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**VII edition of the Study Days on  
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**Book of abstracts**



## VII edition of the Study Days on Chinese Linguistics

### Book of abstract

#### Keynote speech: What can Chinese politicians' speeches tell us about the Chinese language?

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Based on speeches produced by a number of high-profile PRC politicians, including Hu Jintao, Bo Xilai, Xi Jinping, and Li Keqiang, in a number of discourse settings (formal speech, press conference, Q/A with reporters, and informal meeting), this talk discusses some of the values in investigating Chinese political speech. It will be shown that political speech is not a homogeneous genre but rather varies from context to context. As a result, the language of political speech varies in terms of the constellation of linguistic features and multimodal resources deployed. Specific features and their constellations to be highlighted include the use of utterance-final particles, repetition, referential choices, marking of affective and epistemic stances, discourse cohesive devices, prosody, and embodied actions and visual displays.

#### Workshop: Digital Humanities for Chinese

#### Exploring the pragmalinguistic knowledge of the 是 *shì*...的 *de* cleft construction by L1 Italian learners: a parallel corpus approach

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The 是 *shì*...的 *de* cleft construction is challenging for L1 Italian learners to acquire because it conveys focus meaning commonly expressed by the Italian cleft sentence (Berretta, 1994; Frascarelli, Romaglia, 2013; Garassino, 2014), but, with respect to the latter, has specific constraints relating to temporal reference, aspect, and discourse. Here I will refer to the 'adjunct focus *shì*...*de* cleft' (Mai, Yuan, 2016); it consists of a positionally determined focused element (Jing-Schmidt, 2017) and a presupposition, where present/future-oriented temporal adverbs being excluded (Simpson, Wu, 2002) as e.g. in:

- (1) 他是在北京学语言的。  
*tā shì zài Běijīng xué yǔyánxué de*  
3SG be at Beijing learn linguistics DE  
'It is in Beijing that he studied linguistics' (Paul & Whitman, 2008: 414).

Following Callies (2009) and Jing-Schmidt (2017), I consider 'intensification' and '(corrective) contrast' as the two pragmatic functions of the *shì*...*de* cleft construction.

I adopted a triangulated approach to compile a written and spoken learner corpus which includes data from 103 Italian learners grouped into three proficiency levels. The learner corpus, as well as a previously compiled parallel native-speaker corpus (30 Chinese native-speakers), have been manually annotated at the grammatical and pragmatic levels.

The study addresses the following research questions:

- Are there any differences in the use of the *shì... de* cleft construction by L1 Chinese speakers and L2 Italian learners in terms of quantity and quality of use, and in the ways the construction is used to highlight information and express contrastive focus?
- Do the learners have (explicit) knowledge of the pragmatic meanings of the construction?

Chi-square tests show significant differences between learners and native speakers in the frequency rate of the construction used to convey the pragmatic meanings of intensification and contrast. The frequency rate of *shì...de* clefts conveying the pragmatic function of intensification is higher in learners' written data. Differently, the highest occurrence of the cleft construction conveying the pragmatic meaning of (corrective) contrastive focus is observed in learners' speech. Qualitative differences in the use of the construction between learners and native speakers will also be presented.

This study supports the scenario depicted by the Feature Reassembly Hypothesis (Lardiere 2009): learners establish an L1 form–L2 form mapping and alter the L2 feature set in their interlanguage grammars, since there is a persistence of L1 influence in morphosyntactic development. Moreover, following the Interface Hypothesis (Sorace 2005; 2006), the research shows that the appropriate use of *shì...de* clefts, which requires the speaker's knowledge of both the syntactic and pragmatic functions of the construction, cannot be fully achieved in L2 contexts, as different syntax and discourse interfaces creates different attainment patterns in L2 acquisition. The intensity of interaction in the L2 environment and the L1 pragmatic transfer (Bardovi-Harlig 2012) also affect the development of pragmatic comprehension of the construction. Likewise, crosslinguistic influence (interlingual/intralingual interferences), learner strategies, lack of knowledge, and learning context do play a role in the L2 pragmalinguistic acquisition of the *shì...de* cleft construction.

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A balanced corpus, from design to analysis. The case of contemporary Chinese political language.

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A corpus is a collection of texts in electronic form, selected according to external criteria to represent a language or language variety as a source of data for linguistic research (Sinclair 2004). Despite the existence of large-scale general reference corpora, when a research project is focused on a specific language variety it is sometimes useful to build a balanced corpus (McEnery / Hardie 2011). The process of corpus design and construction should then follow a defined methodology and the corpus should meet several binding criteria in terms of sampling frame, representativeness for the data, balance, etc. (Biber 1993; Leech 2007).

This paper argues that linguistic research on contemporary Chinese political language may require such an effort. Drawing from concrete research experiences, it will first discuss the linguistic sources and the methodological resources that can be mobilized to build a corpus devoted to Chinese political language. Secondly, it will describe two examples of small-scale corpora of Chinese political language built by the research team of the University of Milan to study word frequency and to identify linguistic patterns that contribute to the construction of discourses (Baker 2006) . Finally, the paper will address the crucial question of interpreting results, through the discussion of examples of data extracted from the two corpora with AntConc (Anthony 2005; Anthony 2013) or SketchEngine (Kilgarriff et al. 2005; Kilgarriff et al. 2014).

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## Analyzing media discourse on the impact of COVID on Chinese people in Italy through the use of Nvivo

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COVID-19 pandemic caused a strengthening of perceptual distortions, as well as stereotypical views of the “otherness”. Such processes concern in particular diasporic Chinese. As regards Italy, where currently more than 300.000 Chinese reside (see Italian national statistics, ISTAT 2021), public, media and political discourses have been wavering between glorifications of responsible behaviors of Chinese “communities” in the prevention of the virus and views of suspect and “mystery” which have reinforced the old prejudice according to which “Chinese are closed and self-referential” (Scibetta 2019).

Various scholars have so far analyzed different aspects related to symbolic space dedicated to Chinese “voices” in Italian public discourse in times of COVID. As an example, see Pedone (2020), who focused on the processes of symbolic “silencing” addressed to Sino-Italian cultural expressions, or Stafutti (2020), who gathered qualitative data on the perception of the virus in the eyes of Chinese residing in different parts of Italy.

With reference to a theoretical background based, on the one hand, on media discourse analysis related to Chinese migration (Zhang 2019 *inter alia*), and on the other hand on *Chinese Discourse Studies* (Shi-xu 2014), this workshop aims at giving information about how to conduct qualitative analyses on media discourse. For this purpose, the analysis of a corpus of 48 newspaper articles, gathered both from Italian daily newspapers (n. 24) and from web newspapers and news portals addressed to *huaqiao* 华侨 in Italy (n. 24) will be shown as an example. The analysis focuses specifically on different aspects related to symbolic distortions and shifts in self- and hetero-perceptions of/on Chinese people in Italy due to the pandemic development. The study was carried out through the software NVivo 11, bringing together the methodological perspectives of Grounded Theory (Charmaz 2006), Qualitative Content Analysis (Ji, Eun 2014) and Critical Discourse Analysis (Rogers 2004). In addition, the paradigm of Chinese Discourse Studies was used in relation with the processes of labeling of the conceptual nodes coded during the analysis.

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## Introduction to basic Python programming for Digital Humanities projects

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At the crossroads between the humanities and computer sciences, Digital Humanities (DH) can provide a broad and heterogeneous set of fast-evolving methods that can help to explore and analyse large datasets from various fields or to discover unseen patterns in well-studied data.

When it came to working with language and texts rather than artefacts, the methods of DH were heavily influenced by corpus linguistics and as such were often pioneered and advanced in an English-centric environment. It did not take into consideration specificities of working with languages that differ considerably in their grammar and script.

This workshop will concentrate on discussing a number of challenges that are specific to the computational analysis of Chinese texts and will present some possible solutions for them. We will talk about problems and downsides of these solutions and issues that are at the core of some of the most basic tasks in computational linguistics, such as counting words. It entails defining word boundaries and considering simplified and traditional characters as well as variant characters (*yiti zi* 異體字). We will also look at major differences between the analysis of modern and pre-modern Chinese.

*Python* is introduced as an easy-to-learn, powerful and versatile programming language that is used frequently not only by linguists, but in many types of DH projects. We will demonstrate how to write simple scripts using freely available libraries like *nltk*, *jieba* and *mafan* in order to build a pipeline from pre-processing Chinese texts to solving various tasks typical for corpus linguistics. Participants are encouraged to run our code examples on their own computers during the workshop.<sup>1</sup>

In the last part, we will showcase how parts of these scripts can be reimagined and recombined to become the foundation of large, customised projects, where concepts from corpus linguistics are used in order to solve broader questions, related to the evolution of poetic language and diction, lexicography and semantics. For participation in the workshop no prior knowledge of programming is required.

## Using Augmented Reality Tools in Teaching Chinese with Video Clips

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In this workshop, I demonstrate sample applications of Chinese language teaching with augmented reality (AR) technology and authentic Chinese video clips. Participants in the workshop will learn about resources in AR technology for language pedagogy, principles of processing video clips and derivative materials for language teaching, and techniques in developing applications of AR and video clips for teaching Chinese as a second language.

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<sup>1</sup> The use of Google Collaboratory ensures that no prior installation or downloads are required.

## Corpus-aided Chinese Teaching through the lens of Translation

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This workshop introduces how an in-depth annotated bilingual corpus is applied to online Chinese teaching through the lens of translation. The corpus-aided teaching platform features its theoretically-informed annotations, tagword system and teacher/learner-friendly data management. Participants in the workshop will learn about how the data are annotated, how the tagwords and topical boards are inter-connected and how the learning behaviours could be collected and analyzed to support Chinese teaching. We will demonstrate how the platform could be used in Chinese teaching from a translation perspective.

## Moodle quizzes: a crossroad in teaching and learning assessment of Chinese as an L2

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The present study is strongly motivated by research in the field of *Computer Assisted Language Learning* (CALL), which is an interdisciplinary area of inquiry which has been influenced by educational technology (Reiser 1987) as well as applied linguistics (Chapelle 2008, Stockwell 2012). As pointed out by Šmilauer (2021), data collected from CALL tools are intrinsically digital and potentially massive, which are ideal for computational analysis and second language acquisition studies.

Due to the current pandemic situation, the teaching environment has been tremendously changed in a very short time. In order to guarantee the teaching and learning continuity for around 100 French speaking college students, who were Chinese L2 learners from intermediate to advanced level, we took the opportunity to implement a ‘flipping class’ setting with regular exercises on the Moodle platform for our grammar and vocabulary course. The college year being divided into two terms, an on-line exam was implemented in the middle and at the end of each term.

The automatically corrected Moodle quizzes (exercises and exams) set for our course consisted of more than 1000 questions on various grammar and vocabulary points, such as prepositions, classifiers, conjunctions, Ba construction, comparative construction, relative clause, complements, near-synonyms, antonyms, etc. The knowledge of learners about these grammar and vocabulary points were assessed by different type questions, including multichoice, drag and drop into text, cloze test, matching, select missing words, short answer, ordering, etc.

After a whole year’s teaching, it seems necessary to evaluate our on-line course and quizzes. Our research questions are as following:

- 1) In the ‘flipping class’ setting, are the explanations given in the textbook, PPTs and Zoom classes clear enough for the learners?
- 2) Are the questions in the exams suitable to assess and distinguish student knowledge levels?
- 3) Which grammar and vocabulary points are the most difficult for the learners?
- 4) Which type of questions are the most difficult for the learners?

In order to answer these questions, a psychometric analysis is used based on facility index (FI) and the discrimination index (DI) (Gamage et al 2019), which are statistics embedded within the Moodle quizzes. The FI describes the overall difficulty of the questions and the index represents the ratio of users that answer the question correctly, while the DI is the correlation between the weighted scores on the question and those on the rest of the test.

The primitive results of our analysis show that in general the learners did well in the exercises (mean FI = 78%) and exams (mean FI = 70%), which could be interpreted as that the flipping class was sufficient for them to tackle the questions in the grammar and vocabulary course. But questions in the exams were not good enough for knowledge level discrimination (mean DI = 43%). Regarding the target grammar and vocabulary points, resultative complements, directional complements, comparative construction, presentative construction and near-synonyms were the most difficult. And the difficulties were strongly related to question types with word ordering as the most difficult ones.

Further refined analysis of the data collected from Moodle quizzes are ongoing. These findings contribute to teaching and learning of L2 Chinese grammar and vocabulary in the digital era.

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## Regular sessions

Are there prefixes in Modern Chinese?

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In the literature on Chinese word formation, the (possible) distinction between the processes of 'derivation' and 'compounding' is still an unresolved issue (see e.g. Pan, Yip, Han 2004; Dong 2005; Arcodia 2012). Word-formation elements which display high productivity and always appear in a fixed position with respect to the base word (in a particular usage), such as 学 *xué* 'branch of knowledge' (as in 心理学 *xīnlǐxué* 'psychology') have been analyzed as affixes (e.g. Yip 2000), as 'affixoids' (类词缀 *lèicízhùì*; Ma 1995) or just as compound constituents (Dong 2004).

In this paper, we propose a reassessment of prefixation in Modern Chinese. Following Arcodia (2012), we discard the 'prefix' vs. 'prefixoid' distinction, since grammaticalized morphemes in Chinese (as well as in most languages of the Mainland East- and Southeast Asian area; Bisang 1996) very often do not show the formal correlates of grammaticalization (i.e. 'secondary grammaticalization' in the sense of Traugott 2002).

In the framework of Construction Morphology (Booij 2010), we treat potential prefixoids as fixed slots in a construction. In this analysis, the main difference between affixes/affixoids and regular compound constituents lies in their fixed position, their stable selectional properties

and, above all, in the fixed, conventionalized meaning they contribute, as opposed to the more ‘open’ interpretation for compound constituents (Scalise, Bisetto, Guevara 2005). The sample items we chose for our analysis are drawn from a selection of the literature on the topic (see the Appendix below); following Basciano and Bareato (2020), we shall rely on web corpora (as e.g. the BCC Corpus and the Leiden Weibo Corpus) for the analysis of the use of complex words.

We will show that potential prefixes in Chinese have different properties: there are class-maintaining prefixes (as 前 *qián*- ‘former’), class-changing prefixes (as 多 *duō*- ‘multi-’), as well as prefixes with ambiguous properties with respect to word-class assignment (as 非 *fēi*- ‘non-’). We will compare ‘native’ patterns and patterns which seem to follow a foreign model, showing that they do not constitute coherent subsets in terms of their behaviour. We will argue that the differences between prefixes and suffixes in Chinese (see Jia 2019) may be partly explained by the different role of lefthand constituents and righthand constituents in compounding (unlike e.g. Romance languages). However, as conventionalised constructions used for word formation, prefixation patterns also have properties which do not fit in the general picture of headedness and word-class assignment in the morphology (and syntax) of Modern Chinese: above all, the fact that the word class of ‘prefixed’ words is often inconsistent with that of the corresponding base (non- prefixed) word, as e.g. 贸易 *màoyì* ‘commerce’ > 非贸易 *fēi-màoyì* ‘non-commercial’, but both endocentric nouns and adjectives are generally right-headed in Chinese (Ceccagno, Basciano 2007). We will argue that this is a major difference between prefixed and suffixed items in Chinese, since the latter always seem to define the word class of the complex word; also, it can be taken as an argument in favour of analysing prefixes as a separate morphological phenomenon, distinct from suffixation and from compounding.

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很中国 *hěn Zhōngguó*, 很功夫 *hěn gōngfu*, 很文化 *hěn wénhuà*: word class flexibility and the adjectival class in Modern Chinese

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A well-known characteristic of Modern Chinese is that lexical items may be ambiguous in terms of part of speech identity: for instance, the word 麻烦 *máfan* ‘inconvenient, trouble, bother’ may be used as an adjective, as a verb, or as a noun. Different approaches have been proposed in the literature to account for the polyfunctionality of words in Chinese. A first approach is based on the notion of ‘category borrowing’: words change their word class depending on their position in the sentence. Thus, for instance, if a verb is placed in the syntactic slot of the direct object, it becomes a noun (Guo 2002; Liang and Feng 2006). Others (e.g. Chen 1982 [1922]) propose instead that lexical categories may have ‘flexible usage’ (活用 *huóyòng*). According to yet another approach, Chinese words are categorially indefinite and may be assigned to a specific word class only on the basis of their position and function in the sentence (see e.g. Guo 2002; Marosán 2006). Also, some scholars go as far as to cast doubts on the very existence of word classes in Chinese (see e.g. Xu 1994). However, Zádrapa (2017) points out that, in the history of Chinese, word class flexibility was first reduced by a gradual functional specialization of lexemes, and later on by the development of compounding: compound words tend to be less ‘flexible’ than simple words.

In this paper, we will discuss data on a specific case of word class ambiguity: namely, the use of (prototypical) nouns as (attributive and predicative) adjectives, in combination with an adverb (e.g. 很中国 *hěn Zhōngguó*, lit. ‘very China’). This phenomenon has recently attracted much attention in the literature (see e.g. Guan 2020; Xu 2020; Zhu 2020) and has sometimes been associated with Netspeak (Chen and Yao 2011). However, it has been discussed at least since the 1960s (often, from a prescriptivist perspective), and we actually find attestations of ‘adverb + noun’ constructions at least since the Yuan period (Li 2021). In Modern Chinese, it is generally believed that this construction is compatible with [+human] nouns, with nouns indicating periods of time and place names, with abstract nouns, but not with [-animate] concrete nouns (\*很椅子 \* *hěn yǐzi*, lit. ‘very chair’; Zhang 2020); however, instances of [-animate] concrete nouns as predicative elements modified by an adverb have been reported in the literature, as e.g. 太泡沫 *tài pàomò*, lit. ‘too foam’ (meaning ‘empty, devoid of substance’; Xu 2020: 102). In order to gain a better understanding of the type of nouns that can have this usage, we shall analyze a sample of the nouns used with 很 *hěn* ‘very’, 太 *tài* ‘too’ and 不 *bù* ‘not’ with the highest frequency in the *zhTenTen2017* corpus through Sketch Engine. We shall argue that this usage implies that, just as for the noun acting as modifiers in attributive compounding, as e.g. Eng. *snail mail* (Scalise, Bisetto, Guevara 2005), nouns found in the construction at issue here are reinterpreted as a bundle of properties (encyclopedic features), and only one or anyway a (sub)set of those properties is relevant for their meaning in this function (and the relevant property/es may be contextually determined).

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## Passive constructions in Chinese Buddhist translations from a language-contact perspective

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In a series of publications, Zhu Qingzhi (1993, 1995, 2008: 495 and 2017: 321) has proposed that the unusual high number of the so-called “passive” constructions found in the Chinese Buddhist translations might be the outcome of the influence of the Indic source-texts. Zhu’s assumption is based on the fact that “passive” constructions in a broad sense, namely not only present passives but also two other non-finite formations — the resultative participle in *-ta-* and the gerundive —, are highly employed in Indo-Aryan. Zhu’s hypothesis has been accepted by some scholars (Xu 2006: 109-110, Cao and Yu 2015: 208, Yu 2019: 9), while others have expressed doubts about it (Anderl 2017: 692); however, no systematic investigation of this issue has been carried out to the date.

As a matter of fact, Zhu’s hypothesis presents some theoretical problems. Firstly, his definition of passivity appears to be based only on morphosyntactic rationales (i.e. case-agreement, demotion of the actor to the oblique case and promotion of the undergoer to the nominative), whereas cross-linguistically passivity rather represents a system of correlations among morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic features.

This leads to the second general objection: Middle Chinese, as Mandarin (and possibly Archaic Chinese as well), was a topic-prominent language with no grammaticalization of syntactic functions (LaPolla 1993, 1995 and Van Valin, LaPolla 1997: 250-263). Against this background, it is quite unlikely that in the face of no formal similarities between the Indic and Chinese constructions taken in consideration by Zhu, morphosyntax (instead of semantics and pragmatics) was the main linguistic domain determining the possible interlinguistic identification between the Indic and Chinese formations during the translation process.

Lastly, the periphrastic construction built with the *-ta* participle is certainly highly employed in Sanskrit as Zhu notes, but at the same time this high usage is connected with the development of TAM split-ergativity in Indo-Aryan. The gerundive also participates in this development of the morphosyntactic alignment, but in the irrealis modus (cf. Hock 1986). In light of these

functional and syntactic considerations, it is very arguable to consider the *-ta* participle and the gerundive as “passive” constructions in the same way it is done for the parallel constructions in Ancient European languages.

This presentation aims to prove that there is no direct relationship between Chinese passive constructions in the Buddhist translations and their putative counterparts in the Indic source-texts. The comparison of the Chinese translations with the Indic extant parallels shows that, in the majority of the cases, the Sanskrit “passives” are translated with Chinese active constructions. Besides, most interestingly, Indic morphologically active sentences are in some instances also translated with Chinese passives. The discussion will also briefly deal with the pragmatic and semantic factors behind the use of passives in the Chinese Buddhist translations with respect to the language of the Indic source-texts, trying to provide a concise framework for the discussion of the Chinese Buddhist translations as a locus of grammatical interference.

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#### Directionals, objects, and definiteness in Mandarin Chinese: A corpus-based account

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The so-called ‘directional verb compounds’ or ‘directional constructions’ (DCs) have been widely studied in the literature. One interesting syntactic property of these verbs is the position of the non-locative object, which in complex DCs can appear in different positions:

- (1) a. 他拿出来一本书。  
*tā ná-chū-lái yī běn shū*

- he take-out-come      one CLF book  
 b. 他拿出一本书来。  
*tā ná-chū      yī běn shū lái*  
 he take-out      one CLF book come  
 c. 他拿一本书出来。  
*tā ná      yī běn shū chū-lái*  
 he take      one CLF book out-come

‘He takes/took out a book.’

Several attempts have been made to describe and explain the different patterns observed in (1), which are subject to syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic restrictions (Li 2017). Zhu (1982) observes that, while indefinite ‘Num CLF N’ objects are found in all the three patterns, definite objects are excluded from the pattern in (1a). Paul (2022) observes that proper nouns and definite animate DPs seem to be partially acceptable, while definite inanimate DPs are not. In this paper we aim at observing the interaction between DCs and objects in authentic data drawn from a big-size corpus, namely the BCC corpus of Modern Chinese (15 billion characters). In this way, we aim at contributing to a better understanding of the constraints on the objects in this construction, in particular on definite objects (including both formally definite objects, like those modified by a demonstrative or proper nouns, and semantically and pragmatically definite objects; see Chen 2004).

In particular, we will answer the following research questions:

- Are definite objects always excluded after DCs displaying the adjacent order?
- If not, which kind of definite objects are acceptable?
- Which are the factors affecting the position of (non-locative) objects?

Corpus data confirm that the objects appearing after DCs in the adjacent order are mostly indefinite NPs, but also reveal several cases of different types of objects. Taking the verb 带回来 *dài-huí-lái* ‘bring-back- come, bring back’ as an example, we retrieved from the corpus a total of 207 sentences where this verb was followed by an object (‘带回来 *dài-huí-lái* + Obj.’). Most of these objects (178 out of 207, i.e. 86%) are indefinite, confirming the general tendency to have indefinite NPs in post-verbal position. However, we also found out 29 definite objects (14%), specifically: 13 concrete inanimate objects (2); 2 concrete animate objects; 14 abstract objects (3).

- (2) 雌企鹅[...]还带回来给小企鹅的第一口食物。  
*cí      qǐ'è      hái      dài-huí-lái      gěi xiǎo qǐ'è      de dìyī kǒu      shíwù*  
 male      penguin      also      bring-back-come      for small penguin ST first mouth food  
 ‘The male penguin also brought back the first mouthful of food for the small penguin.’
- (3) 他不仅带回来了中国的物质援助 [...]  
*Tā bùjǐn      dài-huí-lái-le      Zhōngguó de wùzhì yuánzhù [...]*  
 He not only bring-back-come-PFV      China      ST material support  
 ‘He not only brought back China’s material support [...].’

Therefore, while corpus data confirm that the sentential position of the object after DCs in the adjacent order displays a strong preference for indefinite expressions, and thus these objects more often than not introduce nonidentifiable referents, this correlation is not absolute, as is the case for other indefiniteness- inclined positions in Chinese (see Chen 2004).

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## Contrastive study of *Causative verb + Noun* constructions in institutional texts (French/Chinese)

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In this study, we propose to compare the *Causative verb + Noun* combinations with structures having the same meanings in Chinese in the institutional corpus of the United Nations (henceforth, UN).<sup>2</sup> The interest of our study is first justified because it is interesting to compare French with a distant language like Chinese to see the different means used in the causality; and then because these lexical collocations defined as (semi-)fixed and semantically compositional associations (Tutin 2013) are frequent in specialized language and often constitute persistent deficits for learners (Bak Sienkiewicz 2016).

Based on the *Scale of compactness* (Dixon 2000) which categorizes the means of causality according to their morpho-syntactic compactness (for example, the causative verbs *to cause*, *to provoke* are the most compact), we seek to highlight the syntactic-semantic relationships between causative verbs and nouns in the UN parallel bilingual corpus (French→Chinese).<sup>3</sup>

From a contrasting point of view, by comparing the French occurrences with Chinese, we noticed that the latter has 3 main ways to translate the association of *Causative V + N*; namely,

### 1. Causative V :

- (1) [...] mais beaucoup de ces conflits **ont** [...] **entraîné des millions de morts**.  
[...] 但/许多/冲突 [...] **造成/数/百万/人/死亡**。  
[...] dàn / xǔduō / chōngtú [...] **zàochéng / shù / bǎiwàn / rén / sǐwáng**.  
[...] but / many / conflicts [...] **cause / some / million / person / death**

### 2. Light verb + V2/adj. :

- (2) Soulignant la nécessité de **renforcer la capacité** de prévention des conflits et de maintien de la paix en Afrique, [...].  
强调/必须/加强/非洲/预防/冲突/和/维持/和平的/能力, [...].  
qiángdiào / bixū / **jiāqiáng** / fēizhōu / yùfáng / chōngtú / hé / wéichí / héping / de / **nénglì**, [...].  
Emphasize / must / **light V + strong (adj.)** / Africa / prevent / conflict / and / maintain / peace / DE / **capacity**, [...]

### 3. Periphrasis Causative V1 + V2:

- (3) Outre l'objectif qui consiste à **accroître la participation** directe et la responsabilité des Timorais dans le domaine politique, [...].  
除/在/政治/领域/使/帝汶人/更多/地/直接/参与/和/承担/责任/这个/目标/外, [...].

<sup>2</sup> This corpus is accessible on the Sketch Engine platform (<https://www.sketchengine.eu/>).

<sup>3</sup> The French corpus is 585,015,613 words while the Chinese corpus has 243,376,079 characters.

chú / zài / zhèngzhì / língyù / **shǐ** / Dìwènrén / gèng duō / de / zhíjiē / **cānyù** / hé / chéngdān / zérèn / zhè / gè / mùbiāo / wài, [...].  
Besides / in / policy / field / **to ensure that** / Timorese / more / DI / directly / participate / and / ensure / responsibility / this / CL / objective / external, [...]

First, there are Chinese causative verbs as equivalents (ex. 1: 造成 *zàochéng*). Then, in example 2, the light verb (加 *jiā*) leads to the transitivity and causativation of V2/adj (强 *qiáng*) (Lin 2001; Basciano 2010). Finally, our results join the study of Basciano (2010: 121-123) according to which Chinese causative periphrases are one of the means most often used to express causality in modern Chinese.

At the end of the comparative study, we propose a range of Chinese functional equivalents of the French *causative verb + Noun* combinations. This range makes it possible to better understand how these constructions are translated into Chinese.

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## Assessment and teaching in Chinese as a second language in French higher education

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Chinese with the social and professional integration is on the rise in France, especially for the public of non-specialists in higher education. The objective of this talk is to show how to assess language skills in Chinese as a second language (now CSL) for a public of non-specialists in French higher education. This research is carried out in the “IDEFI-ANR Innovalangues” project that improves language learning in a “digital ecosystem” which responds “to the demand of initial and continuing training” (see <http://innovalangues.fr/>) with innovative tools. Among these innovative tools, the “Formative Language Evaluation System” (French acronym, now SELF) is a positioning device available for six languages (Chinese, English, French, Italian, Japanese and Spanish). This SELF test consists in directing the learners towards groups of levels. This device is also used as a formative assessment tool. The latter not only measures learners' progress but also identifies their difficulties. This SELF test, designed from authentic resources with no didactic purpose (cf. Nunan, 1988), assesses in particular the three language skills, namely, oral comprehension, written comprehension as well as written production. The objective of this communication is to know how to evaluate the skills and also to know the

specificities of evaluation to be taken into consideration in Chinese as a foreign language. To do this, after a brief presentation of the Innovalangues project, we will talk about internal repositories, developed from already existing repositories (cf. CEFR, DCL, EBCL, HSK and TOCFL), adapted to an audience of non-specialists in Higher Education. Then, the methodological choice of task design will be discussed before showing some concrete examples. Finally, based on the results obtained and the feedback from test users, we will examine the internal consistency and the effectiveness of the test (e.g. consistency of the score by competence/overall score, the behavior/relevance of the items) . Following these analyses, we will propose some perspectives (or avenues of research) with a view to proposing a new version of the test.

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## Exploratory Design of an Ecological Discourse Analysis Framework for Chinese Environmental Texts

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Ecolinguistics is an emergent trans-disciplinary field that applies the traditional linguistic methods on the analysis of texts and discourses of ecological importance (Bang, Trampe 2014). Its aim is to raise awareness of linguistic forms that contribute to ecological destruction and promote new forms of language that inspire sustainable visions and behaviors (Stibbe 2020). Despite some notable exceptions (e.g., Zhou , Huang 2017), the ecolinguistic inquiry into the Chinese language is still underdeveloped. The goal of this exploratory study is to design a trans-disciplinary Ecological Discourse Analysis (EDA) framework applicable to Chinese texts. More specifically, our goal is to prototype a set of criteria to characterize the linguistic features of Chinese documents vis-à-vis different social-ecological paradigms.

The study followed an iterative deductive-inductive process. A tentative set of criteria – including modality, connotation, appraisal items, among others – were first identified through the purposeful review of the literature addressing English texts (e.g., Stibbe 2020). These criteria were then adapted to Chinese and applied to an extract from an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report, representative of formal documents informing environmental decision-making in mainland China.

The original set of criteria thus obtained was validated by external experts (namely a sustainability practitioner and a sociolinguist) and its improved version applied to a second, wider sample of documents, representative of diverse social-ecological visions. Preliminary evidence indicates that our EDA framework can provide a coherent ecolinguistic characterization of ecological discourses embedded in Chinese texts, both as standing-alone criteria and cumulatively. For instance, technicalities and mass nouns are consistently used for erasure purposes, conveying a general sense of detachment, leaving out relevant details on the potential harm to humans and the ecosystem, and overall depicting nature as something unimportant or unworthy of consideration. An example is the mass noun *zhíwù shēngwùliàng* 植物生物量 ‘plant biomass’, which masks the identities and values of the plant species involved, portraying them as a collective whole with insignificant individual attributes;

moreover, the potential impact of the loss of such plants is not mentioned at all. The use of modals represents another noteworthy feature. In the EIA report, we observed a remarkably high proportion of high-value modals of necessity like *bìyào* 必要 ‘must’ and *xūyào* 需要 ‘need’, used to persuade on the desirability of a potentially disruptive project. This is very different from what is observed in Taiwan presidential debates, in which the person in power (the incumbent president) used significantly less high-value modals in order to avoid evoking a feeling of coercion (Cheng 2019). The differences between the political contexts of Mainland China and Taiwan may help account for the differing modal usage patterns. While directly applicable to other qualitative EDAs, our framework also constitutes a steppingstone towards the design of a large-scale, multi-criteria corpus-assisted EDA tool, to which we will orient our energies in the period of 2022-24.

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#### Reported speech in conveying information related to Covid-19: an interactional study of telephone talk in China

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Since the outburst of the global pandemic Covid-19, a huge amount of pandemic related information has been circulating on news, social media as well as casually in our daily mundane talk. However, credibility of pandemic information is often questionable. When reporting “second hand news” or a hearsay, reported speech is used. Interactional studies (Clift 2006; Wu 2018) propose to pay special attention to the sequential position of reported speech in talk and to regard it as “interactional evidentials”, rather than “standalone evidentials”. That is, reported speech may be deployed to index speakers’ epistemic stance towards the point being discussed. The current study, based on a corpus of 254 familial telephone calls in China collected between January 2020 to May 2020, adopts the approach of Conversation Analysis to investigate the use and formal design of reported speech in Chinese, used to spread pandemic related news in daily interactions.

Our findings confirm that the structure, form and content of the reported speech are interactionally designed. When recounting Covid-19 news, speakers often adopt an agentless indirect reported speech, use a vague information source / agent such as 他们说 (“they say”) or 据小道消息说 (“accordingly to a hearsay”). The placement of these agents or sources may also vary (pre-, intra- and post-reported speech) depending on interactional dynamics and how speakers index their epistemic stance. The content being reported includes information related to local/regional Covid-19 cases or suspected cases, quarantine measures, and social actions such as complaint, concern or proposal of cessation of work/study arrangement. Adopting this micro-sociological perspective, the study has not only contributed to our understanding of reported speech and evidentiality in spoken Chinese, but also raised implications on how transmission of pandemic information is used as the basis for other actions in social interactions, and communication of pandemic related information or misinformation.

## Discussion of the term 文艺复兴 *wenyi fuxing* from the linguistic and ideological perspective

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The eminent linguist Luca Serianni (2011), at the beginning of his essay *L'italiano nel mondo*, affirms that «l'espansione dell'italiano non è avvenuta attraverso le armi» (the expansion of Italian did not happen through arms), but «è stata garantita quasi esclusivamente dal suo spessore culturale» (was almost exclusively guaranteed by its cultural depth). It is therefore not surprising that in Chinese there are numerous Italianisms relating to the cultural and artistic sphere, such as 坦培拉 *tanpeila*<sup>4</sup> (it. tempera), 湿壁画 *shibihua* (it. fresco), 干壁画 *ganbihua* (it. secco), 明暗对比 *ming'an duibi* (it. chiaroscuro). Since «la lingua cinese è una delle poche lingue al mondo che meno frequentemente ricorre al semplice mantenimento di termini e sintagmi di origine straniera» (the Chinese language is one of the few languages in the world that less frequently resorts to the simple maintenance of terms and syntagms of foreign origin), even these Italianisms have been rendered «nelle forme grafematiche della lingua di arrivo» (in the graphematic forms of the target language) (Bulfoni 2005). This contribution intends to focus in particular on the term 文艺复兴 *wenyi fuxing*, analyzing this linguistic loan and the related critical lexicography, discussing the translation of this word and its meanings in the 现代汉语词典 *Xiandai hanyu cidian* (XHC).

The term 文艺复兴 *wenyi fuxing*, object of the investigation of this paper, can be classified as a semantic cast: 文 *wen* refers to 'word, text, writing' (Cihai 2009: 4115), 艺 *yi* means 才能, 技艺 'talent, ability' and 艺术 'art' (Cihai 2009: 4695), while 复兴 *fuxing* indicates 衰落后再兴盛起来 'thrive after decline' (XHC, ed.VII, p. 411). However, this method of translation has raised some perplexities. The historian 庞卓恒 Pang Zhuoheng (1980), who wrote an entire article to this topic, believes that the term *Rinascimento* should be translated as 文化复兴 *wenhua fuxing*, because it does not refer only and exclusively to the revival of literature and art. In addition to the problems related to translation, this term also deserves attention from the point of view of its meaning and ideological nuances associated with it, since "ideology is the vital concern of critical lexicography" (Kachru 1995). The definition of the XHC appears in fact strongly connoted in a Marxist thought: the Renaissance would have been proposed by bourgeois historian (资产阶级历史学家) motivated by the emerging bourgeoisie in order to reflect its own interests and demands (新兴的资产阶级为了反映自身的利益和要求) and would therefore represent bourgeois interests (资产阶级的利益).

In conclusion, this contribution intends to analyze a series of Italian words, especially in the artistic and cultural field, and in particular the term 文艺复兴 *wenyi fuxing*, investigating the ways in which they entered the Chinese language and the meanings attributed to them in lexicographic tools.

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<sup>4</sup> Also translated as 蛋彩画 *dancaihua*.

## Mobile-assisted vocabulary games for teaching and learning Chinese vocabulary

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Language learning technology has become an integral part of language education (Xu 2015). In response to the increasing use of smartphones worldwide, the so called Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has become a growing trend in language education too (Lin et al 2018; Hu, Xu 2019). Mobile devices not only are part of our everyday life, but they can also be effective tools to support learning. Furthermore, young students are very familiar with smartphones and spend much time using them interacting and playing games. The new trend of game-based learning with mobile applications has also gained attention from language researchers and instructors (Qian, Clark 2016). Some studies have documented the positive impact that mobile technology and game-based learning have on CFL learning (Xu 2022; Zhou 2020) supporting learning in terms of motivation and autonomy (Zhou, Wei 2019), and facilitating learning outside the classroom (Zhou 2016). New technology and game-based mobile apps are also developed to make vocabulary learning more effective and challenging (Yip, Kwan 2006). It is well known that Chinese vocabulary instruction represent a big challenge for instructors (Xu et al 2013), it is, thus, important to find new methods to support vocabulary learning.

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of mobile-assisted and game-based Chinese vocabulary learning and to explore students' perceptions of mobile learning on their motivation and autonomy. Two research questions guided the analyses: 1. What are the effect of mobile and game- based learning on Chinese vocabulary learning? 2. What are students' views regarding mobile and game-based Chinese vocabulary learning?

20 first-year students enrolled in a Chinese university course took part in a 6 weeks mobile-assisted instructional process. Students received traditional lessons and were asked to practice every-day individual asynchronous sessions of mobile characters writing, using a free mobile game app, and weekly to take part to a synchronous mobile-based game session with classmates.

Pre- and post- tests on vocabulary knowledge, and pre- and post- questionnaires on students' perceptions of employing mobile for vocabulary learning were used to collect data.

Results show that mobile-assisted learning positively affected vocabulary acquisition, and that mobile and game-based learning seem to be more appreciated compared to the traditional paper-and-pen learning for studying Chinese characters.

These findings confirm the effectiveness of mobile-assisted and game-based learning for Chinese vocabulary and support the integration of mobile and game technology in language education.

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## A Special Type of Numeral Reduplication in Sichuanese

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This paper adopts a cartographic approach under the framework of generative grammar to investigate the syntax of a special construction of numeral reduplication in Sichuanese, a branch of south-western Mandarin, showing a rich DP structure parallel to that of CP.

In standard Chinese, when a noun comes to be modified by a numeral, the appearance of a classifier is always obligatory, showing the canonical construction Num-CL-N (Li, Thompson 1981). This is also true for Sichuanese. When the classifier indicates a unit of the noun, the adjective *da* ‘big’ can appear between Num and CL to emphasize the big quantity of the noun, see (1a). In addition, Sichuanese shows another numeral reduplication construction (1b), which is not allowed in standard Chinese:

- (1) a. CH: *liang-da-xiang shu*  
**two-big-CL** ‘box’ book  
 ‘two big (unit size) boxes of books’  
 b. SC: *liang-da-liang-xiang shu*  
**two-big-two-CL** ‘box’ book  
 ‘(subjective idea of big quantity) two big boxes of books’

The two numerals do not have to be totally identical as in (1b), when the basic numeral exceeds 10, only part of the basic numeral is reduplicated:

- (2) *san-da-sanbaiershiwu-ge pingguo*  
**three-da-three.hundred.twenty-five-CL** apple  
 ‘(subjective idea of big quantity) three hundred and twentyfive apples’

Therefore, this construction can be schematically represented as:

- (3) Num1-da-Num2-CL-N.

Research aim: this research aims to explain the derivation of this special construction as well as figure out the syntactic role and position of Num1 and *da*. Finally, a possible syntactic structure will be given to this construction.

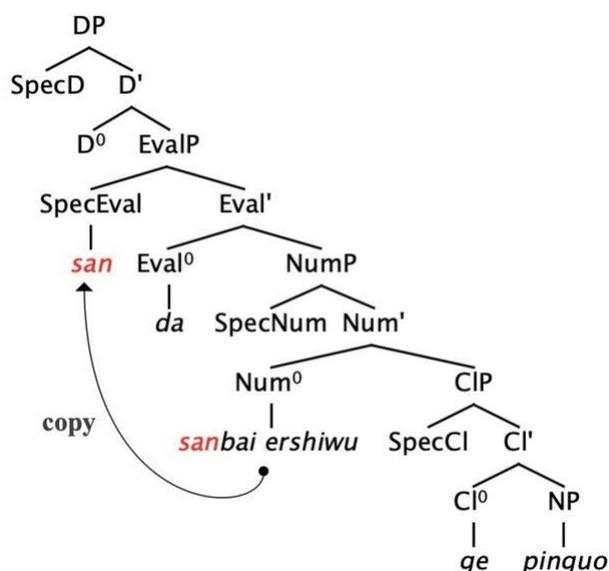
Analyses: 1) Num1 can be identical to/only part of the complete numeral Num2, suggesting that Num1 should derive from Num2; 2) *da* ‘big’ in Num1-da-Num2-CL-N endows the whole construction with speaker’s subjective evaluation of ‘big quantity’, in contrast to normal adjectives (1a) which can modify only the following classifier and convey an idea of ‘big unit size’; this provides evidence for the existence of an Evaluation-expressing element in DP, parallel to that in CP; 3) the numeral reduplication is required by the appearance of *da* to support the subjective idea of big quantity.

Proposals: 1) the reduplicated Num1 derives through an operation of full/partial copy of the basic numeral Num2 (see Nunes 2004, 2011); 2) *da* in (3) is not a normal adjective indicating big unit size, but functions as Evaluator expressing a subjective evaluation of big quantity; it heads its own projection EvalP and is base-generated here (inspired by MoodPevaluative in

Cinque 1999, 2006); 3) Num1 is copied in SpecEval after the Merge operation of Evaluation Phrase.

Syntactic structure: In line with cartographic assumptions (see Cinque, Rizzi, 2009), each independent functional element in this construction is claimed to head its own projection. The syntactic structure is given below (illustrated with example in (2)).

(4)



This special construction of numeral reduplication in Sichuanese confirms the idea that the DP domain is composed by a rich structure which shows a parallelism between DP and CP.

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(Inter)subjective grounding at the sentence right periphery: the case of Mandarin Chinese

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Among the different positions in which pragmatic markers can occur in the sentence, the final position has received relatively less attention in the literature with respect to the initial position (Traugott 2015). An apparent exception are Asian languages, and in particular Mandarin

Chinese, whose rich repertoire of sentence-final particles has been at the centre of a long tradition of research (Chu 1998). Nonetheless, recent typological-oriented studies such as Hancil et al (2015) have brought to the scholarly attention the fact that sentence-final markers that are typical of Indo-European languages such as epistemic (e.g. English *I think*) or intensifying expressions (French *alors*) are often found also in Asian languages, including Mandarin Chinese (Yap et al 2014; Hancil et al, 2015). What is more, as argued in Author (2021), the two types of pragmatic markers can also co-occur in sentence-final position, as shown in (1) and (2). In spite of the recent interest in Mandarin Chinese sentence-final markers and their relationship with sentence-final particles, only a handful of these elements have been (thoroughly) investigated up to date (e.g., Tao 2003 on *(nǐ) zhīdào* 你知道 ‘you know’; Lim 2011 on *wǒ juéde* 我觉得 ‘I think’).

The present contribution seeks to investigate subjective pragmatic markers used at the right periphery of the sentence in Mandarin Chinese, focusing on those overtly encoding the speaking subject. Based on data coming from both spoken and written corpus-based data (CallFriend Mandarin Corpus and Chinese Web 2017), two main types of subjective pragmatic markers were found to occur in this position: 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun + thinking verbs (e.g. *wǒ juéde* 我觉得 ‘I think’) and 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun + swearing verbs (e.g. 我操 ‘fuck’). The current study intends to unveil the different functional profile of the two types of PMs by taking into account several socio-pragmatic features. Based on quantitative and qualitative analyses, results show that the two types of markers: i) have a different distribution according to both speaker and hearer gender; they tend to co-occur with different (inter)subjective markers; they tend to occur in different sentence-types; they perform different discourse functions in terms of (inter)subjective grounding (see Lepadat 2021). The (mis)matches between the two types are exemplified in (1) and (2).

1)        这个        学校    应该    是    不    如        吧,    我    想.  
               This-CLF school should be not.equal    SFP    1SG    think

‘This school should be inferior, I think.’

2)        很                美                啊,        我    操,                Minneapolis!  
               Very                beautiful        SFP    1SG    fuck                Minneapolis

‘It’s really beautiful, damn, Minneapolis!’

(CallFriend/zho-m)

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## Raising and Matching in Mandarin Pre-nominal Relative Clauses

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It is well known that Mandarin Relative Clauses (RCs) precede the relative Head noun, yielding pre-nominal RCs. As schematised in (1), pre-nominal RCs can occur either in a pre-demonstrative position RC1 (2a), or in a post-demonstrative, post-numeral, post-classifier position RC2 (2b, cf. Chao 1968). RC1 differs from RC2 in being able to drop the modification maker *de* (Cheng and Sybesma 2009). Some scholars have argued that RC2 is more basic and RC1 is more marked (Hsu 2017). Many have argued that RC1 is derived from RC2 (Aoun, Li 2003, Zhang 2015, Cinque 2020).

- (1) RC1 - Demonstrative - Numeral - Classifier - RC2 - (AP) - Noun
- (2) a. [RC1 Zhāngsān hěn xǐhuān] (**de**) nà-yí-ge xuéshēng RC1  
Zhangsan very like DE that-one-CLF student  
'that one student that Zhangsan likes'
- b. nà-yí-ge [RC2 Zhāngsān hěn xǐhuān] **de** xuéshēng RC2  
that-one-CLF Zhangsan very like DE student  
'that one student that Zhangsan likes'

We argue that i) RC2 is not a base position, and RC1 is not derived from RC2 (*pace* Cinque 2020). The argument is that the reconstruction for numeral scope is possible for RC1, not for RC2; ii) the modification marker *de* is not genuinely optional in the RC1 position. Without *de*, the *de*-less RC as in (3b) must have a demonstrative. In addition, the *de*-less RC displays more restrictions than the RC with *de*; iii) both the Raising analysis and the Matching analysis are involved in Mandarin RCs (see also Lin, Tsai 2015 based on a different set of data). We show that stacking is possible for the *de*-RC, not for the *de*-less RC. This difference is accounted for by arguing that the *de*-less RC has a Raising structure à la Kayne (1994), whereas the *de*-RC can have a Matching structure in addition to Simpson's (2003) Raising Structure .

- (3) a. [Zhāngsān hěn xǐhuān] **de** (nà)-yí-ge xuéshēng DE-RC  
Zhangsan very like DE that-one-CLF student '  
(that) student that Zhangsan likes'
- b. [Zhāngsān hěn xǐhuān ] \*(**nà**)-yí-ge xuéshēng DE-less RC  
Zhangsan very like that-one-CLF student  
'\*(that) one student that Zhangsan likes'

Our analysis implicates that the HEAD PROJECTION ANALYSIS (Bhatt 2002, Iatridou et al 2001, Cecchetto, Donati 2015), according to which the relative Head moves and projects, is not universal. If the relative Head can freely project and turn the relative clause into a noun phrase in Mandarin Chinese, we would expect DE-less RCs to be possible with any kinds of relative Head nouns, contrary to the fact.

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The semantic representation of characters with different structures in L1 Italian learners of Chinese

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This study focuses on the semantic representation of Chinese characters from different categories in L1 Italian learners. Chinese characters can be characterized both in terms of their external structure and of their internal structure. The external structure leads to the classification of Chinese characters based on visual and spatial features, i.e., left-right structure characters and top-bottom structure characters (Liu, 2007; Roger, 2005:39). In contrast, based on the internal structure, Chinese characters can be classified according to how they are formed or used. This classification is the so-called *Liushu* (六書 *liùshū* ‘six scripts’), which includes four character-forming types, i.e. pictographs, ideographs, compound ideographs, and phono-semantic compounds, and two character-usage types, i.e. phonetic loans, and mutually defining characters (Taylor, Taylor 2014: 45).

In this talk, I will explore the semantic representation of Chinese characters from different *Liushu* categories in L1 Italian learners, and the relationship between semantic representation and Chinese language proficiency, using a statistical quantitative method. I aim at answering the following research questions:

- Does the character-forming type (pictographs, ideographs, compound-ideographs, and phono-semantic compounds) affect the semantic representation ability of Chinese characters?
- Does the semantic representation ability change across different language proficiency levels?

In order to answer these questions, I administered a force-choice semantic task, realized by a program designed by E-Prime. Participants are divided into 3 groups, according to learners' HSK level and a character-based language proficiency test (LEXTALE\_CH - Lexical Test for Advanced Learners of Chinese; Chan and Chang, 2018), i.e., elementary, intermediate, advanced Chinese learners. 48 Chinese characters were shown to the participants randomly: 12 pictographs, 12 ideographs, 12 compound ideographs, and 12 phono-semantic compounds. Behavioral performance was calculated and analyzed in terms of the reaction time and the accuracy percentage of their key responses.

The two main findings of the research are: 1) the semantic representation abilities differ for the four types of Chinese characters. Learners show a highly accurate semantic representation both phono-semantic compounds and for pictographs; however, compared to phono-semantic compounds, the form-meaning mapping of pictographs is faster. The semantic representations of both ideographs and compound ideographs are less accurate, while the form-meaning mapping of ideographs is faster in comparison to that of compound ideographs. 2) As language proficiency improves, the form-meaning mapping of the four types of Chinese characters progressively become more accurate and faster. I will show that these results can be explained by the factors, such as structure complexity, character frequency or familiarity, as well as the ability to decompose the character structure and to recognize the semantic radical.

### A focus-on-forms proposal on the equivalences between the Chinese aspectual system and the Italian tense system

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The morphological marking of verb in temporality tends to prioritize one of the three dimensions of the TAM domain, including Tense-Aspect-Modality. For instance, Chinese is a language with no tense morphology (Lin 2006, 2012), but temporal reference (Smith, Erbaugh 2005) is encoded by grammatical aspectual markers, temporal adverbials, discourse pragmatics (Xiao, McEnery 2004). On the other hands, Italian is a typical tense language. Its tense markers interact closely with aspect category (Bertinetto 1986; Comrie 1978, 1985); the past-referring inflectional markers are employed to reflect temporal and aspectual information at the same time. The different strategy used for temporal marking allow to map equivalent constructions between a tense language and those used in an aspectual system. For instance, in (1a) the construction “Verb-*le* + duration + *le*” can be mapped onto “Verb-Present Indicative + *da* duration”; in (1b) the duration phrase has a predicative function (Abbiati 1998: 137), and the construction “Verb + duration + *le*” can be mapped onto “Verb-Past Indicative + duration + *fa*”.

- 1) a. *Wǒ zài Yìdàlì zhù-le liǎng nián le.*  
 1SG in Italy live-ASP two year SFP  
*Vivo in Italia da due anni.*
- b. *Wǒ bìyè liǎng nián le*  
 1SG graduate two year SFP  
 I graduated two years ago.  
*Mi sono laureata due anni fa.*

The goal of this study is tackling the efficacy of a focused instruction based on the equivalent structure mapped between L1 and L2. In addition, the goal is testing whether such a method is equally productive for facilitating L2 acquisition of the aspectual system by native speakers of

a tensed language, and viceversa. The study involves two groups: 29 Italophone intermediate learners (BA students at the end of the second year), and 29 Sinophone learners of Italian L2 (students at least at the B1 level in CEFR). Each of them has been trained focusing on the relevant equivalences. A parallel set of 20 sentences in Chinese and Italian have been designed, proposing pairs with different temporal orientation, also comprising sentences with durational phrase. Each group of learners was asked to translate the sentences from their mother tongue into the target language. This paper will present the preliminary results showing that both groups of learners positively mapped between these two systems, however, the accuracy rate drops dramatically in sentences including temporal phrases with a predicative function, as (1b). These data suggest that for this specific type of duration phrase a specific-on-form is needed.

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#### The Chinese 被 *bèi* passive construction in Italian learners' L2 Chinese: A preliminary study based on experimental data

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The Chinese 被 *bèi* syntactic passive construction is challenging for L1 Italian learners to acquire because it shows different syntactic and semantic-pragmatic properties from the Italian passive sentences (Klímová 2010, Sansò 2011).

This construction has been widely studied from the theoretical point of view (Chappell 1986, Cheng 1987, Shi 2005, Liu 2016) and from the SLA perspective (Chen, Liu 2020, Peng 2008). Nonetheless, existing studies mainly collected data from English-speaking or Asian learners (Yang 2019, Zhang 2018), while there is a lack of studies collecting data from L1 Italian learners. The present study intends to address this gap in the literature, analyzing the pragmalinguistic knowledge of the *bèi* passive construction of L1 Italian learners.

This research focuses on the two conventionally distinguished *bèi* sentences (Kong 2014): the *long passive* with the overt agent (1), and the *short passive* (2), i.e. agentless structure (Liu 2011; Li, Thompson 1989, Xiao, McEnery 2010). In both cases, the *bèi* construction conveys adverse meaning which refers to unfortunate events (Li, Luk 2017), e.g. in:

- (1) 他被李四批评了 (Chan et al 2016: 29)  
 Tā bèi Lǐsì pīpíng-le  
 3SG BEI Lisi criticize-PFV  
 'He was criticized by Lisi'

- (2) 张三被批评了 (Chan et al 2016: 29)  
*Zhāngsān bèi pīpíng-le*  
 Zhangsan BEI criticize-PFV  
 ‘Zhangsan was criticized’

We collected written and spoken data from 69 Italian students at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice grouped into intermediate and advanced levels according to their HSK Chinese language proficiency test score. Data from 25 L1 Chinese speakers were also collected for comparative purposes. Participants completed four written experimental tasks (Acceptability Judgement Test, Pragmalinguistic Judgement Test, Translation Task, Sentence Selection Task) (Ionin 2012, Mackey, Gass 2021). Following Callies (2009), we conducted retrospective interviews to collect introspective data with the purpose of investigating learners’ explicit knowledge of grammatical and pragmatic features of the *bèi* construction.

The study addresses the following research questions:

*RQ1*: Are there differences in the frequency and accuracy rate between L1 Chinese speakers and L2 Italian learners across proficiency levels?

*RQ2*: Do learners have (explicit) knowledge of the adverse semantic/pragmatic meaning of the *bèi*

construction?

*RQ3*: Does the cross-linguistic influence play a role in the use of the *bèi* construction?

Analyses reveal that learners statistically use the construction with a lower frequency and a lower accuracy rate than native speakers. However, a One-Way ANOVA test showed that the pragmalinguistic (implicit-explicit) knowledge of the passive construction increases as the proficiency level increases. Learners ungrammatically used stative verbs in short passives; L1 transfer plays a role in this case, as stative verbs are passivizable in Italian regardless of the long or short passive constructions. Moreover, in contexts conveying adverse meaning, learners improperly substitute the passive *bèi* construction with the *ba* 把 and the *shì* 是...*de* 的 constructions. This may suggest that learners have insufficient processing resources to coordinate between syntax and semantic/pragmatic learning while using the passive construction, and this supports the Interface Hypothesis (Sorace, Filiaci 2006).

Inter/intra-linguistic interferences, learner strategies, lack of knowledge, educational settings, and teaching materials arguably also affect learners’ pragmalinguistic knowledge of the passive construction.

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## Pet loss metaphors

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The human-animal bond has been shown to be salient and unique to us, for both physiological and psycho-social factors (Fine 2020). To bereaved pet guardians, losing a pet is an excruciating grief that may hurt any less than losing a family member.

Semino has shown (2011) that when people deal with difficult or painful sentiments, metaphor helps them make sense of and convey their pain, so much so that they produce even more metaphors than when they describe mild emotions (Fainsilber, Ortony 1987).

There are various and complex emotions that may be at play when the bereaved deals with the loss of a pet, including those arising from (a) the way the non-human companion is remembered by the bereaved, (b) how the death of the animal is conceptualised and eventually processed, and (c) the way the new life without one’s animal starts to look and feel like to the bereaved.

This paper investigates the conceptualization of grief from pet loss by studying the metaphors bereaved pet owners use in spontaneous discourse as found in English and Chinese blogposts about deceased pets. The primary research question asks which metaphors bereaved pet guardians use to describe their pain. My interest is on both metaphors that appear systematically and in those that appear occasionally, even if only used by one language user. This is intended to provide empirical evidence as to how bereaved pet guardians conceive of their non-human companion and the way they process their pain, and to shed light on cross-linguistic similarities and differences.

Dataset consists in texts ( $n = 50$ ) from blogposts and are half in English and half in Chinese. They are analysed by identifying linguistic metaphors following MIPVU (Steen et al 2010), coding them in ATLAS.ti (following Kimmel 2012), and then grouping the identified metaphors by their vehicle category (Cameron, Low, Maslen 2010) linking vehicle groups to a priori topics (Silvestre-López 2020) mentioned above (a-c) (cf. Nacey 2022).

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## Commendatory and derogatory expressions in Chinese: some consideration about diachronic changes

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The speed of changes in Chinese society is also reflected in the evolution of the language, both official and unofficial.

Many new words are coined mostly online, and the internet is certainly the most appropriate place to grasp the changing trends in Chinese social culture.

The "standards", the canons, vary over time and the evaluation functions can be conceived differently in different times and contexts.

Praise or derogatory expressions thus take on particular relevance to capture changes because they reflect the values and characteristics of the society in which the language is used, to which they are closely linked.

For example, traditional Chinese culture once praised those with red faces and chubby bodies using the laudatory term 胖 *pang* 'fat/chubby' and considered unhealthy those who were thin using 瘦 *shou* 'thin' as a derogatory term. However, most modern societies would assign opposite meanings to these two terms.

Commendatory and derogatory terms had been well defined in Chinese as early as the Han dynasty (206 BC - AD 220), when the founder of Chinese lexicology Xu Shen completed his

monumental dictionary *Shuowen Jiezi*. Over the course of many dynasties, this dictionary has been re-annotated by a number of scholars, but the known and most widely accepted annotation is probably the *Shuowen Jiezi Zhu* made by scholar Duan Yucai in the Qing era. In his work, Duan defines 褒 *bao* as 'praise' and 贬 *bian* as 'destructive'. Following his categorization, even today modern lexicologists and grammarians use 褒义词 *baoyici* 'laudatory terms' and 贬义词 *bianyici* 'derogatory terms' to catalog evaluative expressions.

This study seeks to offer a diachronic view of the functional or conceptual system of Chinese evaluative expressions over the past twenty years, to describe the changes in the Chinese socio-cultural tradition.

In particular, it will focus on the expressions used to evaluate people's appearance, personality or abilities.

The data used for this study are collected from 汉语褒贬义词语用法词典 (Dictionary of Chinese praise and blame words) by Wang Guozhang 王国璋 (2001), and also chosen from the lists of the most used neologisms and expressions that are drawn up annually.

Wang's dictionary includes 1015 evaluative expressions categorized into three types (commendatory, derogatory and neutral) and provides the equivalent in English. Among the 1015 terms, 193 bisyllabic adjectives can be identified as conveying polarity when describing a person's appearance, personality, or ability. Preliminary analysis shows that for physical appearance, positive HEPA (Human Elogiative Polar Adjective) draw a clear distinction between males and females. The desired masculine aspect that is obtained from the analysis of Wang's dictionary is related to the concept of strength (强壮 *qiángzhuàng* 'strong'), naturalness (潇洒 *xiāosǎ* 'natural and unaltered') and healthiness (矫健 *jiǎojiàn* 'strong and energetic'), while the desired feminine aspect is linked to beauty (漂亮 *piàoliang* 'beautiful'), delicacy (秀气 *xiùqi* 'elegant'), quiet (娴静 *xiánjìng* 'gentle and calm') and dignity (端庄 *duānzhuāng* 'dignified').

Personality HEPAs can be classified as related to integrity, modesty, intelligence, purity and sensitivity, qualities which all fall under the grand umbrella of "morality" or "humanity".

The second part of this study will analyze the Cins (Chinese Internet Neologism) used to judge the appearance, personality or abilities of people. From a preliminary comparison, we find fewer references to physical strength and naturalness, but a major number of compounds that refer to spatial references and material well-being, such as 高大上 *gāodàshàng*, 高富帅 *gāofùshuài*, 白富美 *báifùměi*, 邈邈 *lāta*, up to expressions such as 小鲜肉 *xiǎoxiānròu* 'little fresh meat', coined in 2014 to describe the actors of the Korean series, which refers to an innocent, youthful and attractive, almost effeminate appearance. These new laudatory and dispregiative expressions reflect emerging phenomena, new changes, trends and fashions in all aspects of social life and play an increasingly important role in daily life.

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## Deconstructing recipes: a constructionist comparative analysis of Chinese, English, and Italian

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The present study looks at a specific text genre, namely that of recipes, in three different languages, i.e. English, Italian, and Chinese. The aim of the paper is twofold: first, we seek to determine how recipe texts in these three languages encode the temporal sequence of events, the resultant location, and the resultant object and how to account for each pattern in syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic terms. Recipes are particularly interesting as they are goal oriented technical texts describing sets of actions carried out in a specific order in time, happening in specific locations and producing specific resultant objects. Second, in light of the wide occurrence of co-referential deletion in Chinese, we look at the way recipe texts achieve cohesion and convey meaning to the reader in the three languages featuring the corpus of this study. In particular, what are the cohesive devices each language employs to achieve textual cohesion and how does each language employ them? How is a recipe text organized in terms of information structure and thematic progression? And finally, how much pragmatic inference and contextual or world knowledge is needed to fully understand recipe texts?

The paper presents a preliminary analysis of original recipes selected from international blog entries, through a function-to-form framework informed by the tools of construction grammar, which is especially suited for the analysis of structurally different languages like Italian, English, and Chinese, which enables an unbiased and accurate exploration of linguistic patterns. The analysis shows that different languages employ different linguistic devices to encode the meanings/linguistic features examined in the study. Languages also differ in the number and type of details that might be left unspecified and understood through inference, contextual and cultural knowledge. Finally, although some languages appear to be more 'obscure' than others, the activation of world knowledge, contextual knowledge, and inferential processes are necessary to obtain full comprehension of any recipe text.

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## What is a Word? Units of Meaning in Early and Mid-Twentieth Century Dictionaries

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I describe how the phonologist and language reformer Wei Jiangong 魏建功 (1901—1980) formulated a concept of “word” to be applied in lexicography that was so concise that it actually denoted “free morpheme” and enabled him to compile the most successful modern dictionary: The *Xinhua Zidian* 新華字典, 1953.

Wei Jiangong was a linguist who was not only a specialist in the reconstruction of the historical pronunciation of Chinese, but was also involved in the standardization and promotion of the modern standard language (*guoyu* 國語) in both the Mainland and Taiwan in Republican times and in the introduction of the simplified characters in the PRC.

Searching for the ideal tool to promote Guoyu, he reviewed the eight-volume dictionary *Guoyu Cidian* 國語辭典 published in the 1930s and 40s and came to the conclusion that if he wanted to realize a reference work whose lexical items actually match the morphology of Modern Chinese, he must compile a dictionary himself.

Wei Jiangong developed a concept of “word” (*ci* 詞) as “unit of meaning”. It de facto denotes the free morpheme – before the now widely used term *yusu* 語素 (defined 1964 by Lu Zhiwei 陸志韋 as “meaningful syllable”) was coined. Wei applied this concept in the compilation of the first edition of the monolingual pocket dictionary *Xinhua Zidian* which became the “world’s most popular reference work” (Guinness World Records 2015).

My research is based on a thorough analysis of the two dictionaries and of Wei Jianguo's and his contemporaries' articles on wordhood and lexicography. It is contextualized with the history of the discussion of the "word" (*ci*) in contrast to the "character" (*zi* 字). It is additionally put into perspective with an evaluation of the influence of phonographic spelling.

### Cantonese modals and specificity

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Cantonese modals can occur before or after a sentential subject; subject NPs can occur before deontic modals (can, be able to, be willing to) however they cannot follow them. Subject NPs may occur before or after epistemic modals (should), but when they follow them receive a contrastive (focus) interpretation. For Wong (2001) Mandarin's different syntactic positions and semantic readings of the relevant NPs are due to the dichotomy *intension* vs. *extension* (cf. Li 1998). I have applied Wong's analysis to Cantonese, and I propose that there is a connection between modality and specificity.

Cantonese proper nouns/common nouns can precede an epistemic modal resulting in a specific reading:

1.  
Siu2Wong2/jan4-cai ho2nang4 kam4jat6 lai4 gwo2  
SiuWong/postman possible yesterday came SFP  
'(As, for SiuWong/the postman), it is possible that SiuWong/the postman come yesterday'  
[it is possible that SW/the postman come yesterday or did not come, but it is sure about SW/the postman]

Subjects following epistemic modals can only have non-specific readings:

2.  
ho2nang4 Siu2Wong2/jan4-cai kam4jat6 lai4 gwo2  
possible SiuWong/postman yesterday came SFP  
'It is possible that SW/ the postman come yesterday.'  
[It is possible that SW/the postman come yesterday, but it is possible that somebody else come]

In 2. the proper noun/common noun are intended as non-specific because the speaker is not sure about the name and/or the identity of who came yesterday.

When a subject immediately follows an epistemic modal (should) gives rise to a contrastive focus on the agent argument, while 4., with contrast between other elements, is ungrammatical:

3.  
jing1goi1 nei5 maai5 syu1  
should you buy books  
'It should be you who is going to buy books.'

4.  
\*jing1goi1 nei5 maai5 syu1 m4 jiu3 maai5 zi1 bat1  
should you buy books not should buy CL pencils

Epistemic modals (possibility and necessity), and deontic modals (obligations and duties) extrinsic to the subject allow both specific and non-specific readings of the subject:

5.

sin1saang1 ho2nang4 ting1jat6 m4 lai4  
teacher possible tomorrow not come

‘[Regarding the teacher] it is possible that the teacher may not come tomorrow.’

6.

ho2nang4 sin1saang1 ting1jat6 m4 lai4  
possible teacher tomorrow not come

‘[Regarding the present situation] it is possible that the teacher may not come.’

Pre-verbal subjects followed by deontic modals (intrinsic obligations and modals expressing ability, capability, willingness) can only have a specific reading, while post-verbal subjects as in 8. are ungrammatical:

7.

ji5ging1 hou2 je6 ngo5dei6 jiu3 heoi3 laa3  
already very late I PL need leave SFP

‘It’s already very late, so we have to go.’ (\* ‘It’s already late, one has to go’),

8.

\*ji5ging1 hou2 je6 jiu3 ngo5dei6 heoi3 laa3  
already very late need I PL leave SFP

Thus, in Cantonese all pre-modal subjects have specific readings, non-specific readings are available only in post-modal position with extrinsic epistemic and deontic modals with contrastive readings while deontic modals (ability, capability, willingness, and intrinsic obligation) cannot have post-modal subjects.

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## On some differential syntactic properties between French and Mandarin Chinese

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Seven salient syntactic properties found in French, namely:

- the agreement between the Subject and the Verb, (cf. (1)-(2)),
- the possible presence of the complementizer *que*, before a sentential adverb, cf. (3)-(4),
- the obligatory presence of *que* before a complement clause, either in Subject or in Object position, cf. (5)-(6),
- the obligatory presence of a dummy subject pronoun *il* 'it' or demonstrative *'c'(e)* when a CP subject is postposed, cf. (6),
- the presence of subjunctive forms of the verb embedded under certain predicates, cf. (7)- (8),
- the existence of verb gapping, cf. (9)-(10),

- the presence of strong forms of the personal pronouns ‘moi’, in (13) and ‘toi’ in (14).

are **not** found in Mandarin Chinese. See the Chinese translations of (1)-(10) below their translations into English.

(1) Jean **est**/\* **êtes** là.  
John is/\*are here  
*Zhangsan zai (zheli)*

(2) Vous **êtes**/\***est** là.  
Vous are/\*is here  
*Nimen zai (zheli)*

(3) Heureusement **qu**'il est venu.  
Fortunately he came  
*Xingkui ta lai -le*

(4) Heureusement, il est venu.  
Fortunately, he came  
*Xingkui ta lai -le*

(5) (**Qu**'il est en train de pleuvoir) est évident. That it is raining is obvious  
*Hen mingxian xianzai xia yu*

(6) **Il/C'** est évident (**qu**'il est en train de pleuvoir). It is obvious that it is raining  
*Hen mingxian xianzai xia yu*

(7) \*(**Il/C'** est) dommage qu'il \***n'est** pas venu. It is a pity that he did not come  
come  
*Zhen kexi, ta mei lai*

(8) (**Il/C'**est) dommage qu'il ne **soit**  
It is a pity that he did not  
*Zhen kexi, ta mei lai*

(9) Il pleut ici et **il pleut** là-bas aussi.  
aussi.  
It's raining here and over there too  
over there too  
*Zheli xia yu, nali ye xia yu*

(10) Il pleut ici et là-bas  
It's raining here and  
*\*Zheli xia yu, nali ye*

(11) Il a mangé.  
**Ta chi-le fan**

(12) Tu as mangé aussi.  
You too ate/ate also  
**Ni ye chi-le fan**

(13) **Moi** aussi. He ate  
I/me too  
**\*Wo ye**

(14) **Toi**, tu sais ce poème.  
(As for) you, you know this poem  
**Ni** (a), ni zhidao zhei shou shi

I claim that gapping is allowed in French precisely because both the complementizer *que* (cf. (5)-(6)) and S-V agreement exist, cf. (1)-(2). As a consequence, I will show that, in Mandarin, both the **absence** of S-V agreement and the **absence** of a COMP are related phenomena, hence the impossibility (or the **severe constraints** on) of Verb gapping in Mandarin Chinese.

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## A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Cantonese in mid19th - early 20th century USA

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Nearly 20,000 Chinese immigrants arrived in the United States, mostly in California, during the Gold Rush of 1848-1855, and many were there employed to build the Transcontinental Railroad (Chang, Fisher Fishkin, 2019). From that time onward, a few language materials to learn Cantonese were printed in the US for the benefit of westerners having to communicate for different purposes with the growing number of Chinese people in their country. As reported in the earliest of these works (Benoni 1867), Cantonese was fundamental to communicate with all the Chinese, regardless of their status or provenance.

What kind of Cantonese is depicted in these works? Who were the intended interlocutors? What language registers were used? What kind of sociocultural information can we gather from them? Can we retrace any influence of the local society of the time on Cantonese language?

In order to answer the above questions, this study has selected five works compiled between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by Westerners aiming at teaching Cantonese, with the help of native speakers (see primary sources below). An analysis of these texts will firstly reveal the “kind” of Cantonese portrayed (oral/spoken, formal/informal) and the language registers used according to the different interlocutors. It will try to finally assess the influence of American society on Cantonese and on the way it was used, mainly in terms of lexicon, code-switching and grammar.

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## Investigating Dictionary Use Habits of CFL University Students in Italy: A Questionnaire-Based Case Study

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Atkins and Rundell (2008: 24) maintained that dictionaries may be divided, according to their

language(s), into monolingual, bilingual (unidirectional or bidirectional) and multilingual; according to the medium they appear on, they may be divided into print, electronic (in the form of a DVD or a handheld device) and web based. Granger (2012: 4) on the other hand, held that one of the results of electronic lexicography is that “barriers between the different types of language resources” are being removed, leading to the hybridization of the previous forms of lexicographical products.

This contribution addresses the issue of dictionary use in the process of learning Chinese as a foreign language, focusing on the differences between online/offline and monolingual/bilingual dictionaries. Research on dictionary use is a well-established field, dating back to the end of the 1980s (Tono 2001); many studies on the subject are aimed at pointing out the skills that users should possess to employ the dictionary in an efficient way (among the latest, see Zhang, Xia and Liao 2018) Research on electronic dictionaries started to thrive in the 2000s (see Nesi 2000; Granger and Paquot 2012). Despite Müller -Spitzer, Koplenig and Töpel 's (2012, 425) complaint about the scarcity of research on the usage/ of online dictionaries, several contributions have in fact discussed it lately (among the latest, Zheng and Wang 2016; Farina, Vrbinc and Vrbinc 2019). Among these, Lestari, Rasyid and Nuruddin (2020 and 2021) have investigated the usage of offline (i.e., printed) vs. online dictionaries, and monolingual vs. bilingual dictionaries in a number of EFL students in Jakarta: their results show that most students prefer to use a bilingual online dictionary rather than a monolingual and offline dictionary.

Based on these premises, we created an online, semi-structured questionnaire, which was submitted to BA and MA students who learn Chinese as a foreign language in Italian Universities with the following goals: 1) to investigate the languages (monolingual vs. bilingual) and the medium (offline vs. online) of dictionaries they are trained during their course(s); 2) to verify the languages and the medium of the dictionaries they were invited or even required to use in classroom activity; 3) to know the languages and the medium of the dictionaries the students commonly prefer to use in individual work.

At the time of writing this abstract, 227 students from several Italian universities answered the questionnaire. The preliminary results suggest that, on the one hand, the respondents are usually trained to employ offline (i.e., printed) dictionaries, and that these are also commonly (though not exclusively) required during classroom activities; on the other, the answers also show that, when using dictionaries for individual study, students show a clear preference for online bilingual dictionaries, with a particular prevalence for smartphone apps.

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## Writing and etymology in Chinese

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The study of graphic forms was the preferred method of lexical analysis in ancient China, and still constitutes an important part of the etymological research. This traditional approach was also adopted by early Western missionaries, who were fascinated by the myth of Chinese as a ‘visual’ language (Dinu 2016, Mungello 2009). A crucial role in grasping the meaning of a word through the observation of its graphic shape is played by semantic determinatives, which are treated as keys to etymological interpretation already in the *Shuōwén Jiězì*. In fact, Xǔ Shèn derives the meaning of words from the graphic composition of the character itself, and more precisely from the semantic content of *bùshǒu*, treated as graphic primitives that reflect lexical roots on the linguistic level. (Bottéro 1996, O’Neill 2016). While the inappropriate consideration of the *bùshǒu* as original elements of Chinese graphic system and as mirrors about the origins of lexemes (as suggested by the term ‘radical’ itself) has long been stated (cfr. Boltz 1994), much less attention has been paid to phonetic determinatives and the evolution involved in their understanding. While Chinese literati have always been aware of the presence of ‘sound bearer’ components in character structure, their discovery by Western scholars is accompanied by a progressive raising in the recognition of their importance, to the point of regarding the so called ‘phonetics’ as all that matters in etymology. As a result, characters that share the same phonetic constituent and are similar in meaning were often thought to represent cognate words.

The aim of my presentation is to discuss the topic of etymology in Chinese: In particular, I will select some significant examples that demonstrate the mutual independence of the graphical and morphological analysis of Chinese words, although there is a relationship between the two levels. In doing so, I will take as a reference the system of reconstruction for Old Chinese proposed by Baxter- Sagart (2014). We will see that it is possible to identify true cognate words that have nothing in common graphically, while other words can only be said graphically but not linguistically related. For this reason, neither semantic nor phonetic constituents inscribed in Chinese characters can be understood as reflecting derivation from a common lexical root.

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## Analysis of pragmatic functions of Chinese particles *a* 啊/*ya* 呀/*wa* 哇/*na* 哪 in two corpora of oral interactions

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This contribution is an analysis of the main functions of the modal particle *a* 啊 used as “pragmatic marker” (following the definition by Fraser 1999, Fraser 2006) in Chinese language. As demonstrated by previous studies (Lee-Wong 1998, Li, Thompson 1981), the particle *a* 啊 covers the main pragmatic function of reducing the illocutionary force in requests where face threat is implicit (Liu 2011); it also provides a milder tone in exclamations where an answer is not requested (Lee-Wong 1998) or it expresses a surprised reaction (Liu 2011); moreover, it shows a caring attitude by the speaker (Shei 2014; Chu 2002). These particles are used both in formal and informal interactions and contexts show a relatively low social distance between interlocutors, while a high degree of imposition is involved (Shei 2014; Lee-Wong 1998). In these contexts, the use of particle *a* 啊 makes the question more informal and softens the imperative mood. It has been observed how particle *a* 啊 can also occur as a series of phonetic variants (*ya* 呀, *wa* 哇, *na* 哪), depending on the phonetic nature of the syllable preceding it (Lin 1981 in Lee-Wong 1998; Liu, Jin 2007).

The research questions that this contribution addresses are: is particle *a* 啊 used in formative contexts? Does it cover the same pragmatic functions as those observed in other contexts by previous studies? Do the phonetic variants of this particle depend exclusively on the phonetic nature of the preceding syllables, or do these variants also cover specific pragmatic functions? In order to answer these questions, this contribution uses conversation analysis to examine two *ad hoc* corpora: one consists of interactions recorded during Chinese language lessons between Chinese teachers and Italian students studying Chinese as a foreign language (10 hours); the other corpus is a collection of conversations recorded at Fu-Jen University in Taiwan by Mandarin Chinese speakers during a radio program organized by the Faculty of Media and Communication (10 hours). Observations demonstrate some differences between the uses of *a* 啊 employed by teachers and those used in radio conversations. Moreover, phonetic variants *ya* 呀, *wa* 哇 and *na* 哪 sometimes occur independently of their expected phonetic context. In the contribution I will discuss the main differences between the pragmatic functions of *a* 啊 found in the radio conversations and those observed in formative context. I will also try to identify the specific pragmatic functions observed for the phonetic variants of particle *a* 啊.

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## Explicit cohesion markers in written Chinese: A case study based on Italian learners

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The definitions of discourse markers (DM) provided so far have underlined their high frequency in spoken language, the internal variety of these items and their usage as linking device between different discourse segments and conversation turns. This contribution is focused on the last feature,

i.e. the usage of these markers as cohesive device in Chinese, and adopts a broad definition of DMs, as “lexical items, be they words or short phrases, which help connect prior and following discourse segments” (Xu 2015: 96).

Previous studies focused on the acquisition of Chinese DMs have compared the usage of these items by native speakers and learners of Chinese (Ji 2016) confirming the correlation between participants’ linguistic proficiency and the usage of DMs and proposing that the frequency of usage increases proportionally to the proficiency level. More recently, Lu (2019) describes the distribution of Chinese connectives and links the usage of connectives to different factors of learners’ profiles. Liao (2020) analyses L2 Chinese descriptive writing skill and takes into account different proficiency levels describing the usage of cohesive markers not only at local and global level but also illustrating the usage of interactional devices such as personal pronouns.

Romagnoli and Tao (forthcoming) is one of the few works focused on Italian learners of Chinese. Based on oral monologues produced by L1 and L2 speakers, this work not only confirms the results illustrated in previous studies but also highlights some difficulties in acquiring DMs, such as the lack of correlation between proficiency level and usage of DMs and the high number of expressions typically used in written language, despite the oral feature of the task proposed.

The present study is focused on those lexical devices which typically fulfill a linking functions in Chinese, i.e. adverbs and conjunctions between clauses or adjacent sentences, and aims at answering the following research questions:

- What type of cohesive devices are most frequently used in L2 Chinese written productions?
- Does the usage of cohesive devices change across time?
- How does the usage of cohesive devices correlate with the lexical complexity?

In order to describe the usage of DMs by Italian learners of Chinese a corpus of data has been built. The dataset includes 108 texts produced by 38 participants attending the same university course. The linguistic background, age and proficiency level of the participants are rather homogeneous. The data collected are the written productions uploaded on a voluntary basis by students on the platform moodle in different periods, from the beginning to the end of the term. In particular, students have been asked to express themselves on five different topics which can be considered to belong to three types of written tasks: narrative, descriptive and persuasive. The data have been analyzed using Sketch engine in order to provide a quantitative and qualitative account of the usage of DMs.

Results show that the markers most frequently used are those signaling additive and causative relations, followed by those expressing sequences or stages. Moreover, the usage of cohesive devices does not significantly improve across time whereas it is positively correlated with lexical complexity.

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## Disambiguating the reading of *huì*: An exploration of the temporal orientation

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The disambiguation of the modal *huì* represents one of the most challenging tasks for non-native speakers. It expresses dynamic ability, epistemic possibility, and a varied range of readings that can be boiled down to futurity and habituality (Iljic 1985, Liu 1997, Lamarre 2007, Wu 2020, a.o.). Since Tsang (1981), it has been observed that the epistemic reading is more natural in negative and interrogative sentences, and with stative predicates. This study investigates the semantic constraints on the interpretation of *huì* with eventive predicates, with particular attention to temporal features. Firstly, we will focus on the modalities which takes *individual level predicates*, that is, ability and habituality. We will highlight that while ability reading is incompatible with temporal phrases, the habitual requires a *time frame*, that is, a “time period restricting the temporal validity of the property of a given individual” (Bertinetto, Lenci 2012: 858). Such setting can be also provided by a situation which triggers a regular response, as “whenever he sees someone in need”, in (1).

1) Měi cì yùdào biérén yǒu kùnnán de shíhòu, tā dōu huì shēnchū yuánshǒu.  
 every.time meet others have difficulty DE time he all HAB extend assistance  
 ‘Whenever he sees someone in need, he will always lend a hand.’ (Liu 1997: 43)

Secondly, for spelling apart the futurity and habitual readings, we will rely on the notions of *specificity*, describing a situation anchored to a specific event time (Wu 2020: 54). We will also discuss the cases wherein *huì* is used as a past possibility operator (Lin 2012: 676) and propose to account for them in terms of temporal shift of the speaker’s viewpoint, from *speech* to *event time* (typically in sentences having a future-in-the-past *nuance*). Cases in point are (2a), in which the shift is triggered by the adverb *jīngrán* ‘unexpectedly’, and (2b), where the event marked by *huì* is embedded in the complement of an attitude verb, which results in a shift from *speech time* to the time of the attitude verb, consistently with a crosslinguistic phenomenon described by Hacquard (2016: 59ff).

- 2) a. Tā zuótiān jìngrán (huì) shīcháng, shízài ràng rén wǎnxī.  
 He yesterday unexpectedly FUT abnormal really let people regretful  
 ‘How come it was possible that he performed abnormally yesterday? For this, I feel very regretful.’ (Lin 2012: 676)
- b. Nà shíhòu, tā dānxīn wǒ \*(huì) pīpíng tā  
 That time she worry I FUT criticize her  
 ‘That time, she was worried that I would criticize her.’

We will finally highlight that the behaviour *hui* fits very nicely in the typological category of *predictive future* (Dahl 1985: 108-111). We will also stress that the occurrences *hui* as in (2b), typically in embedded sentences, display a “late-developing use” which is characteristic of the most mature future grams (Bybee et al 1994: 244).

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#### Functional range of disposal markers in Chaoshan Southern Min

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The disposal construction of different Sinitic languages tends to be marked by grammaticalized morphemes of various lexical sources. Belonging to the Southeastern group of Sinitic, Southern Min is characterized by its use of a disposal marker derived from the comitative preposition (Chappell 2015). This study focuses on Chaoshan, a dialect cluster of Southern Min which stands out from its sister varieties by its remarkable repertoire of disposal markers. We will analyse the usage patterns of these disposal markers, thereby proposing a set of parameters which condition their functional range.

Disposal markers in Chaoshan are of four distinct types of lexical origin, namely verbs of taking/holding ( $pa^2$ ,  $tsian^1$ ,  $lia^2$ ), verb of facing ( $tui^3$ ), polysemous verb ( $mue^2$ ), and comitative preposition ( $kai^5$ ). An important yet under-addressed question is, are these markers interchangeable? Or is there any sort of division of labour conditioned by linguistic factors?

Adopting a simplified version of the Affectedness Hierarchy (Lai 2019), our preliminary analysis suggests that the use of these disposal markers is largely conditioned by semantic factors. For example, the use of  $mue^2$  is restricted to resultative verbs (Table 1); therefore, while (1) is compatible with  $mue^2$  and all other disposal markers because  $k^1a^3p^h u a^3$  ‘to break’ is a resultative verb entailing a change of state of the cup, (2) is incompatible with it since the person being hit does not undergo a change of state; this non-resultative HIT verb, by contrast, is compatible with the other disposal markers (the use of  $kai^5$  is not shown here as it involves a construction of different syntactic configurations).

- (1)  $i^1$   $pa^2/tsian^1/tui^3/lia^8/mue^8$   $kai^5$   $bue^1$   $k^h a^3$   $p^h ua^3 k^h \partial^3$   
 3SG DIS CLF cup strike breakgo  
 ‘S/he has broken the cup.’
- (2)  $i^1$   $pa2/tsian^1/tui3/lia^8/*mue^8$   $ua2$   $tshe1$   $pha^4$   
 3SG DIS 1SG CONT hit  
 ‘S/he hits me continuously.’

Table 1: Functional range of Chaoshan disposal markers

$pa^2, tsian^1, tui^3, mue^8, lia^8, kai^5$	1	Direct effect on object	1a	Resultative	$p^h a^2 p^h ua^3$	‘to break’
			1b	Non-resultative	$p^h a^2$	‘to hit’
	2	Perception			$t^h o\tilde{t}^2$	‘to see’
	3	Pursuit			$ts^h ue^7$	‘to search’
	4	Knowledge			$ki^3 ti^4$	‘to remember’

Although the Affectedness Hierarchy captures the essential semantic properties of the disposal markers, it should not be seen as a foolproof system for predicting their functional range. Pragmatic incompatibility can render the use of a particular disposal marker unacceptable in some contexts. For example,  $k\partial^5$  ‘to stare’ is a perception verb which is supposedly compatible with  $pa^2/tsian^1/tui^3/kai^5/lia^8$ ; interestingly though, the use of  $pa^2/tsian^1$  is unacceptable in (3) – as markers which come from the literary layer of Chaoshan (Xu 2007),  $pa^2$  and  $tsian^1$  are typically associated with a certain degree of formality, and are incompatible with colloquial words like  $k\partial^5$ . Given the relevance of telicity and grammatical mood to transitivity (Hopper and Thompson 1980), we will also explore the potential impact of these factors on the functional range of disposal markers in Chaoshan.

- (3)  $i^1$   $*pa^2/*tsian^1/tui^3/lia^8$   $ua^6$   $tsh\tilde{e}^1$   $k\partial^5$   
 3SG DIS 1SG angrily stare  
 ‘S/he stared at me angrily.’

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#### Linking theory and practice - A review on and introduction to reflective practice in CSL/CFL learning and teaching

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This paper focuses on the introduction of reflective practice (henceforth RP) in CSL/CFL learning and teaching. RP is the process of learning through and from experience aimed at gaining new insights of self and/or practice (Finlay, 2008; Dewey, 1933; Schön, 1983). It is

identified as an effective approach to bridge theory and practice and has increasingly become embedded within discourse concerning teachers' professional development in recent years (Bolton, 2014; Ghaye, 2011; Mann, Walsh, 2013). Yet RP enjoys little popularity in the research of CSL/CFL learning and teaching (Wang, 2010). For example, the Standards for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (Guoji Hanyu Jiaoshi Biaozhun, Hanban, 2012), while claiming that the capacity of reflection is a required competence of CSL/CFL teachers, does not provide any specific guidance on the matter.

Through a comprehensive and critical literature review of RP and semi-structured interviews of ten Chinese teachers in Italy, including eight teachers from local high schools, one from Chinese language school and one from Confucius Institute, the current study aims firstly to explore the teachers' current understanding of and the level of their engagement with reflection and reflective practice. Secondly, it aims to introduce RP into the field of CSL/CFL learning and teaching by describing briefly the history, current research trends and relevant terms, such as levels, strategies, models and barriers of RP based on the literature. Last, but most importantly, the study tries to propose an effective and practical way for Chinese teachers to apply RP into their daily teaching.

Findings indicate that most of the interviewees were not familiar with the relevant concepts of RP, and none of them used a structured way of reflection in their practice, however, once they were introduced to the reflective approach, they showed keen interest in it. Moreover, even though cooperative discussions with other Chinese teachers are perceived to be beneficial, teachers have few opportunities for cooperation. Therefore, this study recommends firstly that RP should be placed more attention from the stakeholder academia and be included in Chinese teacher education programs and in-service teacher training, introducing relevant terms of reflection and RP systematically. Secondly, on the basis of current literature and the interviews, the study proposes that more opportunities for cooperation should be created, and audio/video-assisted reflection and the application of E-portfolios should be introduced to the teachers, since research suggests that these instruments can help teachers explore and express experiences and learning, and provide space for RP, thus maximizing everyone's learning and enhancing their professional development (Ferguson-Patrick, Jolliffe, 2018; Pitts, Ruggirello, 2012).

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## Let's mind features of connected speech: Chinese prosodic transcription CHIPROT

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Features of connected speech such as stress, phrasing, intonation, and information structure have crucial linguistic and communicative functions. Yet these features are seldom given attention in L2 teaching in general, and in TCSL in particular. Students often tend to produce Chinese utterances as a series of fully tonic syllables of equal prominence with incorrectly placed breaks. To help learners become more natural and fluent I have designed a prosodic transcription CHIPROT for L2 teaching purposes. It is based on Hanyu Pinyin and was inspired by an older system designed by prof. Oldřich Švarný. CHIPROT is a useful instrument for transcribing the recordings of common colloquial utterances / dialogues containing high-frequency words, produced at a natural speech tempo. It can be used by teachers for preparing various pedagogic materials. CHIPROT reflects fundamental prosodic features of fluent speech, namely the degree of prominence of particular syllables (four degrees: *ba*, *bā*, *bǎ*, *BĀ*, see Třísková, 2019), and grouping (prosodic words and prosodic phrases). It is rather iconic and easy to implement / use after receiving certain metalinguistic instruction and practice. This paper will introduce the major features of CHIPROT. It will be demonstrated how recorded utterances can be transcribed.

CHIPROT was already implemented in the textbook Třísková, 2021 (in Czech; English translation is in progress). There are more than 80 utterances transcribed by means of CHIPROT. The book will be briefly introduced at the end of the presentation.

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example of CHIPROT:

你的那只钢笔在哪儿? (Chinese characters) *Nǐde nèi zhī gāngbǐ zài nǎr?* (plain Hanyu Pinyin) *Nǐde nèi-zhī gāngbǐ zài-NĀR?* (CHIPROT)

Dyslexia and Chinese language: a preliminary study on the relations between measurement methods of Chinese characters recognition and different subtypes of dyslexia.

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According to the definition recommended by the Dyslexia International Association, dyslexia is a specific language-based disorder of constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in single word decoding. Nevertheless, despite its biological origin, several studies demonstrated that dyslexia is shaped by language-specific characteristics, and that the western measurement models of reading acquisition are not completely effective in the description of the manifestations of dyslexia in logographic writing systems. From this perspective, this work aims to investigate different measurement methods of Chinese characters recognition for L1 Chinese students with dyslexia in relation to different subtypes of dyslexia. Some researchers

investigated the analytic method, focusing on highlighting the phonological components of words, and the whole-word method, focusing on learning by sight; which have been both mostly used for the recognition of double characters, regular and irregular ones. Other studies have measured the acquisition of reading Chinese characters from a phonology, semantics and phonology and semantics point of view. Phonology method focuses on the pronunciation of a single Chinese character; semantics method focuses on the meaning of it, and phonology and semantics method focus on both the pronunciation and the meaning of it. This study aims to further highlight the relations between different measurement methods and different subtypes of dyslexia, particularly surface and phonological dyslexia, in order to underline the effectiveness of such measurement methods in regard to the different characteristics of dyslexic students.

### An investigation on Chinese character recognition by Chinese L2 learners via primed lexical decision test

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In the field of Chinese character acquisition, numerous studies focus on the process of L1 character recognition (Zhou et al 2000, Williams and Bever 2010, Yeh et al 2017; Tong et al 2021, among many others) and, though to a far less extent, on L2 learners' character decoding, starting from the seminal work of Williams (2013). However, the developmental route of L2 character processing patterns has not yet been singled out. This research is intended to identify the patterns of L2 learners' character processing at the intermediate and advanced levels and compare them to the processing pattern activated by L1 readers.

The process of visual character recognition has here been investigated based on an experimental group of 29 L2 learners (13 in the critical group and 16 in the pilot group), compared to the performance of 37 native speakers (control group), via a primed lexical decision task based on a set of 336 pairs of prime and target characters (192 critical pairs, 144 fillers including 48 pseudo characters). The critical pairs were designed to measure the facilitation effect triggered by semantically or phonologically related pairs. To obtain a fine-grain measurement of the sublexical processing by the subjects, the priming radicals (phonetic or semantic) embedded in the host priming characters were also used. For instance, in (1) the sound of the imbedded phonetic radical 果 *guo* should facilitate the recognition of the target 国 *guo*; whereas in (2), the meaning of the phonetic radical 真 'true' embedded in the prime is supposed to facilitate the recognition of the target 假 'false':

1) *Phonologically related pair*: prime 课 > target 国:

the sound of the radical 果 *guǒ* hosted in the prime facilitates the recognition of target 国 *guó*

2) *Semantically related pair*: prime 填 > target 假:

the meaning of the radical hosted in the prime 真 'true' facilitates the recognition of target 假 'false'

The cycle test consisted of four stages: a radical knowledge test (only for L2 groups); the first priming experiment (for both L1 and L2 groups); a radical awareness training; and the second priming experiment (only for L2 critical group). The data are statistically significant, as proved by a set t-Test.

Concerning the control group of L1 readers, the data is consistent with previous literature (Zhou et al 2000, Williams and Bever 2010, Yeh et al 2017). As for the L2 learners, the data has shown that:

(i) intermediate learners read single characters faster than compound characters while advanced learners read them at similar speed like natives (for each group, RT Diff= [922-889]34ms, [931-930]1ms and [631- 631]0ms). (ii) Concerning the *type of information* automatically activated

during the recognition of target characters, intermediate learners rely more on phonological information, that is they are faster in processing targets primed by sound related than meaning related primes; advanced learners instead rely more on semantic information, like natives (RT Diff= [893-907]-13ms, [929-882]47ms, [632-619]13ms).

(iii) Concerning the *type of sublexical component* (semantic or phonetic radicals) being prioritised in retrieving information, the intermediate learners focus more on phonetic radicals as they recognised targets faster when they were primed by related phonetic radicals than semantic radicals; whereas advanced learners focus more on semantic radicals, as what happens to native speakers (RT Diff= [885- 927]-42ms, [949-860]89ms and [641-620]20ms).

As expected, the degree of similarity to the native speakers' pattern increases with the level of proficiency. Moreover, the Radical Awareness training contributes to a more native-like processing at sublexical level for both intermediate and advanced learners. As for pedagogical implications, the research has also proven that class instruction and directed study, even for a relatively short period, can speed up the development of character processing towards a more efficient, native-like pattern. In addition, the overall results suggest the importance of (a) formal instruction on sublexical decomposition and (b) of presenting the phonetic information carried by the subcomponents, rather than limit the scope to their semantic value, as typically done in classroom activity on radicals.

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## Identification and Communication of Anger Expressions in Italian and Chinese through Emotional Scripts

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In the field of psychology and artificial intelligence, the concept of script (Schank and Abelson 1977; Fehr and Russell 1984; Shaver et al 1987) was developed to define the shared and culture-specific knowledge by which people know how to think, express, and regulate emotions. The script model 'recounts' the culture's view of the distinctive phases of an emotional experience, or rather, a procedural knowledge in which we distinguish three distinct stages called respectively "antecedents" (the circumstances which elicit a certain type of emotion), "responses" (the representations of reactions related to the antecedents) and "control" (the actions that moderate the emotional reaction). From a linguistic point of view, the script-based approach (Kövecses 1986, 1990, 2000; Lakoff 1987; Wierzbicka 1994) has made it possible to conceptually evaluate emotions by adopting, on the one hand, a universalistic view of emotions,

and, on the other, the experiential nature of emotional concepts by embracing the idea that their conceptualization, and not their physiological reactions, may vary between different languages and cultures. The socio-pragmatic aspects that regulate the communication of emotions seem to be a neglected aspect in Chinese language and culture textbooks designed for Italian learners, and it would not be surprising if a similar omission were to be found in those focusing on teaching Italian language and culture to Sinophone students. However, the correct use of expressions related to emotional experience is extremely important to avoid miscommunication. This paper firstly aims to explain the simultaneous teaching activities designed for Italian and Chinese students from four universities (the University of Naples L'Orientale, the University of Bologna, the Beijing University of International Business and Economics, and the Zhejiang International Studies University). Secondly, it focuses on the identification, learning and communication of terms and expressions related to Anger through the compilation of emotional scripts based on the analysis of verbal, non-verbal and paralinguistic elements included in some episodes from the TV series *L'amica geniale* (My Brilliant Friend) and *Yi jia ren zhi ming* 以家人知名 (*Go Ahead*). The provisional findings obtained by collecting students' scripts will be shown and discussed.

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