Teaching and Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language

A Pedagogical Grammar

Janet Zhiqun Xing

HKU PRESS
香港大學出版社

Hong Kong University Press
The University of Hong Kong
Pokfulam Road
Hong Kong
www.hkupress.org

ISBN 978-962-209-762-9 (*Hardback*)
ISBN 978-962-209-763-6 (*Paperback*)

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

Printed and bound by China Translation & Printing Services Ltd., in Hong Kong, China

Contents

Appendices

1 *Preliminaries*

1.1 Aims of This Book

This book is designed to help teachers and students of the Chinese language learn the most recent developments in teaching and learning Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language (henceforth FL). More specifically, it discusses the theoretical models developed for Chinese language pedagogy and acquisition,[1] provides theoretical grounds for selecting teaching materials, and proposes applicable methodology for teaching and learning Chinese. For classroom activities, it demonstrates procedures for teaching and acquiring the five identified content areas: pronunciation, characters and words, sentences, discourse, and culture. These five areas are selected because of their unique characteristics and functions in Chinese and the complexity inherent in their teaching and acquisition.

Teaching and learning Chinese as a FL,[2] as with any other discipline, requires theoretical guidelines. These guidelines, however, may differ from those in other fields in that they are not pure theories; rather they are derived from the practice of teaching and learning Chinese as a FL as well as from research of language pedagogy and foreign language acquisition (FLA). In the process of the implementation of these guidelines, problems and difficulties may occur. However, by solving the problems and overcoming the difficulties, these guidelines are further improved and eventually the field of teaching Chinese as a FL is further developed. In this book, I propose a number of guidelines regarding curriculum design, teaching materials and teaching methodology, based on my own teaching and research experience, as well as incorporating the experiences of many students, teachers and specialists in the fields of teaching and learning Chinese as FL that I have become acquainted with over the last twenty years.

Tones, along with initials and finals, are the foundation of Chinese pronunciation, speaking and listening skills. First, I explain the results of theoretical and empirical studies of acquisition of the tones, initials and finals of the Chinese sound system. Then, I show procedures and strategies for teaching and learning the sound system. Since the majority of students who learn Chinese as FL have a non-tonal native language, the acquisition of tones is the main difficulty and/or problem that manifests itself in different ways for different

students. Although the acquisition of some Chinese initials and finals which do not exist in students' native languages may also be problematic, the scope of difficulty seems much smaller than that of tone acquisition because every Chinese character has a tone, including the neutral tone, but not every character has an initial or final that does not exist in students' native languages.

Characters（*zì* 字） are considered the most difficult component in the acquisition of the Chinese language by students whose native languages have an alphabetical writing system. Because of their shapes, characters are often referred to as logographic writing or pictographic writing, which leads many people to believe that if they are good at drawing, they should be able to learn Chinese characters better. It has also been suggested that the difficulty in learning Chinese lies in the lack of association between characters and sounds. English, for instance, has an alphabet of twenty-six letters, each of which represents a sound or two. So when students have learned those sounds, it becomes easier for them to sound out a word (regardless of whether they have learned the International Phonetic Alphabet) and then write the word. This phonetic ease is even more apparent in a language like Spanish in which each letter has one and only one phonetic pronunciation.

Chinese characters, however, were created differently. The majority of characters have two parts — phonetic and semantic — neither of which is categorized and learned in the "alphabetic" way, so it is difficult for students to decode this "unsystematic" Chinese writing system. This book also aims to guide students in learning the logical aspects of Chinese characters and recognizing a variety of methods for building up a vocabulary pool, an essential component in the development of students' reading and writing competence.

A sentence is the minimum unit needed to express a complete idea and is likely to be the minimum goal for any student learning Chinese. Based on research into both first and foreign language acquisition, I will reveal the most recent trends in teaching and learning sentences and demonstrate the principles and procedures of acquiring Chinese sentences. The emphasis will be on the acquisition of unique Chinese sentence structures, such as topic-comment construction and constructions with various types of complements. Unlike traditional lectures on Chinese grammar, I will provide detailed guidelines for students to follow in the development of their discourse competence. The objective in discussing sentences is not to help students analyze the structure of Chinese sentences but rather to enable them to use different sentences to construct paragraphs to use in authentic communicative situations.

Until recently, the teaching of discourse did not attract significant attention. In the history of teaching Chinese as FL, as well as that of Chinese linguistics, characters and sentences have been the mainstream areas of interest and research. When applied linguists and pedagogical specialists realized that students could not compose coherent paragraphs even after learning many sentence structures, they began to investigate the role of discourse devices used for the connection of sentences/ideas and paragraphs/multiple ideas, and the effect of different genres

used for different communicative purposes. The result of this type of investigation has led to the awareness of the importance of discourse and pragmatic factors in foreign language acquisition. Slowly, various discourse devices and pragmatic factors in communication have been included in curriculum design and classroom teaching. I will discuss methods of teaching and learning various levels of discourse devices and offer discourse activities of various types in speaking, reading and writing Chinese.

Many researchers claim culture and language are two closely related components of society (Sapir 1949[1921], Hymes 1964, Byram 1989, Kramsch 1993, Hinkel 1999). I support this view only to the extent that understanding Chinese culture enhances the learning of the Chinese language, but the former is not an absolute condition for the latter. For example, if a student knows nothing about Chinese tradition, customs, history, people's eating habits, etc., this student can still learn to produce a perfect Beijing accent and talk with people on the streets of China about where s/he wants to go and what s/he wants to do. It is true, though, that if students know Chinese tradition and customs, their conversation with native speakers may be more interesting and effective and the sentences they use might be pragmatically more appropriate than otherwise, to say nothing of giving them an enhanced ability to understand at least some of the metalinguistics of any utterance. The challenge that teachers now face is one of format; they must identify the broad and far ranging elements of Chinese culture, then classify them into layers according to the degree of their difficulty of acquisition, in the same way as grammatical elements have been treated. This is the goal of Chapter 8: I will develop a framework for categorization of cultural elements in teaching Chinese as FL and use illustrative examples to demonstrate the procedure of application of cultural elements in teaching Chinese.

In general, this book may serve as a manual for teaching and learning Chinese as FL at all levels, training potential Chinese language teachers, or designing a Chinese language curriculum. For the convenience of readers with different backgrounds, linguistic jargon is purposely avoided in all topics of discussion and illustration. When a technical term has to be used, explanation always follows. References are provided on occasions when a given subject is a target of early research, so that teachers, students, pedagogy specialists, and applied linguists interested in the subject may consult them for further study.

1.2 Chinese Grammar and Pedagogical Grammar of Chinese

The study of Chinese grammar has a long history, although it may be said that the modern study of Chinese grammar began with Mǎ Jiànzhōng's （马建忠）*Mǎ Shì Wén Tōng*《马氏文通》Chinese Grammar (1898[1983]). Focused mainly on the words *zì* (字) and *cí* (词), Mr Ma used more than seven thousand illustrative sentences to explain various functions of different types of words in Chinese. Ma's nineteenth-century book has been studied extensively since its publication

and is widely considered a work of art in the area of Chinese grammar. Ma's work has not only helped students of Chinese learn Chinese grammar, but has also set the course for future studies of Chinese grammar. Here in the twentieth century, we have seen that words and their functions in sentences constitute the bulk of Chinese grammar. It is probably for this reason that researchers studying Chinese grammar are referred to as grammarians instead of linguists like their counterparts in the West.

More recently, Lǚ Shūxiāng, together with his research team, shared with us his understanding of contemporary Chinese grammar through *Xiàndài Hànyǔ Bābǎi Cí* (现代汉语八百词, Eight Hundred Chinese Words, 1980). According to his preface, Lǚ prepared this work for non-native Mandarin and non-native Chinese speakers, as well as language teachers and researchers. The content of this work is primarily focused on function words (虚词 *xūcí*), unlike *Mǎ Shì Wén Tōng* which includes both function and content words(实词 *shící*). Based on the part of speech (e.g. noun, verb, adjective, adverb, etc.) and syntactic function (e.g. subject, object, predicate, etc.) of each word, Lǚ categorizes the function of every word and illustrates its usage. Presumably, Lǚ's focus on function words lies in the difficulty of teaching and learning these words in Chinese. This leads to the following questions: Is straight Chinese grammar the same as pedagogical Chinese? If so, can we use *Xiàndài Hànyǔ Bābǎi Cí*, or similar types of grammar books as teaching aids in Chinese classes? If not, why not?

My answer to the first question is "no"; the two types of grammar are different. Chinese grammar should comprise all rules, both prescriptive (i.e. how language should be used) and descriptive (i.e. how people actually use the language), relevant to pronunciation, meaning (i.e. semantic), sentence structure (i.e. syntax), discourse and pragmatics. This grammar is practiced by native speakers and studied by grammarians, linguists and other interested researchers. Pedagogical grammars of Chinese, on the other hand, may consist of two parts: (1) grammar that teachers teach students who learn Chinese as FL and (2) the methodology of teaching this grammar. In other words, pedagogical grammar concerns issues of what grammar to teach and how to teach it to students of Chinese as FL. This overlaps with the definition given by Odlin (1994: 1) "the term pedagogical grammar usually denotes the types of grammatical analysis and instruction designed for the need of second language students." With the specification of the content of pedagogical grammar, it becomes easy to answer the two questions raised at the end of the preceding paragraph. That is, we cannot completely rely on grammar books, such as *Xiàndài Hànyǔ Bābǎi Cí*, to teach because they only provide grammar that teachers may teach students, and not the methodology of how to teach grammar. However, as many teachers have already put this into practice, we can consult with these types of grammar books when we teach certain grammatical functions. In addition to Lǚ's work, Chinese teachers often consult a few other grammar books: Chao's *A Spoken Chinese* (1968), Li and Thompson's *Mandarin Chinese* (1981), and Liu's *Modern Chinese Grammar* (实用现代汉语语法 *Shíyòng Xiàndài Hànyǔ Yǔfǎ* 2002[1983]). In comparison,

there is no single handbook of the pedagogical grammar of Chinese. Many Chinese teachers have to search publications by the *Chinese Language Teachers Association* (CLTA) for guidance and enlightenment. I hope this book will broaden the choices for teachers who need pedagogical assistance when teaching Chinese as FL.

1.3 Prior and Current Work on Language Pedagogy and Acquisition

To discuss research into teaching Chinese as a FL, I have to start with the study of language pedagogy and foreign language acquisition (FLA) including second language acquisition (SLA), which is, to some researchers, elucidated or illuminated by studies of theoretical linguistics (cf. Brumfit and Johnson 1979, Ellis 1985, Schachter 1988, Gass and Schachter 1989, Eckman et al. 1995, Gass and Selinker 2001). As far as the scope of FLA is concerned, researchers vary in their opinions. Some researchers distinguish pedagogy from foreign language acquisition; others consider pedagogy a part of foreign language acquisition (e.g. Cook 2001, Ellis 1999, Bachman and Cohen 1998, Romírez 1995, Krashen 1982). Newmyer and Weiberger (1988: 41–42) point out that "the struggle of the field (SLA) to free itself from its ties to pedagogy has been slow and arduous, and is still a long way from being totally achieved … Nevertheless, the field of second language learning research shows every sign of shedding its legacy of direct involvement in pedagogical questions." Gass and Schachter (1995: 17) further argue that if teachers and researchers understand the goals and needs of the other's field, they will succeed in making both pedagogy and FLA/SLA theory better all around. The works of both Newmyer and Weiberger and Gass seem to suggest that language pedagogy and FLA should be distinct fields of research; however, in practice, it is difficult to separate one from the other.

1.3.1 Pedagogy

As early as the 1960s, Newmark and Reibel (1968: 232) pointed out that language teaching has shifted the emphasis away from "mastery of language use to mastery of language structure." This shift refers to the movement of structuralism in linguistic and applied linguistic research. "Mastery of language use" emphasizes the *meaning* of language, whereas "mastery of language structures" emphasizes the *form* of language. Hymes (1979: 1[1971]) further explains this shift as follows:

> We have come to see the task of syllabus design, for example, as very much one of selecting structural items and grading them in suitable order for teaching. Our syllabuses have often been little more than ordered lists of structures, which we have then proceeded to teach by means of a strategy that has become all but universal. The strategy works like

> this: we present a structure, drill it, practice it in context … then move to the next structure. In this way, we gradually synthetically build up the inventory of structural items our students can handle. We reward structural correctness and chastise structural inaccuracy. Success or failure in language learning, as interpreted both through examination results and through student or teacher judgment, has generally come to be assessed in terms of ability to manipulate the structure of the language.

This description provides a vivid picture of how language teaching is affected by the direction of linguistic research — structuralism in this case. Specifically, linguists first provide an answer to 'What is language?" Then, language teachers derive an answer from the linguist's answer to "What knowledge and skills are involved in language proficiency?" (Hymes 1971)

When Chomsky's transformational generative grammar came into being in the late 1950s, the concept of *competence* and *performance* became the center of discussion among not only linguists but also applied linguists and pedagogy specialists. According to Chomsky (1965: 5), competence refers to "the speaker-listener's knowledge of his language," while performance is defined as "the actual use of language in concrete situations." Following Chomsky's explanation of the relationship between language and humans, Hymes (1971) introduced the concept of *communicative competence* — focusing on language in use, the social dimension of language and the concern with language as a form of communication — into language pedagogy and research. Since then, the communicative-based approach in teaching FL has attracted generations of researchers and teachers. This is partly because the communicative approach covers a wide range of topics for research and discussion but more importantly because this approach is more stimulating than the earlier structure-based approach. In other words, the communicative approach involves not only language components, but also their relationship with the people who use the language and the society in which the language is used (cf. Wertsch 1994). As a result, communicative-based syllabi, curricula, teaching materials and teaching and learning guidelines have spread throughout the world and been made known to every language teacher who is interested in the current developments in language pedagogy in the twentieth century (e.g. Lǔ 1981, Rivers 1983, Richards and Nunan 1990, Liu 2002).

1.3.2 Foreign language acquisition

Apart from language pedagogy, the study of foreign language acquisition (FLA) deals with three major areas: (1) the theoretical model of foreign language acquisition, (2) learning content and methodology, and (3) classroom behavior studies. To be more specific, these three areas raise questions relevant to the relationship between theoretical linguistics and FLA, the way of processing learning materials and transferring knowledge of the target language — i.e., learnability, and the procedure of classroom activities.

It has been debated in the last several decades whether the research and practice of FLA has been guided by studies of theoretical linguistics. Some argue that an adequate model of FLA is quite impossible without a coherent theory of language (e.g. Dulay et al. 1982, Schachter 1988, Gregg 1989, Flynn and Martohardjono 1996**).** Some take the opposite position, i.e., that FLA has established its own system of study based on empirical data from learning FL, and therefore, it is autonomous, independent from the theory of natural language (e.g. Gass 1979, Bley-Vroman 1989, Eckman et al. 1995). Others position themselves between the two views just mentioned: a coherent theory of language (e.g. universal grammar) would be enhanced by evidence from foreign language data, and vice versa. In other words, linguistic theories derived from first language acquisition and FLA theories derived from foreign language teaching and learning can benefit from each other (cf. Gass and Schachter 1989**)**.

In addition to the debate of the role of theoretical linguistics in FLA, one central issue that has concerned researchers of FLA has been learnability, i.e. what and how a non-native speaker can learn in a foreign language classroom. Questions often raised are: How do students learn a sound system to achieve speaking and listening competence? How do they build up their vocabulary pool for reading and writing competence? How do they learn sentences, discourse and pragmatic devices well enough to compose cohesive, coherent paragraphs? Moreover, how do students acquire other socially related knowledge so that they can use the language effectively in communication? Among these questions associated with learnability, researchers have prioritized syntax (i.e. sentence structure) and phonology (i.e. a pronunciation system) as central to linguistic theory and more critical to language pedagogy, and vocabulary or orthography, discourse and culture as important elements, but less critical than syntax and phonology (cf. Odlin 1994, Coady and Huckin 1997, Doughty and Williams 1998, Hinkel 1999, Rose and Kasper 2001).

Research on grammar and vocabulary/orthography acquisition can be traced back to the early nineteenth century when the translation method became common in second/foreign language acquisition. The translation method was primarily used for studying literary texts. It encouraged students to learn etymology, develop dictionary skills and master critical sentence structures. After nearly a century of popularity, the translation method was criticized and challenged for its lack of attention to a newly identified practical and realistic function, namely, oral proficiency (cf. Zimmerman 1997). This led to a series of discussions and debates on the need for reform in language pedagogy both in Europe and in the United States. As a result, two new methods were introduced into the teaching of foreign language: the natural method and the situation teaching method. With the natural method, sentences were learned through natural conversation and vocabulary was explained with labeled pictures, demonstration and the association of ideas (Rivers 1983, and Richards and Rodgers 1986). In other words, this method encourages students to use sentences and vocabulary in utterances. The situation teaching method, on the other hand, aimed to develop students' reading skills. For

the first time, vocabulary was considered one of the most important aspects of foreign language learning and priority was placed on developing a scientific and rational basis for selecting the vocabulary content of language courses (Richards and Rogers 1990, Zimmerman 1997). When the audio-lingual method was implemented in foreign language learning during the Second World War, pronunciation and grammar became the center of language learning. Students were taught sound systems through listening to recordings and taught grammatical points through examples and drills rather than through analysis and memorization of rules. This method quickly attracted numerous language students, teachers and researchers alike because a foreign language was, for the first time in history, not approached in an unspoken way anymore. During this period, when one concern within language teaching was the acquisition of structure patterns, vocabulary items were selected according to their simplicity and familiarity. New words were introduced through drills but only enough new words to make the drills possible (Fries 1945, Rivers 1968, Larsen-Freeman 1986).

The most recent method developed in teaching and learning a foreign language is the communicative teaching method. This method is applied to the acquisition of every component of a language: sound system, orthography, sentence structure, discourse and culture. It promotes fluency over accuracy and emphasizes the communicative function of words and sentences, namely, their appropriateness in discourse and communication (cf. Van Ek 1976, Widdowson 1978, Rivers 1983, Zimmerman 1997, Nation 2001). The fluency-over-accuracy theory seems to have generated a lot of discussion in the last two decades; however, the appropriateness approach closely related to discourse, pragmatic, and cultural factors appears to have held its position steadily during the same period.

These acquisition methods and this research in FLA have mostly been developed and practiced in the acquisition of European languages. In the following section, let us see how they can also relate to and influence the pedagogy and acquisition of Chinese as FL.

1.3.3 Chinese as a foreign language

Teachers and researchers committed to teaching Chinese as a foreign language (FL) generally do not consider Chinese pedagogy and Chinese acquisition two distinct areas of inquiry, as do some European and American applied linguists of foreign language acquisition (see discussion in previous sections). The majority of research papers (e.g. those published by the *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association* [JCLTA] or the *Chinese Teaching in the World*), and books on Chinese as FL mix both teaching and learning Chinese in discussion, but distinguish elements (tones, grammar, discourse, etc.) to be taught and learned. Another characteristic of Chinese language pedagogy research and acquisition is that Chinese teachers and pedagogy specialists have long been influenced by the research of European and American applied linguists. This is probably not only

because European and American teachers and researchers have a longer and richer history of teaching European languages to foreign students than Chinese teachers have teaching Chinese to foreigners, but also because many Chinese teachers and researchers have learned English as FL and have been trained to teach Chinese as FL in Europe and the United States.

Although in China the practice of teaching Chinese to foreigners can be traced back to the Tang dynasty (seventh–ninth century), it was not until the twentieth century that academia started to pay attention to teaching Chinese as FL. With an increasing demand for Chinese teaching both in and outside China, teachers and researchers of the Chinese language came to realize the importance of selecting teaching materials and teaching methodology to maximize students' learning potential. This, consequently, led to the birth of research on the teaching and learning of Chinese as FL. By the twentieth century, the traditional Chinese teaching approach was memorization. It was believed that once a student memorized a good number of characters, phrases and grammatical sentences, this student should be able to speak, read, and write the language. Prior to this period, some Western scholars attempted to detect a grammatical system for the Chinese language, but concluded with disappointment that Chinese was "illogical" and had "no grammatical system" (Ramsey 1987: 49). The only recommendation they could offer to students of Chinese as FL was to use the traditional Chinese method — i.e., the memorization and/or translation approach then popular also in Europe and the United States.

When the Second World War broke out in 1941, more students in Europe and North America became interested in learning Chinese in their own countries. Chinese teachers residing in these regions were either native Chinese speakers using, most likely, traditional Chinese teaching methods for teaching Chinese as FL or Western non-native Chinese teachers using the grammar-translation and/or the newly introduced audio-lingual method. During the Second World War and for approximately three decades afterward, research on teaching and learning Chinese as FL was generally neglected both in and outside China.

In the 1970s, when China finally opened its door to foreign countries, learning Chinese as FL began to gather momentum and research on teaching Chinese was also taken more seriously than ever before: not only by Chinese language teachers but also by Chinese linguists. In 1966, the *Journal of Chinese Language Teachers Association* (JCLTA), the first professional journal designated for research of teaching Chinese as FL, was established in the United States. Since then, teachers, pedagogy specialists and linguists have used it as a forum in which to share their understanding of, ideas about and suggestions on how to teach and learn Chinese as FL. Among the numerous articles published in the JCLTA, have been many that have influenced the direction the field of Chinese language teaching and learning has taken. Ronald Walton can be considered a pioneer scholar in the field: He published several articles (1989, 1992, and 1996) in JCLTA introducing the emerging field of Chinese pedagogy, and reflecting on his vision for Chinese language instruction in the United States.

Richard Chi (1989, 1996) has been known for his dedication to proficiency-based instruction, teaching materials and testing. Many teachers and researchers (Walker 1996; Kubler 1997a, 1997b; Ross 1997; Wong 1996; Gallagher 1999; Chen 1998, 2003) have contributed a great deal to the development of Chinese curricula. Some (Teng 1997, 1998; Xing 1998, 2003; McDonald 1999) have made an effort to establish a working model for a pedagogical grammar of Chinese, while others have been detailing the process of teaching different skills in Chinese. For listening and speaking skills, teachers and researchers have discussed issues related either to teaching and learning tones (McGinnis 1996, 1997; Lundelius 1992; and Chen 1997, Feng 2004) or to comprehension and conversation strategies (Kubler 1993, Yang 1993, Yeh 1997). Everson (1988, 1998) and Everson and Ke (1997) have paid special attention to reading skills. Many other teachers (e.g. Packard 1990, Ke 1998, Lǔ 1999b, Yang 2000, Yin 2002) have focused on teaching and learning Chinese characters, however, few issues have discussed writing skills (Feng 2003a, 2003b)**,** unless research (Norment 1994, Xing 1998, Chu 2002, Cui 2003) on both spoken and written discourse is counted. In addition to the four skills, there have appeared a good number of discussions on computers and technology in relation to teaching and learning Chinese (Yao 1996, Alber 1996, Zhang 1998, Xie 1999, Bai 2003, Chan 2002, 2003). Cultural and psychological factors involved in the process of pedagogy and acquisition have also attracted many teachers and researchers (Packard 1989, Lan 1994, Myer 1997, 2000, Wen 1999, Li 1999, Hong 1997, 2002).

It is indeed the case that JCLTA has been the only major resource on Chinese language pedagogy and acquisition for the last thirty years in the English speaking world. In China, other than two Chinese journals (《世界汉语教学》, Shìjiè Hànyǔ Jiāoxué, "Chinese Teaching in the World" and 《语言教学研究》, Yǔyán Jiāoxué Yánjiū, "Language Pedagogy and Research"), designated to research articles on Chinese language pedagogy, there have not been many books systematically addressing various issues relevant to teaching and learning Chinese as FL in the last twenty years. Lǔ (1999a), Liu (2002), Zhao (2004) are among the few that provide some urgently needed information for Chinese language teachers. This situation, nonetheless, may change in the next thirty years. With an increasing number of students rushing to China to learn Chinese, the China National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (*Hànbàn*, 汉办) and the Graduate Institute of Chinese as a Second Language (*Huáyánsuǒ*, 华研所), Taiwan, began to realize the importance of research in the field. In 2002, *Hànbàn* launched, for the first time in history, a large-scale research project on teaching Chinese as FL. Sixty-five projects (see the list at http://www.hanban.edu.cn) were allocated to pedagogy specialists and linguists for exploration of various aspects of teaching Chinese to non-native speakers. The outcome of some of these projects has already been published. Since the establishment of *Huáyánsuǒ* in 1995, its faculty members have carried on numerous research projects on teaching and learning Chinese as FL and have trained a large number of graduate students in the field. All this is a clear

indication that the field of Chinese as FL has advanced rapidly in China in recent years.

Examining the literature of Chinese pedagogy and acquisition makes it clear that the guiding principle of teaching and learning Chinese as FL has gradually changed in the last century from grammar-translation-based to function-based (still a dominant approach used by many Chinese programs in the US) and then to proficiency or communicative-based. More and more factors (e.g. discourse, pragmatic, cultural, psychological, etc.) have been identified to relate to the process of teaching and acquisition. Yet, up to the present time, no system or framework that can connect these factors together has been developed. This current work aims to establish such a system.

1.4 Where and Who?

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is not difficult to find a university or college, a secondary school or a weekend school that teaches Chinese, no matter which continent one goes to. No one doubts that the rise and fall of Chinese language programs is directly related to the status of the economy and political situation in China. When China has either political or economical problems, Chinese programs shrink; conversely, when the Chinese economy booms, Chinese programs throughout the world thrive. In the following, I will provide an overview of the types of Chinese language programs in the world and a few of the characteristics of students who learn Chinese as FL.

1.4.1 Chinese language programs

In the last two decades, many universities, colleges and secondary schools instituted new Chinese language programs in response to students' popular demand for this language (cf. Walton 1989, Chou 1999, Teng and Yeh 2001, Fitzgerald et al. 2002, Walker and Li 2003). In addition to that, new summer Chinese intensive programs, study abroad programs (in China), weekend or Sunday schools have been established every year. In general, Chinese language programs may be classified into five types:

- Four-year college/university Chinese programs
- K-12 Chinese programs
- Weekend/Sunday schools
- Intensive programs (both in China and outside China)
- Other Chinese courses (including short-term training classes)

According to the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition affiliated with the National Language Research Center, 506 public higher institutions in North America have a Chinese language program (over 95 percent

of them are in the United States); 15 higher institutions have intensive summer programs; and 21 higher institutions sponsor a study abroad program in China. It should be noted that these statistics might not be accurate; however, they give us a general idea of the prevalence of Chinese programs in North America. According to a news report from *Xīnhuá News Agency*, January 17, 2003, the United States alone has about 1,000 universities and colleges that offer courses in Chinese as FL. Presumably, the discrepancy between the statistics given by the two sources lies in the exclusion of private colleges and universities. Surfing through the list of institutions with a Chinese program in North America maintained by the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, it can be seen that every single state in the United States, as well as every province in Canada, has at least one college level Chinese program. The majority of these programs offer at least two or three years of Chinese courses along with some elective courses related to Chinese history, culture or society.

In Europe, Chinese language programs have also grown in the last two decades. In France, 152 universities and colleges offer Chinese courses as FL to nearly 10,000 students, according to Professor Joël Bellassen, the president of the French Chinese Language Teachers Association (FCLTA). Among them, 14 institutions offer a Chinese major and 102 institutions offer non-major Chinese courses. In Great Britain, the situation is somewhat different; not as many universities and colleges offer Chinese courses. Most of the programs are in public schools, namely government sponsored institutions. My sources (see Table 1.1) show that in Great Britain only 20 universities and colleges have Chinese language programs for full-time undergraduates and postgraduate students. However, 127 colleges offer part-time or evening Chinese classes, including Mandarin, Cantonese and related cultural courses primarily for immigrants from Hong Kong. In German-speaking countries — Germany, Austria, Switzerland, etc. — Chinese language programs can be found at major universities that also have a China-related course of study, such as Sinology or Modern China Studies. Among the 135 higher institutions offering Chinese courses, only 40 of them are regular four-year colleges and universities; the rest are college extended programs.

Some Asian countries, such as Japan, Korea and Singapore, have a long history of Chinese language programs because of their geographic location and social, economical, and political ties with China. A survey conducted by Teng and Yeh (2001) shows that South Korea has the largest student body of Chinese as FL among all Asian countries. Other countries, such as Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia, do not have a long history of teaching Chinese as FL; however, in recent years, there have been a growing number of higher institutions interested in establishing a Chinese language program to meet the demand of students. The China National Office for Teaching Chinese as a foreign Language (NOCFL), or *Hànbàn* reports that majority of foreign students who study Chinese at Chinese colleges and universities come from Korea, Japan and a few other South East Asian countries.

In Australia, Mandarin Chinese was available at 29 colleges/universities in 2001 with an enrollment of 1,338 students (see report by Fitzgerald, the Asian Studies Association of Australia 2002). Fitzgerald's report also showed that the study of Mandarin Chinese grew steadily in Australia in the 1990s.

K-12 Chinese programs, on the other hand, are not as popular as those at universities and colleges in most parts of the world, except for some Asian countries. Statistics from the National Language Research Center, the same source from which college level Chinese program statistics are cited, show that in North America 86 public schools offer Chinese courses to approximately 38,000 students. Compared with the number of other major foreign language programs at K-12 public schools in North America, this number is rather small. However, compared with the number of Chinese programs in North America a few decades ago, we do see an increase. In the state of Washington, Chinese programs have emerged at several reputable middle schools and high schools (both public and private) in the last several years. Lakeside School, known as the best private secondary school in the Seattle area, started its Chinese program in the year 2000. Three years later, this school offers four levels of Chinese courses. It is worth noting that a significant number of French K-12 schools (total 136 schools with approximately 20,000 students, including students from weekend/Sunday schools) offer Chinese courses (cf. Bellassen 2004). This number is twice more than the number of colleges and universities offering Chinese language programs in France, and comparable to the number of public schools providing Chinese courses in the United States. In German-speaking countries, there is also a reasonable number (57 according to FASK, School of Applied Linguistics and Cultural Studies) of K-12 schools with Chinese language programs, considering Chinese is offered there as a third language after English.

In Asia, South Korea topped all other countries in the number of Chinese programs offered (1,138 public high schools and 18 private high schools) and in student enrollment in Chinese courses (82,520 public school students and 20,300 private school students), according to a report by Teng and Yeh (2001). These numbers coincide with the report from *Hànbàn* showing that North Korea sent the largest number of students to China to study Chinese in 2001–2003.

The number of Chinese weekend or Sunday schools has also boomed in recent years because many children of Chinese immigrants are sent to Chinese schools by their parents. In addition, the number of adopted Chinese girls has also affected enrollment numbers in Chinese schools because adoptive parents who promised to educate their adopted daughters in Chinese culture are registering them in Chinese schools across the US to learn Chinese language and culture. In the United States, more than 270 Chinese schools were registered as non-profit organizations in 2004, with an enrollment of more than 36,000 students nationwide, according to statistics provided by the Chinese School Association at the United States. Other countries, such as France, Great Britain, and Japan, have similar weekend and Sunday Chinese schools, but the number of schools and

students in these countries is substantially lower. Other relevant statistics from these countries are not available (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Statistics of Chinese language programs and student enrollment (Mandarin and Cantonese)*

	Univ./College (Students)	K-12 (Students)	S. School (Students)	Others** (Students)
N. America[1]	506 34,153[2]	86 (38,000)	270*** (36,000+)	53 (n/a)
Japan[3]	84 (n/a)	303 (15,390)	n/a	186 (36,314)
S. Korea[3]	215 (34,727)	1154 (102,820)	n/a	n/a
Australia[4]	29 (1338)	300+ (80,000+)	38 (8,000+)	n/a
France[5]	152 (9,400+)	136 (20,000+)	n/a	n/a
UK[6]	19 (n/a)	n/a	n/a	127 (n/a)
German-speaking countries[7]	135 (approx. 4,000)	57 (n/a)	n/a	n/a
China[8]	300+ (60,000)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	2027 (25 million)[8]	n/a	n/a	n/a

* The numbers in the cells refer to schools having Chinese as a foreign language and those in parentheses represent student enrollment.

** There might be some overlap between the numbers under "Other" and "China," primarily because both categories include "Study Chinese in China" programs.

*** It should be noted that these numbers only include the enrollment for those heritage schools with primarily mainland Chinese immigrant connections, and not the ones with mainly Taiwan connections.

1. Statistics at the university/college level are quoted from the website maintained by the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, National Language Research Center (http://carla.acad.umn.edu/lctl/access.html). The number for Sunday Schools (or Chinese Schools) is from the website of the Chinese School Association in the United States (see http://www.csaus.org). "Other" includes summer intensive programs both in the US and in China (see http://www.studyabroad.com).
2. This only includes the number of US students taking Chinese in the fall of 2002 from the report of the Modern Language Association of America, January 2004.
3. Data from a survey conducted by Teng and Yeh (2001), Institute of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language, National Taiwan Normal University.
4. University/College data are cited from *Maximizing Australia's Asian Knowledge* by John Fitzgerald et al. (2002). Other data were provided by James Wu, the president of the Chinese Language Teacher's Federation of Australia.

5. Data provided by Professor Joël Bellassen, president of the French Chinese Language Teachers Association.
6. This figure only reflects government-sponsored Chinese programs at colleges and universities (see http://www.hotcourses.com).
7. Dr Andreas Guder, a professor at Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz, provided some data for Chinese programs in Germany. Other data was provided by FASK (http://www.fask.uni-mainz/de/inst/chinesisch/shindeutsch.htm)
8. The data is reported by *Xīnhuá News Agency*, January 17, 2003 and provided by the China National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (NOCFL).

1.4.2 Chinese language practitioners

Throughout this book, the term "Chinese language practitioners" is used to refer to teachers and students of Chinese as FL. Although the members of these two categories of language practice vary in terms of status/position, attitudes and personality, they engage in activities that are very dependent on goals: to teach or learn communicative skills in the target language. These two members function as if they are a married couple practicing the Chinese language. Both of them have to work hard, learn from each other and cooperate with each other to create a harmonious environment so that teachers become skillful in teaching and students become knowledgeable and competent in communication in Chinese. Without this harmony, the two groups will struggle through the course of teaching and learning with teachers becoming frustrated and students failing to learn communicative skills in the end. To avoid this situation, it is important for teachers and students to understand and respect the responsibilities and characteristics of each other in the process of teaching and learning Chinese.

1.4.2.1 Teachers and teacher training

Chinese language teachers can be classified into three types based on their background and experience with the Chinese language: (1) native speakers with non-Western education and teacher training, (2) native speakers with Western education and teacher training, and (3) non-native speakers with Western education and teacher training. Each of these types may be further divided into two sub-types: (1) those with training in Chinese linguistics or related fields, and (2) those with training in Chinese literature or related fields. All of these types and sub-types of teachers have certain teaching tactics in common, but each type can also develop its own teaching characteristics influenced by training and/or personality.

The term "Native Chinese teachers with non-Western education and training" refers herein to those whose native language is Chinese and who teach Chinese as FL in China, Taiwan, or other East Asian countries. These teachers, seen in decreasing numbers in recent years, are notably influenced by the Chinese traditional teaching method, namely, the teacher-centered method. They are strict

in the classroom, and friendly and hospitable outside the classroom, especially with their students. Most of these teachers have at least a college degree in social sciences or humanities. In comparison, non-native Chinese teachers who receive Western education and teacher training are more inclined to use the student-centered method. Most of them are skillful, even meticulous, in the design of different class activities and games to sustain students' interest in learning Chinese. It is relatively easy for them and their students to gain mutual understanding because they share the same or similar cultural roots. However, it might be difficult for some teachers in this group to gain students' confidence in their Chinese competence because they are not native speakers. This is, obviously, not an issue for native Chinese teachers regardless of whether or not they received Western education and training. Native Chinese teachers who have received education and teacher training in the West seem to fall between the two types of teachers just discussed. They are trained in both traditional Chinese methods and newer Western methods. In addition, they are familiar with Western culture and students' learning habits. They can be as creative as any other language teacher. This is probably why the majority of Chinese teachers at all institutions belong to this type. Their goal is to "stimulate student interest in language, to develop the learner's confidence in their own abilities, to discover truth about the structure of language under study, and to help raise learners' consciousness not only about what is systematic about the language they are learning but also about learners' own linguistic strength and weakness" (Riggenbach 1999: 25).

Not surprisingly, Chinese teachers with different educational backgrounds teach Chinese with different strategies. Teachers with a linguistic degree, for instance, may prefer to explain how to pronounce a certain sound by using linguistic jargon (e.g. place and manner of articulation — labial, fricative, retroflex, etc.), when teaching the Chinese sound system, whereas teachers with a literature background may briefly go over the sound and leave time for interesting stories about their experience in learning the sound. Each type of teaching has its own merits and each can achieve excellence through cumulative experience and a variety of training.

In the twenty-first century, Chinese teachers and potential Chinese teachers have more training opportunities than ever before. Workshops with various themes, such as the Workshop for Business Chinese, the Workshop for Teaching Chinese via Internet, and a workshop for assessment of student performance, can be found almost every year. Chinese language teacher associations have been established on almost every continent including but not limited to:

- the French Chinese Teachers Association (FCLTA)
- the Association of Chinese Language Teaching in German-speaking Countries
- the Chinese Language Teachers Federation of Australia (CLTFA)
- the Association of Chinese Language (中国语学会, *Zhōngguó yǔ xuéhuì*, Japan)

- the Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA)
- the International Society for Chinese Language Teaching
- the National Council of Association of Chinese Language Schools
- the Chinese School Association in the United States
- the Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary School (CLASS)

These associations for Chinese language teachers aim to advance the teaching and learning of the Chinese language and to encourage and disseminate studies and research in Chinese language pedagogy, as noted in the by-laws of the CLTA. Most of these associations hold an annual meeting so that teachers can gather and exchange or share new ideas relevant to the teaching and research of Chinese as FL.

However, the fundamental training of Chinese teachers lies in graduate schools for teachers of foreign languages. In the 1990s, several universities started programs to specifically train Chinese teachers, among them the Institute of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language at the National Taiwan Normal University, master's or equivalent programs in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language at the University of Iowa, University of Colorado, Beijing Language University, Ohio State University, and National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. Graduates from these programs become Chinese teachers positioned at many competitive universities and colleges in many different countries around the world. With the continued demand for Chinese language teachers, teacher-training programs will undoubtedly continue to grow in the future.

1.4.2.2 Students

It was noted earlier that the number of students choosing Chinese as FL at all academic levels has steadily increased in the last two decades worldwide. We may group students according to their geographical locations and the linguistic similarity of their native language to that of Chinese: in other words, Asian students and Western students. Within these two groups, we may further subdivide them into adult learners and younger learners. What follows is a discussion of the characteristics of each of these groups.

Asian students, with a large number from Japan and South Korea, have certain advantages in learning Chinese. Since Japanese students have already learned how to write Kanji — Japanese words derived from and similar to Chinese characters — when they start learning Chinese, their initial writing skill is clearly better than students whose native language is not Japanese. Many of them, however, have difficulty in pronouncing palatal sounds (e.g. j, q, x) and retroflex sounds (i.e. *zh, ch, sh*) and have difficulty in distinguishing [n] from [l]. Most Korean students also start to learn Chinese characters at an early age. Due to the influence of Chinese characters and pronunciation in the Korean language,

students can associate the pronunciation of Chinese words with the sounds, pronunciation and characters of Korean words. Similarly, Vietnamese and Burmese students can learn Chinese tones without much difficulty because their native languages are tonal too. By comparison, Western students have none of the advantages that Asian students have. In North America and Europe, students generally find that tones and logographic characters are the two most difficult components of the Chinese language because their native languages are neither tonal, nor logographic. They are alphabetical languages whose pitch of accents is rarely linked to semantics. Consequently, it has become almost conventional wisdom in Western countries that if a student is good at learning Chinese tones and characters, this student can learn Chinese.

Younger students of Chinese as FL adopt a different learning pattern in comparison to adult students. In North America, younger learners are either extremely competitive (otherwise they would not choose to learn Chinese) or have some kind of background in or connection to Chinese (e.g. their family members are native Chinese speakers). In other words, they have either a will or a way to learn Chinese well. Those who have the will can learn Chinese faster than adult learners because they can memorize words faster and imitate sounds better than adults do and their affective filter is less opaque making it less embarrassing to imitate such foreign sounds. For those young learners who have a background or for heritage speakers, a certain level of listening, or even speaking, competence has been attained before formal learning begins, so they can easily surpass adults in listening and speaking. For adult learners who do not have any of these advantages, the acquisition of all four skills — listening, speaking, reading and writing — is much more difficult. Due to the lack of data and analysis of younger students, I will not do any parallel comparison between younger students in Asian and Western countries.

1.5 Standards and Assessment

Pedagogy specialists and applied linguists have long been developing standards in addition to guidelines, for teaching and learning a foreign language, as well as assessment tools to measure students' communicative competence and performance. Many language practitioners also know that teaching and learning guidelines and assessment methods often change with the development of new theories and frameworks in foreign language acquisition. During the first half of the twentieth century, structuralism — emphasizing sentence structures — dominated all linguistic related fields. As a result, teaching and learning a foreign language, including Chinese, was guided by grammar/structure-based standards. Be they curricular, textbooks, or tests, all centered on grammatical structures of the target language (cf. Bachman 1990).

During the second half of the twentieth century, functionalism — emphasizing language function in communication with an emphasis on

communication skills/function — gradually gained popularity in linguistic research (Hymes 1971, Johnson and Johnson 1979, Berns 1990) and, applied linguistics and foreign language acquisition and pedagogy soon followed the trend. Foreign language teaching then switched from the grammar/structure-based approach to function-based, then to performance or proficiency-based. This switch was evidenced by the publication of function- and proficiency-oriented textbooks, revision of curricula to pave the road for achieving new teaching and learning goals, and most notably by the development of proficiency guidelines for teaching and learning and proficiency-based assessment, which I will discuss in further detail in the next three sections.

According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), proficiency guidelines "identify stage of proficiency, as opposed to achievement, thus they are not intended to measure what an individual has achieved through specific classroom instruction, but rather to allow assessment of what an individual can and cannot do, regardless of where, when, or how the language has been learned or acquired." (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 1986) This makes it clear that "guideline" and "assessment" are two different yet closely related concepts. In other words, guidelines are a means for assessment of students' proficiency level. It should be noted that in reality, proficiency guidelines have been incorporated into teaching and learning a foreign language far beyond what was originally intended. Many language programs and teachers use the proficiency guidelines to guide their curriculum design, instruction preparation, program evaluation, evaluation, and student achievement assessment (Chi 1996, Higgs 1984, Omaggio 1986).

I agree with the ACTFL's original proposal that guidelines should only be used to assess students' proficiency level. One may argue that students' proficiency level is an indication of the effectiveness of the teachers' instruction, which is, in turn, an indication of the effectiveness of a program's curricular goals and therefore, the proficiency guidelines should not only be used to assess student proficiency level, but also to assess teacher performance and program effectiveness. The problem with this argument is that there are many other means of measurement and factors that affect teacher performance and program effectiveness, such as student-teacher ratio, student retention, program goals, program type, etc. If the proficiency guidelines are considered the only means to evaluate teachers and programs, it can be very difficult to substantiate the purpose of evaluation or assessment.

The most recent standards developed by ACTFL are the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* (1996). Breaking the tradition of developing standards for teaching and assessment, these new standards aim to lay out goals and content range of language learning for students. I will discuss and comment on these standards in 1.5.3.

1.5.1 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and OPI

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL), founded in 1967 by the Modern Language Association of America, is the only US national organization representing teachers of all languages at all education levels. Its mission statement lays emphasis on promoting and fostering the study of languages and cultures as an integral component of American education and society. Similar organizations also exist in Europe (e.g. The European Center for Modern Languages) and other parts of the world; however, no organization has ventured to develop guidelines for the teaching and acquisition of foreign languages the way ACTFL has in the United States.

In the early 1980s, when performance and proficiency became the center of discussion in foreign language acquisition, ACTFL took the initiative to develop a series of national guidelines and standards for teaching and learning foreign languages other than English. In 1986, it published the *Proficiency Guidelines* and language-specific guidelines for Chinese, Classical Languages (Latin and Greek), French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish. In 1996, ACTFL published the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*. Two years later, based on the generic standards, seven language-specific standards, including Chinese, were developed. Besides ACTFL, some other organizations, such as the National Foreign Language Center and the China National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (*Hànbàn*), also developed guidelines and standards for teaching, learning and assessment. In the following sections, I will discuss some of the most influential guidelines and standards used by Chinese language practitioners.

CHINESE PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES

With an increasing demand for Chinese language programs in the United States and other parts of the world, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) published the Chinese Proficiency Guidelines in 1986.[3] These Guidelines provide a detailed description of four proficiency levels: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior. Novice and Intermediate Levels are further divided into three sub-levels: Low, Mid, and High; while Advanced has two sub-levels: Advanced and Advanced-Plus. Superior does not have any sub-levels. All (sub-) levels are described in terms of the four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Following is a brief summary of each level:

Speaking:

> ***Novice-Low***: No functional ability to speak Chinese. Oral production is limited to a few common loan words in English and perhaps a few high frequency phrases (谢谢 *xièxiè*, 你好 *nǐhǎo*.)

Novice-Mid: No functional ability to speak Chinese. Oral production is limited to basic courtesy formulae. Can count from one to ten, name basic colors, common nouns, and food items.

Novice-High: Emerging ability to make short statements utilizing simple formulaic utterance and ask simple questions.

Intermediate-Low: Can ask and answer simple questions and initiate and respond to simple statements in the present time.

Intermediate-Mid: Can ask and answer questions involving areas of immediate need, leisure time activities, and make simple transactions.

Intermediate-High: Can describe daily activities, likes and dislikes in detail and express agreement and disagreement.

Advanced*:* Can make rather complicated factual comparisons and handle arrangements with Chinese administrators.

Advanced-Plus: Emerging ability to support opinions, explain in detail, and hypothesize.

Superior: Can support opinions and hypothesize on a broad range of concrete and abstract topics.

Listening:

Novice-Low: No practical understanding of spoken Chinese.

Novice-Mid: Sufficient comprehension to understand some memorized words within predictable areas of need.

Novice-High: Comprehend some sentence-length utterances in situations where the context aids understanding.

Intermediate-Low: Comprehension areas include such basic needs as: meals, lodging, transportation, time, simple instructions.

Intermediate-Mid: Limited understanding of topics beyond a variety of survival needs, such as personal history and leisure time activities.

Intermediate-High: Able to understand major syntactic constructions.

Advanced: Able to understand face-to-face, non-technical speech in standard Chinese spoken by a native speaker in controlled context.

Advanced-Plus: Often shows remarkable ability and ease of understanding, but comprehension may break down under tension or pressure.

Superior: Sufficient comprehension to understand the essentials of all speech in standard Chinese, including hypothesis, supported opinion, and technical discussion.

Reading:

Novice-Low: No functional ability in reading Chinese.

Novice-Mid: Able to identify/recognize a small set of graphic elements and characters.

Novice-High: Can identify a limited number of characters components and characters common to high-frequency sets of listable categories encountered in areas of immediate need.

Intermediate-Low: Can read, for basic survival and social needs, simple connected, specially prepared material and can puzzle out pieces of some authentic materials with considerable difficulty.

Intermediate-Mid: Sufficient comprehension to understand specially prepared discourse for informative purposes and to understand with use of a dictionary main ideas and some facts in authentic materials paralleling oral language.

Intermediate-High: Able to understand simple discourse of paragraph length in specially prepared materials relying on low-level, high-frequency sentence patterns.

Advanced: Sufficient comprehension to read edited materials within narrow topic range, particularly in areas of specialization or high interest, characterized by structure which increasingly mirrors that of authentic materials.

Advanced-Plus: Can comprehend materials of a more general nature where structure, though simple and constrained, truly mirrors the essential features of authentic expository prose.

Superior: Able to read a narrow range of authentic, expository materials, including areas of professional interest, without the use of a dictionary.

Writing:

Novice-Low: Can copy isolated characters with simple stroke configuration.

Novice-Mid: Able to copy characters with more complex stroke of configuration.

Novice-High: Can write frequently used memorized materials.

Intermediate-Low: Can write in highly colloquial, conversational style, some forms of personal communication.

Intermediate-Mid: Writing style is still reflective or the grammar and lexicon of speech, but quantity is increased and quality is improved.

Intermediate-High: Able to meet most practical writing needs and limited social demands.

Advanced: Writing is obviously reflective of speech but a limited ability in authentic Chinese writing style is present.

Advanced-Plus: Writing is characterized by the emerging use of patterns, lexicon, and structural devices typical of authentic Chinese written style.

Superior: Writing is characterized by predominance of authentic Chinese rhetorical style, with many limitations, over colloquial, speech-influenced writing.

These guidelines identify the stages of proficiency in the Chinese language. They provide a common measurement for assessment of what an individual can and cannot do in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Kotenbeutel 1999). Even though these guidelines have been received and reviewed positively by many teachers and researchers, many Chinese teachers remain skeptical of their practical function in teaching and learning Chinese. The most appealing argument against the use of the guidelines seems to be that the guidelines do not help teachers and students in actual teaching and learning.

ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW

Following the Proficiency Guidelines, ACTFL developed the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) in 1989. OPI is a standardized procedure for the global assessment of functional speaking ability. Similar to the rating system of the Proficiency Guidelines, the OPI rates students as Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior with Low, Mid, and High as their sublevels. The OPI takes the form of a 10–30-minute tape-recorded conversation between a trained interviewer and the interviewee whose speaking proficiency is being assessed. All potential interviewers have to be trained at an OPI workshop to receive a certificate for official oral proficiency interviews. Since the content of each interview can be unique to the interviewee and his or her responses, the interviewer is expected to have the ability to respond and adjust the line of questioning and task posing. An experienced interviewer formulates questions based on a continuous assessment of the interviewee's proficiency and on the topics that emerge in the conversation (ACTFL 1989).

Since the publication of OPI, ACTFL organizes OPI workshops every year. Many Chinese teachers have participated in the training and become certified OPI interviewers. Nonetheless, some Chinese teachers view OPI the same as the ACFTL Proficiency Guidelines i.e. they feel that both endeavors lack practical function in the process of teaching and learning Chinese as FL.

1.5.2 Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì

The Chinese Proficiency Test or *Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì* (汉语水平考试, HSK) was created at Beijing Language University in 1988 for students whose native language is not Chinese. The purpose of this test, similar to OPI, is to assess students' Chinese proficiency level. If students pass the test, they receive a certificate, which may be used for job applications or college applications. HSK is classified into three proficiency categories and eleven levels: (1) Basic Chinese Test 基础汉语水平考试 *Jīchǔ Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì* (Low, mid and high); (2) Elementary-Intermediate Chinese Test 初、中等汉语水平考试 *Chū Zhongděng Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì* (elementary low, mid, high and Intermediate low, mid, high); and (3) Advanced Chinese Test 高等汉语水平考试 *Gāoděng Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì* (advanced and superior). The Center of HSK at Beijing Language University suggests that students who have completed 100 to 800 hours of study may take the Basic Chinese Test, those who have completed 400 to 2,000 study hours may take the Elementary-Intermediate Chinese Test, and those who have completed 3,000 hours or more may take the Advanced Chinese Test. For students who learn Chinese in a regular Chinese program at an American university or college, this means they must take Chinese for at least two years in order to take the Basic Chinese Test, assuming that they take one hour of Chinese a day, five days a week, and thirty weeks a year. At this rate of progress, students

may not be ready for the Intermediate Chinese test before graduation from college, unless they participate in an intensive Chinese program or study abroad program in China. For the Advanced Test, students are expected to reach native or near native proficiency.

HSK is quite similar to OPI in terms of categorization and specification of proficiency levels. The only major difference is that OPI is designed to evaluate students' oral proficiency, whereas HSK is a written test with multiple choice questions so it is likely to reflect students' reading skill rather than listening, speaking or writing skills.

Since the establishment of HSK in 1988, there have been an increasing number of students interested in the tests. To date, 44 centers have been founded to administer the tests in China and 55 centers exist in Asian, European, North American, and Pacific island countries. By the year 2004, it was projected that approximately 380,000 students will have taken the tests. These numbers, as predicted by *Hànbàn*, the central administration of HSK, will continue to rise. Readers interested in specific locations or levels of the tests may consult the websites: http://www.hsk.org.cn or http://www.hanban.edu.cn.

1.5.3 Teaching and learning standards

Due to concerns that national guidelines are mainly applicable at the college level, and not at the secondary level, the National Foreign Language Center gathered teachers of the Chinese Language Association for Secondary Schools (CLASS) and compiled the *Guidelines for Chinese Language Teaching in Secondary Schools* in 1990. These guidelines were intended to guide teachers in curriculum development, instruction preparation, choice of instructional materials, and assessment of student performance. Seven content areas were suggested comprising two levels of learning:

1. Function
2. Topic
3. Level
4. Patterns
5. Vocabulary List
6. Character List
7. Culture Topic

Function refers to a student's Chinese competence in socializing, providing information, expressing information and feeling, getting others to adopt a course of action, etc. *Topic* includes personal identification, family life, shopping, education, leisure, etc. *Level* specifies two proficiency levels in listening, speaking, reading, writing and culture. *Pattern* lists 34 grammatical points suggested for students to master in the course of completing two levels of study. *Vocabulary List* provides a list of words that students are expected to produce and

understand, while *Character List* identifies characters that students are expected to read and write in context. *Culture Topic* covers 28 subjects ranging from Chinese names to color terms and body language, from Chinese festivals to Chinese ideology.

Compared with the Chinese Proficiency Guidelines, the guidelines for Chinese teaching at secondary schools provide detailed information of what should be taught to K-12 students. They are straightforward and easy to follow for teachers even if they do not have any training in the application of the guidelines.

In 1996, ACTFL published its first set of learning standards: *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*. Broadening the content range of language learning by venturing well beyond the traditional four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing and the occasional study of culture, the new standards dramatically changed the paradigms under which teachers have taught in the past (Phillips 1999). Five content areas were targeted in the standards: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities, also known as the Five Cs. The Communication standard was designed to help students to gain communicative competence in a foreign language. The Culture standard aimed to help students gain knowledge and understanding of the culture in which the foreign language is used. The Connection standard encouraged students to use a foreign language to explore interdisciplinary content. The Comparison standard was meant to develop students' insight into the nature of and relationship between language and culture. And, lastly, the Community standard provided students with guidance in using a foreign language in communities where the language is spoken as a native language (L1). Over the last several decades, the first two Cs have been discussed much more often in the literature of foreign language acquisition and emphasized in the design and development of traditional foreign language curriculum than the last three Cs. Notice that the understanding of culture appears to be a major element in all five standards.

Building upon these five national standards, the Chinese standards were derived in 1998, expanding and tailoring the progress indicators and learning scenarios with Chinese language specific examples, as outlined below.

> COMMUNICATION (沟通): Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions in Chinese. Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics in Chinese. Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.
>
> CULTURES (文化): Gain knowledge and understanding of the cultures of the Chinese-speaking world. Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures of the Chinese-speaking world. Students demonstrate an understanding

of the relationship between the projects and perspectives of the cultures of the Chinese-speaking world.

CONNECTIONS (贯连): Connect with other disciplines and acquire information. Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the study of Chinese. Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through Chinese language and culture.

COMPARISON (比较): Develop insight into the nature of language and culture. Students demonstrate understanding of the nature and concept of language and culture through comparisons of the Chinese language and culture with their own.

COMMUNITIES (社区): Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world. Students use the Chinese language both within and beyond the school setting. Students show evidence of becoming lifelong learners by using Chinese for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

Since these are guidelines for learning Chinese, both teachers and students should understand and practice accordingly. The biggest challenge for teachers is probably the addition of cultural elements to traditional curriculum areas and instructional approaches. Questions, such as what cultural elements should be included in the curriculum and how to implement the inclusion of these cultural elements in language instruction, have to be addressed first. Chapter 8 of this book takes a look at these questions.

1.6 Mandarin vs. Other Dialects

Chinese is generally considered to have seven mutually unintelligible dialects: Mandarin, Wú, Xiāng, Gàn, Kèjiā (Hakka), Yuè (Cantonese), and Mǐn, among which Mandarin has the largest population of speakers — 70 percent of China's Hàn ethnic group (Norman 1988). In addition, Mandarin is the standard language of China and as such is recognized as one of the five languages used by the United Nations. This is why most universities and colleges in the world offer courses in Mandarin instead of other Chinese dialects. Cantonese is also taught at some universities in North America and Great Britain due to the demand of new immigrants from Hong Kong and Guǎngdōng areas. However, in comparison to Mandarin, Cantonese has a much smaller student body.

For the reasons stated above, Mandarin is chosen to be the target dialect for discussion throughout this book. When other dialects, such as Cantonese, become a subject of discussion, it will be clearly noted and explained. For instance, when

discussing skill-oriented Chinese classes in Chapter 2, I examine factors involved in curriculum design. In this case, students of native Cantonese are mentioned because they can read and write already. The only skills they intend to acquire are listening and speaking. For Chinese teachers of non-Mandarin dialects, this book may not be as useful as for Mandarin teachers because non-Mandarin dialects and Mandarin have different phonological systems (tones, initials and finals — discussed in Chapter 4) and somewhat different grammar (sentence structure — discussed in Chapter 6) even though they have the same writing system (orthography — discussed in Chapter 5).

1.7 Summary and Outline of the Book

In this chapter, I have outlined the approaches and guidelines of Chinese pedagogy and acquisition. The basic idea is that the communicative approach is the guiding principle and that we need to develop a system that will integrate all major factors relevant to teaching and learning Chinese into everyday practice so that teachers and students will benefit from such work. While much remains to be understood about this kind of a working pedagogical model, my previous work on pedagogical grammar and teaching experience gives me reason to believe that a pedagogical system of Chinese must be built on two foundation elements: content (what to teach and learn) and process (how to teach and learn).

Chapter 2 discusses the content of a pedagogical grammar of Chinese. Questions such as what constitutes a pedagogical grammar of Chinese, how to choose teaching materials and design various types of curricula, will be addressed. Chapter 3 focuses on teaching methodology. First, I review factors that have been identified in the field that have affected teaching and learning methods both in and outside China. Then I introduce two working models in teaching and learning Chinese as FL. Toward the end of this chapter, I discuss the relationship between methodology and accuracy, class size, and program type and provide teachers and students with suggestions for practice. In Chapters 4 to 8, I turn to teaching and learning different elements of Chinese, from pronunciation, characters, sentences, and discourse to culture. Each chapter reviews earlier and current approaches to teaching and learning the subject of the current chapter, explains limitations, and suggests a working model.

It should be clear that Chapter 1 is an overview of the field of teaching and learning Chinese as FL, Chapters 2 and 3 cover two major content areas affecting all phases of teaching and learning Chinese, and Chapters 4 to 8 concentrate on teaching and learning individual element of the Chinese language. It is my hope that by breaking the approach down into these three layers of discussion and illustration, I can present a clearer picture of the system for teaching and learning Chinese as FL.

Notes

Chapter 1

1 Some researchers use the term "acquisition" to refer to the process of acquiring a language naturally (e.g. the situation in acquiring learners' first language) and use the term "learning" to refer to other language learning experience. This book does not distinguish the two terms and use them interchangeably.

2 This book uses the term "Chinese as a foreign language (FL)," instead of "Chinese as a second language," to refer to all situations in which Chinese is not the students' native language.

3 The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines' Speaking section was revised in 1999 and published in *Foreign Language Annals*, Vol. 33(1), 13–18. The revised version adds a low advanced level to the original guidelines published in 1986. Chinese Proficiency Guidelines have not been accordingly modified at the time of this work.

Chapter 2

1 In Taiwan and Singapore, traditional/complicated characters are still used in all official settings and schools even though some simplified characters have penetrated the colloquial usage.

2 Content of this section and section 2.3.2 builds on Xing (2003).

3 English has verbal structures like "walk out of classroom," "walk downstairs" for 走出教室 *zǒu chū jiàoshì* and 走下楼 *zǒu xià lóu*. However, English grammarians label "out of classroom" as a prepositional phrase modifying "walk" and downstairs an adverb modifying the verb, whereas Chinese grammarians consider both 出教室 *chū jiàoshì* and 下楼 *xià lóu* as directional complements modifying the verb.

4 I am grateful to Professor C-P Chou and Gregory Jiang for providing some of these examples.

Chapter 3

1 Parts of this chapter, especially 3.1 and 3.4.1, build on Xing (2003).
2 The results in Table 3.1 are derived from the author's visits to a number of classes at the Northwest Chinese School, Seattle Chinese School, Lakeside Schools, Snohomish High School, and Bellevue High School in the state of Washington, USA.
3 It should be noted that 上来/下去 *shànglái/xiàqù* originally conveyed the concept of spatial direction. Later, through metaphorical extension, 下去 acquired the meaning of "continue." What should be emphasized here is that the "end" meaning of 下 is limited to situations in which it follows a verb only (e.g., 停下), and not situations in which it is used with the directional verbs, such as 来/去.

Chapter 4

1 Norman (1988: 141) explains, "The three retroflex sounds are pronounced with the front of the tongue retracted to a position just behind the alveolar ridge." Before vowels such as *i*, Norman further points out, "retroflex sounds are pronounced with spread lips, which contrary to the English speaker's habit of pronouncing *j, ch, sh*." According to Norman (on the same page), the three palatal sounds, on the other hand, are "articulated with the blade of the tongue placed against the front part of the palate; simultaneously the free front part of the tongue is raised toward the alveolar ridge. The English sounds *ji, chi*, and *shi* fall somewhere between the Chinese retroflexes and the palatals, and the typical English-speaking student of Chinese has a difficult time learning to distinguish Chinese pairs like *shǎo* and *xiǎo*."
2 *S* can be used either at the beginning or at the end of a syllable as in *say* [sei] and *mass* [mæs].
3 If this analysis holds, then the confusion between the two tones is not a result of the pitch value shared by the two tones as reported in the literature (e.g. Repp and Lin 1990), but rather resulted from the uncertainty of the application of tone 3 sandhi rules.
4 The front rounded vowel *ü* often has its two dots omitted after the palatal sounds because the back front vowel *u* never occurs after the palatal sounds.
5 The *i* sound after *zhi, chi, shi* is a low front vowel; it is different from the *i* after the palatal sounds (*ji, qi, xi*).

Chapter 5

1 The pronunciations of radicals given in Table 5.3 are the commonly used pronunciation in modern Chinese, which may not be the same as the original

sound of those radicals. For instance, originally, the radical 丶 given in the table is pronounced "*zhǔ*" meaning "stop"; however, we choose the commonly used term "*diǎn*" meaning "dot" to refer to this radical.

Chapter 7

1 Some of the examples come from *Pop Chinese: A Cheng and Tsui Guide to Colloquial Expressions* by Feng et al. (2004). It should be noted that the distinction between the two pairs is sometimes more than formal versus informal; some may have a wider scope of meaning and some may differ in terms of their grammatical or discourse pragmatic functions.

2 Jião (2003) has a substantial discussion on the new vocabulary developed in recent years in China. Numerous popular and fashionable expressions are also provided in his article. Footnote 1 is also applied here.

3 This section builds on Xing (2005).

4 Halliday and Hasan (1976) introduced the notion of *cohesion* and for a decade or so since that time, researchers did not clearly differentiate between cohesion and coherence in discourse. However, in the last two decades, an increasing number of researchers have addressed the different functions played by the two concepts (cf. Carrell 1982, Cooper 1988, Campbell 1995, Bublitz 1999). Due to the nature of the current work, we use coherence throughout the book unless it is part of quotation or custom usage such as "lexical cohesion".

5 There are a few concurrent discourse connectors in English (e.g. "*not only ..., but also …*"), German (e.g. *nicht nur …, aber auch*) and French (e.g. *non seulement …, mais également*). Most discourse connectors in these languages are used individually, which introduces either cause or result. Chinese also has solo connectors marking a logical relation, such as 从而 *cóngér* "so that", 于是 *yúshì* "as a result", 因此 *yīncǐ* "therefore", 免得 *miǎnde* "in order to avoid" etc.

6 天哪 *tiānna* may be used for two discourse functions: "consequence" and "disappointment". There is no apparent difference with the sound and form when serving for these two functions.

7 The character 啊 may also be used to serve for two discourse functions. When pronounced with a neutral tone, it signals a common "response" of the listener; when pronounced with a rising pitch, it expresses "surprise" of the listener.

8 Traditionally, Chinese aesthetic view on women is largely derived from their face, namely whether a person has large eyes with double-layered eyelid, bridged nose, or small mouth, quite different from the modern American aesthetic emphasizing on the figure of women and their breasts and hips.

9 It should be noted that the characteristics of formal conversation just discussed differ from that of business negotiation, another type of oral

discourse mentioned at the beginning of this section. Readers interested in business negotiation may consult Ulijn and Li (1995).

Chapter 8

1 The term "cultural communication information" is used by Lǔ and some other Chinese researchers. It might be convenient — and more appropriate — to use the English expression "multicultural communication" developed by Western researchers.
2 Some teachers may consider instant messages as a two-way interaction activity. I argue that even though the respondent is another human being, the student is reading messages on the screen, not directly interacting with the person, namely hearing the sound of the language and making an oral response right away. Therefore, the interaction is still one way, not two ways.

Chapter 9

1 According to a national survey conducted by Draper and Hicks, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2002) on "Foreign Language Enrollments in Public Secondary Schools," among almost seven million students enrolled in foreign language courses in 2000, less than 0.1% students were enrolled in Chinese, while majority of the students were enrolled in Spanish (68.7%) and other languages (French 18.3%, German 4.8%, Latin 2.7%, Italian 1.2%, etc.).
2 This would exclude special situations when a class is designed to train students' competence in certain particular area(s), such as speaking or reading.
3 When SARS broke out in 2003, the office of the International Programs and Exchanges at Western Washington University received information from associated institutions that more than 500 schools (including primary and secondary schools) in the United States canceled their study abroad programs in China.

Index