

中国外籍教师英语教学教程

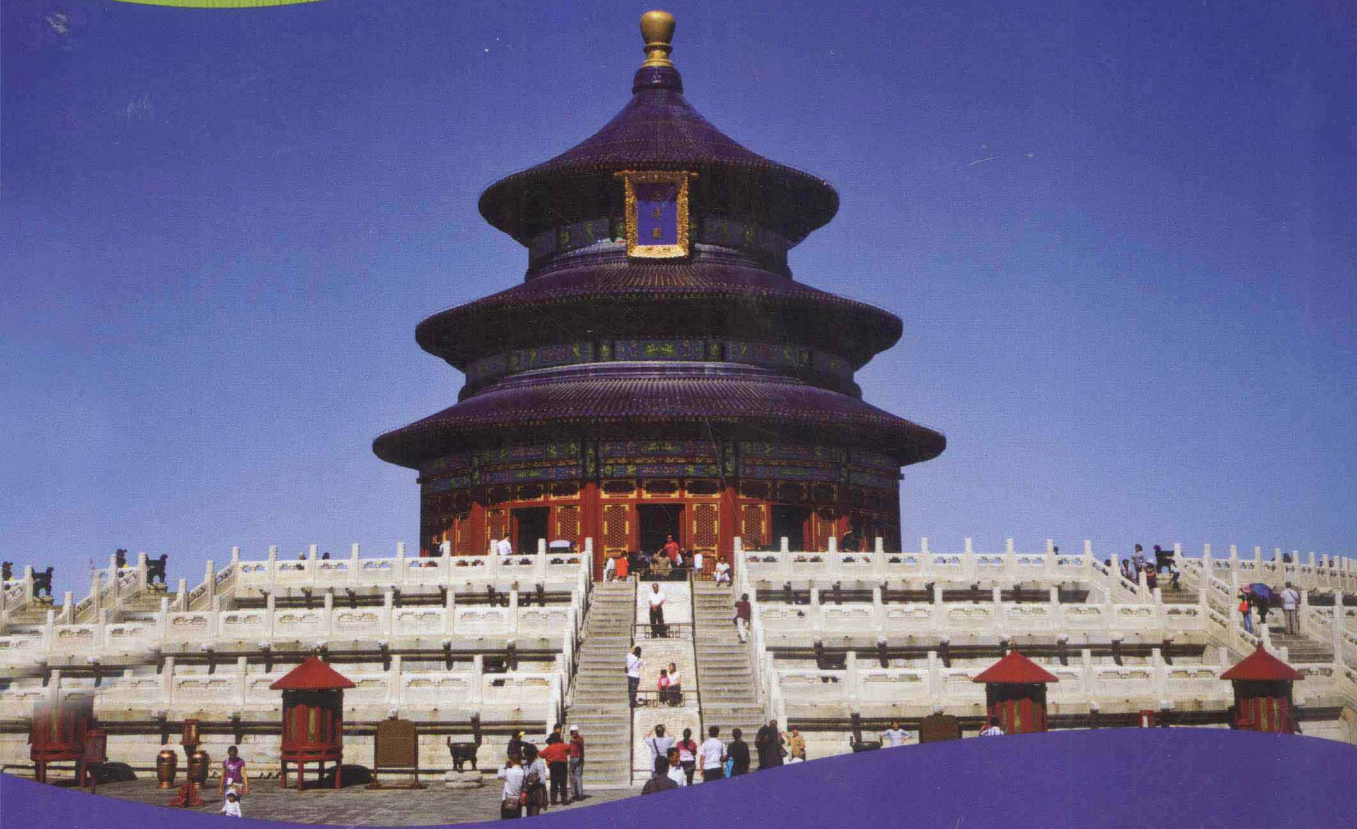
TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN CHINA TODAY

Benjamin Duncan, Ph. D. Center for Teaching & Learning in China

Liu Shusen 刘树森, Ph. D. Peking University

De-an Wu Swihart 吴德安, Ph. D. Center for Teaching & Learning in China

William H. O'Donnell, Ph. D. Center for Teaching & Learning in China



北京大学出版社
PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS

中国外籍教师英语教学教程
**TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
IN CHINA TODAY**

Benjamin Duncan, Ph. D. Center for Teaching & Learning in China

Liu Shusen 刘树森, Ph. D. Peking University

De-an Wu Swihart 吴德安, Ph. D. Center for Teaching & Learning in China

William H. O' Donnell, Ph. D. Center for Teaching & Learning in China



北京大学出版社
PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

中国外籍教师英语教学教程/(美)邓肯(Duncan, B.),刘树森,(美)吴德安,
(美)欧比尔(O'Donnell, W. H.)编著. —北京:北京大学出版社,2013.8

ISBN 978-7-301-21313-1

I. 中… II ①邓… ②刘… ③吴… ④欧… III. 英语—教学法—教材
IV. H319.3

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2012)第 230477 号

*Do not reproduce in any form without the advance written permission of
Center for Teaching & Learning in China LLC(china.program@gmail.com)
and each of the authors*

Preface & Chapters 1–17 © 2012 Benjamin Duncan

Chapter 18 © 2012 Liu Shusen

Chapter 19 © 2012 De-an Wu Swihart & William H. O'Donnell

书 名: 中国外籍教师英语教学教程

著作责任者: [美] Benjamin Duncan, 刘树森, [美] De-an Wu Swihart, [美] William H.
O'Donnell 编著

责任编辑: 黄瑞明

标准书号: ISBN 978-7-301-21313-1/H · 3148

出版发行: 北京大学出版社

地 址: 北京市海淀区成府路 205 号 100871

网 址: <http://www.pup.cn>

电 话: 邮购部 62752015 发行部 62750672 编辑部 62754382 出版部 62754962

电子信箱: zbing@pup.pku.edu.cn

印 刷 者: 涿州市星河印刷有限公司

经 销 者: 新华书店

787 毫米×1092 毫米 16 开本 11.75 印张 306 千字

2013 年 8 月第 1 版 2013 年 8 月第 1 次印刷

定 价: 35.00 元

未经许可,不得以任何方式复制或抄袭本书之部分或全部内容。

版权所有,侵权必究

举报电话: 010-62752024 电子信箱: fd@pup.pku.edu.cn

Preface

Teaching English as a Foreign Language in China Today has been developed through 16 years of experience in training more than 1,000 foreign teachers of English by the Center for Teaching & Learning in China (CTLC), in cooperation with the Peking University English Department and School of Foreign Languages. Benjamin Duncan, Ph.D. wrote this book at the invitation of CTLC and as a CTLC trainer. He first taught English in China in 1999 with the CTLC program in Shenzhen. This book builds upon CTLC's 2007 textbook *Teaching English in China*, written by CTLC trainers, Robert Wyss, M.A. and Emily A. Thrush, Ph.D., and CTLC Co-Directors De-an Wu Swihart, Ph.D. and William O'Donnell, Ph.D., and with an appendix provided by the Department of Culture & Education of the State Administration of Foreign Expert Affairs, which officially endorsed the book and uses it in their training.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language in China Today is very useful for English teachers to learn how to teach English in China. It includes chapters written by highly experienced professors from the USA and from Chinese faculty of the Peking University English Department. The emphasis on understanding Chinese culture addresses the needs of foreign teachers living in China.

De-an Wu Swihart, Ph.D., Co-Director, CTLC

William O'Donnell, Ph.D., Co-Director, CTLC

Liu Shusen, Ph.D., Associate Dean, School of Foreign Language, Peking University

Greetings from Benjamin Duncan

Laoshimen hao ! Hello, teachers! If you've never heard this greeting before, get used to it! Welcome to the wonderful world of TEFL teaching. Many people travel to China for vacation, but you have chosen to live and work in China. Not only live and work, but live and work in one of the most prestigious positions in Chinese culture: teaching. Teachers provide a manifest benefit to the surrounding community for they help its children to increase their knowledge, understanding, and wisdom of the events and community into which they develop. Yes, that's right—you are now a part of the Chinese community. Your work, knowledge and skills will provide economic, social, and political benefit to the students that you teach, your co-workers, and their families. Rather than remaining safely within your culture, you have chosen to look outside and into other cultures for answers to your future. You are seeking to expand your border and gain a new community.

In 1999, I taught in the first full year of the CTLC Shenzhen English Teaching Program. In 2001, I had the chance to revisit my school, Pingang Middle School in Longgang, and my former co-workers. I'll never forget what the vice-principal told me. After one year of TEFL teaching in China, you were an American English teacher, but when you return, you are now Chinese. Although I would never call myself Chinese, I do after all these years maintain a sense of community and empathy toward those I befriended and worked with over the course of my year teaching in Shenzhen.

CTLC aims to provide an additional community to you while living and working in China. We are the largest TEFL program in China and serve you with both social and professional support. Yes, you are now a professional! As such, we hope that you will take your professional responsibilities and your expected contributions to your new community quite seriously. This next year will be what you make of it, but I strongly hope that you will make it more than just a trip through China. I hope you will feel pride in being a teacher, a *laoshi*, and a contributive part of your new community.

This textbook is designed to help guide your professional development in the world of TEFL teaching. We hope that you will keep this book with you at all times and refer to it quite often as you begin your new career. The topics covered herein include expectations, language acquisition theory, lesson planning, strategies for teaching reading, writing, speaking, and listening, classroom management, teaching primary school, adapting lessons for different levels, cultural differences, and more. Throughout you will find anecdotes from current and former instructors in the program that should enlighten and prepare you for what's to come. But that's what's to come. For now, just soak in your new environment and the future that's about to unfold before your eyes. Welcome to China! *Laoshimen hao* !

Sincerely,

Benjamin R. Duncan, Ph.D.

CTLC Teacher Trainer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	1
Chapter 1 Expectations	1
Chapter 2 What Is Language Teaching?	4
Chapter 3 Lesson Planning	18
Chapter 4 Adapting and Revising Lesson Plans	25
Chapter 5 Language Acquisition	37
Chapter 6 Multiple Intelligences	45
Chapter 7 Methodology	51
Chapter 8 Nine Principles of TEFL	59
Chapter 9 Classroom Management	68
Chapter 10 Teaching Primary School	76
Chapter 11 Reading and Vocabulary	85
Chapter 12 Speaking and Listening	98
Chapter 13 Pronunciation	114
Chapter 14 Grammar-Based Lessons	136
Chapter 15 Writing	143
Chapter 16 Error Correction	153
Chapter 17 Cultural Differences	158
Chapter 18 English in China's Educational System	164
Chapter 19 Living and Teaching in China: Tips for Teachers	169
References	181



Expectations

Chapter 1

The goals for this chapter are:

- To introduce yourself to the other new teachers in the program.
- To set achievable goals for your time in China.
- To set achievable goals for your new career as a TEFL teacher.

Reflection:

I entered the TEFL in China program in 1999, the first full year of the program. I had never taught before, had never studied Chinese, had never been outside of the U. S., and had no idea what to expect. I remember waking up the first day, around 5am due to jet lag, and going for a walk. There were no signs posted in English and no one I could talk to to ask for help. Store owners and students hustled about. They were dressed in clothes very different from my printed T-shirt and khaki shorts. They rode rickety bicycles, walked quickly, and spoke in Chinese, a singsong language that sounded completely alien to



my ears. I had made my way to the Peking University campus, and was looking over a large lake covered in a thick mist. Suddenly, rising out of the mist, I saw about 300 men and women practicing tai chi in absolute silence. Their movements, in perfect unison, seemed to carve the air and direct some invisible energy from the surrounding lake. Another member from our **TEFL in China** program, who I had briefly met at the airport, came jogging toward me. We looked at each other, looked at the scene below us and smiled. This was another world. This was a dreamlike experience unlike anything we had ever seen or imagined before. And this was only the start of a full year of cultural learning. This was China.

Introductions

Please fill in the chart below with your own information and information from two people seated near you.

Names			
Tell me about yourself			
Why did you come to China?			
Where else have you travelled?			
Do you speak Chinese/other languages?			
What about teaching in China scares you the most?			
What are your expectations for living and working in China?			
What is one thing that you would like to see or do during your year in China?			

Your Personal Expectations

Some of the joys of living in a foreign country are that it changes your perceptions, challenges your prejudices, and ultimately forces you to grow as a human being. Whatever you think of

China and TEFL teaching today is likely to be very different by next year. Take a few moments to record your own private and personal expectations for the upcoming year. You won't be asked to share your responses, but I'd like you to keep this book in a safe place. At the end of your year in China, revisit your answers and see whether or not your expectations were realized.

1. What do you expect living in China to be like? List at least three expectations you have in order of importance.

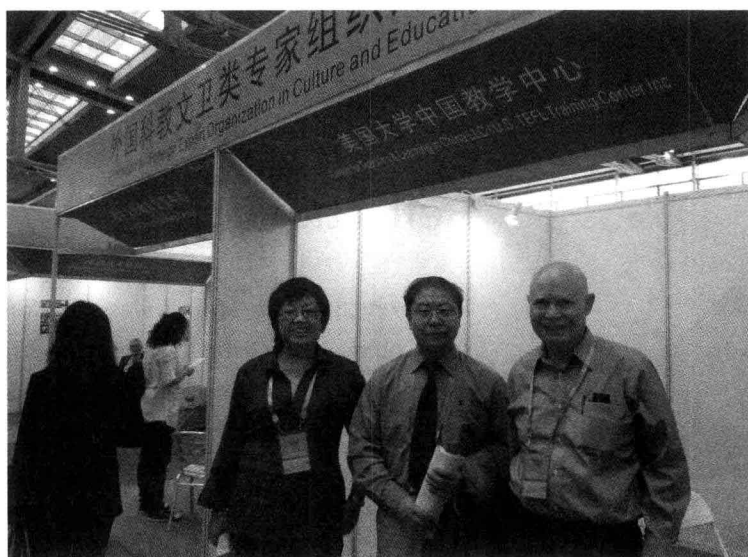
4. What aspects of classroom teaching do you expect to find the most challenging? What about your teaching experience will be the most rewarding?

2. What do you expect teaching English in Chinese classrooms is like? List at least three expectations you have in order of importance.

5. What questions do you have about teaching English in China? Can you provide preliminary answers to those questions?

3. What skills or personal qualities do you believe characterize successful foreign language instructors?

6. How will you change in the next year? What do you expect to learn?



Deputy director of Culture and Education Department of
China Foreign Expert Bureau with CTLC faculties



What Is Language Teaching?

Chapter 2

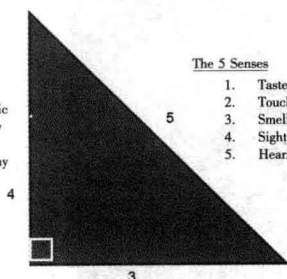
The goals for this chapter are to learn:

- How does the mind actually acquire language? How does this affect the way we teach a second language?
- What does it mean to be fluent in a second language compared to a first language?
- Given our understanding of language acquisition and some sample activities, how can we expand the knowledge from this workshop to create our own materials and lessons?

The "Right" Way of Language Teaching

The Quadrivium

1. Arithmetic
2. Geometry
3. Music
4. Astronomy



The 5 Senses

1. Taste
2. Touch
3. Smell
4. Sight
5. Hearing

The Trivium – Language Learning (or Learning How to Learn)

1. Grammar (Knowledge) – the who, what, when, and where
2. Logic (Understanding) – how, why, separating reality from fiction
3. Rhetoric (Wisdom) – expressing your understanding to others

Reflection:

In ancient times, the world was a mysterious place. The sun would disappear at times; darkness would envelop the land only to dissolve several hours later. Brilliant points of illumination would prick the sky, shifting with the seasons and sometimes falling in a spray of light. Floods, droughts, abundant harvests, fires, ice storms, mist... the world was ever-changing and its laws unintelligible to mortal beings. Some plants tasted bad

but warded off disease; others smelled wonderful but produced sickness. Sounds reverberated and became harmonious under some settings, but were muffled and discordant under others. Touching certain objects produced observable, biological reactions in both the actor and the acted upon, while touching other objects resulted in no change at all. Moreover, senses differed among individuals. What smelled, looked, sounded good to one did not always smell, look, and sound good to another. Individuals tried to discern their surroundings through the only resources available to them: the five senses.

But humans also had another resource which separated them from all other creatures on Earth: language. Innately, humans could move their lips, tongue, teeth, and vocal cords to produce sounds. And what's more amazing is that the recipients of these sounds could process them, separate them from other sounds, find meaning in them, and pass them along to other human beings. Individuals could communicate their sensory perceptions to others. Knowledge was spread; lives were saved; communities arose; the world became more predictable—all as a result of language.

Legend says that the first schools developed spontaneously throughout the ancient world (Babylon, Sumer, India, Egypt, Greece, and South America). Initiates into these so-called mystery schools were taught the hidden laws of the universe and language. The most famous scholar of these various mystery schools, Pythagoras, is said to have been inducted into certain rights that led him to the creation of modern geometry. Before Pythagoras, few knew how to construct a right angle. Protractors and GPS did not exist, and the land and sea were far from flat and straight, so how was one to know what was perfectly “right” and what was slightly off center? Without right angles, navigation and architecture were puzzling if not impossible tasks. However, knowledge of the elementary coefficients 3, 4, and 5 allowed initiates like Pythagoras to tangibly improve their technological tools, their surroundings, as a result, their understanding of life and nature. For example, Grecian ships were universally constructed 3 units from helm to mast, 4 units from the bottom of the mast to the top, and 5 units from the top of the mast back to the helm. Thus, a right angle was created allowing the ship's navigator to accurately calculate distance and time between two fixed points. Travel and trade flourished and the societies of ancient Greece along with them. However, the 3, 4, 5 principle had a deeper meaning to those initiated into the mystery schools.

The first plank of the classical liberal education focused solely on language and was known as the trivium (3), consisting of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Grammar involves basic **knowledge** of a language: the who, what, when, and where. (Modern grammarians complicate grammar with terms like subject, agent, predicate, theme, modifiers, adjunct, etc. but basically grammar is just breaking down language into meaningful expression of who, what, when, and where). Using our five senses, we look at/smell/listen to/touch/taste the world and attempt to make meaning of it. We see somebody approaching us. “*Who* is that?” we ask. An enemy, a lover, an ex-lover, a drunken, crazed, and gun-bearing ex-lover, two drunken, crazed, and gun-bearing ex-lovers? The who (or subject) is meaningful—it affects our perception of the situation. “*What* are they doing?” we then ask. *They are attacking us* is very different from *they are being attacked by us*;

they are pretending to love us is very different from *they love us*. The *what* (or verb/theme) is also meaningful. “*When* is this action taking place?” we might ask. *He will die* is very different from *he died*. The *when* (or tense/aspect) is meaningful. “*Where* is this happening?” our senses seek to answer. *I am walking into the sea* is very different from *I am walking on the sea*. *I am sleeping above Dave* is very different from *I am sleeping with Dave*. All languages contain grammar. The order of words, the structure of language is important as it contains clues to the meaning. *I hit the desk* differs significantly from *The desk hits me*. Without grammar it would be nearly impossible for humans to accurately communicate **knowledge** of their perceptions to others and to make their communications meaningful. According to classical liberal education, the first part of learning a language is to gain knowledge of (i.e., break down) the *who, what, when, and where* of the language being spoken or written.

But how do we know if what is being spoken or written is true? If it is merely personal opinion or if it is a universal fact? Or if the communication is meant as a joke, or is an attempt to persuade, or is a propagandistic lie? To **understand** what is being spoken or written means to go beyond mere grammar to question, the purpose, intended effect, and reason behind that communication. In nature no contradictions exist; however, human perception and language is full of contradictions. Thus, pupils require a system to ferret out fact from fiction. Such a system is known as logic.

Finally, once we possess **knowledge** and **understanding** of how a particular language works, we can communicate meaningfully our own perceptions and thoughts. Rhetoric is the art of communicating effectively, the **wisdom** to pass along one's knowledge and understanding of the world to others and have it be accepted as meaningful and of value. Primary education under the classical system focused solely on language learning; however, once the **knowledge, understanding, and wisdom** of linguistic communication were acquired, the student could discern reality for him or herself. Thus, individuals trained in the trivium could acquire all other subjects faster, could retain them longer, and required less direct instruction or rote memorization than students not trained in grammar, logic, and rhetoric. In ancient Greece there were only four secondary subjects, aka the quadrivium: arithmetic (the study of logic through numbers), geometry (the study of numbers in space), music (the study of numbers in time), and astronomy (the study of numbers in both time and space). Students trained in the trivium and quadrivium gained a clearer perception of their world and were able to communicate their individual senses to others. They were able to question and counter the falsities, illogical conclusions, and duplicitous expressions of others. They became independent, free, liberal thinkers rather than slaves to another's words and ideas. In other words, they learned the “right” way of thinking and communicating.

It's like two students learning to play Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* on the piano. The first music teacher drills the new student into memorizing and repeating the *Fifth Symphony* over and over again. The second music teacher instructs her student how to read music, proper finger position, scales, etc. and then, and only then with this basic knowledge, begins work on Beethoven's *Fifth*. Obviously, the first student will learn faster and after maybe several months

the end product will appear more impressive to a casual listener; however, when it comes to learn another piece of music, say Beethoven's *Fourth*, the first student will also be more dependent on the teacher than the second. The new piece will have to be memorized and repeated same as the first and similarly every new piece of music that follows. Meanwhile, the second student learns the second piece faster than the first, the following piece faster than the second, and so on. Eventually, the second student internalizes the process for playing *any* piece of music, relies less and less on the teacher, and begins to create his or her own music. This is what is meant by educators when we say **learning a language is a process, not a product**. Unfortunately, a large number of language teachers, myself included, initially fail to comprehend this very important and simple concept. You can quickly become one of the best TESOL teachers by learning and applying the "right" theories for language learning.

1st Language Acquisition Is Innate

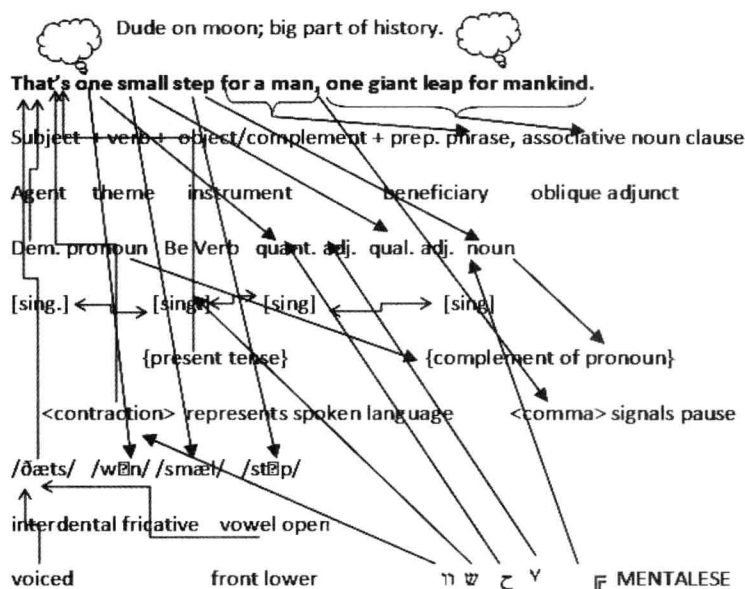
Did your parents ever sit you down and explain to you the rules of English grammar? Did they explicate the conjugation of verbs or how to differentiate between the various prepositions (e.g. "from" vs. "of")? Did they diagram the sentences that they spoke, detail the various tenses and aspects, or train you to record and analyze the speech of linguistic experts? Likely, the answer is no. And yet, all human beings achieve fluency and accuracy in their native language at a relatively young age.

Now, let's imagine (easier for some than others) that at birth your parents had sold you on the black market to another family in China, Spain, or France. What language do you think you'd be speaking today? Would you speak that language fluently? Obviously, you'd be fluent speaker of Chinese, Spanish, or French. How and why does this happen?

When it comes to language acquisition, the human mind is faster, smarter, and more nuanced than any teaching technique, linguistic theory, or technological device could ever hope to become. This is a result of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of years of evolution and natural selection. The human species is not unique in that our ancestry has replicated, mutated, and adapted to its environment. What is unique about our species is that our primary evolutionary trait is language. Elephants have a nose that can breathe, grasp objects, drink, fight, and nurture children. Squirrels have a mind that can remember the exact location of up to 100 different objects. Humans have language.

Steven Pinker's *How the Mind Works*, *The Blank Slate*, and *The Language Instinct* are great, easy-to-read books for new language teachers and have informed much of my own understanding of 2nd language acquisition. Take a simple quote you have heard many times before: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." What's involved in our understanding of this quote? First, we need to **understand** the grammar of the sentence. What's the subject? *That*. What does *that* mean? To what does *that* refer (the beneficiary)? What's the verb (theme)? *Is* ('s) = to be, present tense. What does that comma signify? What follows the comma? What does that associative noun clause (aka oblique adjunct) refer to? *That*

(the subject) is singular; therefore, *is* (the verb) must also be singular as must be the quantifiers (*one*). What's the difference between a *step* and a *leap*? Now imagine you weren't reading this quote but hearing it. /ð/ represents the sound that "th" makes in the mouth. It's a voiced, interdental fricative phoneme, meaning the sound you make when you stick your tongue between your teeth, and vibrate your vocal cords continuously. This phoneme sounds very different from /s/ the sound that "s" makes. "Sat's a small step" would be understood completely differently. Then, there's the context. Who's saying this sentence? Where was it said? If a convicted felon had said this sentence when first entering a prison, it would have an entirely different meaning than Neil Armstrong landing on the moon. To complicate matters further, what Neil Armstrong meant to say was "That's one small step for [a] man..." Although the *a* was expunged, most cognizant English speakers readily understood the meaning of his words although the literal words differed significantly. And what's even more impressive is that from the time you first heard or read this quote and by the time you fully understood and interpreted all the implications of this quote, less than 5 seconds passed. Just looking at the figure below should give you some idea of how complicated understanding one sentence is:



What's going on here? You've likely never heard the term "interdental fricative" before. You don't know the difference between a beneficiary and a theme. You've never spent more than a few seconds analyzing language in this kind of detail. And yet, you still understand the quote and can explain its meaning to others.

The secret to this riddle is why **you** have been hired to teach English to the Chinese although you may have never taught or studied English or linguistics before. You have **native** (or **near-native**) **English speaker credibility**. You were either born into or have spent significant time in an English-speaking environment and have internalized the "rules" of English communication. When you hear "That are one small steps ..." or "Sat's one small step ...,"

your mind instantly recognizes that something is wrong—a rule has been broken (even if you can't explain it as well as a linguistics professor could). In other words, your mind (if not you) already *knows* English much, much better than any student you will encounter during your time in China. But before you swell with pride, remember that innateness works against you, too. Native speakers of Chinese already know Chinese much, much better than you likely ever will.

Noam Chomsky, perhaps the most famous living linguist, talks about the **deep structure** that all languages possess. “Colorless green ideas sleep furiously,” is the classic example of a literally meaningless English sentence that tricks the mind because it follows the meaningful **deep structure** of English grammar. Lewis Carroll had intuited this underlying linguistic structure, aka deep structure, earlier when he wrote his “Jabberwocky” poem:

Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Every non-impaired human mind innately acquires language. And all languages possess grammar (syntax, clauses, groups/phrases, words, morphemes), phonology (tone groups, foots, syllables, phonemes), and a pragmatic function (directness / ambiguity, formality / informality, cooperation / related principle, meaning). While all languages contain similar **deep structure**, the surface structures differ significantly. An analogy is computer hardware versus computer software. All computers contain similar hardware components to execute a similar function: a keyboard, a monitor, a hard drive, a mouse, etc. However, the software can differ significantly: Windows vs. Mac, MS Word vs. WordPerfect, Internet Explorer vs. Safari, etc. Likewise, meaning in one language can be conveyed in a second language very differently. If we were to directly translate “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind” into other languages, it may be something like this:

[Spanish] That is one step small for a man and one leap giant for mankind.

[Chinese] One that be one and small step to one man, also one and giant step to man many.

[Korean] For man, that one small step be [polite marker]. And, for people, that one giant leap be [polite marker].

[Tagalog] It [sub. marker] step-one-small [obj. marker] for man-a [prep. marker] be [present-sing. marker], leap-one-giant [obj. marker] for mankind [prep marker].

What should be clear from the proceeding pages is that the human mind acquires any first language innately. However, acquiring a second language presents new difficulties, just as switching from Windows to Mac will take some time and a little instruction.

Language Acquisition Involves Hypotheses Testing and Deductive Reasoning

It would be impossible for children to hear every possible word, sentence, or combination of sounds that they are to reproduce in their lifetime. Yet, every single adult possesses the capability to create new sentences, ideas, and expressions that are readily by other speakers of that same language. This process occurs through a natural facility of the human mind known as deduction. Sherlock Holmes was a master of the deductive method. The detective eyes a smear of white paint on a suspect's shoe and "deduces" that this paint must correspond to the similar size and shape of missing paint on the door of the murder victim's apartment. I witness one Chinese student acing a math test, and my brain automatically deduces that all Chinese students are math wizzes. This entirely natural (if not laudatory) process is how the human mind works. We take the limited input we have and formulate a universal hypothesis.

This deductive process is apparent in children learning a language. They intuitively form hypotheses about the language they are learning and will use these hypotheses in their speech and writing until they are corrected. We can deduce what hypotheses they are testing through the errors they make when speaking. For example, a 4-year old may say, "Mommy, I jump-ed and jump-ed!" and then later, "I eated it all up!" What hypothesis is this child testing?

A 6-year old says, "Do you know why this water is cold? Because when it's frozened, it is stay cold a long time." A bad language teacher would simply correct the errors and have the student repeat after him or her. I want to challenge you to become a better language teacher. Think about what's taking place in this child's mind. What complex structures is the child applying? What simpler structures has the child not internalized? It's important to recognize that language learning involves grammatical rules (who, what, when, where matter); deductive hypotheses are constantly being tested. Children's mistakes are developmental and reflect learning. Compare these two examples:

"I eat it all up yesterday."

"I eated it all up yesterday."

Which child has made more progress in language acquisition?

2nd Language (L2) Acquisition v. 1st Language (L1) Acquisition

Let's begin using the acronyms L1 for first language and L2 for second language. It's important to recognize that like L1 learners, L2 learners:

- Form hypotheses about the language they are learning.
- Do not necessarily acquire language structures in an order we expect.
- Make mistakes that are developmental and reflect learning.

Think about when you first began studying your L2. More likely than not, you would read or hear the sentence in the second L2, and then immediately translate it directly into your L1. Vice-

versa, whenever you wanted to speak or write in your L2, you would have to first think in your L1 and then directly translate it into the L2. This is a phenomenon known as **transference** and occurs naturally in all humans whose L1 is stronger than their L2.

Sometimes transference works in your favor; other times it does not. **Positive transference** occurs when the L1 and L2 are similar. The learner directly transfers syntactical knowledge from her L1 to produce similarly correct forms in the L2. For example, Spanish speakers learning French quickly acquire the idea of feminine and masculine articles (*le, la*) because Spanish contains similar structures (*el, la*). Negative transference, or **interference**, occurs when the L1 and L2 have differing structures. For example, Chinese learners of English struggle with articles (*a, an, the*) because no corresponding structure for articles exists in Chinese. Likewise, you'll often hear Chinese speakers call girls, "he," and men, "she." This is because the word *ta* in Chinese translates directly to *he* or *she*.

The two types of errors L2 learners will make can be categorized as either:

- **Interlanguage errors**—caused by interference from the 1st language, or
- **Intralinguage errors**—caused by inconsistencies in the 2nd language

Interlanguage Errors

L2 learners may be helped or hindered by interference from their first language.

- **Negative transference or interference**: Learner uses 1st language structure, resulting in an error in the 2nd language.
- **Positive transference**: Learner uses 1st language structure, resulting in a correct form in the 2nd language.

Look at the following sentence spoken by a native Spanish-speaker learning English:

"I have a pen blue."

1. What negative transfer from the L1 (Spanish) to the L2 (English) is occurring?
2. What positive transfer from the L1 (Spanish) to the L2 (English) is occurring?

Native Chinese speakers learning English will tend to make the following interlanguage errors:

- 1) Confusing gender pronouns (he, she)
- 2) Forgetting articles (the, a, an)
- 3) Forgetting to add "s" to make words plural
- 4) Pronunciation of "th", "r" vs. "l"

The reason why these errors commonly occur among Chinese learners of English is simple: these grammatical structures do not exist in Chinese! *Ta* in Chinese means both *he* and *she*. Chinese employs a very different article system for countable nouns. Rather than adding -s to the make words plural, Chinese uses -men. /r/ and /l/ are not phonetically differentiated in Chinese.