

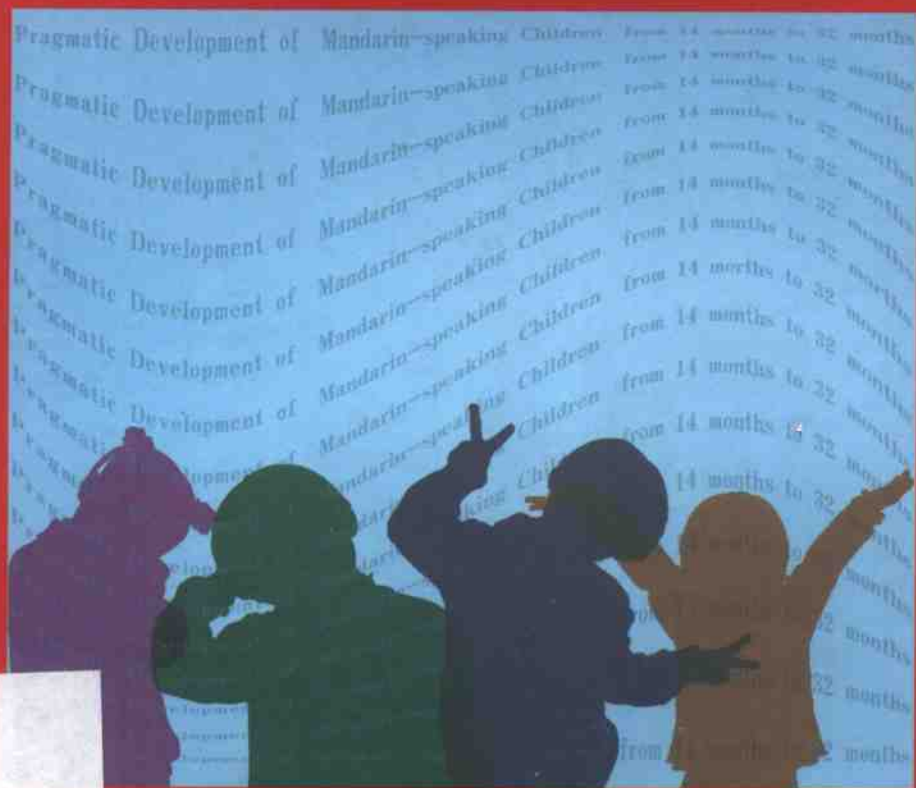
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# Pragmatic Development of Mandarin-speaking Children from 14 months to 32 months

## 儿童语言运用能力的发展

周兢◎著

Zhou Jing



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## 序

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南京师范大学出版社最近创意性地策划推出《海外博士文库》，这是该出版社建设历史上一件有开辟新径意义的出版行为。“博士文库”国内已不乏几种，选集海外学人著作出版也时有所闻所见，但出版《海外博士文库》似不多见。我理解策划者的目的不仅在于鼓励国内学者在研究上瞄准国际学术前沿，推出一些具有较高独创性和学术水准的研究成果，而且旨在以那些符合国际通行的学术论文规范向国内研究生提供一种规范研究的参照。

关于研究者，特别是正在攻读的博士、硕士研究生，怎样选题，怎样拟定研究目标和选择研究方法，怎样追求研究的新颖性和创造性，从而使所做的工作不仅对自己的学术锻炼有益，同时更对人类学术文化的创造性积累有利，这是十分严肃的事情。不是为“文凭”而学，而是为求知而学的人，都会慎重地对待自己的研究历程。周兢女士即是这样一位学者。

周兢在硕士毕业近10年，并在自己也做了硕士生导师好几年的情况下赴香港大学言语听觉科学系攻读博士学位。她的论文《儿童语言运用能力的发展》以质化研究和量化研究相结合的方法，采集汉语儿童的语用资料，并用哈佛大学的研究编码系统和目前国际儿童语言研究通用的计算机分析系统进行分析，揭示出儿童语言运用能力发展的三大指标特征。论文首次显示中国文化环境中母亲与儿童交往对儿童语言运用能力成长的影响。作者还同步分析汉语儿童语言运用能力与语法能力发展的过程，为儿童语言教育的整合观念提供了实在的证据。这些成就，引起国际儿童语言界的关注。我作为她的同事和教育专业的同行，真诚地为她高兴。这些年里她不仅奔波于香港和内地，而且积

极参加本专业国际性的学术交流,提交研究论文,直接与国际儿童语言界的学术权威对话和合作。我完全可以想象出她坚持这些年,一定有不少个人困难和家庭困难,包括可能耽误的某些个人利益。但是她总是以苦为乐,乐此不疲,执著于目标而活力四射。这几年,我为组织举办国际会议及国际合作事宜,常常求助于她,她从不拒绝,而且主动出谋划策承担义务。那副为集体公益之事的热心肠实在令我感动。在她身上,思维敏捷、讲求效益、乐于交往、喜于分享的现代人形象十分鲜明。

在当前的研究生群体中,虽然不乏刻苦勤勉和有志于搞研究、做学问的学生,但已相当严重地弥漫着浮躁、急于求成,甚至更为令人堪忧的学风。有些人虽然算得上用功,但埋头书本,视野狭窄,对社会公益与合作性学习缺乏兴趣。所以说,策划这套丛书,实可为匡正时弊、宣扬学术风尚作出一些推动。

据说这套文库并不追求图书的规模,而重在精选、追求质量,计划用若干年的时间逐本出版,慢慢形成一种规模。我相信这一出版思想及其旨趣会给学术界带来好的的学术形象和清新的学术风尚。

朱小蔓

2002年2月于南京鸡鸣寺

## 内容简介

---

儿童语言运用能力的发展,近年来受到了国际儿童语言界的普遍关注,与儿童语音、语义和语法发展一起,成为儿童语言研究领域的四大范畴。20世纪90年代中期,美国哈佛大学教育研究院的一批学者,以社会文化心理理论为基本依据,开展了美国英语儿童语用交往行为的研究。他们运用新的研究方法和计算机语言分析手段,探讨了儿童语言交往能力的发展过程,并提出了语用是儿童语言发展驱动力的观念,由此将儿童语言运用的研究推向新的水平,成为目前国际儿童语言界的前沿课题。

本书是作者于1997年至2000年就读香港大学言语听觉科学系期间的博士学位研究论文。这项研究以质化研究和量化研究相结合的方法,采集汉语儿童的语用语料,并用哈佛大学的研究编码系统和目前国际儿童语言研究通用的计算机分析系统进行分析,引起国际儿童语言界对汉语儿童语言运用能力发展的关注,填补了汉语儿童语用发展研究的空白。

本书内容揭示了汉语儿童语言运用能力发展的过程,这个过程主要表现为儿童语言运用类型习得和使用比例的不断增长。中国儿童的语言运用能力成长的速率与美国同龄儿童基本相似,但是中国儿童语言运用能力发展的模型很明显地呈现出独有的特征。与此同时,这个�项目已经获得的研究结果也第一次从质的角度揭示了儿童语言运用能力发展的三大指标特征,即儿童语言交往清晰度不断增加,各种新的语用类型萌发显现次序,以及儿童在学习运用语言与人交往过程中参与关注程度的不断提高。

本书内容还涉及了目前国际儿童语言界论争的另一个前沿课题

——儿童语言发展驱动力的问题。作者在研究中国儿童语言能力发展的同时,同步分析了汉语儿童语言运用能力与语法能力发展的过程,从而证明了儿童语言发展各个不同范畴能力习得的互为支撑并相互制约的复杂关系,为儿童语言教育的整合观念提供了实在的证据。

此外,本书内容还首次展示中国文化环境中母亲与儿童交往对儿童语言运用能力成长的影响。中国儿童与美国儿童在语言运用能力发展上与美国儿童的差别,主要来源于母亲语言运用的影响。中国母亲在与孩子交往中表现出的一些突出特点,十分真实地反映了来自中国传统文化影响的种种信息。中国母亲在与孩子交流时含载和传递的这些文化信息,潜移默化地影响了儿童的语言运用发展状况,从而形成了具有中国社会文化特征的儿童语言运用发展过程,这些社会文化的影响也就在实际上把中国儿童塑造为中国式的语言运用者。上述内容在有关的国际会议上的报告,已经受到国际儿童语言界学者们的普遍关注。

## Abstract

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The development of communicative acts is a significant component of early pragmatic language acquisition. Recent research distinguishes communicative acts at two levels; children's ability to make purposeful interchanges with others in a social context and their ability to express communicative meaning through utterances. Learning to master communicative acts involves the development of children's linguistic expression, as well as their social and cognitive abilities for intentional interaction. Although increasing attention has been devoted to communicative act acquisition, as well as to pragmatic development, we know relatively little about how these develop in Chinese children.

This study aims to explore the development of communicative acts in Mandarin-speaking children aged from 14 to 32 months, as they interact with their mothers. The study looks particularly at the developmental process and the influence of Chinese linguistic and social factors. The study is both longitudinal and cross-sectional. Information was collected both from the audiotapes of a long-term observation of the spontaneous interaction between one child and her mother and from the videotapes of semi-structured mother-child interactions between groups of children and their mothers at different age groups. The procedure for the groups of children followed the design of a recent Harvard study. This study has both descriptive and predictive goals, so a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods has been used to test theoretical hypotheses and to examine the actual variation in the patterns of communicative acts and



relevant syntactic development in Chinese young children.

This thesis delivers three sets of findings. The first reveals a growing repertoire of communicative acts in Mandarin-speaking young children. Children's acquisition of communicative acts can be indicated quantitatively with the increasing number of types and frequency of use and qualitatively by means of the degree of interpretability, the emergence of new types and the level of joint attention. In comparison to American children, Chinese children show a similar rate but a different pattern in their development of communicative acts. The second set of findings shows the complexity of the relationship between pragmatic and syntactic development. The evidence of the emergence of communicative acts shows that two language domains support and limit each other, suggesting that these two aspects of language work together in the performance of communicative acts. Thirdly, the findings show that Chinese mothers have their own characteristic ways of communicating and transmitting cultural information in their interactions with their children. Information exchange is the central task for a Chinese mother, which may be understood as a cultural focus in the mother-child communication. This cultural emphasis brings special characteristics to children's development of communicative acts and helps to fashion Chinese children into Chinese communicators. Therefore, the findings in this study propose that when Chinese children are compared with American children, similar rates of pragmatic progress suggest a universal ability. However, differences in the pattern of communicative intentions suggest specific contributions of Chinese social and linguistic factors.

## Preface

---

The modern study of children's language development goes back to the early 1960s, when, influenced by the Chomskyan revolution in Linguistics, Roger Brown, professor of Social Psychology at Harvard, developed a research project which examined grammatical development in the pre-school years in three English-speaking children. It is perhaps fitting that this book by Zhou Jing, as the first systematic study of the pragmatics of Mandarin language development, has at its core an analytical approach which was also developed at Harvard.

For Brown, and for many of those who followed him, the focus of research into children's developing language was grammar, and the language of interest was English. The choice of grammar-syntax and morphology as the central domain to be studied was natural, given the influence of Chomsky's work. Grammar and its organisation was central to Chomsky's theorising. But more significantly for the field of child language study, so was the child's acquisition of grammar. This was assumed to be guided by an innate set of principles, which would result in the construction by the child of the same set of rules which a linguist would identify as necessary to account for the sentences of a language.

The nativist grammatical tradition lives on in language acquisition studies today. Now however it exists alongside other approaches to the description and explanation of children's language development. These can be characterised, by contrast, as 'emergentist'. They see language as a self-organising system grounded in general cognitive mechanisms rather

than in specific hard-wiring for language. The rapid and successful acquisition of spoken language by pre-school children is seen as the product of interaction between these general mechanisms and a rich environment, rather than the consequence of highly specified innate language modules. (For examples of the emergentist approach, see MacWhinney 1999).

A further significant development in the last two decades of child language research has been a dramatic increase in our knowledge of language acquisition in languages other than English. A major influence here has been the crosslinguistic project inaugurated and directed by Dan Slobin (Slobin 1985—95). The publication of detailed accounts of the acquisition of typologically very different languages has helped us to understand the different problems that languages other than English pose for the learner. The contributors to Slobin's volumes have addressed development in languages as diverse as German, Finnish, West Greenlandic Eskimo, Kaluli and Mandarin.

Dr Zhou's work falls squarely within in the emergentist approach, and also adds to the range of languages on which we have detailed longitudinal developmental information. It is important that we extend our knowledge of the developmental profile of Chinese-speaking children. This is, after all, the world's first language, in the sense that it has more speakers than any other. There have been previous studies of Mandarin development (see the chapter by Erbaugh in Slobin's volume 3, and also, for an overview of work on Mandarin and Cantonese, Lee 1996), but acquisition in Chinese is still understudied by comparison with English. Dr Zhou provides us with detailed information on development in the crucial 14–32-month period. In this eighteen-month interval the child proceeds from essentially a single word stage to one of not inconsiderable grammatical ability. This progression is most clearly illustrated for the reader in the examples of conversations listed in

## Chapter 5.

Examples and descriptions of the language the child uses at different ages and stages are important enough, and constitute the basic data on which researchers work. The researcher's task is to analyse this data and from the analysis to try to understand how the pattern of development emerges. As a guide to the interpretation of the data, Dr Zhou uses an analytical framework (INCA-A) developed by Catherine Snow and her associates at Harvard University (Pan et al. 1996, Snow et al. 1996). This framework reflects a perspective on language acquisition which is fuller and richer than the historically prior focus on grammar. Instead of viewing the child merely as a sentence-producing mechanism, this approach sees him as a participant in interpersonal communication. This in turn means that the child's knowledge of the language has to go beyond grammar. In addition to mastering the linguistic resources of the ambient language as characterised in a grammar, the child must understand how and when to deploy these resources appropriately, in interaction with other members of the language community. The analytical framework reflects this by treating the child's productions as communicative acts.

The use of INCA-A allows Dr Zhou to examine how communicative acts develop in Mandarin, to look at the relationship between communicative acts and syntax, to explore differences between English-speaking and Mandarin-speaking children in development, and to look for explanations of the differences in the specific characteristics of Chinese mother-child interaction. In doing so she has added considerably to our knowledge of early language development in Mandarin, and to our appreciation of cross-cultural differences in how children learn to be competent communicators. It is to be hoped that this book will inspire students and scholars to follow Dr Zhou's lead in this fascinating book, and to make further inquiries into how Chinese children grow up linguistically.

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