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Instructional Effects on Acquisition of Chinese Pragmatics

教学对汉语语用习得的效果

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Abstract: This article reviews data-driven research on instructed pragmatics with a focus on the seven studies that examined Chinese pragmatic instruction. Findings suggest that an effective method of teaching Chinese pragmatics needs to include direct metapragmatic instruction and adequate follow-up practice. The follow-up practice may increase the degree of task complexity to stimulate sufficient classroom discourses (e.g. peer-to-peer, teacher-learner), in order to consolidate learned pragmatic features. Instructors also need to make learning tasks adaptive to learner-related factors such as foreign language aptitude and proficiency. One good way to improve learning tasks is to do action research on teaching methods recommended by previous studies. Finally, instructors may also think about teaching pragmatics beyond pragmatic features at the utterance level (e.g. speech acts) to promote learning pragmatics in interaction.

Keywords: Chinese pragmatics, instructed second language acquisition

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Introduction

In Chinese learning, it is not uncommon for learners to have moments when they fully understand the semantic meaning of an utterance but have problem figuring out its actual function in context. For example, the utterance 我明天不见得有时间 (I will not necessarily have time tomorrow.) contains no vocabulary or grammar beyond the second year’s Chinese textbook at college so its semantic meaning can be easily understood by learners who know the included words and grammar but few of them may understand that this utterance can be used as an indirect refusal to an invitation such as 我们明天一起吃午饭怎么样 (How about eating lunch together tomorrow?). On the other hand, Chinese instructors often provide cultural and social information to introduce new words and sentence structures. For example, 您贵姓 (What is your honorable surname?) is the norm to ask for someone’s surname in a formal situation (e.g. at a business banquet), and 您 (the polite form of you) is often used to show respect to people of higher social status. All these examples are in the scope of pragmatics, which addresses culturally and socially appropriate language use in context.

From a cross-cultural perspective, Thomas (1983) defines two types of pragmatic failure: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failure. Pragmalinguistic failure refers to inaccurate use of linguistic forms to perform a pragmatic function. For example, at a business banquet, one uses 你叫什么名字 (What is your name?, informal) instead of 您贵姓 (What is your honorable surname?, formal) to get to know a new friend. Sociopragmatic failure refers to inappropriate use of linguistic forms in context such as using a direct refusal to an invitation from a person of higher social status where an indirect refusal is the norm. Therefore, in order to communicate appropriately in a second language (L2), learners need to develop their pragmatic competence – the competence to use linguistic forms appropriately in context (e.g. Kasper & Rose, 2002;
Taguchi & Roever, 2017). Since 1980s, a growing attention has been paid to pragmatic competence alongside the wide acceptance of communicate competence in L2 learning and teaching. Empirical studies have shown that pragmatic competence does not develop hand in hand with L2 proficiency (for a review see Bardovi-Harlig, 1999, 2013; 2017; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Taguchi & Roever, 2017; Xiao, 2015). In other words, learners’ advancedness in proficiency may not naturally lead to advancedness in pragmatics, calling for the need of pragmatic instruction. This article takes a systematic evidence-based approach to review existing empirical studies to offer suggestions on effective instruction on Chinese pragmatics. Because only seven previous instructional studies focused on L2 Chinese pragmatics (Li, 2012, 2013, 2017; Li & Taguchi, 2014; Yang, 2014, 2016; Yang & Zhu, 2016), and they targeted a limited number of pragmatic features (e.g. request, gratitude, greeting, and compliment), this article extends the review scope to research on other L2s, in order to situate L2 Chinese pragmatics studies in the broader context of instructed second language acquisition and find pedagogical implications that are generalizable to L2 Chinese pragmatic instruction.

**Theoretical Construct of Pragmatic Competence**

The theoretical construct of pragmatic competence is often traced back to Hymes’s (1972) notion of communicative competence, where grammaticality and acceptability are considered equally important (p. 63). According to Hymes, grammaticality refers to rules of grammar whereas acceptability entails rules of performance (language use in situations). Following Hymes, Thomas (1983) distinguishes between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, with the former referring to forms that can perform pragmatic functions and latter referring to appropriate use of these forms in context. Concomitantly, the bifurcated view of pragmatic competence has been reflected in all models of communicative competence (e.g. Canale & Swan, 1980; Canale, 1983;
Bachman & Palmer, 1996, 2010). In Bachman and Palmer’s articulation (2010), language knowledge consists of organizational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. The former includes the knowledge to organize sentences and texts (i.e. grammatical and textual knowledge), whereas the latter encompasses functional and sociolinguistic knowledge of language use. Functional knowledge represents the knowledge of linguistic forms that can perform pragmatic functions while sociolinguistic knowledge refers to the knowledge of appropriateness of using linguistic forms in context. These two core pragmatic components suggest two main learning objectives of pragmatic instruction: linguistic forms for different pragmatic functions and sociopragmatic norms embedded in the use of these linguistic forms.

**Learning Objectives**

Adopting the concept of communicative competence, existing instructional studies have targeted a variety of pragmatic features such as speech acts (e.g. Alcón-Soler, 2015; Eslami, Mirzaei & Dini, 2015; Hernández & Boero, 2018; Kim & Taguchi, 2015; Kondo, 2008; Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Nguyen et al, 2017; Rose & Ng, 2001; Takimoto, 2006; Tateyama, 2001), pragmatic routines (e.g. Bardovi-Halrig, Mossman, & Vellenga, 2015), functional words such as address forms (e.g. Lyster, 1994; Van Compernolle, 2011), interactional markers (e.g. Iwai, 2013), reactive tokens (e.g. Utashiro & Kawai, 2009), hedging devices (e.g. Wishnoff, 2000), hearsay expressions (e.g. Narita, 2012), speech style (e.g. Ishida, 2009), and epistemic stance (e.g. Fordyce, 2014), and conversational implicatures (e.g. Bouton, 1994; Kubota, 1995). Among the seven previous instructional studies on Chinese pragmatics, four focused on request (Li, 2012, 2013, 2017; Li & Taguchi, 2014), three on gratitude (Yang, 2014, 2016), and one on multiple speech acts (Yang & Zhu, 2016), following suit of the trend in instructed pragmatics research on. The advantage of targeting speech acts is that several types of speech acts (e.g.,
request, refusal, apology) have been well examined with L2 data since 1980s (e.g. Wildner-Basset, 1984), and most researchers use the coding scheme developed from the cross-cultural study speech act realization patterns (CCSARP; Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989).

Therefore, cross-cultural comparisons can be done among studies that targeted the same speech act and adopted the CCSARP coding scheme, which can be used as learning objectives in pragmatic teaching. In teaching Chinese speech acts, instructors can ask learners to compare speech acts (e.g. request and apology) in Chinese and their first language so that learners can notice the cross-cultural differences in speech act realization and improve their performance of speech acts in Chinese through peer-peer interactions such as role-plays.

However, traditional speech act theory only deals with pragmatic functions at the utterance level but not those at the discourse level (for a review of speech act theory see Austin, 1962; Searle, 1976; Levinson, 2017). For example, in an invitational conversation, the speaker often insists on the invitation if it is refused, which is considered polite in Chinese (Mao, 1994). In other words, an invitational discourse in Chinese may include exchange of multiple turns rather than one turn pair (invitation-acceptance/refusal). This example resonates with the emergent interest in pragmatics in interaction (for a review see Roever, 2009; Roever & Kasper, 2018; Taguchi & Roever, 2017; Xiao, 2018), which accentuates the importance of pragmatic adaptation in the sequential context of interaction. Despite the growing attention to pragmatics in interaction, no instructional studies have focused on pragmatics in interaction regardless of L2s but two longitudinal studies may shed light on teaching Chinese pragmatics in interaction. Su and Ren (2017) used a three-scenario role-play to examine differences in request making across three proficiency groups: Level 2, 3 & 4 (proficiency determined by a computerized placement test). Data were coded for request strategies, internal modifications, supportive moves, and
sequential placement of supportive moves in pre-, post- and insert expansions. Findings showed no difference in the choice of request strategies across proficiency levels and all the learners used fewer internal modifications than the Chinese native speakers (baseline). At the discourse level, the number of supportive moves in expansions increased from L2 to L3, and to L4, indicating a positive proficiency effect.

Xiao (2017), on the hand, analyzed video-recordings of semi-structured interviews to reveal changes of L2 use of Chinese mitigations over eight weeks of study abroad (SA). Findings showed that at the beginning of SA, the two advanced-level Chinese learners (proficiency determined by course level) used the dànshì / kěshì (‘but’) clause but did not use the four mitigations identified as common sentential mitigation devices in Chinese corpora (reduplication of verbs, verb+yǐxià, the sentence final particle ba, and a/ya). At the end of SA, they started using the sentence final particle ba, but not the other three common sentential mitigation forms. At the discourse level, the learners used single pre- and post-expansions at the beginning of SA; eight weeks later, they started using multiple pre- and post-expansions. The associated stimulated recalls revealed that the learners’ use of mitigation in both the pre- and post-interviews was based on their face (pubic self-image) consideration in interaction. Despite the differences in target pragmatic features, these two studies both engaged their learners in interactions with a native speaker to elicit negotiation of pragmatic moves in the sequential context, implying that a carefully designed oral task such a role-play and a semi-structured interview can be used to teaching Chinese pragmatics in interaction.

In summary, in order to teaching pragmatic competence in L2 Chinese, instructors may select learning objectives (e.g. speech acts) at both the utterance and discourse levels because realization of a pragmatic function is not predetermined but negotiated between interlocutors. To
this end, oral tasks that require exchange of multiple turns (e.g. role-play and semi-structured interview) may be suitable for teaching pragmatics in interaction.

**Effects of Pragmatic Instructions**

In addition to learning objectives, teaching methods are critical to the success of pragmatic instruction. This section reviews studies with different teaching methods to discuss which aspects of pragmatic competence can be advanced by what types of instruction.

**Consciousness Raising Instruction**

A group of instructional pragmatics studies examined the effect of consciousness raising instruction (e.g. Eslami et al., 2015; Ishida, 2009; Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Kondo, 2008; Narita, 2012; Yang, 2016; Yang & Zhu, 2016). Consciousness raising instruction is developed from the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 2010), which claims that noticing the difference in language use is the initial stage of L2 acquisition. Two studies in this camp targeted L2 Chinese. Yang and Zhu (2016) examined effects of consciousness raising instruction on production of multiple speech acts (e.g. greeting, gratitude, request, and compliment) among 20 beginning-level Chinese learners (proficiency determined by course level). Their instruction included a spate of questions that elicited cross-cultural differences in speech act production between Chinese and English. These questions were designed to draw the learners’ attention to sociopragmatic norms reflected in the target speech acts. The learners were evenly divided into two groups. Both groups received the same pragmatic instruction but one before a regular lesson unit and the other after it. After five sessions of pragmatic instruction over the semester, all learners took an oral interview that elicited production of the target speech acts. Findings showed that all learners were able to produce the target speech acts, and there was no between-group difference. Yang (2016), on the other hand, used a pre-post design to examine the effect of a pragmatic instruction
website on the awareness of sociopragmatic norms coded in Chinese expressions of gratitude among 36 learners with the beginning-level and intermediate-level of proficiency. The website (written mainly in English) explicitly explained appropriateness of target expressions in different situations and provided prompts for the learners to analyze Chinese-English differences on gratitude expressing. In addition, the learners wrote weekly journals to reflect on their learning from the website for five weeks. The outcome measure was a metapragmatic assessment task which asked the learners to evaluate appropriateness of the target gratitude utterance in eight scenarios. Two-way ANOVA analyses showed a positive effect of the website-delivered pragmatic instruction. The learners with higher proficiency benefited more from the website than their lower-proficiency counterparts.

The positive effect of consciousness raising instruction has also been reported in studies on other L2s. Fukuya and Zhang (2002) used a pre-post design to examine the effect of recast on request making in L2 English. Different from direct error correction, recast only reformulates a learner’s utterance with correct linguistic forms. In this study, recast was used in a role-play to indirectly raise the learners’ awareness of their inappropriate production of requests. Their findings revealed gains in both accuracy and appropriateness of request production on the post discourse completion task (DCT). Similar findings were reported by Narita’s (2012) study on L2 Japanese hearsay markers, Ishida’s (2009) study on Japanese speech styles, and Kondo’s (2008) study on English refusals. The findings of these studies suggest a positive effect of consciousness raising instruction on L2 pragmatics.

Different from the studies reviewed above, Eslami et al. (2015) compared explicit and implicit consciousness-raising instruction on L2 English request production through email exchanges with native speakers. In this study, the explicit instruction provided metapragmatic
feedback after consciousness-raising instruction on request forms and strategies, which followed by production practice and performance discussion, while with all other components alike, the implicit instruction provided input enhancement (e.g., bold-faced request forms) and guided reflections on cross-linguistic differences in request making but no metapragmatic feedback. According to a DCT and email responses, they found an advantage of the explicit awareness raising instruction over the implicit one, suggesting that if the distinction between explicit and implicit pragmatic instruction is whether or not having metapragmatic information, the explicit instruction is more effective. In fact, the comparison between explicit and implicit instruction has been examined extensively in L2 pragmatics. Many of these studies had consciousness raising instruction in all experimental conditions but only included metapragmatic information in the explicit instructional conditions. The comparison between explicit and implicit instruction is important because different pragmatic features may require different types of instruction. In other words, the multifaceted nature of pragmatic competence requires manipulation of different learning conditions so that different instructional methods could be implemented efficiently in learning different pragmatic features.

**Explicit and Implicit Instruction**

Originated in cognitive psychology, the distinction between explicit and implicit learning is a long stand interest in the field of second language acquisition, which taps into the relationship between consciousness and learning (for a review see R. Ellis, 2005, 2009; Rebuschat, 2013). According to R. Ellis (2009), explicit learning entails conscious acquisition of linguistic knowledge while implicit learning refers to unconscious acquisition of linguistic knowledge (often without metalinguistic awareness). However, explicit and implicit instruction is different from explicit and implicit learning. Explicit instruction refers to instruction that directly draws
learners’ attention to linguistic rules, which often includes metalinguistic explanation of the target rules, while implicit instruction refers to indirect instruction that guides learners to infer rules from enriched input (Ellis, 2009; Norris & Ortega, 2000). In instructional research on L2 pragmatics, explicit instruction often includes direct metapragmatic information while implicit instruction often includes different types of input but no direct metapragmatic information (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig, 2015; Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Kasper, 2001; Taguchi, 2015; Xiao, 2018). For example, Yang (2014) compared the effects of explicit and implicit instruction on the production of Chinese gratitude among 15 advanced-level learners (proficiency determined by course level). The learners were evenly divided into explicit, implicit and control groups. The explicit group received explicit metapragmatic information on gratitude followed by role-play practice, while the implicit group received examples of expressions of gratitude without explanation on related metapragmatic information and completed role-play practice. The control group received online reading exercises with no practice. The outcome measures included a written discourse completion task (DCT) and a written survey. All learners completed the DCT three times (one week before, immediately after, and two weeks after the instruction). Findings showed that the two instructional groups outperformed the control group at the immediate and delayed posttests but there was no difference between the two instructional groups. As stated by the author, the no difference between explicit and implicit instruction may be attributed to the small sample size (five per group) and short time of instruction (30 min). Another possible reason is the quantity and quality of practice. These other instructional studies on L2 Chinese have investigated this issue.

Adopting the input processing theory (VanPattern, 2015; VanPatten, B., & Cadierno, T., 1993), Li (2012) compared the effects of different amounts of input-based practice on learning
L2 Chinese requests. Two experimental groups received the same metapragmatic instruction but different amounts of the follow-up input-based practice. The intensive training (IT) group completed a practice on eight request situations while the regular training (RT) group completed a practice on four request situations. The input-based practice was a computerized learning module which had two sections. In section one, the learners judged the degree of imposition of a request situation written in English and chose the most appropriate request form for a dialogue based on the situation. After that, they read and listened to the complete dialogue twice. In section two, they rated appropriateness of four request utterances according to different situations. The outcome measures included a listening appropriateness judgment test (LJT) and an oral DCT. All participants completed the two outcome measures prior to, immediately after, and two weeks after the instruction. The findings showed that the two experimental groups both achieved significant gains in accurate production of target requests but only the IT group outperformed the control group. No group made gains in the production speed (indicated by speech rate and planning time). With regard to the LJT, no group had significant improvement in judgement accuracy. The IT group had significant gain in the judgement speed (indicated by response time) but did not outperform the RT and control group in this regard. These findings suggest that a higher amount of input-based practice generally can lead to more gains in accurate request production and speedy appropriateness judgement but not in production speed or judgement accuracy. In other words, when separate outcome measures are used to assess pragmatic knowledge and processing differently, the intensity of input-based practice may have different impacts on these two aspects of pragmatic competence.

Li & Taguchi (2014) on the other hand, compared effects between computerized input-based and out-based practice on L2 Chinese request making. After a metapragmatic instruction,
the input-based practice required the learners to make judgement on grammaticality and appropriateness of request forms according to different situations and offered explicit feedback. The output-based practice required the learners to first translate English requests into Chinese with target request-making forms and compared their translation with the correct ones, and then, they judged the nature of provided requests (i.e., a minor or a major request) in different situations. Finally, they completed given request utterances in context. The outcome measures included an LJT and an oral DCT. Their findings showed that only the input group achieved significant gains in both accurate and speedy judgement in the LJT from the pretest to the immediate posttest and to the delayed posttest two week later. With regard to request production, both the input and output group achieved significant gains in the oral DCT from the pretest to the immediate posttest and to the delayed posttest two week later. However, the output group had a higher retention rate than the input group. Similar findings were also reported by Li (2013). In a follow-up study, Li (2017) used the same outcome measures and revealed that different aspects of foreign language aptitudes (rote memory, grammatical sensitivity, and working memory) had different effects on Chinese pragmatic instruction. The input group positively correlated with working memory and reduction in LJT response time at both the immediate and delayed posttests, while the output group positively correlated with grammatical sensitivity and gain in speed rate of request production at the immediate posttest but negatively correlated with rot memory and reduction in planning time of request production at the immediate posttest. Taken together, Li and his colleague’s studies suggest that instructional effects are susceptible to the effects of practice conditions (e.g. input-based and output-based practice) and foreign language aptitude.
In summary, most of the studies on L2 Chinese pragmatics (except Yang, 2014) suggest a positive effect of explicit instruction. However, this positive effective can be mediated by the quantity and quality of follow-up practice (Li, 2012; 2103; Li & Taguchi, 2014) and learners’ personal traits such as foreign language aptitude. Although instructional effects are susceptible to task and learner related factors, these studies suggest an overall preference of explicit on teaching Chinese pragmatics, aligning with instructional studies on L2 English (e.g. Félix-Brasdefefer, 2008; Nguyen et al., 2012; Fordyce, 2014).

**New Trends in Instructed Pragmatics**

Most recent research on instructed pragmatics has gone beyond the traditional paradigm of explicit and implicit instruction, embracing new theoretical frameworks that directly approach classroom activities. From a task-based instruction (TBI) perspective (e.g. Robinson, 2001, 2011), Kim and Taguchi (2015) compared effects of simple and complex tasks on request production in L2 English. After the direct introduction to metapragmatic information on request making, the simple task group was asked to completed a drama script construction task with detailed situational descriptions and matching pictures, while the complex task group was asked to compete the same drama script construction with pictures but no detailed situational description. To this end, the simple task group required little reasoning to figure out the request situation while the complex task group required sufficient reasoning to figure out the details of the situation (pragmalinguistics and sociopragamtics) through peer collaboration. The learners’ oral interactions during the tasks were audio-recorded and analyzed on the amount of pragmatic-related episodes (PREs, peer-peer conversations on pragmatics). The outcome measure was a DCT. Their findings showed that both the simple and complex task groups outperformed the control group at the immediate posttest but no difference was found between these two
experimental groups. However, only the complex group maintained its pragmatic gains on the delayed posttest four week later. These findings suggest that although complex tasks can stimulate more PREs, both simple and complex tasks were effective in teaching L2 English requests. Taguchi & Kim (2016), on the other hand, examined effects of different types of PREs (i.e. peer-peer conversations vs. individual think-aloud episodes) on production of L2 English requests. After receiving the same metapragmatic information on request making, the collaborative group completed a drama script construction task with two request scenarios in pairs while the individual group completed the same task without collaboration. Peer-peer PREs from the collaborative group and individual think-aloud PREs were audio-recorded. A DCT was used to measure their learning outcomes. Their findings revealed that the collaborative group generated more PREs and target-like request head acts than the individual group at the immediate posttest but this advantage was not maintained on the delayed posttest four weeks later. With regard to the production of request modifications, there was no between-group difference. The findings of these two studies suggest that different manipulation of learning conditions of production practice (e.g. task complexity and types of PREs) may result in different learning outcomes. These two studies directly examined the effects of learning tasks (e.g. complexity) and collaborative dialogues (PREs) in classroom interaction on pragmatic learning. The advantage of examining classroom-based instructional methods (as opposed to lab-based instructional methods) is to generate the pedagogical implications that could be directly tested in a classroom setting. Although these two studies focused on L2 English, collaborative dialogues and learning tasks are universal across different L2 classrooms. Therefore, manipulation of task complexity and stimulation of PREs may be used to teaching Chinese pragmatics.
Aside from the implementation of TBI in pragmatic instruction, the concept-based instruction (CBI) has also been applied to teaching pragmatics (for a review of sociocultural theory and CBI, see Thorne & Lantolf, 2006). Van Compernolle (2011) reported a case study on using CBI to teach the sociopragmatic meaning of French second-person pronouns *Tu* and *Vous* in interaction. The distinction between these two words is that *Tu* is often used between friends and in informal situations while *Vous* is often used between strangers and in formal situations. Based on this rule of thumb, people can use *Tu* to project a close relationship and *Vous* to project a distant relationship. The indexical meaning of *Tu* and *Vous* was the learning objective in this study. The CBI instruction included three stages. First, a language awareness interview with a tutor (LAI) was given to provide explicit metapragmatic information on the indexical meaning of *Tu* and *Vous*, and then, the participant completed an appropriateness judgment questionnaire (AJQ) where she verbalized her choices of *Tu* and *Vous* and rationale behind her choices in given situations. The final stage included a summary of what learned in pervious stages and two follow-up AJQs. The instruction was delivered through the tutor’s mediation in the collaborative dialogues during the tasks. The participants’ increased engagement in the expert-learner interaction and verbalization on the rationale for her choices of *Tu* and *Vous* during the tasks revealed that CBI was effective to support the learner’s microgenetic development of sociopragmatics. These findings suggest that carefully designed instructor-learner conversations based on CIB can be used to prompt learning of sociopragmatic norms. Although Van Compernolle’s study focused on L2 French, CIB may also be useful in teaching Chinese pragmatics because it directly addresses differences in social and cultural concepts, and instructor-learner conversations are common in a L2 Chinese classroom that aims to teach communicative competence.
In summary, the studies reviewed above have investigated two new approaches to pragmatic instruction (e.g. TBI and CBI). The new approaches directly focus on classroom activities such as complexity of learning tasks, individual think-aloud, peer-peer interaction, and expert-learner interaction, suggesting the possibility of using these classroom activities in teaching Chinese pragmatics. If sociopragmatics is the learning objective, instructors may provide individualized intervention in instructor-learner interactions to guide the learner to discover sociopragmatic meaning of target linguistic forms.

**Discussion**

Along with the rise of models of communicative competence during the past four decades, instructional studies on L2 pragmatics have developed from examining the effects of conscious raising instruction (e.g., Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Kondo, 2008; Narita, 2012; Yang & Zhu, 2016), to comparing explicit and implicit instruction (e.g., Félix-Brasdefer, 2008; Kubota, 1995; Nguyen et al., 2012; Takimoto, 2009; Tateyama, 2001; Yang, 2014), and to comparing different types of practice (Li, 2013; Li & Taguchi, 2014), different types of learning tasks (Kim & Taguchi, 2015), and different types of classroom interaction (Taguchi & Kim, 2016; Van Compernolle, 2011). A general suggestion is that explicit instruction with direct metapragmatic information and sufficient practice is more effective than implicit instruction with only input enhancement. However, the positive effect of explicit instruction may be affected by the quantity and quality of follow-up practice (Li, 2012; 2103; Li & Taguchi, 2014; Taguchi & Kim, 2016), task complexity (Kim & Taguchi, 2015), instructor’s mediation (Van Compernolle, 2011) and learner-related variables such as foreign language aptitude (Li, 2017). Based on the empirical evidence generated by these instructional studies, effective instruction on L2 Chinese pragmatics (e.g. speech acts) needs to include direct metapragmatic information and adequate follow-up.
practice. The follow-up practice may increase the degree of task complexity and stimulate more peer-to-peer discussion. In addition to method-related considerations, instructors may also factor in learners’ personal traits such as foreign language aptitude, proficiency, previous learning experiences to improve instructional tasks for better learning outcomes. For this purpose, doing action research within an established curriculum is particularly important because although previous studies have focused on a variety of pragmatic features, no replication studies that use identical instructional methods and outcome measures have been done, which limits the generalizability of the findings of existing studies. Since the majority of these studies used a quasi-experimental design, the instructional effectiveness should be replicable if instructors adopt the same teaching methods and outcome measures. For example, action research can replicate an existing effective instructional method by using learners with different L2 proficiency levels so that the findings could be easily compared with those generated from studies that use the instruction. This type of replication is especially useful in pragmatic instruction because very few studies to date have tested the effectiveness of a certain instruction across different proficiency levels (e.g. Fordyce, 2014; Yang, 2016). Therefore, findings of a large number of action research at different proficiency levels can shed light on developing level-appropriate pragmatic instruction.

In addition to teaching methods, the theoretical construct of pragmatic competence needs to be expanded beyond speech acts. Although existing instructional studies operationalized pragmatic competence based on the concept of communicative competence, speech act performance at the utterance level was the dominant pragmatic feature examined in previous studies, such as request (e.g. Hernández & Boero, 2018; Li, 2012, Li & Taguchi, 2014;), gratitude (e.g. Yang, 2016; Yang & Zhu, 2016); refusals (e.g. Kondo, 2008), and criticisms (e.g.
Knowledge of speech acts is the core of pragmatic knowledge because it represents a clear form-function-situation mapping in language use. However, existing instructional studies only focused on the morphosyntactic structure of speech acts at the utterance level, which does not represent the adaptive nature of speech/communicative act performance in interaction.

According to Levinson (2013, 2017), pragmatic failures result from a misinterpretation of the speaker’s intention in the preceding turn. In other words, this adaptive view of pragmatic competence provides a model that can explain the real-time pragmatic performance in communication. Future instructional research and practice should adopt this adaptive perspective to operationalize pragmatic competence because in real life communications, communicative acts are often jointly constructed by the speaker and listener. Pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge only provide the foundation of appropriate communication. It is the ability to be adaptive in the sequential context that defines a person’s pragmatic competence in interaction. To this end, successful pragmatic performance requires an appropriate production of the follow-up move based on a proper understanding of the preceding turn. Therefore, the construct of pragmatic competence should be expanded to the ability to comprehend preceding turns and produce sequentially appropriate follow-up moves. Adopting this adaptive view of pragmatic competence, Chinese instructors need to design tasks that can elicit exchange of multiple turns in interaction. Since there were two studies that examined Chinese pragmatics in interaction (Su & Ren, 2017; Xiao, 2017), their pragmatic measures (role-play and semi-structure interview) might be developed to classroom tasks to teach pragmatics in interaction. Although no instructional studies have focused on this aspect of pragmatic competence,
instructors may do action research to test effectiveness of different tasks on pragmatics in interaction.

**Conclusion**

This article has reviewed studies on instructed pragmatics with a focus on L2 Chinese studies. Existing empirical evidence generally supports the effectiveness of direct metapragmatic instruction with sufficient follow-up practice. However, different practice conditions affect teaching effectiveness differently, as indicated by mixed findings reported by most recent studies, suggesting that L2 Chinese instructors may need to increase the degree of task complexity and stimulate sufficient classroom discourses (e.g. peer-to-peer, expert-learner) to facilitate learners’ intake of target pragmatic features.

They also need to make learning tasks adaptive to learners’ personal traits such as foreign language aptitude, proficiency, previous learning experiences. For this purpose, action research that replicates teaching methods examined in previous empirical studies can be done to test effectiveness of different methods among a given learning cohort. Finally, Chinese instructors may also teach pragmatics beyond speech acts to promote learning of pragmatics in interaction.
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Endless Potential Beyond the Classroom: Developing Extension Activities to Teach Culture Through Film

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Abstract: In the wake of the rapid development of the Chinese media industry, the broad application of film has become a trend in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language. Currently, the application of film in Chinese language instruction has focused on theme selection, pre-class preparation, and classroom activity design. However, film, as a non-traditional teaching material, has great pedagogical flexibility. This paper argues that film can be treated as a cultural carrier. It proposes multi-faceted after-class extension projects, and provides specific teaching examples, for guiding students to integrate extracurricular resources, to extend learning outside the classroom, to become active participants in the target culture, and to engage in more active and deeper cultural learning.

Keywords: teaching Chinese as a foreign language, film, cultural teaching, extension activity

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1. 前言

近年来，随着中国电影产业的快速发展，相关素材不断地被应用于中文教学之中，电影除具有较高的娱乐性质，比传统平面教材更受学生欢迎，在语言教学上更具有多媒体、多视角、多语体的特性，能传递具象、直观的丰富社会文化信息，在文化教学上极具优势，因此，电影素材的应用已日渐成为国际汉语教学中密不可分的一环。然而，电影虽具有较高的娱乐性，对学生而言有较高的吸睛效果，但毕竟不是因教育功能而生的商业产物，在中文课中使用，有相对耗时、主题繁杂、难以聚焦的应用难点，因此，如何有效地运用电影资源，使其在语言课中充分发挥效用，而非仅止于观看、欣赏的层次，已成为当前十分值得关注的课题。目前电影应用于语言课的讨论，多聚焦于主题选材、影片的应用方式、课前准备及课堂活动安排，然而，电影作为非传统教材，有极佳的教学延展性，本文主张以电影为触媒，将学生的学习触角更进一步地延伸到教室之外，以多维度的延展活动设计，引导学生整合课外资源，成为积极的目标文化参与者，进行更主动、有深度的学习。

2. 电影应用于文化教学的优势

近年来，电影于外语课的应用已受到相当程度的讨论，笔者综整相关文献的论述，将电影应用于语言课文化教学上的优势罗列如下：

2.1 电影中涵盖的文化元素丰富且多元
电影素材中的文化元素非常广泛，不仅涵盖传统观念、历史事件、社会文化议题，更可观察到社会中各个阶层生活百态（Hertel & Harrington, 2015; Kaiser, 2011; Xiang, 2018）。以电影作为媒介，可让学生看到较平面文本更真实且立体的中国社会多元样貌，电影将这些原本与学生距离遥远的文化内涵隐身之其中，透过故事及影像的呈现，使学生吸收知识的过程自然又不枯燥，亦能使印象更加深刻。

2.2 电影中呈现的文化点脉络清晰

传统语言课使用的平面文本对学生而言有距离感且抽象，特别是学生在学习文本中的文化元素时（Zhang, 2011），例如伦理、孝道、义气这些较为抽象的概念，学生在学习时常因与自身经验缺乏连结，感到距离感遥远、难以理解，亦难对目标文化产生情感共鸣。透过电影直观而具象的方式，不仅呈现文化点的脉络清楚，而且透过故事让文化元素附加了生命力，拉近跟学生的距离，有助学生产生情感的共鸣与连结（Gilmore, 2007; Parisi & Andon, 2016）。

2.3 突破传统课本在议题上的时效性与局限性问题

中国社会近几年的发展演变非常迅速，传统教材从编写、审定到出版，需要一段漫长的过程，所以课文往往无法连结当下的社会文化议题，容易与最新时事热点产生时间差。此外，课本倾向回避较敏感的政治或争议性议题，在课堂中的讨论话题因而相对受限，电影在课堂讨论的应用上有极佳延展性，比如，笔者曾在课堂中，就同部电影两岸三地的不同删减版进行比较，引导学生讨论中国的审查制度，进而延伸到言论自由的话题。
电影可补强前述课本的不足之处，既可连结时事，涵盖多元、争议性的敏感议题（Hertel & Harrington, 2015），亦可让学生从中观察社会百态与流行时事，引发多元思考及更丰富的课堂讨论（Kaiser, 2011）。

2.4 广泛接触社会中不同类型的互动形式与自然的口语表达

从电影中，学生可以观察到社会中不同阶层、人物的自然口语表达及互动形式（Hertel & Harrington, 2015; Kaiser, 2011），也同时能接触不同类型的方言。广泛地观看中国电影，使学生得以观察中国社会中丰富的语汇表达类型及不同人物的自然互动形式（Xiang, 2018; Zhang, 2011），让语言输入与知识习得不再仅限于教室或传统教材之内，帮助学生未来能更自然地用中文与母语人士交流。

2.5 教学应用上的延展性佳

电影在教学应用上有非常丰富的延展性，可从单一议题延伸到多元议题，再提升到跨文化比较的层次（王静, 2018; Kaiser, 2011）。此外，多元活动的设计，例如访谈、辩论、剧本改写、即兴演出，都可帮助学生从被动的学习者，成为主动的参与者，不再是目标文化的「局外人」，增加学生对中国文化的参与感及认同。

3. 延展活动的设计与应用

3.1 影片选择与题材简介

本校高年级中文课采用的文本教材中，其中一单元介绍了中国的教育体制、校园文化、高考、体罚及社会价值体系对学历的态度。外国学生成长于截然不同的文化背景，其
经历的学校教育及青春岁月与中国式的青春大异其趣，因此，在学习相关主题时常有「局外人」之感，难有共鸣，且容易因受西方价值观及母文化影响，对中国文化进行单一角度的价值判断和粗暴批评。因此，笔者考虑学生年龄、兴趣及语言课学习背景后，从近期流行的中国校园青春片中，筛选出涵盖高考、校园文化、体罚、早恋、复读，及华人社会主流价值等丰富文化元素的电影《青春派》，引导学生进行更进一步的文化探索。

《青春派》（Young Style）是由导演刘杰执导 2013 年上映的中国电影，剧情叙述一群即将参加高考的学生，面临青春期恋爱、家庭和梦想间的挣扎与勇气，以贴近写实又不失幽默的手法描绘出大部份中国人面对高考的集体回忆。全片中有许多台词和口号，恰如其分地勾勒出大多数高中生的第一个中国式奋斗梦，无数的中国学生和家长把希望投向教育，期望通过高考的窄门，从此翻转人生。电影中班主任的几句经典台词： “不苦不累，高三无味；不拼不累，等于白活。”、“累死你一个，幸福你全家。”，更是画龙点睛地描绘出中国人高三生活的缩影。

《青春派》整部电影轻快诙谐，非常适合刚经历过高中阶段的大学生观赏，然而，在课堂讨论中，学生虽表示喜欢电影幽默逗趣的拍摄手法，但对部分台词及细节却看得一头雾水，且对片中家长的过度参与及老师所展现的绝对权威多所批评。因此，笔者以青春派为轴线，针对高年级中文课，设计以下课后延展活动，引导学生转换成主动学习者与参与者的角色，老师则扮演从旁辅助的角色，不再是传统认知上的知识灌输者，以降低学生对文化冲击之排斥感，帮助学生从不同视角探索文化差异性。
3.2 操作实例

3.2.1 社区访谈

学生在观看电影后，对影片中的许多文化点有许多困惑，例如体罚、留校自习、教师被赋予的绝对权威等在中国教育现场特有的现象，语言教师虽熟悉中国文化，但给学生的答案常受限于自身成长背景及个体经验。因此，笔者设计社区访谈活动，引导学生从被动的接收者转化成主动寻找答案的采访者。

社区访谈的具体操作方式是将学生分组，前进社区采访当地的华人，访谈主轴聚焦于受访者的「高考记忆」及其印象中的「中国式青春」，此外，访谈之前，各组学生须在Google Docs上汇整成员间感到困惑或希望深入了解的文化点，并将讨论出的内容设计成简要的问卷，在主要访谈内容结束后进行提问。由于受访者分属不同年龄段，且来自两岸三地不同地区，学生有机会与不同年龄、社会阶层的母语者进行自然交流，除了在访谈过程中可深化对中国文化的理解之外，还可观察到不同背景母语者的自然口语表达及互动形式，获得文化学习上的第一手信息。各组在完成社区访谈后须提交一份整组的访谈报告，此外，每位学生须将自己在访谈过程中的观察和体会写成一个小故事，并在课堂中简要分享。

3.2.2 微电影计划

为了提供学生更进一步与母语者交流与合作的机会，笔者在校内邀集了与全班人数相当的中国留学生参与微电影计划。将国际学生与班上学生打散分组，进行微电影拍摄任
务。微电影内容以青春岁月及校园生活为主线，须融入青春派里的文化元素及曾于课堂中学习过的文化点，例如：中国式的校园生活、教育制度、制服、早恋、体罚及主流社会价值对高考的态度等，再与中国留学生一起脑力激荡，对比美国式的高中生活，导入跨文化对比的内容，拍摄出能体现中美文化差异的微电影。

微电影长度要求六到八分钟，学生四人一组，须共同参与讨论、撰写剧本、排练、演绎、拍摄及后期制作的过程，为节省时间成本且便于老师追踪各组工作进度，老师将学生分组后，要求各组学生将讨论出的文化点、剧本、分工、拍摄计划等内容放在 Google Docs 平台上汇整，此外，各组学生组成微信群，以便于课外联系。老师于各组学生完成微电影计划后，安排中国文化之夜，邀请校内老师、国际学生及所有对中国文化感兴趣的学生一同欣赏学生的创作成果，并于观赏后共同参与评选。

3.2.3 自主延伸学习

高年份语言课的学生相较于低年份初学者，除了语言水平较高之外，往往对目标文化及语言具有更高的学习热忱。因此，笔者在设计高年份学习任务时，尝试给予学生更高自主性及弹性。网络时代的来临，使各种资源得以快速流通，资料的集结更形便利，笔者鼓励学生善用网络资源，自行收集并筛选网上学习资源，将学习的触角延伸到教室及课本之外，学生在观影后，可从网络上自行选择三样延伸学习的材料，例如豆瓣影评、与中国高考有关的新闻事件、YouTube 导演或演员访谈视频、与学习主题相关的其他电影、纪录片或文章等，学生须在规定的时间内阅读或观看完自行搜集的材料，并撰写心得报告。
笔者在延伸学习素材的筛选及取用上，给予学生相当的自主性，学生可选择同一类型的材料，例如三篇影评或三部相关电影，也可搭配不同类型的网上资源，例如一则高考相关新闻加上一篇影评，再搭配一段演员访谈视频。布置任务时，笔者鼓励学生阅读观点迥异的文章或访谈视频，如有感到困惑的地方，建议与中国学生讨论，学习以多元视角看待、分析主题电影里中美文化的观念差异。

3.3 说明

本文汇整同一部电影曾实践过的延展活动于同一文章中，但并非将所有活动集中于同一学期内操作。笔者在不同学期设计电影延展活动时，考虑班级的人数、背景，并针对当时校内外可用之资源进行评估，在播放完一部电影后，搭配一到两个延展活动，以避免单一电影占用过多时间的问题。笔者认为电影于语言课中的使用，应达锦上添花之效，而非喧宾夺主、取而代之，在活动安排上仍应以既定课程中的语言及文化内容为主线，使电影与语言课相辅相成，以达应用上的最佳效果。

4. 实践成果

笔者于总结学生的反馈内容及自身的教学观察后，将实践成果归纳如下：

4.1 多元视角

对于成长于截然不同文化背景的学生而言，光从电影中的片段，实难以领略真实的文化差异内涵。透过延展活动，使学生有机会于课外链接母语者，不仅能从自然的互动、亲身经历中获得第一手文化信息，且能从与母语者一对一的访谈中接收到对方个体化的经
历，对学生更具说服力，使其能从中理解事情的多样性，学习用多元视角看待不同于自己母文化的现象。比如，一位受访者在回答问题时，提及自己年幼被父亲用皮带抽打有如家常便饭的同时，也向学生说明自古以来中国父母「望子成龙，望女成凤」的心愿，以及「打是疼，骂是爱」、「不打不成才」的传统教养观念。此外，另一位受访者向学生解释了中国文化传统中「万般皆下品，唯有读书高。」的观念，这些访谈内容皆有助于学生理解他们原先在电影中看到的「父母与老师疯狂行径」背后的文化脉络。许多学生在刚看完电影后的第一次课堂讨论中，以美国视角对影片中的文化现象进行单一角度的批评，但在延展活动结束后第二次课堂讨论，却展现出截然不同的态度，能以不同视角、更包容的态度来评价东西方文化上的歧异性，也同时对本身母文化产生反思。

4.2 文化知识习得

教室、平面文本中的知识习得内容较为零碎、片面，光从电影中的片段，也很难在学生脑海中描绘出较为完整、全面的中国文化样貌。实践成果中特别值得一提的是学生于课外延展活动中获得的文化知识成果相当丰硕，学生前赴华人社区进行访谈时，受访者因来自两岸三地不同区域及年龄分布，接受高考及体罚「烙印」的经验大不相同，且个别访谈中许多细节的讨论，亦涵盖了丰富的文化知识点。比如，其中一位年长的受访者提及成长过程中，与家人经历文化大革命，其后辗转离开大陆，最终移民美国的过程；另一位来自香港的受访者则分享自己在香港英治时期的受教经验。此外，一位华裔子女参与访谈，与祖辈及父辈一起讨论不同时代的体罚及学校教育经验，也有助学生理解不同世代的中国父
母对子女教养观念及方式的变化。课外访谈活动不仅帮助学生更深刻地理解中国式的教育，更进一步从横向地域性差异及纵向时间轴的演变，观察大时代变迁与中国教育发展、价值观的相对应关系，使学生在相关知识的习得更加完整。

4.3 情感共鸣

不少学生表示，在微电影计划共同讨论、撰写剧本、演绎到拍摄的过程中，跟同龄母语者的自然社交互动，让他们感到亲切而且享受，比在课堂中讨论轻松许多，能更自在地发言、提问，且能从许多组员间分享的小故事、小秘密中观察中国文化内涵。学生在与母语者合作学习的过程中感到中国人的生活世界不再遥不可及，此一合作学习模式有效地拉近了外语学习者与中国文化的距离感。此外，学生也因与中国留学生的共同参与，相互演绎对方的青春故事，对中国文化产生身历其境之感，从这份参与感进而触发情感共鸣。

4.4 语言水平提升

炼接语言学习者与母语者的合作学习模式，使学生在语言课之外，能以目标语和不同年龄层的母语者进行交流，产生自然的社交互动。许多学生于期末反馈中提到，延展活动的设计，帮助他们把语言及文化的学习延伸到教室之外，不仅促进了跨文化理解，在语言方面更是大有斩获。学生与母语者的自然口语交流，使他们第一次感受到语言的实用性及交际功能，过程中不但增加了使用中文的自信，而且更加了解语法及词汇的文化语境，能更精准顺畅地表达自己的看法。大部分学生也表示，延展活动中正面的互动经验，有助于中文课学生往后与中国留学生的社交连结。
5. 反思与操作建议

从实践成果来看，延展活动创造了学生与母语者于课外的合作学习平台，导致两者间的自然对话情境，有效地促进学生的跨文化理解，在语言及文化上都有极佳的效果。然而，笔者在事前准备时却遇到整合母语者资源不易的困境。笔者任教的学校属于小型文理学院，国际学生人数有限，此外，来自中国的国际学生无法从参加此类活动获得学分，又需耗费课余时间，主动参与合作学习的意愿普遍不高。建议老师在安排相关活动时，提供中国留学生参加活动的诱因，例如小额礼卡、招待美食、担任助教优先权等，以增加中国留学生的参与意愿，提供诱因亦能使不修课的中国留学生更加投入于学习活动，乐于付出更多时间参与合作学习计划。

此外，对中国留学生及中文课学生而言，课外见面时间的耗费常常是一大负担。笔者在实务操作的过程中，发现 Google Docs 及 WeChat 等科技的应用，大量地减少了中文课学生与中国留学生在合作学习过程中开会讨论的时间，减轻学生在学期中的额外负担，在上课之余仍能积极参与活动、维持兴趣。笔者建议老师往后在设计延展活动时，可多考虑纳入便利的科技社交平台作为学生之间及师生之间的沟通管道，以利活动顺利执行。

6. 结语

电影不仅能传递出丰富的社会文化信息，且能将学生于中文课中习得的文化内涵具体化、生动化，其具象、直观的特点使电影相关素材成为语言课文化教学中最合适的教材之一。本文针对电影教学提出多维度的课后延展活动方案，探索电影于语言课中应用的延展
性，汉语教师宜考虑学生的年龄、成熟度、语言背景、课时安排及校园周辺的可用资源进行活动的设计及安排。电影毕竟不是为了教学而生产的商业产物，文本教材亦有其不可取代性，因此，如何针对学生水平选择合适的电影，再将影片内容解构后进行有效的教学活动设计，使其能与文本教材相辅相成，发挥最大效益，是当前语言教师应关注的课题。
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Language Teaching, 40, 97-118.


Book Review


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This Chinese reader is an advanced level Chinese textbook, targeting Chinese learners with approximately advanced mid to advanced high OPI proficiency. Unlike most of the advanced level Chinese textbooks, the highlighted features of this book are multimedia and culture themes. In order to strengthen learners’ cultural literacy, the authors compile a comprehensive repertoire of articles related to both modern and historical issues using written Chinese. All the articles are authentic materials that were directly extracted from newspapers, journals, and fictions.

This book is a thematically organized and multimedia-oriented with 12 chapters categorized four broad units: popular culture, social change, cultural traditions, and history and politics, with three lessons in each unit. Each lesson starts with learning objectives and warm-up questions, followed by a brief but informative introductory reading, usually a short article (about 300 characters) related to the theme. The introductory article serves the purpose of delineating the cultural and historical background of the main text. After the introductory section, the main reading is introduced, supplemented by fixed expressions, word discrimination, sentence patterns, and exercises. The last section includes review exercise, cultural notes and supplementary reading, which oftentimes provide different perspectives and further explanation of the theme.

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There are several advantages in this textbook compared to other “traditional” advanced level Chinese textbooks. I will describe four major strengths with regard to its content, format, and functionality.

**Topic**

Most of the topics are heatedly discussed social issues in China, and some of them are relevant to contemporary Chinese culture, such as lesson 3, *TV Drama*, and lesson 1, *Online Dating*. The up-to-date content easily arouses the attention of college-age Chinese learners who usually have an intense curiosity about contemporary youth culture. The “conventional” topics in most of the advanced level textbooks are usually about Sino-US relations, housing prices, greying society, etc. A broad spectrum of topics could potentially help students to develop not only language proficiency but also cultural literacy. A good example is lesson 3, which takes a deep insight into Chinese pop culture through current TV drama. Activities consist of having learners watch TV dramas, make comparisons between Chinese and U.S. TV dramas, and summarize themes. The culture aspect introduced in the book is a gateway for learners to discuss, research and compare.

**Multimedia**

One of the most appealing features is the incorporation of multimedia. The website *Chinese Society in the New Millennium* (Please see [https://web.duke.edu/chinesesoc/](https://web.duke.edu/chinesesoc/)) is open to the public as the online companion to the textbook. The twelve lessons perfectly correspond to the textbook topics. Clicking on lesson 7, *Chinese Cuisine*, for example, learners will see interview footage in China encompassing a variety of issues like birthday food, recipe names, Shanghai cuisine, nutrition, etc. To ensure the authenticity of the videos as well as familiarize learners with language under different contexts, videos are labeled with “normal,” “subtle” and “mixed” accent. In some of the videos, there are no clear utterances but just scene shootings, such as the *Morning Market*
Argument video in lesson 5 Floating Population. Through watching the footage, learners go beyond the topic by accessing authentic and real-time situations. Both verbal and nonverbal details, including gestures, environment, clothing, expressions, and speech are visually presented to the learners. In terms of pedagogical application, learners could be assigned to watch closely and describe the details of what happens in the video. A “dubbing” type of assignment is ideal for training students’ ability to narrate and describe a series of events in the past time frame, which is a key requirement for reaching OPI advanced level (“ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines,” 2012). In addition, the real happenings enable learners to situate the main text within a broader authentic context. The website videos also have companion exercises, an ideal supplemental resource for instructors to enrich students’ learning experience via diversified learning materials.

Besides the companion website, various online tools are also incorporated into learning activities. In lesson six, Changing Views of Marriage, two of the warm-up exercises are: 1) Do a keyword search for “Chinese wedding” on YouTube and view at least two videos. 2) Visit the website Chinese Historical and Cultural Project at http://chcp.org/ (p. 125). Through watching authentic weddings on YouTube and searching for artifact nuances on the suggested website, learners go beyond the written texts and learn about the topic in a visual way. Thus, multimedia incorporation allows learners to take a deeper insight into Chinese marriage from different sources and modes.

Integration of Four Skills

The four skills- speaking, listening, reading and writing- are facilitated throughout the volume. Speaking is treated with primary importance, as it is with most of the language programs. The four skills are equally emphasized for the most part, although there seems a lack of formal writing training. The practical language task design is a convincing showcase of the integration of
different skills. For instance, in lesson 5 *Floating Population*, the task asks learners to complete a sequence of activities. Firstly, the textbook suggests that the class be grouped into three teams and watch three different videos on migrant workers. Then learners need to write up their understanding of the video on a class social media website, either on Blackboard or an online discussion forum, and they will read and reply to each other’s posts. In class, learners then are instructed to retell and present the synopsis in the video and exchange the information with other groups. The three-step, task-based project is an epitome of integrating different skills. By watching videos, learners practice listening skills. The writing-up and reading others’ posts on the Internet are effective ways to hone both writing and reading skills while exchanging ideas in class is intended to train learners’ speaking and presentation skills. Upon completing a series of tasks, learners familiarize themselves with the topic, and they produce meaningful language through output. Exercises with an integration of different skills are ubiquitous in the textbook.

**Teacher – Friendliness**

The textbook not only provides rich content to learners, but also serves as a user-friendly teaching resource for instructors. One great feature is its free Instructor’s Resource Manual, which includes answer keys to the textbook exercises, additional language tasks, in-class activities, and instructional suggestions. Instructional suggestions, above all, is significant assistance, especially for new instructors, to plan a multi-media advanced Chinese curriculum. The four authors of the book are all well-versed Chinese instructors who years’ teaching experience, so the supplementary activities they propose are based on immense classroom practicum. In the instructional suggestions in lesson 6, *Marriage Customs*, for example, learners are asked to watch two short video clips. The first video is an authentic interview with a wedding dress manager, followed by the second video, which is a conversation between a female college student and two social workers. The activity is
designed to introduce students to views on marriage from different perspectives, which is effectively complementary to the relatively one-sided view in the text.

Another aspect of the book’s teacher-friendliness is indicated in the word recycling. Many language teachers find it hard to have a systematic review of earlier materials due to time constraints. Particularly, for advanced Chinese courses, recycling of old vocabulary from earlier chapters is hard to carry out because each lesson has over 150 vocabulary words. However, this textbook is excellent for reviewing earlier words. For instance, the main text in lesson 3 includes over ten vocabulary words and sentence patterns from lesson one and lesson two. In this way, students are able to go over the materials that are situated in new contexts and review earlier materials on a natural learning curve. The systematic reviewing saves valuable time for teachers on figuring out how to recycle materials from the previous lessons.

Despite all the strengths, some weaknesses need to be addressed.

**Inadequacy of Writing Training**

For advanced Chinese learners, composition is an essential skill to be trained. Although it is the authors’ earnest endeavor to include writing guidance, there is still insufficient training in writing skills. A composition section is included in the exercise section with instruction on what should be covered, suggested vocabulary and basic requirements. Students’ main issues at the 300-400 level in terms of writing, however, are usually not what to write, but how to write for a specific purpose. The textbook provides little guidance on skills for writing within a context, and some essay assignments do not fulfill the functional goal. Heneda (2007) stated that in the surge of foreign language curriculum reform, writing needs to be conducted in a specific social context beyond the classroom. For example, the essay topic for lesson 7 is *My Favorite Dish*. The requirements for the composition include the description of the origin, flavor, recipe, etc. The
problem for this essay project is the lack of functionality. Questions arise such as what function it serves, what social aspect the task includes, and how to write to serve the purpose. Style, genre, diction, and structure of essays are dependent on the purpose and context of writing. Therefore, the composition task is insufficient for cultivating learners’ genre and functional writing awareness. The essay assignments should be situated in a social context, and serve a specific audience and purpose.

**Translation**

Although the book aims to cultivate learners’ proficiency via online-intensive communicative approach, in the grammar section, there are occasions where grammar translation is encouraged. Multiple questions ask learners to directly translate from English to Chinese as an supplementary exercise of new grammar. Direct translation, however, is not an ideal method for approaching meaningful and context-based communication. Without context and communicative elements, learners automatically remain on the sentence level, translating word for word, rather than think in Chinese by using newly-learned grammar in a socially appropriate manner, which is the ultimate goal for language acquisition.

In addition, the English translation of some vocabulary can appear perplexing for native English speakers. Users reported they were confused over some English used in the vocabulary list. For example, the English counterpart for vocabulary number 17 guan chang in lesson 3 TV Drama is translated as officialdom. Learners reported that they were not sure of the meaning of the word. What this word actually means is “the circle of government officials.” There are many words in the Chinese language that cannot be simply substituted with a single English counterpart. In situations like this, example sentences and more detailed explanations could be included for better comprehension.
In conclusion, *The Routledge* is an accessible and comprehensive textbook for advanced level Chinese learners to promote communicative skills and cultural literacy. The organic combination of cultural literacy development and multimedia resources is the highlight of this book. The diversity of topics cultivates learner’s cultural sensitivity and serves as a resourceful reading material for advanced Chinese learners. Although several shortcomings might need to go through closer scrutiny and modification, such as the writing training and grammar translation, this book is an excellent choice for Chinese teachers who look for an up-to-date textbook written by well-versed language educators.
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Acquisition of the Chinese Modal Particle “Le” between Heritage and Non-Heritage Learners with Different Proficiency Levels

不同汉语水平的华裔非华裔的动态助词了的习得

Ava Tiller¹

Abstract: This study examined differences in production and comprehension of the Chinese model particle *le* between heritage and non-heritage learners with different proficiency levels. The results of ANOVA and ANCOVA analyses showed that there was no statistically significant difference between heritage and non-heritage learners’ abilities to comprehend and produce “le”. Though there was a significant difference between proficiency levels in production but not in comprehension.

Keywords: heritage learners, proficiency, comprehension, production

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Background

Functions of Le and Tenses in Chinese

The linguistic definition of le (了) is a modal particle that modifies tense in Chinese (Sun, 2010). With different configurations, le can indicate different tenses. For example, there is the simple past tense le that indicates the completion of an event where le is put after the verb. There is the present perfect tense le which is the completion of an event using present time as the reference time where le is placed at the end of the phrase. When le is placed at the end of a sentence, it is closely related to the mood of the speaker and listener (Wen, 1995). There is the present perfect progressive le which indicates the continuity of an action. The sentence pattern is verb le duration 的 (possessive “de”) (object) le. Finally, le can be used in the future tense, which marks the completion of an action. The present study focuses on all the four functions of le, and the following are examples.

Example 1: Simple past tense

我看了今天的新闻 Wǒ kànle jīntiān de xīnwén.
(I have seen today’s news.)

Example 2: Present perfect tense

作业写完了 Zuòyè xiě wánle.
(The homework is finished.)

Example 3: Present perfect progressive tense

我学习中文学了六年了 Wǒ xuéxí zhōngwén xuéle liù niánle.
(I have been studying Chinese for six years.)
Example 4: Simple future tense

我明天吃了饭就去图书馆

(I will go to the library right after eating my breakfast tomorrow.)

**Heritage and Non-Heritage Learners**

The present study examines differences between heritage and non-heritage learners in the use of *le* because previous studies have shown that heritage and non-heritage often differ in their Chinese acquisition. For example, Chinese heritage learners (CHL) have shown increased levels of anxiety when completing writing tasks. A large portion of CHL writing anxiety is explained not only by factors of the second language (L2) writing process but also by factors associated with the learners’ heritage identity (Y. Xiao & Wong, 2014). Heritage learners are taken to be good at and confident in speaking and listening, but often lack skills in reading and writing because much of their language experience is in colloquial Chinese. Previous research shows that Chinese heritage learners struggle developing reading and writing proficiency because unlike their non-heritage learner classmates, they do not develop oral and written skills from the beginning (Y. Xiao, 2006). This means that compared to non-Chinese-heritage learners (NCHL), CHLs do not develop all the four sub skills at the same pace. In other words, their Chinese performance is mediated by modality such as production and comprehension. Therefore, the present study developed separate outcome measures for comprehension and production.

With regard to the definition of a heritage learner, prior studies varied in specifics but most of them used features similar to the following definition: “a language student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English” (Wilson & Martínez, 2011, p. 116). Because CHLs are such a diverse group, it is impossible to encompass
every individual’s experience under a set of simple definitions, but the aforementioned definition describes the shared language background of CHLs well. In the present study, we define a CHL as a L2 Chinese learner who has had early exposure to Chinese usually in colloquial form, whereas a NCHL as a L2 Chinese learner who has had no prior exposure to the language in any form. Based on this distinction, the background survey used in this study did not ask whether the learner considered herself as a CHL or NCHL but asked if she had early exposure to Chinese such as speaking at home. As such, the participants did not have to decide for themselves whether they categorized themselves as a CHL. It is important to recognize that CHLs are not the same as native speakers or balanced bilinguals. CHLs are people who have had exposure to Chinese before an academic setting, yet they are still learners of Chinese and are considered L2 speakers.

In addition to learners’ background (heritage and non-heritage), proficiency is included as a covariate because many previous studies have revealed an important role of proficiency in the acquisition of Chinese linguistic forms (citation >2). For example, X. Li (2010) found that more proficient Chinese learners with longer study abroad experience in China were more likely to omit the Chinese functional word *de* when *de* was optional, conforming to the native norm. On the other hand, F. Xiao, Taguchi & S. Li (2018) found that proficiency sub skills had differential effects on L2 Chinese learners’ production of linguistic forms that can perform different pragmatic functions such as a request. These two studies suggest that proficiency plays an important role in L2 Chinese acquisition. To this end, proficiency was considered as a covariate in the present study.

In sum, previous studies on the acquisition of le has the following limitation. When comparing the differences between CHLs and NCHLs, no previous study included proficiency as
a covariate. Given the important role of proficiency in L2 Chinese acquisition, it is critical to see whether proficiency affects the differences between CHLs and NCHLs. Moreover, no previous study used two separate outcome measures for comprehension and production. Since CHLs often do not develop their four proficiency subskills at the same pace to the same level, it is helpful to see if their knowledge of *le* also differs by modality. In order to fill these gaps in literature, the present study compares differences between CHLs and NCHLs in their use of *le* and considers proficiency as a covariate. In particular, this study addresses three research questions:

1. Do heritage and non-heritage learners differ in their production and comprehension of the Chinese model particle *le*?

2. Does proficiency affect production and comprehension of *le*?

3. What is learners’ understanding of the functions of *le*?

**Methods**

**Participants**

The participants in this study were 57 students who have studied Chinese at a college level. There were 32 females and 25 males. The participants were clustered into four proficiency groups based on years of college-level Chinese learning. The four proficiency groups were: one year of college Chinese learning, two years, three years, and four or more years.

**Tasks**

There were two tasks that participants were asked to complete. The first was a production task (n=12, see Appendix A for all production items) to assess participants’ ability to translate
sentences into Chinese. Participants were asked to translate English sentences into Chinese (traditional or simplified). See an example below:

Example 4: Sample item of the production task

We have been learning Chinese for five years.

Correct answer: 我们学习中文学了五年了。Wōmen xuéxí zhōngwén xuéle wǔ niánle.

The second task was a comprehension task (n=18, see Appendix B for all comprehension items) where participants were asked to identify whether target Chinese sentences were grammatically accurate and if they were not, participants were asked to shortly explain why they were incorrect and correct the sentence. The comprehension task had options in both traditional and simplified characters in order to accommodate to all participants.

Example 5: Sample item of the comprehension task

Correct: 我们上个星期吃了中国菜。Wōmen shàng gè xīngqī chīle zhōngguó cài. We ate Chinese food last week.

Incorrect: 我昨天想买了东西。Wǒ zuótiān xiǎng mǎile dōngxī. Yesterday I wanted to buy things.

Explanation: Need to put le at the end of the sentence.

Data Collection

The participants received the two tasks electronically. They were asked to type their answers because the present study focused on their knowledge of le but not on their character writing ability. They were instructed to use the English letter A for an unknown Chinese
character. The data were evaluated based on grammaticality by a Chinese native speaker who has a PhD degree in second language acquisition.

**Results**

**Answers to Research Question One**

Research question one asks if there is a difference between CHLs and NCHLs in their ability to comprehend and produce *le*. As shown in Table 1, ANOVA ($F_{1, 56}=0.172$, $p>0.05$) analyses reveal that there was no significant difference between CHLs and NCHLs in their ability to produce *le*.

Table 1: ANOVA results for production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>6.330</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.330</td>
<td>0.172</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1951.415</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>36.706</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1951.745</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 2, ANOVA ($F_{1, 56}=1.64$, $p>0.05$) analyses reveal that there was no significant difference between CHLs and NCHLs in their ability to comprehend *le*. 
Table 2: ANOVA results for comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>11.755</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.755</td>
<td>1.635</td>
<td>0.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>380.972</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>7.188</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>392.727</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In sum, the quantitative data showed that there was no statistically significant difference between CHLs and NCHLs’ ability to comprehend and produce le. An explanation for this is that CHLs are still L2 learners, meaning that they receive similar influences of their first language in their use of Chinese. The heritage identity does not have a significant influence on comprehension and production of le.

**Answers to Research Question Two**

Research question two asks whether proficiency plays an important role in the production and comprehension of le in CHLs and NCHLs. Proficiency was treated as a covariate, and ANCOVA analyses were performed.

As shown in Table 3, the p-value is significant for proficiency but not for heritage language background, meaning that proficiency has a significant effect on L2 production of le.
Table 3: ANCOVA results for production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>Wald Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>31.584</td>
<td>2.1398</td>
<td>27.391</td>
<td>35.778</td>
<td>217.875</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCHL (0)</td>
<td>.577</td>
<td>1.5992</td>
<td>-2.558</td>
<td>3.711</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHL (1)</td>
<td>0a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>1.796</td>
<td>.7198</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>3.209</td>
<td>6.237</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Scale)</td>
<td>31.769b</td>
<td>6.0581</td>
<td>21.862</td>
<td>46.166</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows ANCOVA results for comprehension, and it indicates that the p-values for proficiency and heritage background are not significant. These suggest that neither proficiency or heritage background has an effect on L2 comprehension of le.

Table 4: ANCOVA results for comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>Wald Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>12.051</td>
<td>.9862</td>
<td>10.119</td>
<td>13.984</td>
<td>149.337</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCHL (0)</td>
<td>-1.003</td>
<td>.7370</td>
<td>-2.447</td>
<td>.442</td>
<td>1.851</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHL (1)</td>
<td>0a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>.401</td>
<td>.3318</td>
<td>-.250</td>
<td>1.051</td>
<td>1.457</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Scale)</td>
<td>6.748b</td>
<td>1.2868</td>
<td>4.644</td>
<td>9.806</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In sum, when proficiency was treated as a covariate, ANCOVA analyses showed that proficiency had a significant effect on the production of *le* but not on its comprehension. CHLs and NCHLs did not differ in *le*’s production or comprehension. These findings suggest that learners of higher proficiency levels are better able to produce *le* correctly, but they are not necessarily better able to comprehend *le* accurately. In other words, as proficiency increases, L2 Chinese learners can improve their knowledge of *le* but such improvements are modulated by modality (comprehension and production).

**Answers to Research Question Three**

Research question three asks about L2 learners’ understanding of the functions of *le*. Qualitative data on the learners’ explanations for errors in the comprehension task can answer it. In the comprehension task, if the sentence was incorrect, the learners were asked to explain why it was incorrect. Their data have shown four patterns of explanations: no explanation, correct explanation, irrelevant explanation, and incorrect explanation. The areas where the learners encountered the most difficulty in explanation of incorrect sentences were regarding the use of *le* in the present perfect progressive tense and the future tense.

The learners were over-sensitive to the present perfect progressive tense which uses double *le*. Most of them noticed the use of double *le* and marked correct sentences as incorrect. In sentences that accurately depicted the present perfect progressive tense, the learners used explanations such as “too many *les*” and “two *les* are unnecessary”. This shows that they did not have a strong grasp of how to properly identify the present perfect progressive tense in Chinese. This may be due to the fact that the double *le* pattern is not adequately emphasized in grammar instruction.
Moreover, there was a distinct dissociation between *le* and the future tense. Participants often identified correct sentences as incorrect simply because there was a future tense indicator like 明天 (tomorrow) with *le*. There were multiple explanations that stated that *le* could not exist in a sentence if it was in future tense, which is incorrect. *Le* and the future tense in Chinese are not mutually exclusive.

**Discussion and Limitations**

There was no statistically significant difference between CHLs and NCHLs. Previous studies have produced different findings. For example, Y. Xiao (2006) have shown that CHLs do significantly better than NCHLs in speaking, listening, and grammar construction, but show no significant difference in reading comprehension, vocabulary learning, and character writing, demonstrating that oral proficiency does not automatically lead to literacy. However, the results from the present study has shown that there was no significant difference in comprehension or production of *le*. The different results from the present study may be because this study focused on a Chinese modal particle that is associated with L2 Chinese learners’ understanding of tenses, which may be more susceptible to the negative transfer of their first language (English) due to the fact that there is no direct English equivalent to *le*. In other words, CHLs and NCHLs may not differ in their acquisition of target linguistic forms that do not exist in their first language (English). Future research needs to include target linguistic forms that have direct equivalents in learners’ first language. Findings of these studies will help us understand whether CHLs and NCHLs have different acquisitional patterns on different types of target L2 linguistic forms.

Overall, the findings showed that proficiency plays a significant role in determining learners’ ability to produce *le* in written Chinese. Because the learners in higher proficiency groups were better able to produce *le*. This reinforces that *le* is very difficult to produce and takes
a high level of proficiency to master. However, there was no proficiency effect on their comprehension. This means that comprehending le is easier at lower levels of proficiency compared to producing le. In terms of a classroom setting, Chinese teachers should focus time on teaching their students how to properly produce le in all tense forms in all the subskills of Chinese. This can be done through repetitive writing exercises that prompt the use of le as well as reinforcement every semester. Chinese learners that are better able to produce le are closer to reaching advanced proficiency and will be able to properly express tenses in Chinese.

The two main errors made regarding the production of le were oversensitivity to the use of multiple les and disassociation between le and the future tense. Present perfect progressive tense should be emphasized when teaching le because it is particularly difficult to produce. Students also need to be taught that le can be used in the future tense.

The main limitation of this research is that there was no standardized proficiency test. Participants were put into proficiency categories based on the number of years they had studied Chinese at the college level. Two participants who have the same number of years of college Chinese experience could still have disparities in their proficiency levels. Compared to years of Chinese instruction, a standardized proficiency test score is a more reliable indicator of proficiency.

**Conclusion**

The current study investigated whether CHLs and NCHLs with different proficiency levels differ in their comprehension and production of Chinese modal particle le. Findings showed that CHLs and NCHLs had no significant difference in their comprehension or production of le. When it was added as a covariate, proficiency had a significant impact on
production but not on comprehension. These findings suggest that with increased proficiency, both CHLs and NCHLs can increase their accurate production of *le* but their comprehension of *le* may lag behind, suggesting a need of instruction with a focus on the rationale for correct use of *le* in different tenses. Qualitative data showed that most learners were oversensitive to the use of double *le*, which is associated with the present perfect progressive tense, and they had a misunderstanding that *le* cannot be used in the future tense. These two aspects need to be addressed in classroom instruction.

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References


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Appendix A

Production Task

Please translate these English sentences into Chinese. PLEASE DO NOT USE A DICTIONARY OR GOOGLE TRANSLATE. If you do not know the word in Chinese, please insert a capital "A" where the character(s) would be.

1. I ate breakfast this morning.
2. I have washed my clothes.
3. We have been learning Chinese for 5 years.
4. She finished her homework yesterday.
5. We have read this book.
6. She has been writing her book for 8 weeks.
7. She has sold her car.
8. He bought a t-shirt last week.
9. He has been eating lunch for two hours
10. They watched a movie last night.
11. He has lost his cellphone.
12. I have been looking for an apartment for 1 month.
Appendix B

Comprehension Task

Please determine whether the following sentences are accurate grammatically. Write in "accurate" if so, write "incorrect" if so and please point out the error and explain it in English.

1. 我昨天去了图书馆。/ 我昨天去了圖書館。 (incorrect)
2. 我昨天想买了东西。/ 我昨天想買了東西。(incorrect)
3. 他明年会去了中国。/ 他明年會去了中國。(incorrect)
4. 我们上个星期吃了中国菜。/ 我們上個星期吃了中國菜。
5. 她看书看了一天了。/ 她看書看了一天了。
6. 弟弟学会开车了。/ 弟弟學會開車了。
7. 她前天总是在洗衣服了。/ 她前天總是在洗衣服了。(incorrect)
8. 妈妈画画儿画了 3 个小时了。/ 媽媽畫畫兒畫了 3 個小時了。
9. 他上个月买了一台新电脑。/ 他上個月買了一台新電腦。
10. 我上个星期日去了商店买了东西。/ 我上個星期日去了商店買了東西。(incorrect)
11. 他上个月坐了飞机回了家。/ 他上個月坐了飛機回了家。(incorrect)
12. 我们下个月能上了课。/ 我們下個月能上了課。(incorrect)
13. 哥哥找到新工作了。/ 哥哥找到新工作了。
14. 她已经借到中文书。/ 她已經借到中文書。
15. 我睡觉睡了 10 个小时了。/ 我睡覺睡了 10 個小時了。
16. 她昨天骑了自行车来了学校。/ 她昨天騎了自行車來了學校。(incorrect)
17. 我去年常常做饭了。/ 我去年常常做飯了。(incorrect)
18. 哥哥上个星期一直在工作了。/ 哥哥上個星期一直在工作了。(incorrect)
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