角形框架中的顶点元音/i/的位置相近，基本重合。这说明正迁移使得中国学生所发的/i/元音在格局中的位置与英语格局中的位置大体一致。



图六 中国学生所发的英语元音与汉语元音声位图

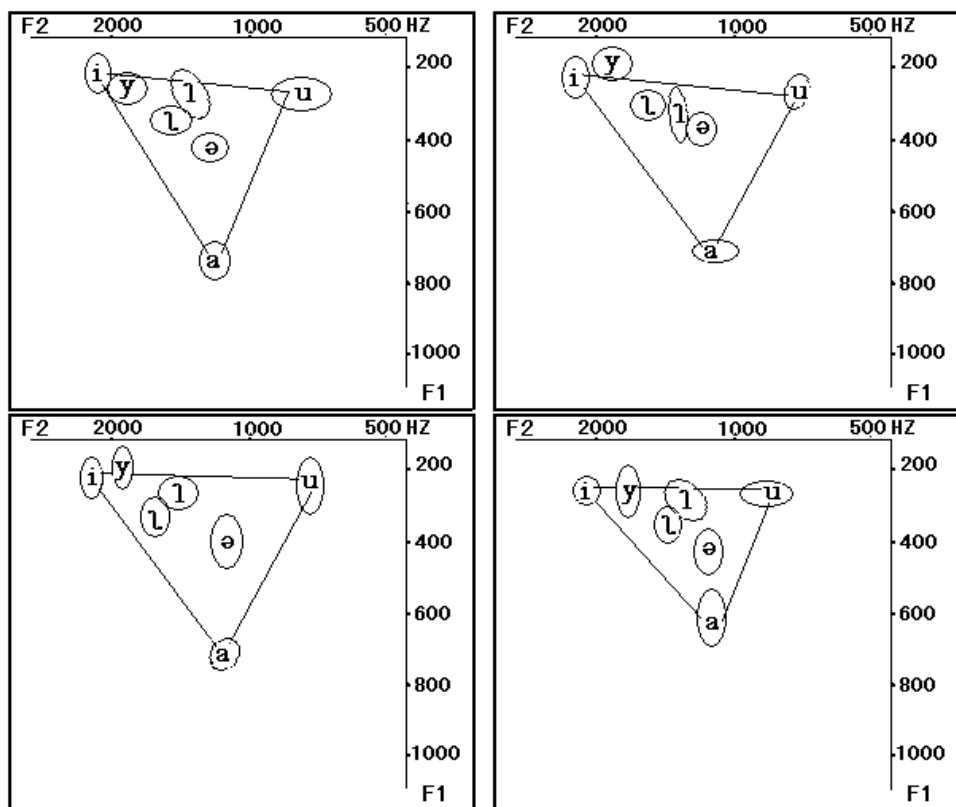
在图六的对比中，另外两个顶点元音/u、ɑ/的位置差异较大。汉语/u/元音的发音比较靠后，第二共振峰（F2）数值较小，在 800HZ 以下；英语的/u/元音比较靠前，第二共振峰（F2）数值较大，在 800HZ 以上。汉语/a/元音发音比较靠下靠前，第一共振峰（F1）数值较大，在 800HZ 以上，第二共振峰（F2）数值也较大，在 1200HZ 以上；英语的/a/元音比较靠上靠后，第一共振峰（F1）数值较小，在 600Hz 左右，第二共振峰（F2）数值也较小，在 1000HZ 左右。这样，中国学生在发英语/u/元音和/a/元音时，语言学习中的负迁移就发生了作用。负迁移使得中国学生所发的/u/元音大多是较英语格局偏后，而/a/元音则是多为趋下趋前。

我们发现，中国学生所发的英语/u/元音虽然趋后，但并不与汉语格局中的/u/元音重合，而是处于汉语的/u/元音和英语的/u/元音之间的位置。这说明中国学生在发/u/元音的过程中已经意识到母语的影响，从而有意识地去克服这种影响。中国学生所发的英语/a/元音的表现不如/u/元音，虽然多是位于汉语的/a/元音的上方，但是比起英语母语发音的/a/元音位置相差甚远。这说明中国学生多数不能区分汉语中的/a/和英语中的/ɑ/，因而基本是用母语去代替目的语，产生发音的偏误。

在以上因素的共同影响下，中国学生所发的英语元音与美国学生母语发音相比较，三角形框架有所变化，整体分布较大，横向纵向都有一定扩展，框架内部的配列布局也有相应差异。

七 美国学生的汉语元音发音

本节我们将对美国学生的汉语元音发音的声位图和汉语元音格局进行比较，找出其中的相似和相异之处；然后对美国学生的汉语元音发音的声位图和英语元音格局进行比较，来说明产生这种共性和差异的原因。



图七 美国学生所发的汉语元音声位图

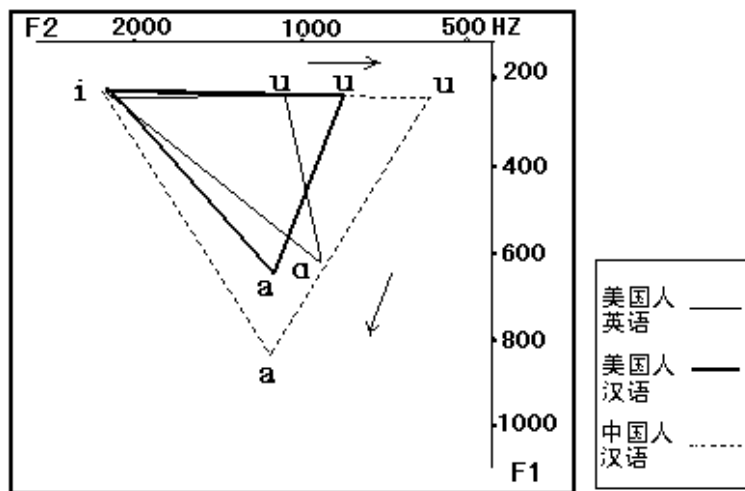
综合图七中的各图，我们可以看到美国学生发的汉语元音跟汉语元音格局的相似和相异之处：首先，格局框架三角形不是近似的等边三角形，而是大体上以/i/元音为顶点，以/i、u/连线和/i、a/连线为两腰的等腰三角形形状。其中顶点元音/i/的位置与汉语格局中的/i/位置接近，第一共振峰（F1）数值大约在 250 Hz 左右，第二共振峰（F2）数值在 2100 Hz 左右。顶点元音/u/略有趋前，第二共振峰（F2）数值在 800 Hz 左右。顶点元音/a/位置较高，

第一共振峰（F1）数值在 700Hz 以下。总体区域在横向纵向上都有压缩。

其次，从前后位置来看，各元音间的排列不平衡，高元音、舌尖元音和中元音的横向分布/i、y、ɿ、ʅ、ə/的次序不清晰，尤其是舌尖元音/ɿ、ʅ/排列次序不稳定，有的呈左右分布，有的呈上下分布。

最后，从高低位置来看，/i、y、u/位于最上层，/a/在最下层，可是舌尖元音/ɿ、ʅ/和中元音/ə/的排列次序比较混乱，舌尖前元音/ɿ/有时居于舌尖后元音/ʅ/之上，/ɿ、ʅ、ə/有时又位于同一水平层级。另外，中元音/ə/不具游移性，缺乏动程。这些共性和差异应该是受到英语元音格局分布特点影响所致。

图八是美国学生所发的汉语元音和英语元音的声位对比图。图中用粗线画出的三角形是美国学生所发的汉语元音位置，可以跟用细线画出的美国学生发音的英语元音和用虚线画出的中国学生发音的汉语母语元音位置相互对照。英语/i/元音的发音跟汉语相近，出现语言学习中的正迁移。我们可以看到：图八中的顶点元音/i/位置非常接近，可以说基本重合。正迁移使得美国学生所发的/i/元音的位置与汉语格局中的位置大体一致。



图八 美国学生所发的汉语元音与英语元音声位图

英语的/u/元音和/a/元音跟汉语的对应元音发音的差异较大，形成语言学习中的负迁移。在图八中我们看到：负迁移使得美国学生在发汉语的/u/元音时趋前，发/a/元音时趋上。然而，美国学生所发的汉语/u/元音和/a/元音却并不与英语格局的两个对应元音重合。图中这个美国学生所发的/u/元音正是处于汉语/u/元音和英语的/u/元音之间的位置，这说明，他意识到了英语母语与

汉语的[u]在发音部位上的区别。这种情况也形象地表明了中介语的特点。

汉语的/a/元音跟英语的/a/元音的发音位置既有高低的差异又有前后的差异。美国学生所发的汉语/a/元音的前后位置跟汉语基本一致，高低位置却是跟英语的/a/元音大体相同。这说明，学生在发汉语的/a/元音时，注意到了舌位的前后与其母语的区分，但舌位的高低还是受其母语影响较大。这也可以看作是一种处于汉语和英语之间的中间位置，同样是负迁移与克服负迁移共同作用的结果。这也形象地表现出中介语是从母语向目的语接近的特点。

在英语中，中元音/ə/不具有游移性。这也被迁移到汉语的发音中来，我们从上面图七中可以看到，美国学生所发的/ə/元音均缺乏动程。

英语中没有汉语的前高元音/y/和舌尖元音/ɿ、ɥ/。这也会产生母语的负迁移。由于没有母语对应语音的依赖，所以美国学生在发这几个元音时会遇到困难。在图中显示为/y/元音过于偏后。舌尖元音则是常常呈上下排列而不是前后排列。

在上述原因的共同作用下，美国学生所发的汉语元音与汉语元音格局相比较，框架三角形形状有所不同，整体布局在横向和纵向同时压缩，元音的前后、高低排列次序变得模糊，格局分布不平衡。

八 对语音教学的启示

从上文的分析中我们可以得到以下结论：

1、汉语和英语的元音系统各自呈格局分布，具有稳定的规律性，同一语言中不同的发音人的元音格局是对应一致的。

2、第二语言语音的习得和母语语音的习得是有差异的，母语（第一语言）的语音习得是系统进行的，因此语音格局是成体系的，不同元音之间的相对位置在总体上是一种有序的平衡分布；而第二语言的语音学习是逐一进行的，因此它的发音常常缺乏系统性。

3、在第二语言语音习得的过程中，母语的迁移现象大量存在。相似元音会导致母语的负迁移，因此学习者很容易掌握这类元音。表面上看起来相似，而实际上发音存在差异的元音容易造成混淆。学习者往往注意不到这种差异，而是用母语中的元音直接去替代目的语中的元音。实际上，二者无论在发音还是感知上都是不同的，因此，学习者的发音听起来就会很不地道，有浓重的外国腔。对于母语中不存在的元音，学习者无法直接用母语中近似的元音来替代，因而很可能会发成源于其母语的其它元音，会造成这类元音发音的不稳定。

我们可以遵循着语音格局的思路，把语音教学大体分为以下几个步骤：

首先,我们可以将母语和目的语两种语言的元音格局图示给学生。如图一和图三那样,可以分别对每个元音的开口度、舌位、唇形等个体特征,加以描述说明。使学生对于各自的母语和目的语当中各个元音的定位特征、相对关系、分布顺序等先有一个总体的了解。有一个关于语音格局的直观印象,会使对于语音系统的认识更为具体,提高语音学习的自主性。

其次,我们可以从元音格局的三角形框架开始进行教学。无论在汉语中还是英语中, /a、i、u/ 三个顶点元音都居于十分重要的位置,它们大体限定了一种语言元音发音开口度的大小以及舌位前后的界限。因此,在教学的过程中,让学生了解并通过练习,掌握这三个顶点元音在母语和目的语中位置的差异是十分必要的。我们可以如本文图五和图七那样,做出汉语三个顶点元音的格局,再在汉语格局中做出英语三个顶点元音的参照图形,直观地呈现给学生。在此基础上进行讲解说明,对照比较,便于提高教学效果。

第三,对语音格局内部各元音的高低前后的分布关系进行教学。在定位三个顶点元音的基础上,让学生了解目的语元音格局内部各元音间的排列位置,明确它们的高、中、低和前、央、后的分布关系,可以避免学生在发音时出现越位和混淆的错误。我们同样可以通过图示来说明。

最后,我们可以根据语言迁移的类型,分别对每个元音进行分类教学。在这个步骤中,把元音分为相似的元音,相异的元音和新元音三类。从元音格局的角度来看, /i/ 元音在英语和汉语中属于相似的元音。相似的元音在习得的过程中会产生正迁移,学生学习起来会比较容易,可以不作为教学的重点,安排较少的时间。

相异的音是母语和目的语中都存在的音,发音相似,但不完全相同,要特别注意加以区分。在英语和汉语中, /ɑ、ɜ、u/ 和 /a、ə、ʊ/ 属于相异的音,学生在学习过程中,会习惯性地用母语中的元音代替目的语的元音,由此产生语音的负迁移。因此,对于这些元音音,要通过对比说明和反复练习,让学生认识到两者的差异,进而学会正确发音。

新元音是母语中不存在,而目的语中存在的元音,需要学生建立新的音位发音范畴。英语的 /ɔ/ 元音是汉语中不存在的元音;汉语中的元音 /y、ɥ、ɰ/ 是而英语中没有的元音。对于这些元音,学生往往会利用母语中其他类似的音加以替代,也会产生负迁移。这时候,可以因势利导,利用学生母语中存在的音引导出新学的音。例如,英语中没有 /y/ 元音,但是有 /i/ 元音,我们就可以利用 /i/ 引导出 /y/ 来。利用同一舌位,先发 /i/, 然后将双唇收拢,便可以发出 /y/ 音。

语音格局的思路为我们提供了一个既直观又便捷的方法,去比较母语习

得和第二语言习得的差异所在,去观察和解释第二语言语音习得中的母语迁移现象。以前的汉语教学大多仰仗教师的个人经验,语音教学方法基本上是“口耳之学”。把语音实验的研究成果应用到汉语教学领域,可以帮助我们

在语音教学中提高教学水平,增进教学效果,促使汉语教学科学化的进步。

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汉语发音词表:

元 音	/i/	/y/	/u/	/a/	/ə/	/ɿ/	/ʅ/
发音词	衣	鱼	屋	阿	哥	资	知

英语发音词表:

元 音	/i/	/u/	/a/	/ɜ/	/ɔ/
发音词	bee	too	bar	bur	door
	see	do	car	fur	four

Defining Curriculum Objectives in Terms of Learner Performance: Justifications and Challenges¹

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Abstract: Chinese language teaching is experiencing an unprecedented surge both at home and abroad, and has achieved notable successes in material development, instruction, and testing. Curriculum objectives, as well as its study and specification, however, seem to be lagging behind, though objectives are generally considered as one of the essential components of curriculum, which set standards of evaluation, and also dictate the implementation of instruction. So far, curriculum objectives have yet to receive sufficient attention in the field of teaching Chinese as a foreign/second language. An informal survey of 44 Chinese language programs in leading institutions in China and the U.S. conducted recently has found that the overwhelming majority has no proper definition of learning objectives. This paper, based on the survey results and the author's personal observations, compares the different practices of various programs and analyzes their strengths and weaknesses. It presents the justifications for defining objectives in terms of learner performance in Chinese language teaching, testing, and articulation, after a brief review of the relevant theory of curriculum development. The paper also discusses some practical issues and challenges in this attempt. It argues that if we want to bring teaching Chinese as a foreign/second language (TCFL/TCSL) to the next level, it is high time that we raise our awareness of this fundamental issue and have discussions in depth and on a broader scale.

Key words: curriculum objectives, performance, define, instruction, testing

提要: 作为一个蒸蒸日上的新学科, 对外汉语在教材、教学和测试等方面, 都取得了显著的成就。然而, 作为统领整个课程 (非狭义的某一门课)、影响教学全过程的教学目标, 其研究和设定, 似乎却落后于在其他方面。笔者近年来在中美两国几十所大学的 44 个对外汉语教学单位(programs)作了一次非正式的调查, 发现不少单位的教学大纲, 对各年级不同课程的教学目标普遍缺乏恰当、明确的描述。根据这次调查的结果和个人的观察, 本文比较分析了各单位目前实行的不同做法及其利弊, 并从有关教学目标的课程理论入手, 简述了制定具体、明确的, 特别是以学生的实际语言能力来描述的教学目标的重要性和必要性, 然后对课程教学目标设定的一些具体做法和需要解决的问题, 进行了初步的讨论。尽管目前我们在理论上对教学目标的设定尚缺乏充分的认识, 在实际操作中还会遇到各种各样的困难, 但是笔者相

¹ I am very grateful to my colleagues and friends in these programs who generously share with me the information about their programs' curricula, and the relevant course objectives. Without their help, it is impossible to finish this study. At the request of most interviewees, their institutions will remain anonymous. I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions.

信，只要我们在思想上予以高度的重视，加大这方面研究的力度，并进行广泛深入的探讨，不拘泥于固有的模式，根据汉语教学的特点，大胆创新，很可能会闯出一条新路，使对外汉语教学更上层楼，把外语教学的课程理论研究推向新的水平。

关键词：课程、教学目标、表现、设定、教学、测试

1. Introduction

Curriculum objectives have received little attention in the field of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign/Second Language. A perusal of the major treatises on TCFL/TCSL shows that there is hardly any specific discussion about specifying curriculum objectives in terms of learner performance. An informal survey of the Chinese language programs in 44 leading institutions in China and the U.S. conducted recently has found that the overwhelming majority had no proper definition of learner objectives. While some programs stated objectives in their Chinese language course syllabi in terms of how many characters, words, and sentence patterns students should master, instead of what students should be able to do with these linguistic elements in actual communication; others identified their objectives from the teacher's perspective, namely, instructional activities or teachers' effort rather than the intended learning outcomes; still others chose a certain proficiency level outright from some official tests such as the *HSK* or the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, without considering the differences between the two, and whether they actually provide reliable and valid proficiency tests by the end of each course.

Based on the above-mentioned survey and observations, this paper discusses some fundamental questions regarding curriculum objectives, providing a theoretical background of specifying objectives in terms of learner performance. It then analyzes the negative consequences and possible causes of the current problems in stating instructional objectives. The paper presents the justifications for defining objectives in learner performance in Chinese language programs, across the spectrum of teaching, testing, and articulation between instructional levels (including high school to college). It argues that if we want to bring teaching TCFL/TCSL to the next level, it is high time that we raise our awareness of this fundamental issue and have discussions in depth and on a broader scale.

2. Chinese Language Course Objectives: An Informal Survey

2.1. The survey results

The survey was conducted between late 2004 to early 2007, primarily through informal interviews, and partially substantiated by relevant syllabi ob-

tained from the interviewees or the Internet. The interviewees were asked to provide information about their Chinese language course curricula, particularly the specific instructional objectives of each course, if there are any. There are altogether 44 Chinese language programs in some major colleges and universities in China (12), and the United States (32), a total of 455 courses at different levels². The survey may not necessarily cover the entire curriculum of each program; however, it gives a general picture of the course objectives of these programs. The following table is the summary of the survey results:

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Table 1
Types of Objectives of Surveyed Chinese Language Courses (programs)

Types of Objectives expressed in terms of	Courses (12 pro- grams) in China	Courses (32 programs) in the U.S.	Total (44 programs) courses
1. Textbooks	62	47	109
2. Linguistic items	7	6	13

² As most programs in China offer courses in Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing for each level, there are substantially more courses in these programs comparing with their American counterparts. In addition, some courses in the same program have different descriptions of objective, thus the total number of programs is not listed in the table to avoid possible multiple counts.

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3. Official standards	17	12	29
4. Teachers' effort/actions	78	26	104
5. A mixture of 2, 3 or 4	113	39	152
6. Learning outcomes of a specific lesson		3	3
7. learner performance (yet unclear or inconsistent)		48	48
Total courses	277	178	455

2.2. The various types of course objectives – a closer look

2.2.1. Textbooks or teaching materials as objectives

This practice is at one extreme of all the surveyed programs in that there is no explicit statement concerning objectives whatsoever, or even no written syllabus at all. The following remark of a program director best reveals, perhaps, the mindset of these practitioners. “Why do we need that? We have textbooks, and all we need to care is that students can master everything we have taught in the textbooks.” It seems to them that since the textbooks have presented all the linguistic items and communicative functions sequentially, as long as teachers have finished the teaching materials from cover to cover, students should have a good command of all the requisite knowledge and skills accordingly. In some programs, objectives are not a common feature in all the course syllabi. While certain course syllabi do not have any objectives, some contain vague statements of one kind or another, similar to goals at best. There is, basically, no consistent practice at all, even in the same program.

2.2.2. Linguistic items to be taught as objectives

This is a traditional practice found rather commonly in the past twenty or thirty years but still lingering in the field of Chinese language teaching. The following are some typical examples,

- This course will develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. In the first semester, pronunciation and some basic grammar will be taught. There will also be an introduction to the Chinese writing system. By the end of the first semester, approximately 200 Chinese characters will have been introduced. By the end of the second semester, most of the basic grammar will have been introduced, as well as another 250 Chinese characters.

- To learn 1,500 words approximately and further understand the knowledge of grammar and master about 150 commonly used sentence patterns...⁴
- Through the reading course in a semester, students will master approximately 1,000 words, and learn about 60 linguistic items...⁵

2.2.3. Official standards or testing guidelines as objectives

It remains a popular trend to use some sort of official standards or testing guidelines such as the *HSK* (汉语水平考试) or the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines as course objectives although it is not as popular now as it was a dozen years ago.

- To enable students to reach Level 6 of the *HSK* (*Hànyǔ shuǐpíng kǎoshì*) – the official Chinese Proficiency Test in China.
- By the end of the course, we expect our students to move from the novice to the intermediate level in both oral and written communicative proficiency, a standard set by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).
- The teaching and learning goals are based on the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Proficiency Guidelines... The instructional goals of the XX Modern Chinese Language Program are summarized in the table below:

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
1 st year Chinese	Intermediate High	Intermediate Mid	Intermediate Mid	Intermediate Low
1 st year Heritage	Intermediate High	Intermediate High	Intermediate Mid	Intermediate Low
2 nd year Chinese	Advanced	Intermediate High	Intermediate High	Intermediate Mid
3 rd year Chinese	Advanced High	Advanced	Advanced	Intermediate High
4 th year Chinese	Advanced High	Advanced High	Advanced High	Advanced
5 th year Chinese	Superior	Superior	Advanced High	Advanced High

⁴ The Chinese original—掌握词汇 1500 个左右，进一步深化语法知识，掌握常用句式 150 个左右.....

⁵ The Chinese original – 通过一个学期的阅读，使学生掌握 1000 个左右的新词语，同时学习 60 个左右的语言知识点.....

- Through training to meet the needs of students in basic everyday life, social communication, and study in general, including: clothing, food, lodging, travel, introducing oneself and one's family, personal hobbies, leisure recreation, travel, sight-seeing, social life and class discussion, etc. (Students) can comprehend basically audio materials that contain no crucial unknown grammatical structures, new words not exceeding 2-3%, and with familiar topics, reaching the *HSK* Levels 5-6 in general.⁶

2.2.4. Teachers' effort or actions as objectives

It is interesting to notice that some programs have tried to specify their curriculum objectives in performance terms. The *agent* of these objectives, unfortunately, is not the student but the teacher. In other words, these objectives focus on the *input* rather than the *output*, that is, not what the students will be able to do after the course but what the teachers should do or plan to do during the course instead. In some cases, the agent or subject of the sentences shifts elusively, from the teacher's perspective for one moment and then to the learner's for another, or vice versa (the underlined parts below).

- To develop students' interest in studying and using Chinese, and impel them to use Chinese to engage in simple communication. First of all, requiring students to have correct pronunciation and tones. Secondly, requiring students to know when to say what to whom, how to say it, and be able to complete a simple transaction in communication, with rudimentary understanding of the context and cultural characteristics in the process of communication.⁷

- The emphasis is on training students' ability to read and write, enabling students to express themselves accurately, fluently, and appropriately.⁸

- To develop and improve students' ability to read and literary Chinese (*shūmìànyǔ*). Starting from the training of reading strategies, and by reading extensively materials in literary Chinese, to provide students with focused, systematic, and specific training in words and phrases, sentences, paragraphs and dis-

⁶ The Chinese original – 通过训练满足学生基本日常生活、社交及一般学习的需要，其中包括衣、食、住、行，介绍个人情况、家庭情况、个人爱好、业余文化生活、参观、游览、社交和课堂讨论等方面的内容。能够基本听懂无关键性新语法点、生词不超过 2%-3%、话题熟悉的语音材料。基本达到 *HSK* 5-6 级标准。

⁷ The Chinese original – 培养学生学习和使用汉语的兴趣，促使学生能运用汉语进行简单的交际。首先要求学生掌握正确的语音、声调。其次要求学生掌握在什么场合对谁说什么，怎么说，能够完成一个简单的交际过程，并简单了解交际过程中的语境与文化特点。

⁸ The Chinese original – 着重训练学生的读和写的能力，使学生能准确、流畅、得体地表达自己的思想。

course, so as to enable students to have the ability to analogize. To enable students to read and comprehend essays of popular science and news reports, and to have the ability to skip reading obstacles, obtain the needed information, and understand the gist of the content. Through extensive reading, they should also be able to learn a certain number of new words accordingly. The reading speed should reach 150 words per minute, and with a 90% correct of comprehension when reading texts that contain limited unfamiliar words.⁹

- (WHO?) Attain skills that will enable the students to speak basic Chinese and to read, write and present short narratives.

2.2.5. A mixture of linguistic items, official standards, or teachers' effort as objectives

The survey has found that some programs in China and the U.S. shared a practice, that is, to specify course objectives by combining linguistic items, teachers' effort, and the official standards/testing guidelines. The words in upper case are added by the author.

- Through this period of grammar instruction and comprehensive training in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, to enable students to have better command of basic Chinese grammar, and learn some new linguistic items, communicative skills and relevant cultural knowledge. (STUDENTS) Can rather skillfully use the corresponding linguistic knowledge (grammars and vocabulary) to express themselves both in speaking and writing in paragraphs, and be able to use the language with considerable accuracy and appropriateness. After study for one academic year, (STUDENTS) are required to reach the 3rd level of Intermediate Chinese (developed by the Department of the Chinese Proficiency Test, National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, the equivalent of the Intermediate Level in *HSK*.)¹⁰

⁹ The Chinese original – 培养和提高学生阅读汉语书面语的能力。从阅读技能训练入手，通过阅读大量汉语书面材料，在字词、句子、段落和篇章诸方面对学生进行集中的、系统的、有针对性的训练，使他们获得能够举一反三的阅读能力。能够读懂一般性的科普文章和新闻报道文章，有相当的跳跃障碍、查询所需信息、了解内容梗概的能力。并能通过大量的阅读，自然地吸收一定数量的新词。阅读限定生词的课文，速度达到 150 字/分以上，理解准确率达到 90%。

¹⁰ The Chinese original – 通过此阶段的汉语知识讲授以及对学生进行听说读写综合训练，使学生进一步掌握汉语基础语法知识，并学习一些新的语言要素、言语技能和相关的文化知识。能够较熟练地运用相应的语言知识（语法、词汇）进行口头、书面成段表达，做到语言运用比较准确、得体。通过一学年的学习，要求达到汉语水平等级标准三级标准（由国家对外汉语教学领导小组水平考试部制定，对应 HSK 中等）。

- Course objectives are for students to obtain Intermediate-Mid to Intermediate High as per the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines. By the time they attain this level, learners will be able to conduct simple, practical conversations with Chinese speakers on a variety of everyday topics. They will also be able to read simple passages printed in traditional or simplified Chinese characters at about the 500-character level.

2.2.6. The expected learning outcomes of each individual lesson as objectives

This is, at least, a nice trial to specify the learning outcomes of each individual lesson, a breakaway from the very first type in which textbooks determine the learning objectives. The questions are 1) whether students can all the tasks, and how well they can perform, after studying a particular lesson, and 2) whether students are able to use comprehensively various knowledge and skills learned from different lessons to engage in more sophisticated communication in the interpersonal, presentational, and interpretive modes. Here are two examples:

Communicative Objectives (of Unit Ten – Weather)

- ◆ *By the end of this unit, you will be able to use Chinese to:*
 - 1) Talk about the weather and weather forecasts: hot, warm, cool, cold; high and low temperatures; dry vs. humid air; clear vs. cloudy skies; thunder, lightning, rain, fog, snow, typhoons, etc.
 - 2) Discuss climate: Beijing, Taipei, your hometown.
 - 3) Talk about the four seasons.
 - 4) Make comparisons and contrasts: “San Francisco is colder than Taipei, but not as cold as Beijing,” etc.
- ◆ After studying this chapter, students should:
 - 1) Have a good command of the meaning and usage of these sentence patterns and terms: “zhàozhe” (according to; in accordance with), “zuòwéi” (be used as; be regarded as), “yóu...zǔchéng” (be made of; consist of), “bǎifēnzhī” (X percent), “A gēn B yǒu guānxi” (A is related to B; A has something to do with B), “háishi” (still), “yàoshì...nǎme” (if...then).
 - 2) Be familiar with the meaning and usage of the vocabulary introduced in the text and the reading.
 - 3) Understand the meaning and use of parts of a Chinese character.
 - 4) Understand the importance of writing Chinese characters correctly.

2.2.7. Inconsistent description of learner performance as objectives

The objectives below probably seem to be the closest to the model suggested

by curriculum theory in general. However, in addition to not being specific enough, the biggest disappointment is that these objectives are not found consistently course after course both in progression in linguistic skills and communicative functions. Sometimes, there are only one or two courses in a program that contains such objectives in their course syllabi. In other cases, the same objectives recur in the next sequenced course usually offered in the following semester. Although these objectives are defined in terms of learner performance, they are mostly individual teachers' personal endeavor. In other words, their programs do not have a systematic, coherent specification of curriculum objectives defined in learner performance; all they have are inconsistent objectives for individual courses only.

◆ **Objectives of 3rd Year Chinese**

(Note: courses sequenced before this one in the same program do not have objectives specified in this format, or even any mention of objectives at all.)

Upon successful completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:

- 1) understand most face-to-face conversations and discussions within the limit of students' linguistic and cultural knowledge.
- 2) initiate, sustain, and close a conversation on familiar topics and in normal social interactions.
- 3) read level-appropriate texts and comprehend the main ideas and some supporting details.
- 4) write coherent, short essays (including narrative, descriptive, and expository) with no major patterns of grammatical errors.

◆ **C101 Elementary Chinese I Objectives:**

- 1) Read and write with the Pinyin system.
- 2) Read and write 240 Chinese characters and related compounds.
- 3) Carry out simple conversations on everyday topics.
- 4) Read a simple story.

◆ **C102 Elementary Chinese II Objectives:**

- 1) Add another 240 Chinese characters and related compounds into existing repertoire.
- 2) Carry out simple conversations on everyday topics.
- 3) Read a simple story.
- 4) Write out what you can say in Chinese.

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- ◆ C201 Second-Year Chinese I Objectives:
 - 1) Carry out a simple face-to-face conversation with ease.
 - 2) Narrate a simple story or describe a familiar event.
 - ◆ C202 Second-Year Chinese II Objectives: (same as C201 above)
 - 1) Carry out a simple face-to-face conversation with ease.
 - 2) Narrate a simple story or describe a familiar event.

2.3. The negative consequences

A curriculum without objectives is incomplete, and curriculum objectives stated other rather than in learner performance are inadequate. Thus the negative consequences are self-evident. First of all, when objectives are listed as teacher's actions or intents, we will have no clue as to what students can do with the target language despite all the wonderful things teachers may have done in class. After all, students are the ones who are supposed to learn, and their success in learning is ultimately measured by their performance. Secondly, the idea of using linguistic items as instructional objectives has long been considered antiquated. As Valette (1980:157) pointed out, "Language learning ... is not the sum of myriad parts: it is not by learning 1000 grammar rules, 1000 verb forms, and 3000 items of vocabulary, for instance, that one can suddenly read, speak, or understand the language." I have heard about a dozen times the question "what grammar do you teach in the 3rd year?" among Chinese language teachers on different occasions. This reveals, to a certain extent, that the focus of instruction beyond the intermediate level was still on grammar, rather than the overall development of communicative competence. Over the past few decades, language acquisition theory and empirical studies have proved that grammatical competence is merely a subset of the latter, which cannot and should not replace communicative competence. It is not necessary to dwell on the negative consequences of such misconceptions and ineffectual practice in language teaching anymore.

Another downside is the arbitrariness in text material selection and instructional organization without considering specific and coherent objectives regarding students' performance. Since certain teachers are often designated to be in charge of a specific level for considerable years in some programs, textbook selection and instruction may be more out of personal preferences or convenience instead of informed choices without sufficient coordination and communication. For example, some programs used textbooks such as *Taiwan Today* (Teng and Perry, 1998) or *A Trip to China* (Chou & Wang, 1996) in their 3rd year courses as a sequel to their intermediate level Chinese course (2nd year), in which *Integrated Chinese Level 2* (Liu and Yao, et al., 1997) or *David and Helen in China* (Zhang

& Meng, et al., 1999) was the text material. The latter were, obviously, similar to if not easier than the former both in content and language. Using text materials with little or even no reasonable increase in degree of difficulty to sequence courses drags the learning process unnecessarily, and may hinder the development of students' communicative competence. From my personal experience, I have met students who, after studying one year at college or a few years at high school, could mumble some words about themselves or their families but failed to engage in a simple conversation with the same content, or who could simply read things written in *pinyin* but failed to recognize characters. I have also taught 3rd year students who were able to answer comprehension questions by using the exact wording cited from the text but unable to paraphrase in their own words the sentences they recited. These are, evidently, instances of lacking proper training in interpersonal and interpretive skills, which in turn indicate the randomness in instructional organization. Such cases, I am sure, are not just personal encounters unique to me, but on the contrary are quite common to teachers of Chinese who have been in the practice for some years.

The fourth negative effect is the disjunction of assessment and instruction. In another study, the author (Cui, 2006a) has found that a considerable number of achievement tests in Chinese programs in China and the United States were loosely or even remotely related to the objectives these programs claim to have. Such disjunction may be attributed to several possible reasons: either the objectives were not stated clearly or properly, or the test developers (usually teachers) forgot the preset objectives (could be by the program director or other teachers), or even worse, had no idea that the main purpose of achievement tests is to assess what and how well students have learned after a period of study, and more importantly, can demonstrate their competence in acts or performance involving the use of the target language. For example, a *conversation* course in a program used the following format in its final exam. It required students to listen to recording and answer 48 multiple choice questions (3 and a half pages, 60% of the total score) first, and then pick a topic from a pool of six to make a paragraph-long speech (40% of the total score). The six topics were things like "talk about the holiday customs of your country", or "my hobbies (sports, music, recreations, etc.)". There is practically no interaction in this exam, either between the teacher and the student, or between students. Such an exam inevitably has very low validity because what it focused on was not the conversational ability of students after they took this *conversation* course for a semester, even though it involved listening and speaking. Another example is the written final exam of an advanced-intermediate (3rd year) level course in a summer intensive program. It contains 3 pages with 4 parts: 1) choose the appropriate words to fill in the

blanks – 15 items, 2) complete sentences with the given words – 8 items, 3) make sentences – 5 items, and 4) use 100-150 characters to answer a question “how much do you understand the geography or history of China?” Without going into the details, simply judging from the face value of this test, we will have no idea if the students, after nine weeks of intensive training, could have achieved more or less the same proficiency compatible to a 3rd year Chinese language course in a reasonably run program in the US at college level.

While some programs (primarily in the US) adopted various levels of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines as objective for different courses, some programs (mostly in China) used the official Chinese proficiency test *HSK* as part of their curriculum objectives. The problem of such practice, actually, was discussed over a decade ago in the field of Chinese language teaching in the US. After reviewing the basic features of curriculum objectives and the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, Cui (1994: 65) argues that since the guidelines are based on a deficit model “The ACTFL Guidelines are, to be precise, assessment criteria only,” thus “simply cannot be adopted as curriculum objectives in the teaching of Chinese.” Even in the mid-eighties, Galloway took the same position, “As assessment criteria, the level descriptions at times focus less on what the individual *does* and more on what the individual *does not do yet*. In extracurricular performance assessment, such distinctions are crucial, for they establish the accuracy parameters in reference to certain communicative tasks and thus serve to hold level expectations in check. However, because of this focus on deficiencies, the guidelines are inadequate as program goal statements.” She further stated that “This curriculum-free nature of the proficiency guidelines limits their direct transportability to curriculum and instruction either as learner goal statements or as learner achievement indicators” (Galloway, 1985:37). As for the official Chinese proficiency test *HSK*, despite all its merits, it is purely a test, which has the same weakness when it is chosen as curriculum objectives. In addition, given the high cost of administering tests such as the ACTFL oral interviews or the *HSK* to every single student of Chinese language, one has every reason to doubt whether those programs that have used the *HSK* or ACTFL Guidelines as their curriculum objectives really give these tests to their students by the end of each semester. If not, though it does not sound agreeable to hearers, it is like “hang up a sheep’s head but sell dog meat (挂羊头卖狗肉) – trying to palm off something inferior to what it purports to be,” as the Chinese saying goes. We should, therefore, follow Galloway’s advice that “the [ACTFL] guidelines must stand apart from curriculum” (Galloway, 1985:38). The same should be true to the official Chinese proficiency test *HSK*.

Last but not least is the issue of articulation both between courses and cross

programs. In some cases, several programs have identical objectives for sequent courses, which have virtually no indication of any progress from one to another. Here is a typical example,

- ◆ Chinese 201 Second-Year Chinese I Objectives:
 - 1) Carry out a simple face-to-face conversation with ease.
 - 2) Narrate a simple story or describe a familiar event
- ◆ Chinese 202 Second-Year Chinese II Objectives:
 - 1) Carry out a simple face-to-face conversation with ease.
 - 2) Narrate a simple story or describe a familiar event.

In other cases, without looking at the course title, we cannot tell which course is more advanced simply by glancing at the objectives of two courses in the same program:

◆ **Course A**

This course ... continues to develop students' four skills of aurally understanding, speaking, reading and writing. ...With increasing sophistication in terms of style and usage... In this course students are required to comprehend and produce paragraph-level Chinese. Rigorous practice of spoken and written Chinese in complex communicative activities will be conducted. Students will also do intensive reading of expository writings on a variety of cultural topics.

◆ **Course B**

This course aims at helping students solidify their ability to comprehend and produce paragraph-level Chinese. It seeks to enable students to understand face-to-face conversations on most familiar topics, give factual accounts, read material written in formal *shu1mian4yu3* Chinese and write simple essays, reports and all types of correspondence.

In fact, the former is for the second year Chinese course and the latter is for the third year course in the same program. Objectives with such vagueness are not helpful at all to teachers and students.

3. Clarification of some basic terms

In education, while *goals* are general statements about what must be accomplished in order to attain the goals and satisfy students' needs, objectives are more specific statements about what content or skills the students must master in order to achieve a particular goal. Figuratively speaking, curriculum *goals* and

instructional *objectives* are at the two ends of a scale of generality, with the former at the general end and the latter the specific.

According to Brown (2001: 21), in language instruction, “Objectives come in many forms and may differ in degrees of specificity even within a given program primarily because they can serve different student needs that themselves vary in level of specificity.” Nevertheless, it is preferable to specify instructional objectives in terms of learners’ performance. Since language learning involves a student’s mastery of the relevant knowledge and skills, which depends on whether he or she can successfully use the target language to engage in meaningful communication. Therefore, the specification of course objectives in terms of learning outcomes, and normally accompanied with the program’s assessment strategy, is crucial to the development of foreign language curriculum. Only when instructional objectives are specifically described as demonstrable acts, namely, learners’ actual performance showing the application of relevant knowledge and skills, can we observe and measure the students’ performance, and then determine if both the instructor and the students have achieved the goals of the language course. Otherwise, we cannot be confident to say that the students have, not only gone through the process of learning, but also had a fair command of the target language after taking that language course for a certain time. This is the theoretical basis of curriculum development, and also the fundamental rationale behind the development of all the proficiency tests, including the ACTFL Proficiency Oral Interview and its guidelines.

4. The Possible Causes of the Current Problems

4.1. The influence of the Chinese traditional concept of teaching (教书)

Curriculum development, particularly the specification of instructional objectives and the assessment of their achievement, has not been in the tradition of Chinese education. For centuries, “jiāoshū yù rén” (教书育人—impart knowledge and educate people) has been considered the core responsibility of a teacher. As Han Yu (韩愈) said, “A teacher’s job is to transmit wisdom, impart knowledge, and resolve doubts.”¹¹ Under such influence, a teacher in China was often viewed by others respectfully, but also assumed by oneself subconsciously, as an authority figure who was expected to provide instruction and direct learning. The word *teaching* in Chinese, interestingly enough, is “jiāoshū”(教书), which is “to lecture through the book” in literal translation. It is, accordingly, not farfetched to infer that teaching was teacher-centered and textbook-oriented. To a large extent,

¹¹ 师者，所以传道、授业、解惑也。- 韩愈《师说》

textbooks were the curriculum, which dictated instruction, and even the imperial examinations. As for what students were able to do to apply the knowledge and had what specific skills after studying all those books, little attention was paid to such questions generations after generation, let alone to assess the differences between students relevant performance before or after schooling. In short, the concept of performance objectives has been a totally strange one in the tradition of Chinese education. The influence of this tradition, unfortunately, has been still lingering in the minds of a lot of teachers of Chinese language both in China and throughout the world. As evidenced in the survey results summarized in Table 1, a total of 109 courses in all these programs have taken textbooks as curriculum objectives (Type 1). In addition, a considerable number of programs, to a certain extent, have expressed their course objectives from the perspective of teachers instead of the students', that is, what teachers are going to do such as "enable the students to..." or "develop the (students') skills of..." , etc. (Types 4 & 5).

4.2. The sequelae of being a cottage industry over a century

Chinese language instruction had been a cottage industry over a century since the language was first offered in the United States (at Harvard) in 1878. For years, it was taught primarily by native speakers of Chinese, or non-native speaking sinologists, who had hardly received any formal training in language pedagogy. Without deprecating the great contributions our predecessors have made, it is a historical fact that "learning through practice" (干中学) was the best in-service-training they could get in those days, and transmission of teaching experience from the older generation mentors to the younger "disciples" was the major mode of teacher training. Since Chinese has long been a less-commonly-taught language, professional training in curriculum design and testing remains a low priority if not completely absent in the agenda of Chinese language teachers' professional development up to the present. Despite the fact that Chinese language teaching has made tremendous progress in recent years and become one of the most popular foreign languages throughout the world, many teachers and even program directors do not have sufficient and adequate understanding of the importance of curriculum objectives, let alone the necessary knowledge and skills to define coherent curriculum objectives in terms of learner performance properly. As pointed out by Zhou Yan (2001:F32), "Because of the heavy teaching load, often time our teachers do not have time to analyze students' needs, not to mention paying attention to curriculum objectives. They tend to simply follow the text materials or the collective teaching plans, but seldom develop instructional objectives of their own according to students' specific

situations or needs.”¹² Although this comment is mostly directed toward foreign language teachers in China, it is to some extent also applicable to the situation in the United States. This is closely related to research on curriculum objectives and testing in the field of Chinese language teaching as a whole, which is lagging far, far behind compared with other research areas. A glance at Everson’s database of Research in Less Commonly Taught Languages, of the total 77 articles on Chinese teaching and learning published in major professional journals from 1987 to 2005, only 2 touched the subject of learning outcomes (Elder & Manwaring, 2004; and Ke & Reed, 1995), accounting for less than 2.6%. Even the recommendations for basic Chinese and post-basic Chinese instruction made by the CLTA Task Force (The NFLC Guide for Basic Chinese Language Programs, 1997) failed to mention the importance of specifying curriculum objectives in terms of learner performance systematically, though the word “goals” did occur a few times.¹³

A common feature shared by these surveyed programs is that the most of the objectives are the products of teachers’ individual effort in isolation. The syllabi collected in this survey show that the ways of expressing instructional objectives for each course varied considerably, even in the same Chinese program. Some teachers told the author that there was no discussion or cooperation whatsoever involved, and they just wrote the syllabus the way they thought it should be, or modeled it after other colleagues’. On the other hand, some program directors said that they did not have a chance to organize meetings with their instructors to discuss the details of instructional objective or even the syllabus, and simply trusted their instructors and approved whatever was submitted.

4.3. Some misconceptions among Chinese language teachers at large

The survey results and interviews, to some extent, reflect certain misconceptions among Chinese language teachers at large. The first may be, perhaps, named as “business as usual”. On different occasions, the author has heard repetitively sayings like this, “We have been in this business for years without performance objectives, yet still able to produce excellent learners with high Chi-

¹² The Chinese original – 由于教学任务繁重，我们的老师常常无暇对自己的学生进行分析，更难以注意到课程的目标，容易跟着教材设计走，跟着集体的教学计划走，却很少想到根据学生的实际情况和需要而制定出自己的教学目标。(周燕)

¹³ Kubler, C. 1997:46. “A Framework for Basic Chinese Language Programs”, Recommendation 36: *The assessment system should reflect program goals. If the development of listening and speaking skills is included among the program goals, then a way should be found to test these skills on a regular basis.* Ross, C. 1997: 56. “The Framework for Post-Basic Chinese”, Section V. B. Learner’s responsibilities 4: *The learner must know what he or she want to accomplish in Chinese and must plan a course of study that will enable him or her to achieve those goals.*

nese proficiency” or “the reputation of a good program comes from its effective instruction, not nicely-written curriculum objectives.” While these might be true, does it mean that there is absolutely no more room for further improvement, particularly as a field? How can we be sure that the practice we are so used to and comfortable with is the best way, or even the only way?

The second misconception is that instructional objectives are for “window dressing” only, but have no real use at all. As Chinese instruction has gradually stepped out its cocoon and started to have more exchanges with that of other foreign languages, some teachers might think that it is a trendy thing to do by adding instructional objectives to the existing syllabus. Sometimes, when it is imposed from top-down, teachers might simply act in a perfunctory manner, to make something up, just for the sake of satisfying the department chair or the dean. Either way, it shows that teachers of Chinese have not arrived at a sufficient appreciation of the functions of curriculum objectives, and the relationships between objectives, instruction, and testing.

Another misconception is to equate certain official standards or tests with curriculum objectives. Some programs, a total of 29 courses in this survey, have used certain levels of the *HSK* in China or the *ACTFL* Guidelines in the U.S. as their instructional objectives. This, naturally, leads to a frequently asked question, “Why do we need to reinvent the wheel when we already have the National Standards and the *ACTFL* Proficiency Guidelines?” As for the National Standards, the document itself has stated very clearly, “The standards are not a curriculum guide. While this document suggests the types of content and curricular experiences needed to enable students to achieve the standards, and supports the ideal of extended sequences of study, it does not describe specific course content, nor a recommended scope and sequence” (Standards for Foreign Language Learning, 1996:24). In regard to the *ACTFL* Proficiency Guidelines, the *ACTFL* web site provides some sort of answer indirectly to the question under Question 5 in the section of FAQ for the *ACTFL Performance Guidelines*, saying that “The *ACTFL* Proficiency Guidelines describe language performance for adult language users regardless of where, when or how the language is acquired. K-12 Performance Guidelines were designed to help educators better understand the developmental path that language learning takes for students in a classroom setting who are in a continuous process of cognitive development.” Without further elaboration, it is crystal clear that standardized test such as the *HSK* or the documents such as the *ACTFL Performance Guidelines* and *National Standards for Foreign Languages* should not be adopted directly as curriculum objectives, whether in high school or college Chinese language programs.

5. Taking the Challenge –Defining Chinese Curriculum Objectives in Terms of Learner Performance

5.1. The necessities

There is no doubt that all Chinese language teachers have the desire to make their teaching effective. However, effective instruction does not fall from the heavens but requires careful planning, regardless of variations of individual teaching style and preferred teaching method. As Hadley (1993: 481) points out, “First, effective teachers plan instruction carefully and effectively. They have a clear idea of what the programmatic and course goals are, and they try to reach those goals by actively involving students in their own learning and appealing to their interests and needs. Obviously, daily planning must be related to an overall curriculum plan if it is to be effective. Therefore, teachers need to be concerned with long-term curriculum goals, and, ideally, should be involved in both the planning and the evaluation of the curriculum in their own institution.” While many teachers spend hours and hours preparing and revising their lesson plans every year, very few of them have considered carefully and comprehensively what changes these individual lessons plans, by the end of the course, will bring to their students communicative competence, specifically those acts or performance tasks that can be observed and assessed after they have finished implementing these lesson plans. In the meantime, even when teachers have tried to include specific instructional objectives in their course syllabi, it seldom is seen that teachers in a Chinese program have been invited to sit down together with the program director to discuss the curriculum objectives across all levels in the entire Chinese language program.

According to Brown (2001:75), “Developing statements of perceived needs into program goals, and these in turn into clear objectives, is an effective way to clarify what should be going on in the language classroom. Once having thought through what will be taught in each classroom, planners can make efforts to coordinate across courses and throughout an entire language program. In other words, the process of converting perceptions of students’ needs into goals and objectives provides the basic units that can in turn be used to define and organize all teaching activities into a cogent curriculum. Once objectives are in hand, the basic elements of the students’ needs can be analyzed, assessed, and classified to create a coherent teaching/learning experience. In short, objectives provide the building blocks from which curriculum can be created, modified, and revised.” If what Brown says is correct, then we must think seriously about the foundation on which, and the procedures by which we have been developing our Chinese language curriculum. Yes, textbooks are absolutely necessary and teaching methods

are undoubtedly important. They are, however, not the *building blocks* for curriculum development, modification, or revision. Without clear objectives, it may well be like sailing without a compass, cruising with the wind and drifting along the tide. It might not necessarily bring the passengers to the proper designation however fast the boat and skillful the sailor could be. On the contrary, curriculum objectives described in terms of learners' performance can give a director of Chinese program a whole picture of all the courses at different levels, like a blueprint to an engineer, a graphic image or a miniature model of the completed building to an architect. They facilitate the overseeing of the instructional operation as well as the coordination among teachers throughout the entire program.

Coherent performance objectives enable teachers to see both the woods and the trees. With specific instructional objectives in mind, teachers will have a clear sense of, in addition to the number of characters and lessons to be covered, new words and grammatical structures, what students will be able to do with all these linguistic items, and how well they can perform communicatively upon completion of the course. Whatever a teacher does in class, grammar explanations, mechanical drills, group discussions, interactive activities, all are geared toward the development of students' communicative competence over a period of study. Thus instruction will be more focused, consistent, and effective. It is not unusual for teachers to rotate across sections of the same level or across levels within the same program, or even find personnel changes from time to time. Despite such changes, coherently specified performance objectives can better guarantee instructional consistency and efficiency – two major indicators of overall excellence in a language program suggested by Pennington and Brown (1991).

Clearly stated performance objectives can help teachers develop better achievement tests at different instructional stages to accurately assess students' linguistic knowledge and communicative competence, which may avoid unnecessary fumbling or randomness. They can also objectively indicate students' strengths as well as weaknesses, providing teachers with necessary diagnosis and remedy in a timely fashion. In addition, this may lead to better communication among teachers within the same level of courses and more effective coordination and smoother articulation across levels.

Performance objectives can also serve as a mechanism for students to take better control of their own study and motivate them constantly. These objectives, to some extent, are like a road map that can give students a clear idea of the path they have traveled through, what they are already able to do with the target language at a given stage, and where they will arrive ultimately in terms of their communicative skills by the end of a course. Since these learning outcomes are observable and measurable, with or without the help of the instructor, students

may check themselves periodically on how they are progressing, and compare the distance between their current status and the expected performance. They may, accordingly, make due adjustments to their learning strategies, time allocation, effort distribution, etc. to overcome the shortcomings of their own. They may also be better prepared for the upcoming tests or exams as they know in advance on what specific “performance” they should focus their review. Thus students tend to be more actively engaged in learning. Another positive side-effect, possibly, is that when some students are anxious about their grade during the semester, or even when a few of them come to the instructor to ask for a grade at the end of the semester, the pre-determined performance objectives may serve as a tool to ease anxiety or to remind those with unreasonable demands by showing the distance between the expected learning outcomes and the students’ actual performance.

5.2. The basic guidelines for designing performance objectives

A lucid statement of a curriculum objective, according to Brown (2001:86), should contain five elements,

1. subject – namely, the students who participate in the learning activities,
2. performance – what the learners can do with the target language,
3. conditions – under what circumstances the performance will take place,
4. measure – how the desired performance will be observed, and
5. criterion – the standard based on which a decision is made whether the learners succeed (or pass).

The following example illustrates how these elements work together in an instructional objective for an English writing course (adapted and modified from Brown, 2001:89).

By the end level C, the students [*subject*] will be able to:

1. Fill in missing elements [*performance*] on the appropriate lines [*measure*] in a graph, chart, or diagram from information provided in a 600-word 11th grade reading level general science passage [*conditions*], with fewer than 3 grammatical and 8 spelling errors [*criterion*]¹⁴.

¹⁴ The italics in the brackets and the last part “with fewer than 3 grammatical and 8 spelling errors [criterion]” were added by the author for the sake of illustration. Actually, Brown holds that stating the level of accuracy explicitly in objectives might be problematic for “there are only ‘rules of thumb’ to go by in setting such levels.” For details, please refer to Brown (2001:90).

The course objectives of Elementary Chinese I (101) and II (102) in the appendix are an attempt to model after Brown's in accordance to the particular situations of the Chinese language program in a liberal arts college where the author teaches. As part of our Chinese curriculum, it is still very primitive and undergoing constant revisions "to respond to changes in perceptions of students' needs and to changes in the types of students who are being served" (Brown, 2001:96). Efforts have been made to connect and incorporate relevant objectives in the same skill areas between courses. For example, the objective for learning *pinyin* (Chinese 101) states that,

By the end of the semester, students will achieve the following:

- A) Ability to distinguish by ear, to pronounce, and to write individual syllables and disyllabic words in the phonetic Romanization system (*hànyǔ pīnyīn*) of modern standard Chinese (Mandarin) with tones marked, with an accuracy of 85% for initials and 75% for finals in any perceived syllables.

A similar objective in Chinese 102 says that,

By the end of the semester, students will achieve the following:

- A) Ability to distinguish by ear, to pronounce, and to write individual syllables and polysyllabic words in the phonetic Romanization system (*hànyǔ pīnyīn*) of modern standard Chinese (Mandarin) with tones marked, with at least 85-90% accuracy in all perceived syllables, including unknown words.

To assess the achievement of such objectives, similar test items have been included in both final exams of Chinese 101 and 102, which require students to write down unknown words and phrases in *pinyin* dictated by the teacher. After repetitive trials and revisions, the criterion was set as such, which has proved to be fair and reachable through practices. It should be emphasized that this is by no means a one-size-fits-all model that can be copied indiscriminately by any other programs. As a matter of fact, it is vital for other Chinese programs that wish to include performance objectives in their curriculum to take into consideration their specific conditions, particularly factors such as human resources, weekly instructional hours, teaching material adaptation and development, as well as institutional or major requirements, etc.

While performance objectives are not panacea, having systematic specification of performance objectives is definitely better than none, or some vaguely stated, incoherent, simplistic ones. With the rapid development of Chinese language teaching and learning worldwide, particularly after the formal offer of

Chinese AP courses and AP exams, Chinese language teachers are facing an unprecedented and the biggest challenge ever, that is, the articulation vertically from kindergarten to college (K-16), and/or transfer horizontally across programs or institutions. We can no longer afford to remain in the same mindset of “business as usual” and stick to conventions. It is true that in the field of Chinese language teaching, so far, there is not a single set of systematically developed curriculum objectives in terms of learner performance and the corresponding tests that have been empirically validated all the way from beginning level to advanced level, but this should not be the excuse for non-action. Waiting passively is simply not an option. As a profession, we must rise to the challenge collectively and unflinchingly.

Although so far no existing well-developed Chinese language curriculum objectives can serve as a model, Brown’s systematic approach (2001) for program development is an excellent reference. The recently published *International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education* by the Office of Chinese Language Council International (*Hànbàn*) is a constructive attempt and bold innovation, considering its timing, scope and scale in particular. Other documents such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), and the ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners are also very useful resources for the development of performance objectives. In addition, some performance objectives found in this survey (see 2.2.7 above), have given an inkling of the proper way to express curriculum objectives. They are, actually, a good starting point to tackle the problem in spite of their crudeness. If every objective is stated consistently from the perspective of students, and describes clearly the expected performance (including various language skills and performance) under specific conditions and with explicit gauging criterion, step by step, the development of coherent performance objectives for a Chinese program as a whole is definitely possible. As long as we take this challenge seriously, and particularly teachers of every each Chinese language program take concrete actions, devoting sufficient time and effort steadfastly to the specification of curriculum objectives according to its own specific situations, systematically defined performance objectives will by no means be merely a mirage. Such performance objectives, together with the corresponding tests that can accurately assess the achievement of these objectives, will greatly help improve our instruction.

6. Conclusion

Although no consistent curriculum objectives are found in this survey across the Chinese programs following the ideal model as Brown suggests, it is a positive sign that more Chinese programs, both in China and the United States, have included some sort of instructional objectives in their course syllabi. This is, at least, a breakaway from the old tradition – relying on textbooks only. It is even more encouraging to see that 48 courses in Chinese programs in the US have begun to describe instructional objectives in terms of learner performance, although they are still in embryonic form, and have a lot of room for improvement. The author believes that as long as there is something to start with, it is always better than years of empty talks but produce nothing substantial. It is precisely such a desire that motivated the inclusion in the appendix the Chinese 101 and 102 course objectives drafted by the author. They serve more as a “brick cast to attract jade” (引玉之砖) than a model for emulation, with the hope that other colleagues may come up with valuable insight and suggestions. If we can follow the proper procedures suggested by Brown (2001), analyze the strengths and weaknesses of any existing instructional objectives according to the specific situations of each individual program, we can gradually come up with better versions of performance objectives, course by course, and finally develop a set of coherent curriculum objectives with consistent format. With these performance objectives in hand, we can adjust our teaching, and also revise or even develop new tests for each course, so as to assess how well students in a program may have achieved the performance objectives set by the collective efforts of both teachers and program director.

At present, Chinese language instruction is at a critical moment of historical development. With decades of unremitting efforts of the Chinese language educators and teachers in China and also throughout the world, it has won increasing popularity worldwide in the 21st century. Likewise, this language, once considered as “true-foreign” or even “exotic”, is forging ahead into the mainstream of foreign language education in the United States. As more and more schools from K-12, and colleges and universities offer Chinese language courses, particularly with the formal adoption of the Chinese AP Exam by the College Board in 2007, Chinese is booming unprecedentedly both at pace and in scale throughout the nation. To cope with the new situation, we teachers of Chinese language can no longer remain in the habitual mindset and stick to conventional practices. If we really want to bring TCFL/TCSL to the next level, it is high time for us to take concrete actions, to deepen our understanding of the significance of curriculum objectives, organize discussions and workshops, and develop both practical and

systematic curriculum objectives as well as corresponding valid tests for specific programs that can effectively guide and assess our teaching and students' learning.

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Appendix

Elementary Chinese (101) Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will achieve the following:

- A) Ability to distinguish by ear, to pronounce, and to write individual syllables and disyllabic words in the phonetic Romanization system (*hànyǔ pīnyīn*) of modern standard Chinese (Mandarin) with tones marked, with an accuracy of 85% for initials and 75% for finals in any perceived syllables.
- B) Ability to listen to short face-to-face conversations and simple recorded passages at the speed of 60-70 syllables/minute (with two repetitions when necessary), and understand about 75% of the main ideas on familiar topics of self-introduction, family, daily routine activities at school, narratives simple events and descriptions of familiar objects, etc.
- C) Ability to use actively for communication the basic grammatical structures and vocabulary introduced in the course.
- D) Ability to perform the following communicative functions mostly in

face-to-face interactions with acceptable linguistic accuracy and social-cultural appropriateness:

- Greeting and farewell
- Expressing/responding to gratitude
- Apologizing/responding to apology
- Giving/responding to simple commands
- Identify people/objects
- Briefly introducing a person/oneself
- Using various question forms to seek information
- Asking a reason/for an explanation
- Asking for help/favors
- Asking for suggestions/simple opinions
- Making/responding to an invitation
- Confirming/denying
- Making simple hypotheses
- Narrating some simple personal events/activities
- Describing:
Colors, size, general states/conditions, quality, quantity, degree, simple results/manner ("how" some activities/actions are performed), etc.
- Exchanging information about:
One's own self, significant family members and friends, everyday life and some routine activities, likes and dislikes, time, days and dates, basic feelings, etc.
- Handling situations of survival/daily life such as:
Asking/telling time, shopping and money units, making/responding to requests, making an appointment, taking public transportation, etc.

E) Ability to recognize approximately 350 characters in the simplified form, and to read and comprehend simple passages written in simplified Chinese characters.

F) Ability to write from memory about 200 most frequently used characters, and

to write short notes or passages about simple topics such as basic personal information, significant family members and friends, daily routine activities, etc., using a mixture of both Romanization (*hānyǔ pīnyīn*) and simplified characters.

Elementary Chinese (102) Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will achieve the following:

- A) Ability to distinguish by ear, to pronounce, and to write individual syllables and polysyllabic words in the phonetic Romanization system (*hànyǔ pīnyīn*) of modern standard Chinese (Mandarin) with tones marked, with at least 85-90% accuracy in all perceived syllables, including unknown words.
- B) Ability to listen to short face-to-face conversations and simple recorded passages at the speed of 60-70 syllables/minute (with two repetitions when necessary), and understand about 75% of the main ideas on familiar survival topics such as dining, weather forecast, asking/giving directions, seeing a doctor, sports, travel, etc.
- C) Ability to use actively for communication the basic grammatical structures and vocabulary introduced in the course.
- D) Ability to perform the following communicative functions in face-to-face social interactions and in simple role-play telephone conversations, in strings of sentences with some use of transitional words, considerable linguistic accuracy, social-cultural appropriateness, and rudimentary fluency:
 - Dining in a Chinese restaurant and ordering a meal
 - Asking/giving directions
 - Seeing a doctor and discuss some personal health problems
 - Making comparisons
 - Making a (role-play) telephone call and scheduling an appointment
 - Renting an apartment
 - Reserving a flight ticket
 - Describing briefly the physical surrounding, a person's facial features, action duration, result, possibility, simple feelings and emotions, etc.
 - Exchange brief information and simple personal opinions on familiar topics such as family and friends, sports, travel and transportation, future plan, etc.
- E) Ability to recognize and to write approximately 700 Chinese characters in the simplified form, and to read and comprehend simple, short passages (about 2 paragraphs) written in simplified characters.
- F) Ability to write from memory about 550 most frequently used characters, and to write simple passages with one to two paragraph (about 200 – 300 characters) in a combination of characters and *pinyin* for daily purposes such as short notes, personal letters, short skits or stories, etc.
- G) Ability to use a Chinese-English dictionary to look up the meaning any usage of new words.

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书法课对汉语教学的辅助作用¹

李文丹

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

提要： 中国书法熔语言文字、文化、艺术于一炉，反映中国的历史、中华民族的思维方式和审美意趣。在美国大学开设中国书法课，可以侧重于艺术，也可以侧重于文化。本文讨论在美国大学的中文系科开设书法课对中文语言教学所能起到的辅助作用，指出书法课除了教授毛笔书法的技能以外，还能够增加学生在中国文字和文化两方面的知识。对学习中文的学生来说，研习书法能够丰富学习内容、扩大学习范围、增强学习兴趣。书法课有知识性、技能性、趣味性俱佳的特点，是使教学多样化，增强中文课型配置的理想课程。

Abstract: Chinese Calligraphy combines language, culture and art in one unique form. It reflects Chinese history, philosophy and aesthetics, and it is also a practice deeply grounded in everyday life of the Chinese people. Chinese calligraphy can be taught to American students as an art form, or as a way to introduce Chinese culture. This article discusses how calligraphy can be taught to supplement Chinese language teaching, i.e., with emphasis on knowledge of Chinese culture and Chinese writing. It argues that a calligraphy course offered alongside with Chinese language courses can help diversify course offerings and open additional channels to support language learning. Brush calligraphy is of great student interest; it is an ideal course to strengthen a Chinese language program.

近年来，汉语作为第二语言教学有了长足的发展，美国开设中文课程在大学及选修中文的学生日益增多，已有的中文系科 (program) 也在不断扩大。在这种形势下，中文课程的设置和总体规划显得越来越重要。如何通过不同的课型把语言教活，使学生在学语言的同时增加文化的知识和体验，已经成为很多中文系科作发展规划时必须考虑的问题。本文根据作者近年来开设书法课的经验，讨论在课程设计方面的一些考量，尤其是作为文化课程的书法课对中文语言教学所能起到的辅助作用。文章指出，书法课可以从中国文字和文化两个方面对中文教学加以补充，使教学多样化，是增强中文课型配

¹ 谨以此文纪念美国书法教育的前辈晋聪先生。

置的理想课程。下文分为五个部分：（一）教学对象及目的；（二）中国文字方面的知识；（三）书法文化方面的知识；（四）关于课程设计的思考；（五）结束语。

一、教学对象及目的

设计任何一门课程都必须首先了解学生的特点，然后确定教学目的。在中国，学生学书法，目的是练就一笔令人愉悦称道的好字，传统的做法是先学好楷书，再考虑别的书体，除了从师习字以外，还需要长年的苦练。美国大学生选修中国书法课，主要目的多不在练字，而在于增加对中国文化和书法艺术的了解，有些艺术专业的学生也希望通过学习中国书法扩展自己的审美情趣和创作思路。所以在美国大学里，书法课有多种上法，可以侧重艺术（书法艺术欣赏或创作），开在艺术系，也可以侧重文化或文字，开在外语系或语言文化学院(School of Languages and Cultures)。既可以是单独的一门课，也可以是一门课（如中文语言课或亚洲艺术课）中的一个部分。每一门课都可能因设计不同而有不同的教学目的和方法。最理想的情况当然是同一个班的学生有相近的语言文化背景和兴趣，或者给有特殊兴趣的学生个别辅导，但从目前来看，常常因为客观条件的限制，尤其是在课程开发的初期，需要多种学生混合开班。

本文讨论的是以介绍中国文化为主、开在中文语言系科中的书法课，教学对象是学过或正在学习初、中级汉语（或日文）、没有中国文化背景的美国大学生。教学目的是通过研习中国书法使学生了解并在一定程度上掌握毛笔书法的基本技巧，增加他们在中国文字和书法文化方面的知识。课时为一个学期（15周），每周课堂时间150分钟²。这样的一门课，如何在一个学期的时间内尽可能多地把有关知识和技能传授给学生，同时也对他们的语言学习有所帮助，是课程设计时需要考虑的问题。

众所周知，学中文对使用英文的美国学生来说难度较高。由于中文和英文渊源甚远，西方学生母语的知识在学中文时可供借鉴的微乎其微。所以，在美国FSI (Foreign Service Institute) 评估设立的四个外语难度等级中，中文的难度高踞榜首。据一般的估计，母语为英语的学生学习中文，跟学习某

² 本文作者开设的课程“Chinese Culture Through Calligraphy”是作为文化课开在 Department of Asian Studies. 每个班约26-30个学生。为这类书法课程编写的教材，见 Li (forthcoming).

一种印欧语言相比,难度要高四倍左右³。然而,大学的外语课程设置却很少考虑这个因素。无论难易程度如何,外语课程设置均统一为四年,每年的课时、学分也大致相等。这就意味着,在教学实践中,中文课的授课时间格外宝贵,必须精心挑选必需讲解和操练的最重要的内容,每一堂课都是高强度的训练,都有必须完成的任务。即便如此,还是有很多内容和基本技能的训练,如汉字书写的练习,无法在课堂上完成,必须利用课外的时间。因而,很多美国学生视学中文为畏途。

还有一个与此相关的事实,即中国文化与西方文化有较大的差异。我们都知道,语言是人类历史和文化的产物,它又被用来记录人类的历史和文化,与文化有着千丝万缕的联系。要学好一种语言,必须要了解其丰富的文化内涵。所以学习语言和学习文化总是相伴而行。与西方语言的教学(如法语、德语、西班牙语等)相比,教美国学生中文更有必要讲解中国的文化和历史。正是基于这样一种共识,近年来编写的中文语言教材大都包含了文化的内容。但是在课堂讲授中,文化教学毕竟是辅助语言教学的,只能见缝插针,不宜喧宾夺主。而且要加入文化的内容,就使本来已经十分有限的课堂教学时间变得更加紧张。所以语言课上的文化教学一般只能简略地介绍“交际文化”,而对较深层次的“知识文化”则无暇顾及(张、毕 1995)。

鉴于这种情况,本文提出,通过开设书法课,另辟一条渠道,可以既教书法,又在汉字和中国文化的知识方面为语言课做一些补充。书法的文字、文化和艺术内涵能使这门课的内容丰富多彩,是学生积极性极高且能多方面受益的一门课程。

二、中国文字方面的知识

中国书法是以汉字为表现对象,以毛笔为表现工具的一种线条造型艺术(郭、李 1995)。学书法必须在书写汉字上下功夫,教书法自然而然也必须介绍与汉字有关的知识⁴。其中,很多细节是在中文语言课上无暇顾及的。

³ 据 Liskin-Gasparro (1982) 的口语测定,要达到印欧语学生十六周训练(480 课时)后的口语水平,学中文的学生需要四十四周的训练(1320 课时),难度几乎为三倍,这还不包括高难度的汉字学习。

⁴ 目前有关书法争议颇多。连什么是书法这个基本问题都有不同意见。对这个问题的不同回答也必然影响到什么是书法教育和书法课教什么。本文立论于传统书法的观念,即书法是书写汉字的艺术。下不赘述。

笔划、笔顺、笔势

书法要体现的是汉字的美。先由粗细、浓淡、强弱、长短等种种不同的线条构成笔划，再通过笔划的组合构成汉字，表现多样而和谐的神韵。汉字的笔划分主笔划（横、竖）和副笔划（撇、点、捺、挑、钩等）。主笔划对字的结构起主导作用，所以要求“横平竖直”⁵。副笔划则主要起辅助的作用。教书法必须先教笔划，从一点一划入手，注重每一种笔划的特点及形态。在这方面，即使是学过中文的学生，在语言课的学习过程中也会有很多忽略了的地方。

比如，书法有它独特的艺术性，只有用特殊的工具——毛笔，才能充分发挥它的特长。但是，即使不用毛笔，而用硬笔（铅笔、钢笔或圆珠笔等）写汉字时，也跟写毛笔字一样，应该有落笔、行笔、收笔的具体过程。这跟书写英文的方法截然不同。英文由于字母的形状及线性排列的特点，在书写过程中轻重缓急和运笔方向的变化都较少。而中文，即使用硬笔写，行笔时也有快有慢，有轻有重，很多笔划的写法都是从毛笔的笔法沿袭下来的。比如，“横”划起笔较重，稍顿一下，然后自左向右行笔，结束时，不应该直接提笔结束，写得类似于“挑”，而要先按下，略顿，再回锋收笔。又如长“捺”，起笔较轻，向右下渐行渐按，至捺笔处，重按，然后略微调整方向，向右徐行渐渐提笔。这样，如“人”字的第二笔，即使是在写硬笔字的时候，“捺”也常常要拖出一个“脚”来。总之，硬笔的运笔虽然不像毛笔那么复杂，但仍然有轻重、顿逆和回收之意，与毛笔的笔法一脉相承。通过书法课对笔划的分解和练习，学生可以对汉字笔划的特点和书写过程有更加细微的体会和了解。

除了笔划以外，汉字的美还是由笔划之间、构件单位之间关系的默契构成的。要感悟和体现这种默契，就必须经过一定的训练。笔划之间的关系，体现在上笔带下笔，下笔接上笔，靠笔势的呼应产生自然传神、连贯流畅的韵致。这种关系，以行书为例较容易说明。比如：

三 文 我 小 大 也

行书由于是在楷书的基础上加快书写速度，笔划间便形成了“牵丝”。“牵丝”，即笔势往来路线在纸上留下的痕迹。有时是实的，在纸上牵出线条，如上例中“三”字的前两笔、“文”字的第一、二笔、“我”字的第一、二

⁵ 虽然书法不需要有严格意义上的“横平竖直”。这一点，下文将有进一步的说明。

笔和“竖钩”与“提”之间；有时又是虚的，笔不落纸，看上去是断开的，实际上却有气韵相连。比如“三”字的后两笔之间，“小”字的竖钩与左右两点之间、“文”字和“大”字的撇和捺之间，都有形断意连的笔势呼应。写楷书时，虽然没有明显的牵丝，但笔势的呼应仍然是存在的。

在初级语言课中，学生常问的一个问题是为什么一定要按照笔顺写字。这个问题一旦联系到书法便迎刃而解：（1）笔顺与书写的速度密切相关。只有笔顺正确，行笔才顺畅、顺手，才能写得快；（2）写得快（如行书和草书）一定会有牵丝和连笔，若笔顺不正确，形成的牵丝和连笔便会使字无法辨认；（3）正确的笔顺更能保证写出的汉字形体匀称；（4）正确的笔顺有益于帮助学生记忆汉字的结构⁶。所以，写汉字不但要按笔顺写，而且笔划之间还要上承下接、有相互呼应的关系，字体才显得自然、舒展而又有韵味。

中国字讲究对称均衡，这是指量的对称和均衡，而不是形的雷同。这一点，西方学生初学汉字常常有一些误会，以为很多汉字的两边都是对称的。他们写的“非”和“同”常常从中轴线分开，两边完全相同，甚至连“同”字左边的竖也要加上一个朝里的钩。其实，中国字无论是一个字的两边，还是书法作品中重复出现的字，都忌讳雷同⁷。在印刷体中看上去两边一样的字，如“大”“人”“中”，用手写出来，左右两边决不应该完全相同：

非 同 大 中 人

手写的汉字还有一个常常被忽略的特点，就是横画往往有略微向上倾斜的趋势，因此造成一种动感，一种统一的动势。试比较下面的印刷体（宋体）、楷书和行书：

三三三 林林林
成成成 我我我

⁶ 承蒙匿名审稿者指出 3、4 两点，特此鸣谢。

⁷ 这自然仅限于手写。王羲之《兰亭序》中有二十多个“之”字，形态各异。后来的印刷体和现在计算机打出来的字当然就无法避免雷同了。

通过对比可以看出，横画略微向上倾斜造成的动感，在楷书里已有所体现，行书中则更加明显。一篇文章中的字在书写时这种倾斜度应大体上保持一致，形成统一的动势，使每个字不再各自为政，而成为整体中的一员。再辅之以字体大小的配合及笔划的伸缩与均衡，汇成一个和谐、美观的篇章。

合体字的结构形态及比例关系

汉字除了少部分独体字以外，百分之九十以上都是合体字，由两个或两个以上的部件构成。因而书法之法，在部件的合成和字的总体结构方面颇多讲究。好比建筑楼房，必须先有总体规划，立柱建梁，然后墙壁门窗才能安排妥当。又好比人的身体，必须头正，肩平，方能手足舒展，形态安详。结构优美的字给人的第一感觉是平稳，用俗话说，就是“站得住”。可见人们把每一个汉字都当作一个活生生的形体来看待⁸。人之所以站得住是因为不失重心。所以每个字的重心也都要落在字的合适的位置上。

初学写字，结构最难。对美国学生来说，首先要建立的是“方块字”的概念。这个说起来容易，做起来却不那么简单。在英文里，单词的长度无拘无束，有多少个字母都可以一路排下去，能写多长就写多长。到中文里可就不行了。比如“孩子”，初学的西方学生常常写成“子亥子”；“女孩子”就成了“女子亥子”，类似的还有“一木不水”、“小日寸”、“日月天”等，这些都是左右结构的字。上下结构的字，写上半部的时候想不到要给下半部留出足够的空间，结果常常写得头重（大）脚轻（小）。要把两个或更多的字符稳妥地安排到一个想象中的方格里，除了建立方块字的概念以外，还要了解部件的组合方式及比例。

合体字部件的组合方式及大小比例均有定规。比如，左右和上下结构的字，有些对半平分天下，有些分大小主次，和平共处。了解和熟悉部件的组合方式，是学习汉字、写好汉字的基础，也是记忆汉字的关键。现将基本的部件构成方式略述如下，以常用字为例：

左右结构：

左 1/2 + 右 1/2：朋、钱、歌、就

左 1/3 + 右 2/3：你、江、德

左 2/3 + 右 1/3：到、外

左中右：谢、街、做、聊、潮、游、难

⁸ 这个形体同样有骨、有肉、有筋、有血，这些都是书论中的要点，这里略去不谈。

上下结构：

上 1/2 + 下 1/2：李、男、音、思、星、香、要、怎

上 1/3 + 下 2/3：字、花、笔、笑

上 2/3 + 下 1/3：点

上中下：意、算

包围结构：

四面：国、因、图

三面：同、医、间、网、周

两面：可、司、习、床、后、尼

其他：

唱、夜、题、这、道、最、碧、喜、想、慢、宿

上文提到的笔划间的上承下接、相互呼应，也同样适用于合体字中部件的合成。也就是说，合体字的部件与部件之间同样要在气势上互相接应、互相依存。

的 吗 没 你 好 华 是 想

先看左右结构的字。“的”“吗”“没”三个字，左右两边有明显的线条牵连，是实线的连笔；“你”和“好”左右两个构件之间则靠笔势相连。究竟是用实线相连，还是形断意连，是书写时的选择。除此之外，左右两个部分还要有呼应的关系，还要保持对称、平衡，好比两个人的合影，互相配合，互相照应。如“好”字，左侧的“女”以右侧的“子”为支撑，构成一个整体。上下合体结构的字也是同样的道理。初学者尤其要注意上下两部分的中心应该在一条中轴线上。如“华”字、“是”字下半部的竖笔，和“想”字下部的“心”中间的一点，都应该落在这条中心线上。

关于字的内部结构，历代书家著述很多，有唐朝欧阳询的三十六法、明朝李淳的八十四法、清朝黄自元的九十二法等等。下面仅用简单的例子说明几个要点。

上下层叠的字，如“喜”、“暑”、“拿”，横画之间的距离应基本相等，而横画的长短却要错落有致，避免雷同。左中右结构的字，如“做”、“谢”、“难”，要写得疏密停匀，点画清晰，互不碰撞。部件间的安排就好比人与

人之间的关系，讲究相互尊重、谦让、互依互补、和谐相处。

笔划多，容易写得拥挤和堆砌的字，常常需要将笔划和部件略作调整，这叫避就。除了避密就疏，避免冲突以外，还有避重叠之意。比如下例中的“餐”和“繁”字，为了避免上下两个部分的冲突，上部右边的“又”和“（反）文”的撇必须写得短小。“货”字上宽下窄，上部的“化”便在位置上作了调整，纳入下部的“贝”。“紫”字，上部的“此”写得宽扁，中间让出空档，让下部的“糸”插入“此”的下空中起笔，配合才紧凑。

餐 繁 货 紫

又如，“餐”字的构件中原本有三个“长捺”（“又”“人”“良”）。为了避免笔划的雷同和重叠，将上下两个改成“长点”，仅留下中间的一个：

又、人、良 → 餐

一般来说，左右结构的合体字，若两个部件相同的话，左边的通常写得略小，要让右，即左缩右伸。如“从”、“林”、“双”，左边的捺均改为点，让位给右边的撇。左右两个部件若不相同，笔划发生冲突时，左边的最后一笔也要写得短小、略高，让右边的“撇”插入其下，如“路”、“期”。这样整个字才显得舒展。其他结构类似的字，如“球”，依此类推。

从 林 双 路 期 球

写好了单字以后，还要积字成行，积行成篇。注意字与字之间、行与行之间的关系，以及字体大小、形体的配合。这叫行气。讲究的是繁简疏密的搭配、匀适。需要多看多练，熟能生巧。

总之，每个汉字，从笔划形态到构造组合，都有多种选择。书写时要做的是把各种因素组合搭配得恰到好处。不但要掌握正确的笔顺，还要灵活运用笔势、构件的往来呼应，营造出字和篇章的整体感，写得气势相连、浑然一体。毛笔字、硬笔字均同此理。

汉字造字法

汉字的造字方法，在书法课里可以作为一个重要的内容来讲，给学生详细地介绍有关中国文字的知识。对中文不太了解的人，常常误认为汉字是象形文字，每个字都是一幅图画。学过中文的学生，在语言课里学到的汉字知识也常过于零散。所以，可以通过对汉字的分类，给他们讲解常见易懂的象形、指事、会意及形声字⁹。比如，现代汉字中有一些保留了象形文字遗迹的字，如“日”、“月”、“山”、“门”、“木”，但所占的比例已经很小，仅百分之三左右。这类字符很多也用在合体字中作部首，有一定的表意作用。但从形体上说，这些字在很大程度上已经抽象化，跟甲骨文中的象形字原型已经有了根本的差别。所以，充其量也只能说这些字在形体上保留了象形文字遗迹。象形的造字方法在现代汉语中基本上不再使用。

世界上的古文字，如古埃及文字、两河流域的楔形文字、中文等，在原始阶段都使用大量的象形字符，这是不争的事实。但是古埃及象形文字过于追求细节逼真及复杂的描写性，从而失去了实用价值，终于在公元 500 年左右被废弃。楔形文字从象形字符的原形发展到楔形字符，变得难认难写，也消亡在历史的长河中（Coulmas 1989；DeFrancis 1989）。只有中文，从象形字符，逐步简化、抽象化，尤其是后来又大量使用形声字，保持了旺盛的生命力和不可取代的实用价值，成为世界上目前仍在使用的历史最悠久的文字。

对古埃及文字和楔形文字，美国大学生多少有一些知识。但他们很少有人能够说出中文是什么样的文字。其实，汉字究竟是什么性质的文字，在目前仍然是一个有争议的话题。现代汉字百分之九十以上是形声字，既有表意的成分，又有表音的成分（DeFrancis 1984）。鉴于这个事实，同时也考虑书法课和中文课的教学目的，把汉字概括地称为意音文字较为妥当，英文可称之为 *logographic writing*。中文作为典型的意音文字，与英文截然不同，对美国学生来说，是一个全新的天地。系统地介绍汉字的构造及分类，是把理解和记忆汉字的最便利的工具传授给他们。学过一些中文的学生，既可以用这些知识对以前学过的汉字进一步分类、整理，温故而知新，也能把以往积累的感性知识上升到理性的层面。

⁹ 六书中只有这四种是造字法，另外两种，假借和转注，是用字法。有关汉字造字法的参考资料很多。这里就不一一举例说明。

汉字发展史

中国书法艺术历史悠久，源远流长。因为书法是书写汉字的艺术，它的发生和发展，必然与汉字有着极为密切的联系。要了解书法，就必须了解中国文字的历史，了解汉字怎样产生，怎样从早期的书写形式发展到今天的样子。讲述书法的发展历史以及与书法家有关的故事，也就是讲授汉字的发展历史，能够使学生了解中国文字发展的概貌以及书体的演变过程。同时也增加学生有关中国历史的知识。这些都是我们在语言课中很难顾及的。

谈起书法的起源，不能不上溯到商代的甲骨文、周代的金文、秦代的小篆、以及后来的隶、楷、行、草。甲骨文是用笔写在龟甲和兽骨上，然后用刀刻出来。当时，汉字的形体就已经婉转自如，具有天然的姿态美。所以说，书法的艺术在中国已经有几千年的历史。西周战国时期，学术争鸣，文字和甲骨文相比有了很大的变化，异体字很多。直到秦始皇统一中国，由李斯创造小篆，实行“书同文”，才使“文字异形”、“言语异声”的状态得到改观。

到了汉代，隶书法度森严，被定为第一个的官定公文标准书体。隶书上承前代小篆的规则，下启魏晋南北朝、隋唐楷书的风范，同时，由于在小篆基础上的简化，出现了简省和连笔，又为行草的产生奠定了基础。在笔法上，隶书开始讲究笔划粗细的变化，使汉字的书写更加艺术化。也是在汉代，书法开始成为一种独立的艺术形式，从实用的层次发展到审美的层次，是书法艺术史上的一大飞跃。

楷书从隶书变出，创于汉末，历魏晋六朝，到唐代而大盛，可谓登峰造极。唐楷字体严谨工整，碑帖丰富。柳公权、颜真卿、欧阳询均为享有盛名的大书法家。行草在不同程度上放笔而书，简易实用。尤其是草书，无拘无束，随意挥洒。唐朝的书法和唐诗一样，是中国历史上的鼎盛时期。唐代以后，书法稳定于篆、隶、楷、行、草，再也没有创造出新的书体。近代、现代书家仍然是在这几种主要书体中发展自己的风格。

纵观书法的历史，我们可以看出，中国书法的发展，基本上是由简化和美化两大趋势构成的。这与书法的实用价值和作为艺术形式的审美要求密切相关。实用要求简化，要求书写便捷；审美的价值要求美化，要求书艺的提高。在字体逐渐简化的过程中，书法艺术的表现手段，如笔法、墨法、汉字造型法、章法等，不断增加，艺术内涵日趋丰富。简化和美化两种趋势互相制约，交替发生作用，推动了书法艺术的不断发展（陈 1993）。

中国历代帝王对书法的喜爱和推崇也是一个学生很感兴趣的话题。唐太宗提倡书法，尤其推崇王羲之。临死还特嘱以王羲之的《兰亭序》真迹殉葬，从此王羲之的这一传世杰作就未再见天日。后来昭陵被盗，《兰亭序》却无法找到了。宋徽宗不仅在书画上造诣极深，还创立了著名的“瘦金体”，在

书法史上名垂千古。近代的毛泽东，多年戎马倥偬，却对书法始终保持着浓厚的兴趣和感情，成了坚持使用毛笔的最后一代书家的代表。他作为政治家写下的宏伟诗篇，配之以挥洒驰骋的草书，颇有“大笔一挥天地惊”之势。

由此我们可以看出，书法史在很大程度上就是汉字发展史。讲书法史，也就是从一个不同的侧面讲中国历史、中国文化史及文字发展史。

三、书法文化方面的知识

文化作为一种内在的抽象，需要种种外在的形式来表现。书法便是最能代表中国文化的一种艺术，与京剧、武术、针灸一起，被公认为四大国粹。在华夏五千年文明的发展过程中，汉字的书写逐渐升华为一门艺术，这在世界文字发展史上不能不说是一个奇迹。

有人说中国文化是书法的核心，也有人说书法是中国文化的核心，可见中国文化和书法关系之密切。与书法有关的中国文化方面的知识很多。可以在书法课中介绍的大致有如下几个方面：

书法的艺术特性和哲学理念

教西方学生书法必须回答一些看上去简单，却不太容易回答的问题，如(1) 什么样的字是好字？(2) 为什么说中国书法是艺术？它的艺术特性表现在哪些方面？(3) 怎样鉴赏书法作品？回答这些问题，要讲笔法、字法、章法，要讲由线条的流畅、力度及用墨的方法所体现的不同风格，要讲中国人的审美角度和审美情趣，也要讲书法所反映的哲学理念。

书法艺术是由线条美、汉字的结构美和黑白反差形成的空间感来体现的。黑白的强烈对比是最大的特色。可以用阴阳对立统一观念进行深刻而周详的演绎和诠释。一纸之上，着墨处为黑，无墨处为白；有墨处为实，无墨处为虚；黑白虚实，相辅相成。中国文化中阴阳的概念和老子对立统一的思想，在书法艺术中体现得淋漓尽致。这是中国传统哲学观念中的精华，无论是笔法、墨法、章法，还是书家的风格，都可以用阴阳的概念加以阐述。用来描写书法的对立的概念很多，比如：

点划线条：长短、曲直、轻重、粗细、提按

结构关系：松紧、疏密、聚放、张收、向背、肥瘦

用墨：干湿、浓淡、燥润

笔法：疾缓、方圆、藏露、抑扬

章法：欹正、首尾

风格：刚柔、劲媚、雅俗、丑媚、巧拙

行气：擒纵、远近

我们知道，阴阳除了对立以外，还有统一和谐的一面。书法的理想境界也是通过对立达到统一和谐。这种和谐不是简单的线条和结构的均衡分割，而是多样性的统一，用调轻配重、浓淡相间的艺术手段，达到整体的和谐与平衡。所以说，书法艺术也是中和之美，在书法课中给西方学生介绍阴阳的概念，可以把中国文化的方方面面（艺术、世界观、中医、养生等）有机地联系起来，加深他们对中国文化的综合理解。

文房四宝的特点和作用

中国书法之所以成为独特的艺术，与其所用的独特的工具——文房四宝是分不开的。四宝中笔又最为重要。相传秦将蒙恬造笔，其实甲骨文的龟片上就已经有了毛笔朱红描写的痕迹。中国毛笔的特点，古人总结出笔之四德：尖、齐、圆、健¹⁰。在教学中，除了给学生讲解这些特点以外，在书写实践中还应该引导他们慢慢体会毛笔的这些特点及重要性，了解这些特点与书法笔法（包括毛笔和硬笔书法）的渊源关系。

墨，一般人只知道是黑色，只有对中国书画有所了解的人才知道墨分五彩：干、湿、浓、淡、枯（陈 1993）。在书法中，可以根据不同的作品，选用不同的墨色，营造出不同的艺术效果。纸是中国的四大发明之一，也是五彩墨色的艺术感染力在黑白浓淡间得以表现的媒介。宣纸质地柔软，润墨性强，且有较高的韧度，最能表现中国书画的特点。砚在材料上和作工上均有讲究，除实用价值外，还有很高的观赏价值。书法的工具，除了文房四宝之外，再加上能够画龙点睛的印章和精心的装裱，使之珠联璧合，锦上添花。

书法在中国社会的地位

任何语言，从存在的第一天起，便有了不可取代的实用价值。但是在不同的文化中语言的地位却不尽相同。西方的《圣经》说上帝创造了语言，这个语言指的是口语。中国的传说里，仓颉造字，造的是书面文字。可见中国文化历来对书面文字情有独钟。本来，世界各民族多有自己的文字与书写工具，时时刻刻都有人在写字。但中国人却把写字变成了一门艺术。这除了归功于汉字的结构以及书写工具的独特性以外，对文字的重视也无疑是一个重要因素(Chiang 1973)。这种重视不仅仅见于帝王及文人墨客之中，还深深地根植于广大民众，使书法成为反映民族文化和民族精神的一种表现形式。

¹⁰ 见明·陈疾如《妮古录》：“笔有四德：锐、齐、圆、健。”

从单纯的写字到书法，文字也在实用功能的基础上增添了艺术功能。在中国，研习书法还是养生之道。现代医学研究证明，专心致志、调息凝神的运动，是调节人体机能的好方法，能够健身祛病、益寿延年（马 2003）。因此，书法在中国还有极大的普及性。尤其是近些年在中国现代社会的全民健身热潮中，书法以其在艺术性、普及性及养生功能上的奇妙结合，发展出一种新的、独特的形式——地书。每天清晨，在新的一天刚刚开始的时候，作为一种晨练的形式，人们不分男女老幼，用各种自制的笔蘸着清水，在公园的空地上挥毫疾书。一种艺术形式，能够如此普及、如此深入人心，令人叹为观止。

书法作为传统艺术的现在和将来

如前文所述，从两晋到唐代是中国书法发展的顶峰。成熟的楷书把汉字的字形推到了高度稳定的发展阶段。从那以后，汉字的字形几乎一成不变地沿用至今。汉字的最终定型，决定了以汉字外形为依托的中国书法再也不能像以前一样不断创造出新的书体。这就给中国书坛提出了如何在传统艺术的基础上创新和发展的问题（郭、李 1995）。尤其到了现代，中国社会日益商业化，人们缺乏从事书法创作所需要的学养、耐心与情绪。随着钢笔、圆珠笔，以至于电脑的普及，书法的实用功能日渐削减，传统书法的未来和发展成了一个十分严峻的问题。

现代书法突破了传统书法的样式，是使书法适应现代化的意识与生活，同时也使这种传统的艺术形式走向世界的一系列前卫性的尝试（古 1990；朱 1996）。现代书法的作品，有些虽仍然是书写汉字，却抛弃传统书法的法度、规范和审美取向，在造型上刻意追求夸张、变形。另外一些现代书法作品则摆脱汉字的束缚，以线条的排列组合或墨迹的喷、洒、泼、抹、在纸面上创造出具有画意属性的效果。这种没有文字功能的、抽象的、纯视觉的形象表达，往往更接近于西方艺术思潮的表现形式和日本现代书法的发展趋势，因而较容易参与艺术界的国际交流。现代派的书法家们认为，这是给书法注入新的生命，使之走向世界的最佳途径。然而，传统派书法家们则强调，中国书法是以书写汉字为依托的艺术形式。书写汉字也是书法区别于绘画、作为一种独立的艺术形式存在的基本特征。不写汉字就不成其为书法。因而“无字书法”不是对书法艺术的传承，而是对书法艺术的扼杀和毁灭。

有关书法的这些争论是古今中外文化冲撞和交融的必然产物，使中国书法在最基本的定义和特性方面受到了挑战。传统书法艺术的传承和世界其他文化遗产的传承是有共性的。我们教美国学生书法，讲书法史和汉字发展史，同时也介绍书法这种传统的艺术形式在现代社会中所要面对的问题，引起他

们对书法以及其他文化遗产的传承的思考，是很有益处的。

有关书法文化的其他内容

在中国的传统文化中，有一些西方的学生不一定认同的观念，却有必要理解。比如，学书法要下苦功，锲而不舍，水滴石穿。这不仅是笔下功力的积累，也是性格的磨炼。再比如，在中国的传统文化中，学书法，除了学写字以外，还要学书德。古人云，“书者，如也。”也就是“书如其人”。一个书法家，要有深厚的学养、精湛的书艺、高尚的情操和扎实的功底。仅仅是字写得好，并不能名垂后世，一定要对社会做出贡献，一言一行，堪为后人师表，这就是所谓的书德。古人学书，讲究“心正笔正”，人雅书才能雅，艺高不如德高。这是中国传统文化的精髓，世代学书者均以此自勉。

有关书法文化的内容，除了以上谈到的这些以外，还有一些可以酌情考虑介绍给学生。比如，

- (1) 中国的干支纪年法。这是书法创作和欣赏必备的知识。因为它是循环记年法，与公历的线性记年法完全不同，还与中国的十二生肖连在一起，知识性、趣味性都很强。
- (2) 印章的制作及在中国的使用。印章反应中国文化的一个侧面，也是书法作品不可或缺的一个部分。
- (3) 中国书法和西方书法的比较。通过比较，进一步了解中国书法的特性，以及为什么中国书法能够成为一种独特的艺术形式。
- (4) 诗书画的结合——中国文学艺术的巅峰。

四、关于课程设计的思考

关于课程设计，我的总的体会是，教美国学生书法，既要遵循书法教学的基本原则，又要兼顾美国学生的特点。这基本上体现为立足于楷书的原则、多书体的原则、反复的原则和知识性、技能性、趣味性相结合的原则。

立足于楷书的原则

行书是平时写字最实用、最有个性化的书体。美国学生，没有东方文化背景的，多半想把字写得“酷”，喜欢学行草。可是，要把行草写得神似，必须从楷书入手。古人说，楷书如立，行书如走，草书如奔。先要站稳，才能进而学行走奔跑，否则非跌跤不可。通过学习楷书，了解笔墨的特性、笔划形态、运笔方法、汉字的间架结构等等。有了基本的概念和技能，写起草书

来才不是“潦草之书”，才能避免“鬼画符”。

要从楷书开始，首先要培养的是一丝不苟的态度。一丝不苟，就是要从坐姿到握笔，再到点划的每一个步骤都要认认真真“写到家”。这对写字向来无拘无束的美国学生来说不是一件容易的事。要学会用笔，摹临的过程十分重要。尤其要注意的是，摹不是写出线条来就完事了，而是要摹出笔划的形态，墨量及笔划的粗细均不走样，不肥不瘦，方不失真，决不能任意为之。只要明白了先学楷书的道理，静下心来，全神贯注地写，先摹后临，几个星期以后，一般都能有长足的进步。

多书体和反复的原则

前文提到，美国学生选修书法课主要目的多不在练字，而在于增加对中国文化和书法艺术的了解。对他们来说，这门历时四个月的书法课，很可能是他们一生中研习毛笔书法的唯一机会。所以，他们更希望较全面地认识书法，尽可能多地涉猎书法知识的方方面面。实践证明，在这门课中让他们接触篆、隶、楷、行（草）几种主要的书体是可行的。可以结合书法史的内容，边讲边练，很受学生欢迎。在西方教书法，还有一个不可忽视的现象，就是为数不少的学生用左手写字，写楷书时常遇到特别的困难。其他的书体能给他们提供尝试的余地。当然，课程内容的深度和广度是在课程设计时就作出的选择。教师必须根据实际情况（学生、课时等）制定合理的教学目的和考核标准。

教美国学生书法，尤其是在学生识字量不大的情况下，涉及的汉字不宜太多，也不宜太偏。可选择一些简单、实用、较能反映不同书体特点的字或词语，反复用不同的书体写，从比较中体会不同书体在笔划和形体上的差别。学生在反复学习和书写的过程中也有更多的时间和机会了解这些字或词语的意义，既学了书法，又学了语言。

知识性、技能性、趣味性相结合的原则

书法应该是知识性、技能性与趣味性相结合的一门课。知识性，除了老师的课堂讲授、课外阅读和考试以外，还可以要求每个学生选择一个自己感兴趣的有关中国书法的题目，做一个简短的课堂演讲。通过收集资料、选题、准备、演讲的过程，鼓励学生之间的讨论与学习，促使他们上网或去图书馆搜寻有关书法的资料，从而增加他们的阅读量，也能补充很多老师在课堂讲授中照顾不到的内容。现在网上的资料很多，学生的课堂演讲常常在选题、组织和演示各方面都能做得十分新颖，图文并茂。内容除了书法名家的评介之外还常常有：

- (a) 笔、墨、纸、砚的制作
- (b) 印章的制作和使用
- (c) 碑林的历史意义
- (d) 西方艺术中中国书法的因素
- (e) 西方人对中国书法的普遍印象
- (f) 中国书法和其他文字（日、韩等文字）书法的比较
- (g) 书法与健身
- (h) 书法与文身

技能性主要是指用毛笔书写的技能，可以包括不同的书体，不仅要求学生能说出不同书体的差别，还要能够辨认，并且能够写出基本的差别。在为语言课所作的补充方面，主要是补充有关中国文字的知识，而不是使用语言的能力（如发音、记忆汉字的数量、组词造句等）。趣味性则主要体现在对书法作品的欣赏、动手学书的过程和期末的书法作品创作上。在期末学期结束的时候，可以要求每个学生用自己喜欢的书体写一幅字，日期、落款、印章样样俱全。从书体的选择，到书写内容的选择，以及整幅字章法上的安排，均由他们自己设计。学生得以从中学习和体验书法创作的整个过程。最后，全班的作品就是一个很好的书法作品展。这是最受学生欢迎的教学项目之一。

五、结束语

在美国的大学里开设书法课，无论在课程设计，教材编写、还是在教学方法上都才刚刚起步，需要逐渐摸索规律、归纳和总结不同课型（如文化课、艺术课、文字课）的教学目标、行之有效的教学方法以及合理的考核方式（Chin and Li 2004）。还有一个很重要的方面就是书法课的教资问题。书法课（如果不仅仅是欣赏的话）是一门实践性课程。学生要掌握书写技能，需要直观的感受。教师除了介绍书法知识以外，必须能够提笔演示，用毛笔纯熟地书写出漂亮的笔划和汉字。这种技能不是短时间内能够练就的。所以，书法课的教师应该从已经具有这种素养的教师中选择，为保证教学质量，要有合适的师资才能开课。近几年，书法教育学会(Calligraphy Education Group)常在中文教师学会的年会上作书法课的专题讨论，并在夏天举办书法课教师培训班，在课程内容、课程设计和教学方法等方面提供交流和学习的机会。近来，市面上教授书法的 DVD 渐渐增多，但用英文讲解的似乎还没有见到。

除此之外，在课程设计方面也还有许多值得思考的问题。比如，(1)从实

用的角度考虑, 是否应该增加硬笔书法的内容; (2) 如果是各类学生合班, 是否可以考虑在大班中分小组, 把有中文语言知识和没有中文语言知识的学生分开, 在教学中有所分别, 因材施教; (3) 对左手写字的学生的教学方法等等。这些都是很具体、很实际的问题, 却跟教学质量和学生的学习兴趣有直接的关系。

总之, 在中文语言课程的基础上开设一门书法课, 不仅可以把有关中华民族思维方式、审美意趣等方面的文化知识介绍给学生, 也可以根据学生的中文情况, 量体裁衣, 在语言文字和知识方面加以补充。对学习中文的学生来说, 这门课能够丰富学习内容、扩大学习范围、增强学习的兴趣。书法课不应该仅仅是一门技能型课程, 同时也应该是知识型的课程, 使学生在多方面受益。

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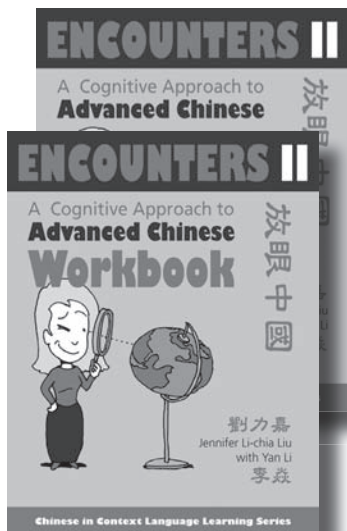
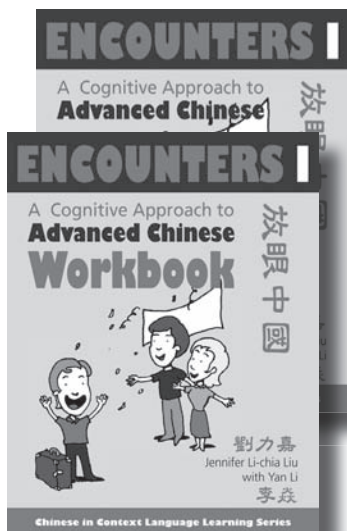
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Teacher Questioning and Construction of Opportunities for Chinese Language Learning¹

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Abstract: In this study, adopting the sociocultural approach and the method of discourse analysis, we compared the classroom questioning behaviors of two Chinese language teachers. We examined how different patterns of teacher questioning create different opportunities for students' classroom discourse participation and influence the provision of scaffolded assistance for students' Chinese language learning. In the analysis, we focused on the dynamics of teachers' questioning process, paying close attention not only to the types of questions asked by the two teachers, but also teachers' questioning strategies and the interactional structure of teacher questioning. This study helps researchers as well as practitioners better understand the important role of classroom interaction in learning Chinese as a second language.

Keywords: Teacher Question, Chinese as Second Language, Socio-cultural Theory

提要: 在社会文化理论框架内, 利用话语分析的方法, 本文对两名中文教师的课堂提问行为进行了比较分析。我们考察了不同模式的教师提问行为在创造学生课堂话语参与机会、为中文学习提供支架式帮助方面的差异。我们重点关注教师提问的动态过程, 兼顾两名教师所提问题的类型, 提问的策略以及提问话语的结构。本研究有助于我们进一步了解课堂互动在中文作为第二语言学习中的重要作用。

关键词: 教师提问, 中文作为第二语言, 社会文化理论

Drawing upon the sociocultural theoretical framework and using the classroom data collected in Singapore, where Chinese is taught as a second language (L2) in the school setting, we aim to examine the structure and dynamics of dis-

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course underlying how teacher questioning constructs opportunities for students' discursive participation and mediates their learning of Chinese. To this end, we compare two Chinese language teachers' questioning behaviors. We focus our analyses on how the two teachers differ in constructing opportunities for the learning of Chinese in the classroom with their questioning process. We pay close attention not only to the types of questions asked by the two teachers, but also their questioning strategies and the interactional structure of questioning.

1. Teacher Questioning and Second Language Acquisition

The interaction between teacher and students in classroom discourse has been an important area of studies in the field of education in general and L2 education in particular (Cazden, 2001; Hall & Walsh, 2002; Johnson, 1995; Mehan, 1979). Among the various studies on teacher-student interaction in L2 classrooms, one area that has received much attention in the past decade is teacher questioning, one of the important discourse strategies used by teachers in classroom pedagogy. Research has examined from different perspectives how teachers' questions can contribute to students' L2 development (Chaudron, 1988; Ellis, 1994). A majority of these studies focused particularly on the effects of different types of teacher question in eliciting output from students, especially display and referential questions, which respectively refer to those to which the teacher knows (e.g., What does the word *computer* mean in Chinese?) and does not know the answer (e.g., Do you like Chinese culture?) (Brock, 1986; Long & Sato, 1983; Nunn, 1999). Based on the Output Hypothesis proposed by Swain (1995), which argues that pushed output from L2 learners is conducive to their L2 syntactic development, these studies showed that referential questions contribute more to students' L2 development as they tend to elicit longer and grammatically more complex utterances from students. Therefore they suggested that more referential questions be asked than display questions (Brock, 1986; Tsui, 1995).

In a pioneering study on the functions of L2 teachers' questions, Long and Sato (1983) found ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers asked predominantly more display questions than referential questions in the classroom setting, which marked a clear contrast to the proportional distribution of questions asked by native English speakers in conversation with non-native speakers where there was minimal number of display questions but very high percentage of referential questions. However, Long and Sato's study didn't relate these types of questions to students' responses. Therefore, while helping enhance the understanding about teachers' use of questions, the study didn't specifically address how these questions contribute to the acquisition of L2 linguistic and communi-

cative competence.

This research gap was addressed later in Brock's (1986) study, which directly examined the effects of L2 teachers' questions on learners' language production. In the study, Brock assigned four ESL teachers of adult learners into two experiment conditions. The two teachers in the treatment group received training in incorporating referential questions into their classroom activities, while the other two teachers in the control group were not provided with any such training. It was found that teachers in the treatment group asked significantly more referential questions than display questions. More importantly, the analyses of students' responses to the two types of questions, with regard to their length and syntactic complexity, showed significant advantage of referential questions over display questions, suggesting that teacher's referential questions should increase the amount of target language use by learners in the classroom. Corroborating Brock's findings, Shomoossi's (2004) study found displayed questions asked by university EFL teachers in Tehran significantly outnumbered referential questions, and the latter type of questions produced more classroom interaction, both between teacher and students and among students themselves.

While studies on teachers' questions in L2 classrooms seem to support the benefits of asking more referential questions, it should be noted that these output-based studies take language mainly as a system of linguistic forms and focus on the linguistic side of student interlanguage development. They pay little if any attention to the social processes of language use and the discourse dynamics underlying how teacher discourse affects students' L2 learning in classroom pedagogic practice. Therefore, there is recently in the field of L2 education a trend of adopting the Vygotskian perspective, which views learning as a dynamic meaning-making process with language as an important mediation tool, for examining classroom interaction and students' L2 learning (e.g., Donato, 1994; Hall & Verplaetse, 2000; Lantolf, 2000).

2. Sociocultural Theory and Teacher Questioning

The sociocultural approach to learning and classroom pedagogy views learning as a mediated process within social and cultural context (Lantolf, 2000; Wertsch & Toma, 1995). Vygotsky (1978) took social interaction as a prerequisite to the learning process, and he situated learning in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is described as the difference between the original independent capability of a learner and what he or she is able to achieve when given some intellectual guidance and support. According to Vygotsky, learning involves the transition from the social, intermental domain to the individual, intramental

domain, which takes place within the ZPD where the novice appropriates from the expert the cognitive functions necessary for carrying out a task or solving a problem (Kington, 2002; Lantolf, 2000).

The conception of outside assistance in the development of children is similarly expressed by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) as scaffolding, which refers to the supportive behaviors of an expert in assisting a child to solve a problem that he or she might not have been able to do unassisted. In classroom pedagogic practice, the notions of the ZPD and scaffolding highlight the way teachers can fine-tune their discourse and adapt the cognitive support to assist the participation of children in classroom activities, for example, by directing attention to key aspects of a task, simplifying a task, monitoring ongoing performance, and providing appropriate feedbacks depending on the children's level of understanding in classroom interaction (Mercer, 2000; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

Following this view of mediated learning, teacher questioning, the first move in the triadic dialogue between teacher and students which elicits most of student discourse, is a mediational tool that helps teacher assist and regulate students' reasoning and knowledge construction (Cazden, 2001; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). In L2 classes, where language is the objective of learning as well as the medium of instruction, teacher questioning not only mediates knowledge construction as in content subject classes, but creates opportunities for students' use of the target language for classroom discourse participation, which contributes to their L2 learning (Johnson, 1995).

However, not all teacher questions are equally effective in constructing opportunities for students' discourse participation and scaffolding their L2 learning. Research has shown that interaction between teacher and students follows different patterns, and teacher-student interactional discourse of various forms may imply different opportunities for students' L2 learning (Hall, 1998; Hall & Walsh, 2002; Johnson, 1995; Walsh, 2002). With regard to teacher questioning behavior, while it is true that a referential question, which requires students to give their personal responses, tends to involve students in authentic communication, it may also fail to do so in that the students may have difficulty in answering the question. Also, although a display question asks students to display knowledge without being involved in authentic communication of ideas, it also functions as an important means that teachers use to check students' understanding in order to decide the next move of their discourse. Thus, whether or not a type of questions contributes to student learning seems to be dependent upon teachers' pedagogical purposes (Nunn, 1999; Walsh, 2002).

So far, there is only a small amount of research on L2 teacher questioning within the sociocultural theoretical framework. However, findings from a few

studies did provide some insights into how teacher questioning functions in L2 classrooms and how it scaffolds L2 learning. For example, McCormick and Donato (2000) examined the scaffolding functions of one university ESL teacher's questions and explored how her use of questions scaffolded L2 learning in relation to her pedagogic goals for student comprehension, comprehensibility, and participation. Using a sequential analysis of interaction between ESL teachers and students, Lee (2006) demonstrated that display questions are actually resources that teachers and students use to organize lessons collaboratively, and he argued that it would be premature to treat display questions simply as an ineffective instructional device for L2 learning without knowing how they are used in unfolding interactional discourse between teacher and students.

Overall, findings from existing studies seem to suggest that whether or not teacher questioning serves scaffolding and whether opportunities can be constructed in teacher-student interaction for L2 learning depends on how classroom discourse unfolds moment-to-moment as teachers fine-tune their discourse, such as adjusting questioning strategies and giving appropriate feedback to student response, to provide contingent help to guarantee maximal student participation (Hall, 1998; Hall & Walsh, 2002; Johnson, 1995). However, these findings largely come from ESL/EFL classrooms. So far, very limited empirical research has been conducted on teacher questioning and L2 learning in Chinese as a Second/Foreign Language (CSL/CFL) classrooms, and it is not clear to the CSL/CFL community how Chinese language teachers' questioning would influence students' learning. Therefore, by comparing two CSL teachers' questioning behaviors sampled from classroom data collected in the Singapore context, we aim to examine how the structure and dynamics of teachers' questioning discourse constructs opportunities for students' discursive participation and mediates their learning of Chinese.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Context and Participants

Under the bilingual policy in Singapore, English is the dominant language used as a *lingua franca* for administration, global business, science and technology; it is the *de facto* language used for wider communication among Singaporeans of different ethnic and social backgrounds (Shepherd, 2005; Silver, 2005). With the language-in-education planning in Singapore in the past decades (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003), English is now taught as the first language and used as the medium of instruction in the school setting, and at the same time, Chinese one of

the mother tongues of the Singaporeans, is maintained and taught as an L2 with its proficiency seen as enabling direct access to Chinese cultural traditions and related values of the Singaporean Chinese community as well as a principal means of maintaining and developing Chinese cultural heritage (e.g., Chan, 2000; Shepherd, 2005).

Due to such important status of the Chinese language in Singapore, Chinese language education has always been given high priority in the agenda of education policy makers in the country. Recently, in line with the initiative of the Ministry of Education to reform Chinese language education by adopting a more student-centered, communicative-oriented pedagogy, Chinese language teachers in Singapore are encouraged to build a supportive and interactive environment to maximize students' engagement in classroom discourse to facilitate the development of communicative competence (Chin, 2003). However, there are so far few empirical studies examining what is going on in Chinese language classrooms, including teachers' pedagogic practice and students learning.

This important issue began to be addressed in 2003 when the Center for Research in Pedagogy and Practice (CRPP) at Nanyang Technological University started to carry out a large scale longitudinal CORE research project on Singapore schools (for detail, refer to Luke et al., 2005). The CORE project aimed to give, as one of its foci, a description of what happens in about 1,000 classroom lessons in the core curriculum areas in Singapore, including Math, Science, Social Studies, English and mother tongues (Chinese, Malay and Tamil). These lessons were coded "in real time" and were aggregated from a whole week of observation of instructional units in randomly sampled schools for two years from late 2003 to late 2005 by using the Singapore Pedagogy Coding Scheme. The coded data were analyzed statistically to identify different patterns and relationships for various purposes. At the same time, these lessons were also audio-taped (with some videotaped) and transcribed for building a computer corpus of classroom interactional discourse.

As a part of CRPP's CORE project, a corpus of Chinese language classroom data has also been built, and it contains transcribed data of about 150 hours out of 38 units of Grade 5 and Grade 6 classes. The data of this paper are drawn from two Grade 5 classes. The two classes are selected for the current study because they are similar in composition (about 40 students); the teachers of the two classes, one female and one male, have similar years of experience (two-three years) in teaching Chinese in elementary schools in Singapore; the two classes also follow the same curriculum that offers the same textbook and evaluation procedure, but there are considerable variations in actual teaching practices between the two teachers in terms of their questioning behaviors and the learning

opportunities constructed for students learning.

The two interactional excerpts we will compare in the following section are typical of the two teachers' questioning behaviors in the four lessons of a whole-unit classroom teaching. The interactions in the two excerpts reflect two different ways in which questions are used to engage students through classroom discourse participation. However, we should point out that the analyses that follow are by no means a comprehensive examination of teacher questioning behaviors in Chinese language classrooms in Singapore. Rather, these are "telling cases" (Mitchell, 1984, p.239) of how teachers' questioning strategies affect the construction of opportunities for students' classroom discourse participation and the development of their communicative competence in Chinese.

3.2 Method of Analysis

We use Discourse Analysis as the method for the examination of how teacher questions are structured interactionally in constructing opportunities for student learning. Discourse Analysis focuses on the study of extended talk in natural settings rather than individual utterances in isolation (Riggenbach, 1999; Stubbs, 1983). It considers context to be of primary importance and pays close attention to the surrounding text and the sociocultural environment that frames the production and interpretation of message (Riggenbach, 1999). Because its power in elucidating and interpreting discourse processes, Discourse Analysis has now gone far beyond its original discipline as a linguistic inquiry and become a powerful methodological tool in addressing sociolinguistic issues of talk in classroom learning and teaching (Cazden, 2001; Gee & Green, 1998).

For classroom L2 learning, discourse analysis, by describing in detail how interaction is carried out in classroom contexts, provides a good explication of how language is used by teacher and students to construct and negotiate meaning for the development of students' L2 competence. Therefore, through the analysis of the discourse dynamics of teacher-student talk, the process of how teacher uses and adapts his or her talk to engage students' participation and language learning can be revealed and how questions are used in interaction to facilitate students' discourse participation and scaffold L2 learning can be better explicated and understood.

In what follows, through comparison of two interactional excerpts using the method of Discourse Analysis, we explicate the communicative dynamics of teachers' classroom questioning behaviors and its effects on the construction of opportunities for students' discourse participation. In the comparison, we pay close attention to the dynamics and structure of teacher questioning and the roles

of different types of questions and questioning strategies in promoting negotiation of meaning between teacher and students. We describe what teacher and students do within the evolving sequence of talk and analyze how teachers ask questions, how students make sense of them and how teachers deal with student contributions. The classroom audio data are transcribed in Chinese characters with the software *Transcriber*, following its transcribing convention (see Appendix). An approximate English translation for each turn in the excerpts is provided right beside the turn, and the salient paralinguistic features are also noted. All the names in the excerpts are pseudonyms.

4. Dialogic Interaction: Learning Facilitation

The interactions in Excerpt 1 in this section and Excerpt 2 in the next section take place right after students' silent reading of the texts in question and before the session of teacher's systematic explanation of the text in the first class of a new lesson unit. Both of the two teachers try to, through asking students questions, involve students in classroom interaction. However, as we will see in the following analysis, the interactions between the teacher and students in the two excerpts reflect two different ways in which questions are used to construct opportunities for students learning.

Excerpt 1

1	Teacher	好，那你们在德丰小学已经读了五年的书，%% 今年是第五年。有谁能够告诉老师你们这五年来有没有碰过一些 %% 同学啊，自私的行为，不要讲名字，只能说说他一些自私的行为，讲出来。%% 来，耀东，说说看。	Ok, you have been studying in Defeng Primary School for 5 years, %% this year is the 5 th year. Who can tell me some selfish behaviors of your %% classmates that you found in these 5 years. Don't tell the name. You can only tell his selfish behaviors. %% Ok, Yaodong, have a try.
2	Yaodong	大概 [\$/]- 就是我 -[\$/] 。	Perhaps [\$/]- it is my -[\$/].
3	Teacher	你要说你自己很自私，怎样个自私法，都可以，没问题。	If you want to say you are very selfish, how selfish, it's ok, no problem.
4	Qiyong	老师，我讲。	Teacher, me.

5	Teacher	Hah? %% 你自己有自私的行为呢, 你要讲出来也行, 不一定是说你朋 _ 同学的。好, 来, 齐英。	Hah? %% If you have selfish behaviors of yourself, you can also tell them. Not necessarily of your friend _ classmates. Ok, Qiying.
6	Qiying	我的一个朋友 hor。	I have a friend hor.
7	Teacher	Ah。	Ah.
8	Qiying	他自己有 _ 那个笔 hor, and then hor,	He had his _ own pens hor, and then hor,
9	Teacher	Ah。	Ah.
10	Qiying	向我借。	Borrowed from me.
11	Teacher	他自己有笔却向你借。	He had his own pens but wanted to borrow from you.
12	Qiying	Ah。	Ah.
13	Teacher	那你怎么知道他自己有笔呢?	Then how do you know he had his own pens?
14	Qiying	因为我坐在他旁边 hor, 然后 hor, 我知道他有一个笔嘛。	Because I sat beside him hor, then hor, I knew he had a pen.
15	Teacher	Ah, 那么, 他有说出他的理由吗? 为什么他要向你借笔呢?	Ah, then, did he say his reasons? Why did he want to borrow a pen from you?
16	Qiying	没有。	No.
17	Teacher	没有。那你凭什么能够判断他是 = 这种是一种自私的行为呢? 明白我的意思吗? 既然他跟你借笔, 你又知道他的文具盒里有很多支笔, 他又没有把理由告诉你, 你又怎么能够判断这是一种自私的行为呢? 来, 有谁能够帮他回答? 来, 班长。	No. Then on what basis did you make the judgment he is = this is a selfish behavior? Understand me? Since he wanted to borrow a pen from you, you knew he had many pens in his pencil box, and he didn't tell you the reasons, then how could you judge it as a selfish behavior? Ok, who can help Qiying to answer? Ok, monitor.
18	Monitor	Hah?	Hah?
19	Teacher	刚才我问的问题明白吗?	Do you understand the question I just asked?
20	Monitor	Ah。	Ah.

21	Teacher	啊。齐英说，他的同学跟他借笔，但是齐英发现他的文具盒里有很多支笔。然后呢，他的同学又没有告诉他借笔的理由，%%好，他凭什么能够判断呢，是这个同学很自私？	Ah. Qiying said, his friend borrowed a pen from him, but Qiying found there were many pens in his pencil box. Then, his classmate didn't tell him why he wanted to borrow a pen, %% Ok, how could he make the judgment that his friend was selfish?
22	Monitor	啊，因为 hor，可能他知道他的朋友，因为 hor，他觉得他 = 他 = 他的那些笔没有什么用，觉得齐英的那些笔比较好用，所以就向他 _ 跟他借。	Ah, because hor, maybe he knew that his friend, because hor, he felt that he = he = his pens are of no use, felt Qiying's pens are good to use, so from him _ borrowed from him.
23	Teacher	Ah，但是这能够证明呢，他的同学是自私的吗？	Ah, but can this prove, his classmate is selfish?
24	Student	不能 [够。]	Can [not/.
25	Student	[不] 对！	[No/.
26	Teacher	自私，我们 = 我们的定义是什么？	Selfishness, our = our definition is what?
27	Monitor	自私就是 [(..) 只为自己] 着想。	Selfish means [only think of oneself/.
28	Student	[自己东西。]	[One's own things./
29	Teacher	Ah。那么他那，刚才那个借笔的那_ 这件事情呢，有没有 _	Ah. Then his, his behavior of borrowing pens _ is it _
30	Monitor	Ah，有 = 有 = 有。	Ah, yes = yes = yes.
31	Teacher	有吗？	Yes?
32	Monitor	他自己用那个 ink hor，然后不想到 ah，齐英 hor，以后会可不可以用，人家用完了 \$。	He used that ink hor, then didn't know, ah, Qiying hor, later will use his or not, he used already \$.
33	Teacher	那是 [\$/- 你的推断，对不对？ -[/	That's [\$/- your deduction, right? -[/
34	Monitor	\$	\$
35	Teacher	好，但是他有没有真正这样想呢？齐英有没有 _ ok，比	Ok, but did he really think like this? Does Qiying _ ok, for example, did Qiying

		方说，齐英你有没有跟那个同学借那支笔？ 有没有跟他借笔过？	borrow pens from the classmate? Have you ever borrowed pens from him?
36	Qiyang	(.) 有。	(.) Yes.
37	Teacher	有。他有没有借给你？	Yes. Did he lend to you?
38	Qiyang	## 有。	## Yes.
39	Teacher	啊，他如果有借给你，怎么 = 你怎么能够说 [\$/]- 是自私 -[/] 的呢？	Ah, if he lent his pens to you, how come = how can you say [\$/]- he is selfish -[/] ?
40	Class	\$\$	\$\$
41	Teacher	[/]- 对不对 -[/] ?	[/]- Right -[/] ?

The exemplar text of this unit is about how a selfish boy (selfish in terms of not willing to help his classmates with their studies) finally changed his attitude after he received much help from his classmates when he was back to school from hospital. In asking students questions to discuss what constitutes selfish behavior, the teacher creates a context in which students have the floor to share their personal experiences through interaction with their teacher. Throughout the interaction, most of the questions the teacher asks are those to which he does not have an answer (such as in turns 1, 13, 15). To put it another way, the students, rather than the teacher, are the primary knowers, and the teacher is seeking opinions rather than facts from the students. For example, after Qiyang says that his friend wanted to borrow a pen from him even though the friend had his own pens (turns 6, 8, 10), the teacher builds upon the responses, asking a referential question (“Then how do you know he had his own pens” in turn 13) to scaffold Qiyang to think further about the behavior of the friend to understand what constitutes selfish behavior. And in so doing, the teacher engages Qiyang further in classroom discourse by requiring him to use the target language to reason for his argument.

The effect of the questions on students’ language use can also be found in the strategies used by the teacher when he reformulates questions. In turn 17, thinking of the difficulty in putting the factors together (“Then how do you know he had his own pens?” in turn 13 and “Why did he want to borrow a pen from you?” in turn 15) on the part of the student, the teacher summarizes the points and builds upon the responses given by Qiyang with a probing questioning (“... then how could you judge it as a selfish behavior?”). This also takes place when the monitor is nominated to answer the questions. The teacher by repeating the question in turn 21 provides the monitor with necessary scaffolded assistance to help him get a whole picture of the task in question and asks him to make a

judgment on whether the behavior of Qiying's friend is a selfish one or there are some scenarios that might make the behavior a selfish one. This summary of points and repetition of the questions engages students with each other's idea and provides a good chance for students to think critically and reason dialogically (turn 22).

Another point related to the construction of opportunities for students' discourse participation by teacher questioning is the appropriate feedback strategies of the teacher. While interacting with the students, the teacher uses many back-channeling cues to show his attention to and acknowledgement of student discourse contribution while withholding evaluations on students' responses. By withholding evaluations, the teacher on the one hand encourages students to use the target language to express themselves, on the other hand, makes the interaction more like authentic communication where participants rarely provide evaluations on each other's discourse. For example, when Qiying is telling his story in answering the teacher's question, the teacher acknowledges his contribution with back-channeling cues ("Ah" in turns 7 and 9), and re-voices the story (turn 11) to get more students to think about it. What is more important is that the teacher often builds upon student responses with follow-up questions (e.g., "how do you know he had his own pens?" in turn 13, "Why did he want to borrow a pen from you?" in turn 13, "how could you judge it as a selfish behavior" in turn 17), thus making the interaction more dialogically constructed.

Generally, the conversation is coherently constructed around the questions raised by the teacher for the understanding of text with students communicating in the target language. In the excerpt, the teacher skillfully integrates the use of different types of questions. While he uses referential questions for students to use Chinese for self-expression, he also uses display questions to recap and consolidate existing knowledge in class and link students' existing knowledge to the problem in question (such as checking students' understanding of the definition of "selfishness" in turn 26). By using these display questions, the teacher diagnoses the students' ZPD for the fine-tuning of his ensuing discourse to promote students' understanding and discourse participation. In addition, in the interaction, the teacher consistently acknowledges students' contributions while withholding evaluations. These feedbacks provide students with necessary encouragement and support while they are expressing themselves, thus making the interaction coherent and sustained. The conversation very much features dialogic interaction where teachers ask referential questions and build upon student responses with probing questions for collaborative knowledge building. This dialogic feature of the interaction can also be found in the sequential organization of the interaction in which the teacher directs the question for Qiying to the monitor (turn 17) and

finally directs the question back to Qiying (turn 35). This distribution of cognition in dialogic interaction perfectly fulfills the teacher's pedagogic purpose of getting students to understand what selfishness is while engaging them in using the target language for classroom discussion, which is conducive to the development of students' communicative competence in Chinese.

5. Teacher Dominance: Limited Opportunity for Learning

Excerpt 2

1	Teacher	可以吗? 请问义斜, 故事中发生在什么地方? 故事发生在哪里?	Ok? Please tell us, Yixie, where this story took place? Where did this story take place?
2	Yixie	学校。	School.
3	Teacher	好啊, 故事绝对不是发生在我们的学校。那间学校有自己的名, 请问是什么? 刚在我好像已经说了, 而且	Ah, the story absolutely didn't take place in our school. The school has its name, what is the name? I seemed to have said it just now, and...
4	Yixie	英国威廉皇家学院。	Yingguo Wilian Huangjia Xueyuan.
5	Teacher	以后请你站起来啊, 你的屁股不要粘在那边啊。Okay, 好。彦卫, 请你告诉我故事中的其中一个人物, 一个就好。	Next time please stand up. Your butt never sticks there. Okay, alright. Yanwei, please tell me one of the characters in the story, one is enough.
6	Yanwei	什么意思?	What?
7	Teacher	故事中有提到某一些人物, 请你告诉我其中一个。	In the story there are some characters. Please tell me one of them.
8	Yanwei	布拉格 ((ge4))。	Bu la ge ((ge4)).
9	Teacher	布拉格 ((ge3))。另外一个他是他的?	Bu la ge ((ge3)). Another one is his?
10	Yanwei	父亲。	Father.
11	Teacher	父亲。还有提到谁? 如果讲到学院, 学校, 应该会提到	Father. Who else are mentioned? If college, school is talked about, there should be...

12	Yanwei	[学生。]	[Students].
13	Class	*CHORUS* [校长。]	*CHORUS* [Headmaster].
14	Teacher	校长。还有?	Headmaster. Who else?
15	Yanwei	老师。	Teacher.
16	Teacher	没有老师。	No teacher.
17	Class	*CHORUS* 同学。	*CHORUS* Student.
18	Teacher	同学们，对。而跟这故事 很有关的是什么东西?	Students, right. What is closely related to this story?
19	Yanwei	大皮鞋。	Big leather shoes.
20	Teacher	大皮鞋。你们脚穿的是皮 鞋吗?	Big leather shoes. Are the shoes you wear on your feet leather shoes?
21	Class	*CHORUS* 不是。	*CHORUS* No.
22	Teacher	不 [是，是什么?]	No. [It is what?]
23	Student	[是袜子。]	[Socks.]
24	Student	袜子。	Socks.
25	Student	鞋。	Shoes.
26	Teacher	袜子，放在外面的是?	Socks, then outside of the socks are?
27	Class	*CHORUS* 鞋子。	*CHORUS* shoes.
28	Teacher	哪种鞋?	What kind of shoes?
29	Student	布鞋。	Cloth shoes.
30	Teacher	不叫布鞋。	Not called cloth shoes
31	Student	白鞋。	White shoes.
32	Student	学校鞋。	School shoes.
33	Teacher	也不叫白鞋。只有 [E]- Mr Yeo -[E] 穿皮鞋，那 你们都穿什么?	Not called white shoes either. Only [E]- Mr Yeo -[E] wears leather shoes, then what do you wear?
34	Student	学校的鞋子。	School shoes.
35	Teacher	那种布料叫什么?	What is the name of the mate- rial of the shoes?
36	Student	白鞋。	White shoes.
37	Teacher	不叫白鞋。[白色] 是因 为他的颜色。	Not called white shoes. [White] is the color of the shoes.
38	Student	[皮鞋。]	Leather [shoes.]
39	Teacher	[E]- Mr Yeo -[E] 才穿皮 鞋。	[E]- Mr Yeo -[E] wears leather shoes.

40	Student	学校穿的鞋。	Shoes worn in school.
41	Teacher	这个东西！这是什么？	This! This is called what?
42	Student	老师，我知道。船鞋。	Teacher, I know. Boat shoes.
43	Teacher	英文说 [E]- Canvas shoe -[E] 对吗？	In English [E]- canvas shoe -[E], right?
45	Student	啊。	Ah.
46	Teacher	华文叫什么？	What is it called in Chinese?
47	Student	帆布。	Canvas.
48	Teacher	对，帆布鞋啊，你们穿的 都是这一种。这个故事跟 大皮鞋有关系。这双大皮 鞋 (..) 大到 (.) 怎么 样？继续看下去。	Right, canvas shoes, this is the type you all wear. This story has something to do with big leather shoes. This pair of big leather shoes (..) how big (.) are they? Let's continue.

There are similarities between this excerpt and the one discussed earlier: both classes are similar in size, composition and level, and the teachers' aims are more or less the same, focusing on engaging students in classroom interaction for better understanding of the text. Yet, there are significant differences in teachers' questioning process, the length of student response and overall quality of teacher and student contributions. While there obviously exist some variables which make direct comparison difficult – teacher beliefs and teaching styles, different texts in terms of content (the former is a story about the selfishness of a school boy, while the latter is a story about a British boy who came from a poor family but later became a famous scientist), to mention just a few – there are nonetheless substantial differences in teacher's questioning behaviors which contribute to the different discourse patterns and the construction of opportunities for student learning.

While in Excerpt 1 the questions asked by the teacher are often referential, the questions the teacher asks of the students in Excerpt 2 are almost all display questions (e.g., “Where did this story take place?” in turn 1, “In the story there are some characters. Please tell me one of them” in turn 7), which very often only require students to give only one or two words for factual recall or reproduction of knowledge (such as, “School” in turn 2, “Bu la ge” in turn 9, “Father” in turn 10, “Student” in turn 17). By asking these questions, the teacher in Excerpt 2 wants to check whether students understood the target text in question after their silent-reading of that text. Whether or not students could display their knowledge to answer these questions is valuable to her pedagogical decision-making in the next move. Therefore, the teacher's use of display questions at the initial stage of

her talk with students seems to serve her pedagogical purpose well, as students give pertinent answers to her questions.

Beyond this initial similarity, however, there is a clear difference between the two teachers in terms of the specific questioning strategies they use, which suggests different level of student involvement in classroom discourse and opportunity for learning. While in Excerpt 1 the teacher can adapt his questioning strategies to meet the need of the students, the teacher in Excerpt 2 obviously lacks means to fine-tune her discourse, which provides a very limited amount of scaffolded assistance for students' classroom learning with regard to constructing opportunities for target language use. In the interaction, to get students to use the Chinese word for *canvas* to describe their shoes, the teacher asks a series of closed questions (e.g., "Are the shoes you wear on your feet leather shoes?" in turn 20, "Socks, then outside of the socks are?" in turn 26, "What kind of shoes?" in turn 28). However, there is obviously no uptake of the teacher's question whose purpose is not clear to the students, and the teacher lacks means to scaffold students in arriving at the answers with appropriate questioning strategies. All that the students do is to guess what the teacher wants (e.g., "Socks" in turn 24, "Cloth shoes" in turn 29, "White shoes" in turn 31), and the teacher rejects students' answers one after another until the correct answer has been produced ("Canvas" in turn 47). In general, the interaction becomes a guessing game in which the students try best to guess what is in the mind of the teacher. Therefore, the questions asked by the teacher have very limited contribution to constructing opportunities for students' classroom discourse participation.

The feedback strategies used by the teacher in Excerpt 2 are also different from those used in Excerpt 1. While in Excerpt 1 acknowledgement is given and direct evaluation is withheld to encourage students' discourse engagement, the teacher in Excerpt 2 evaluates students' responses very frequently and many of them are negative evaluations (e.g., "No teacher" in turn 16, "Not called cloth shoes" in turn 30, "Not called white shoes either" in turn 33). These negative feedbacks always keep the students on the track to arrive at correct answers, and discourage the potential for long and sustained student output. More importantly, the teacher cannot adapt her questioning strategies to scaffold the students after the negative evaluations are given.

While there is clear evidence that teacher-student exchanges in Excerpt 1 feature dialogic interaction where students and teacher are involved in meaningful communication, the discourse in Excerpt 2 is very pre-scripted where the teacher as the primary knower of knowledge controls the flow of the talk with the questions she asks of the students. Students are only involved in reproducing information that is already known to the teacher without chances to give personal

responses. From turn 20 to turn 48, the students, by giving short answers, are put in a position to guess what their teacher wants and their answers are often negatively evaluated or rejected by their teacher. In such a case, few communicative opportunities are constructed for students to use Chinese for participating in classroom discourse, and scaffolded assistance for students learning is very limited.

6. Conclusion

In this study, drawing upon the sociocultural approach, we compared the questioning behaviors of two Chinese language teachers. We examined the dynamics of teachers' questioning process and its effects on constructing opportunities for students' language use and scaffolding students learning. We have shown that in one class, the teacher, by asking students' referential questions and adjusting his questioning strategies, successfully created opportunities for maximum learner involvement in meaningful communication. The teachers' withholding of evaluative feedback allows for further discourse engagement on the part of the students, and involves students in dialogic interaction for the development of their communicative competence. However, in the other class, the teacher hinders student communicative involvement and discourse participation because of her predominant use of display questions and use of negative feedback, and lack of fine-tuning of discourse in providing students with necessary scaffolded assistance.

In the literature, teacher questioning is believed to play an important role in facilitating students' L2 learning. However, many studies on teacher questioning behaviors treat teacher questioning as isolated and discrete pedagogic behavior, while paying little if any attention to the dynamics of the questioning process. Recent development in research on L2 teaching and learning suggests an alternative approach, that is, Sociocultural Theory, for examination of classroom discourse process and L2 learning. Studies already show that different patterns of teacher-student interaction can create different opportunities for students' use of the target language in classroom discourse participation, and therefore their effects on students' L2 learning are different (Hall & Walsh, 2002; Johnson, 1995).

Our study adds to this line of research by focusing on teacher's questioning process. In our analysis of teacher questioning behavior within its discourse context, we showed that teacher questioning is a complex discourse phenomenon. It can be of different discourse patterns which construct different opportunities for students' L2 learning. Its effects on students' L2 learning depend largely on how questions are asked rather than merely on what types of question are asked, such

as teachers' fine-tuning of discourse to meet the needs of students by repeating or simplifying a question, and building upon student's response with follow-up questions.

If we consider language learning as a process of students' engagement with active problem-solving, a process in which students use the target language for communicating ideas through participating in classroom discourse, then the question-answer exchanges between teacher and students are not merely teaching activities, but learning opportunities as well. The quality of teacher questioning to a certain extent determines the opportunities for language learning. The study reported in this paper, from a pedagogic perspective, shows how teacher's questioning behaviors can contribute to the construction of opportunity for students' discourse participation and scaffolding language learning.

The study should help Chinese language teachers and teacher educators, not only in Singapore but in other contexts as well, build a better understanding of the dynamics in L2 classroom interactions and the influence of teacher-student interaction on CSL/CFL learning. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, insights into the effects of classroom interaction in general and teacher questioning in specific on students' L2 learning largely come from studies on ESL/EFL classrooms; very limited research has been conducted on CSL/CFL classroom interaction and learning. Recently, a few Chinese language researchers (e.g., Jin, 2004) have highlighted the importance of teaching questioning in CSL/CFL learning and called for training on Chinese language teachers' questioning skills. However, what is actually happening in the "black-box" of Chinese language classrooms is still not clear to the Chinese teaching and research community. In addition, previous discussions in the Chinese community on Chinese pedagogy have not systematically built classroom discourse analysis into their rationale of instruction design. In these regards, the current study would provide Chinese language teachers with an understanding of the nature of CSL classroom interaction, and a framework whereby they can reflect upon their own pedagogical behaviors (for example, by asking such questions as "What was the purpose of my asking this question?" and "Did my questioning achieve the expected effect in getting learners to use the target language?") and conduct appropriate action research to fine-tune their pedagogy to meet the communicative needs of learners. In addition, this study would provide a methodological tool that Chinese language educators can use in designing appropriate pre-service or in-service professional development materials, and raising teachers' awareness of how classroom discourse structure and dynamics influence the extent to which students are given the opportunity to participate in classroom interaction for CSL/CFL learning.

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Appendix: Transcription Conventions

%%	Inaudible background conversation
\$	Laughter
\$\$	Extended laughter
[\$]	Laughter quality in utterance
—	Cut off (after incomplete utterance)
=	Latching (without any pause)
[	Overlap onset
]	Overlap termination
[E]	Code-switch to English
##	Background noise
(.)	Gap between utterances
(..)	Extended gap between utterances
...	Trail off
(())	Transcriber comment on the utterance
CHORUS	Chorus voice
Teacher	Teacher
Qiyang etc.	Names of students nominated by teacher
Student	Student whose name is not identified
Class	Whole class

汉语作为外语的习得研究---理论基础与课堂实践, by 温晓虹
(Xiaohong Wen). 北京大学出版社, 2008. 375 Pages. ¥48.

The book is an excellent addition to the research studies on the acquisition of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL). It consists of a critical review of relevant theories on foreign language acquisition and the author's empirical studies on CFL acquisition. In addition, the author has presented very informative discussion on the practical implications of her research studies and recent theories from the relevant fields for Chinese language pedagogy. It is a valuable book with a comprehensive coverage of various foreign language acquisition theories and the author's own insights on the important issues concerning CFL acquisition research and Chinese language pedagogy. Many of the main points that the author makes are supported by research evidence from her carefully designed empirical studies. As the author says, the book can be used by CFL students or as a reader for CFL educators to reflect on important issues concerning CFL acquisition and pedagogy.

The book is divided into five chapters. Chapter One is a critical and systematic review of the research studies that deal with various aspects of foreign language acquisition with frequent reference to the CFL context, i.e. how foreign language acquisition studies inform the CFL field both in terms of the understanding of the nature of the CFL acquisition process and in terms of the exploration of effective Chinese language pedagogy. The theoretical review and discussion is organized in 4 major sections. Section 1 is an analytical summary of schools of thought on the nature of language acquisition: behaviorism, theories from the fields of transformational-generative grammar, and cognitive linguistics. Section 2 compares the L1 and L2 acquisition processes in terms of the order of acquisition of morphology and syntax, language acquisition mechanism, inter-language, the critical period hypothesis and other relevant aspects of language acquisition research. Section 3 is a brief historical sketch of teaching methodologies. In Section 4 the author gives an informative discussion on the research studies on error correction and its pedagogical implications.

Chapter Two explores the process of CFL acquisition. It is composed of 5 sections, all of which are derived from the author's empirical research studies on how native speakers of English acquire aspects of Chinese grammar. Section 1 deals with the acquisition of the ba-structure and discusses how well students of different proficiency levels use various types of ba sentences. Section 2 is a study on how existential sentences are acquired, confirming other research findings that unmarked elements such as existential sentences are acquired more easily with-

out much influence from the learners native language. In Section 3 the author reports her study on the acquisition of Chinese aspect markers, pointing out, among other things, the acquisition order of *le*, *guo* and *zhe* in the learning of CFL. Section 4 is a report of the author's empirical study of the acquisition of sentence final *le* and the verbal aspect suffix *le*, which found that sentence final *le* is acquired later than verbal aspect suffix *le*. It also discussed how pragmatic factors and the role of native language affect the acquisition of marked elements such as sentence final *le* during the acquisition process. The final section of this chapter deals with acquisition order in the CFL context, pointing out the importance of aligning the instructional sequence with the order of acquisition. In each of the sections the author offers a careful analysis of the previous relevant studies on the issue and describes her research methodology and the results of her research findings in relation to the understanding of the CFL acquisition process and pedagogical implications. In my opinion, Chapters Two and Three are especially informative and valuable for graduate students of CFL and foreign language educators who want to explore the nature of CFL acquisition empirically. Instead of just presenting a summary of her research findings and pedagogical implications, the author presents her original research with special care and clarity on the discussion of research methods, which others will find useful to design and implement empirical research studies of their own for the study of CFL acquisition. In addition to her summary of research methods at the beginning of the chapter, she described her research methods very clearly and also raised very instructive discussion questions at the end of the chapter that may guide others to develop or sharpen their research skills.

Chapter Three explores how learner variables, both cognitive and affective, influence the learning and acquisition of Chinese as a foreign language. The chapter is divided into two major parts. Part One, Sections 1 and 2, deals with learners' processing strategies for reading and listening and the second part is on how students' motivation and learning purpose affect their learning of CFL. Section 1 is a report of the author's empirical study on how EFL and CFL learners process their native language and the foreign language they learn. It was pointed out that native speakers of Chinese rely more on the semantic clues whereas native speakers of English rely more on the word order. The results of the research provides important information on the nature of the CFL acquisition process and also highlights significant individual differences in terms of the learners' processing strategies. In Section 2, the author discusses how CFL learners' character recognition strategies change as they become more proficient with the Chinese language. For instance, beginning and intermediate CFL learners use more phonetic clues in their character recognition than advanced learners. The author notes

the necessity of certain pedagogical treatment in our instructional practice and materials development that help beginning students to develop their strategies of using phonetic clues for more effective character recognition. Section 3 consists of the report of the author's study on the motivation factors of different types of learners and a discussion on how learners can be motivated to put more effort towards successful learning of the language. Chapter Three concludes with a report of the author's study on how students react to courses offered via WebCT technology.

Chapters Four and Five are devoted to the discussion of how foreign language acquisition theories and research findings inform language pedagogy. For instance, a section is devoted to what constitutes effective input and how input can be turned into intake effectively. The research on the output hypothesis and its pedagogical implications are also addressed. The discussion on the relevant research findings is always followed by instructional examples to guide the design of effective CFL teaching and learning practice. There are sections that deal with general guiding principles for successful teaching and learning of the Chinese language; there are also sections on the theoretical and practical issues about the teaching of vocabulary and grammar. Chapter Five starts with a very comprehensive and informative discussion on task-based language instruction and continues with sections on how research findings can be utilized to enhance the teaching of listening, speaking and reading. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how culture can be integrated into the teaching and learning of CFL.

This book is an excellent contribution to the CFL field. It contains a comprehensive and critical summary of the important issues concerning the nature of foreign language acquisition in general and CFL in particular. It distinguishes itself from many other books on CFL acquisition and pedagogy in that many of its theoretical claims and pedagogical suggestions are supported by research evidence from empirical studies. The discussion questions at the end of each chapter are also well designed to help readers of this book to develop or enhance their understanding of the nature of the CFL acquisition process and their research and teaching skills. Developing an adequate understanding of the major issues and teaching excellence, like learning a foreign language, takes time and practice and constant reflection. The questions at the end of each chapter can help the users of the book reinforce their understanding of the important issues discussed in the chapter and reflect on what they learn from the book and what they do as a teacher or researcher in the field of teaching CFL. Pedagogically it would be more useful if the author could provide some keys to the questions that she raises or additional relevant readings of research studies by others that may help answer the questions in order to strengthen the readers' understanding of the important

issues. This book would be a good textbook for a CFL graduate course, but it should be used together with one of the following books (Brown 2001, Hadley 2001, 徐子亮、吴仁甫 2005) that deal with, more comprehensively and systematically, the important issues of foreign language pedagogy such as methods and techniques, classroom management, integrating the four skills in a communicative teaching and learning framework, testing and assessment etc. The book under review focuses more on the exploration of the nature of language acquisition, but the books recommended below focus more systematically on the important issues concerning language pedagogy. When used together they can serve the CFL students much better.

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Chinese Breeze Graded Reader Series, Level 1: 300 Word Level.

Edited by Yuehua Liu, Chengzhi Chu. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2007-2008. 6 volumes. \$5.00 each.

Those of us who have been teaching beginning and low-intermediate level Chinese language courses are all too familiar with Fred Fang-yu Wang's ingeniously crafted *The Lady in the Painting* (Yale University Press, 1969). Within the limits of a vocabulary written with merely 300 characters, Wang manages to retell a well-known Chinese folktale in a vivid manner that is accessible to students who have studied Chinese for only a few months. Many beginning learners have experienced excitement, encouragement, and newly-found confidence when they hold their "first real book" in Chinese and read the engaging story with ease and enjoyment. They do not have to constantly go back and forth between the text and a glossary, thanks to the frequent recurrence of familiar characters in the text. The fact that this little book has remained in print for so many years and has recently been published in an expanded version accompanied by a multimedia courseware package speaks to its irresistible appeal to both Chinese language teachers and students.

On the other hand, however, the "classic" status Wang's little book has enjoyed for the past four decades reveals a dire situation in the Chinese learning community: There have been too few full-length stories written in Chinese for learners of Chinese as a foreign language! Therefore, there is a pressing need in our field for authentic extensive reading materials written with a controlled vocabulary that can propel beginning learners to read for fun, read for pleasure, and thus motivate them to read for more on their own. *Chinese Breeze Graded Reader Series* is an exciting new set of readers that not only meets this urgent need, but also sets a new standard for future extensive reading publications in our field.

Although similar to *The Lady* in terms of its intention to facilitate learners to move beyond the stage of "learning to read" toward "reading to learn," *Chinese Breeze* exceeds its predecessor in many aspects. There are several reasons why.

First, while *The Lady* focuses on *character* and *character recognition* as the basic building blocks to improve learners' reading skills, *Chinese Breeze* emphasizes *word* and *pleasure reading* as the stepping stones to develop learners' reading fluency.

Second, while the 300 characters in *The Lady* are chosen based on a textbook titled *Read Chinese I* compiled by the same author (Wang), the 300 words in *Chinese Breeze* are selected based on sophisticated computational analyses of very large written and spoken Chinese corpora as well as a databank of more than

forty leading Chinese language textbooks used in various countries. This scientific selection of base vocabulary not only guarantees the words chosen to be those most commonly used in daily spoken and written discourses by native Chinese, but also ensures that this series of readers (used as supplementary material) will be much easier to “plug” into any language program.

Third, while *The Lady* showcases but one traditional Chinese folktale, *Chinese Breeze* includes stories with a wide spectrum of themes ranging from detective stories to romance, all using contemporary China as the backdrop. Therefore, students will not only learn about Chinese cultural traditions, but also get exposed to contemporary social issues such as poverty and the plight of public education.

Fourth, given the fact that *The Lady* is penned by a veteran language teacher (and a very talented one for that matter), the discourse of the narrative nevertheless suffers from the inevitable problem of “teacher talk.” *Chinese Breeze* avoids this potential shortcoming by inviting professional writers who usually write for a native audience to create the original stories. Their imagination of plots and unique depiction of characters adds charm and depth to these stories that one can hardly find in books published for learners of Chinese as a foreign language. These stories are then polished by the two editors who are veteran researchers and teachers of Chinese as a foreign language to ensure their readability for learners at this level.

Chinese Breeze is scheduled to include altogether over sixty volumes covering eight grades ranging from a 300 word level vocabulary all the way to a 4,500 word level vocabulary. As of now, only the six volumes of the 300 word level have been published. Therefore, this review will only focus on these six volumes.

The six titles are *Wrong, Wrong, Wrong* 错, 错, 错!; *Can I Dance with You?* 我可以请你跳舞吗?; *Two Children Seeking the Joy Bridge* 两个想上天的孩子; *I Really Want to Find Her* 我一定要找到她; *Left and Right: the Conjoined Brothers* 向左向右; and *Whom Do You Like More* 你最喜欢谁? The first two titles are suspenseful detective stories involving two cases. In the first case, the police have to figure out which one of the beautiful identical twins has been murdered and who has committed the vicious crime. In the second case, a skilled computer analyst becomes a fugitive on the run in search of the bad guys who have framed him in a high-tech bank robbery. *Two Children* narrates a heart-warming story of two elementary students’ persistent search for the heavenly bridge that enables the annual reunion of the legendary Cowherd and his wife the Weaving Maid. *I Really Want to Find Her* relates a story of three American college students’ journey to China, trying to find and help a girl in a photo left behind by their late professor. The girl turns out to be a big-city college graduate

who forfeits the opportunity to go abroad and chooses to teach in a mountain school in a remote village. *Left and Right* is the rarely-told story of two conjoined brothers, highlighting their happiness and their hassles from childhood to adulthood. *Whom Do You Like More*, using the 1980's and a once well-known social phenomenon called "left-behind spouses" as the backdrop, tells the story of a young man who has to make a difficult choice between going to America to join his wife and staying behind to develop his own software.

As a native speaker, I have found all six stories to be enjoyable to read. The surprises and excitement that these twisted plot lines bring about are not at all hindered by the constraint of the limited vocabulary with which the original writers and editors have to work.

For language learners, all six books will prove to be pleasurable and accessible reading materials. I can imagine students in my intermediate Chinese courses picking up any volume at this level and starting to read without too much difficulty. The base vocabulary items reappear in various contexts on different pages, a research-informed feature that ensures better mastery of newly acquired words. Although each story has to introduce additional new words (ranging from 50 to 81) to facilitate storytelling, all the new words are glossed with pinyin and English translations in footnotes and indexed throughout the text as well as in a "Vocabulary Index" at the end of each book. The English translations of these new words are concise and accurate. Like the base vocabulary, all the new words recur multiple times throughout the book to build readers' familiarity with them. Each page usually does not have more than five new words, a density that can be easily handled by students at this level.

All of the six stories are divided into short chapters. After each chapter, there are exercises to help readers check their reading comprehension. There are various types of exercises including multiple choice, true-false, arranging sequence of events, and "Global Understanding" where the reader is supposed to discover and correct the mistakes in a retelling of the story.

"Global Understanding" proves to be the most demanding activity because the reader has to remember the whole story and every little detail of it. Some of the "Global Understanding" questions are contextualized as real-life tasks that make them more meaningful and realistic. For example, in *Wrong, Wrong, Wrong*, the reader is asked to correct the mistakes in the notes taken by a detective when he investigates the crime. All the exercises come with keys at the end of the book, which is a nice feature that will help students to interact with the texts more effectively on their own.

The physical layout of the six volumes is appealing and user-friendly. The "Table of Contents" is followed by a list of "Main Characters and Main Place"

which prepares the reader for the story. Each page has between ten and twenty lines, clearly marked so that learners can trace and time their reading. New words are superscripted with an index number and their pinyin and English translations are provided in the footnote section. The main texts are interspersed with excellent illustrations, which add flavor and contextualize the story to facilitate comprehension. The main texts are then followed by a “Vocabulary Index” which includes all the new words introduced in the story, “Exercises,” and keys to all the exercise questions.

Being the first set of publications in this series, *Chinese Breeze: 300 Word Level* nevertheless suffers from a few minor drawbacks, which hopefully can be addressed in the upcoming issues of the series. For example, although both the editors and the original writers have apparently striven to make the discourse in these stories sound as natural and smooth as possible, I still find a few instances where the language is either unnatural or awkward-sounding. In the story *Can I Dance with You*, the opening sentences on the first page read: “这是 2007 年 4 月 30 号的晚上, 一个很好的晚上。北京的这个晚上, 不冷, 也不热。” The phrase “一个很好的晚上” sounds very similar to the English phrase “a very nice evening,” which is seldom used by native Chinese. In this context, this phrase can probably be deleted without damaging the flow of the discourse. On page 5 of the same book, one sentence reads “这时候, 房子里开始响起很好的音乐, ...” Here, it might be more natural to use “很好听的” to replace “很好的”. I have also noticed the limited use of measure words in three of the volumes (*Can I Dance with You*, *Two Children Seeking the Joy Bridge*, and *Whom Do You Like More*). Instead of introducing different measure words for different objects that appear in the stories, the editors apply the more commonly used “个”. Thus, we see phrases such as “一个电脑” and “一个桥,” where “一台电脑” and “一座桥” may sound more natural in those contexts. It is understandable that the editors have to make the difficult choice of what new words should be introduced in the readings and what should be left out. The decision to leave out certain key measure words, however, might potentially undermine the consistent efforts by many language teachers who repeatedly admonish their students to use the correct measure words in Chinese from the very beginning.

I have to point out that these few examples of awkward language use are exceptions rather than the norm in these volumes. I have not found the same problem with the other three volumes at this level. Actually, the flow of language in some volumes sounds extremely natural and smooth (e.g. *Left and Right: the Conjoined Brothers*” and *I Really Want to Find Her*.)

All six volumes in the series come with mini audio CDs that contain the

oral renditions of the stories read by two professionals (both male and female) at two modes of speed: slow and regular. The audio files are in MP3 format, which can be easily downloaded onto a learner's personal iPod. While excited to see these nice features that will facilitate self-learning, my initial enthusiasm was dampened when I made the discovery that a) the 8-centimeter mini CDs can only be played on a PC but not inserted into a Mac. This is due to the fact that a Mac usually comes with a slot-loading CD/DVD drive that "sucks" a standard-sized CD into it, while PCs are usually equipped with a non-slot-loading CD/DVD drive that slides out a tray to receive the CD); b) the claimed "regular" speed of the recordings for four of the six stories (*Can I Dance with You*, *Two Children Seeking the Joy Bridge*, *Left and Right: the Conjoined Brothers*, and *Whom Do You Like More?*) is notably slow in my opinion. It is not the natural regular reading speed one would expect to find in, for instance, recordings made by native Chinese for native listeners.

Would it be possible that these professionally-trained announcers have unconsciously slowed down their speed when they were told these recordings were made for foreigners? Or were they specifically instructed to do so by the publishers? Either way, I hope to hear true *regular* speed recordings in the upcoming CDs that come with the series. To make the audios more accessible for Mac users, the publisher might want to consider the option of making these audio files available on the *Chinese Breeze* website for easy download by customers who have purchased the books.

Additionally, while the "Global Understanding" activity mentioned above is a good check on learners' overall comprehension of the materials after they have read the whole story, some of the questions are designed as "memory tests" rather than "reading comprehension tests." In other words, this activity should aim for "global" and "general" comprehension about the story line, rather than a "local" memory contest that checks readers' ability to remember the smallest detail that is irrelevant to the general plot line. For example, in *Two Children*, the reader has to remember whether it is Mingming's mother or both of his parents who had received the call from the "kidnappers." In *Can I Dance With You*, the reader has to remember whether it is in front of a park or a library that the female protagonist finally meets her boyfriend. Even as a native speaker, I found that I failed to identify some of the mistakes. There are two reasons for this: First, when one reads fast, these little details tend to go unnoticed. Second, cognitively speaking, when one finishes reading a story, usually it is the major plot line and the critical details, not those that are irrelevant, that stand out in one's memory. The purpose of these readers is "extensive reading," not "intensive reading." The design of the "Global Understanding" in some volumes betrays this purpose and might unnec-

essarily frustrate those learners who read for meaning rather than for little details.

Despite the aforementioned minor and easily correctible shortcomings, I highly recommend this series of readers for all Chinese language learners who have completed the low-intermediate level of coursework. All six volumes in this level can be used either as self-learning materials by students, or as supplementary readings by instructors in beginning and intermediate language courses. With their intriguing story lines and well-controlled selection, sequencing, and recurrence of vocabulary, these six little volumes will succeed in helping both heritage speakers and “true” beginners to improve their reading skills in Chinese. Given the high quality of the first batch of books in this series, I look forward to seeing more volumes from this series at higher levels for more advanced learners of Chinese. Since the six volumes I have reviewed are printed in simplified characters, I also look forward to seeing a traditional character version to meet the needs of all types of learners and language programs. Learners of the Chinese language will have many more “real books” to enjoy than merely *The Lady in the Painting* when they embark on their journey to explore the reading world of Chinese.

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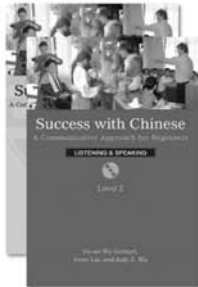
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