Teaching Chinese:
Challenges in a Globalized World

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中文教学:
全球化语境下的挑战

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Introduction

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In 1902 Liang Qichao, a Chinese scholar and reformist, composed and published a political work of fiction — *New China's Future*[①], bravely predicting that there would be a hot wave of Chinese language learning around the world, which would accompany the rise of China. People laughed at his political and social madness and his utopian vision, as there was no sign of China's rise at the end of the Qing dynasty — quite the opposite in fact: it had lost all its glory in the wars with the west. People never imagined in their wildest dreams that the predicted wave would surprisingly arrive in less than a century. Liang's words were not restricted to the pages of his book and, instead, have become a reality in today's world.

In June 2006, *Time* magazine highlighted a title— "Get Ahead, Learn Mandarin" as its cover story, predicting the arrival of a hot wave of Chinese language learning. It quoted a British linguist, David Gadder's declaration "In many Asian, European countries and America, Mandarin has gradually become a language that one must learn." Eight years later, Chinese language fever has still maintained such a high degree and continues to go from strength to strength. Currently, there are about 100 countries with more than

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① Liang Qichao, *The Future of New China*, Guanxi Normal University Press, China, 2008.

2500 universities offering Chinese language subjects, and more and more primary and secondary schools are following their steps. The development of various community training centres has also contributed to this phenomenon.

According to a senior official at the Confucius Institute Headquarters, there are over 40 million foreigners currently studying Chinese, and that number keeps rising. Six years ago, based on statistics from the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (NOTCFL) , there were 30 million foreigners learning Chinese. This meant that the number of people studying Chinese had grown by around 10 million in half a decade, and that if this increase would continue, the number will reach 100 million by 2011. Based on the New York Time´s estimation, by the mid of 21st century, Chinese will become one of the two most important world languages alongside English. [1]

It is in this context, people have long been wondering whether one day Chinese will become an international language. Simply Googling the sentence, "is Chinese an international language?" will generate 25,700,000 hits. While there are people arguing that the level of difficulty of Chinese language´s linguistic features alone will make this vision impossible, others insist that the rise of China´s economic power will make its language at least equal with English in terms of world influence, if not encouraging it to be accepted as a universal one.

In 2013, the Asia-Pacific Consortium of Teaching Chinese as an International Language held its fifth annual conference at The University of Melbourne´s Asia Institute under the theme of "Chinese Teaching in Different Linguistic, Cultural and Policy Contexts." It

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① Charlie Custer, *How Many People Are Learning Chinese*, The World of Chinese, Dec 13, 2010.

attracted about 150 scholars from more than 10 countries and regions around the world. During the conference, many discussions were focused on the globalization of Chinese language, and the teaching and learning of Chinese language in a global village. This volume is a collection of some of these arguments.

This volume consists of two parts. The first one touches on policy issues that concern Chinese teaching and learning.

In Professor Joseph Lo Bianco's paper, the issue of Chinese language's internationalization is considered. Lo Bianco argues that documentary evidence of the status of English in the world increasingly speaks of it not so much as a foreign language but as a basic skill, required for access to a host of institutional, intellectual and cultural domains. This is no less than true in China as elsewhere and, as he has written elsewhere, China's decisions about English will help shape the global character of English more than any language policy in English speaking societies. In De Swaan's global language hierarchy, English is the sole hyper-central language. What is and can be the status of Chinese in such macro-sociological projections? What will be the consequences of the steadily, more strongly established Chinese economic boom? What will be the long term world communication results of the global mobility of people, ideas and goods?

All of these questions suggest that the future communication order of the world will be unlike any other in the past. De Swaan's paper was written after an intense period of the consolidation of the primacy of Asian languages education, as exemplified by Australia in the Asian Century. The recent period of Australian political life has seen the emergence of a view about the future that he calls "China-centred Asian regionalism". In all the past large-scale political accommodations, the linguistic code of the dominant centre has

established itself as a language of wider and privileged communication, and historically of course this has also been true of China and of Chinese. However the notions of a "lingua franca", a "language of wider communication", and an "international language" are different in large languages like Chinese and will be a projected global form of communication that is tied both to identity and to an instrumental need. Chinese enjoys claims of antiquity, scale, depth of civilizational refinement, and increasingly of contemporary scientific intellectual infrastructure. But none of these qualities have ensured its presence as a foreign language. It is global forms of hard and soft power and the new trans‑national realities of today that have been largely missed by Australia in its Asia strategy, dealing as they do with increasingly challenged ideas of bounded national states. In this paper, De Swaan tries to trace very briefly some of the macro communicative sociology of Chinese in an emerging, but still barely understood, future world communication order.

Dr Lijian Hong´s paper deals with understanding the nature of Chinese language and Chinese language teaching in Australia. He argues that language is politics. What language is taught and how to teach it in a certain country is very much determined by the national policy of that country. To teach Chinese as a language other than the official/common language of a country will certainly require a consideration of the social, political and culture status of Chinese and an understanding of the nature of teaching Chinese in a particular country. Among English speaking countries, Australia is the first to have a national policy on languages. This policy has, for the first time, determined the nature of Chinese in Australia as a community language. Consequently, Chinese in Australia is both a foreign language as well as one of many community languages. The nature of

teaching Chinese in Australia is, therefore, to teach Australian students to use Chinese to express an Australian´s positions, thoughts and ideas, to use Chinese to communicate with all Chinese speakers at an equal level, and to reflect the understanding of students about their own language and culture and those of Chinese speaking communities. Based on this assumption, we can see that any attempt to regard Chinese in Australia as a mere "foreign" language will likely generate an unproductive direction for teaching Chinese in Australia. In the past 10 years, the Australian Tertiary Chinese Teachers Association has developed a new concept of Teaching Chinese as an International Language to guide our teaching Chinese in the Australian context. Dr Lijian Hong´s paper discusses the development of such a concept and understanding related to the teaching Chinese in a global context.

Dr Yukun Wang´s paper discusses the strategies related to globalizing the Chinese language. It argues that in an era of globalization, many countries have begun to introduce policies that aim to protect and to promote their native languages. Ten suggestions are put forth in this paper as to the strategies for promoting the Chinese language internationally, which are as follows: 1. Using Chinese to describe the histories, cultures and values of Chinese-learners´ countries as a tool for communication and target setting; 2. Increasing the use of Chinese words (in the form of Pinyin) in other languages; 3. The government should put greater effort into helping overseas Chinese with their Chinese teaching career and enhancing their roles in the promotion of Chinese language; 4. Setting up professional institutions to patronize the studies of Chinese as a foreign language, including strategic research and disciplinary study, especially the study of pedagogy, the linguistic differences between Chinese and other languages, HSK, the

construction of resource libraries for instructional testing, the compilation of teaching materials, the start of academic journals about overseas Chinese language teaching and so forth; 5. Establishing an alternative system between standard teaching and flexible non-standard teaching; 6. Some strategies for cultural transmission, including: (a) joining with universal values; (b) transmitting modern cultures; (c) sparing no effort to develop overseas sinology and launch high level cultural exchanges with elites of other countries in the fields of science, culture, arts and so on; and (d) taking native cultures into consideration when transmitting Chinese culture; 7. Strengthening the construction of sinology as an industry and its teaching faculty; 8. Bringing Chinese into the formal educational system of other countries, whilst cooperating with their local communities or enterprises; 9. Developing a distance education network of Chinese learning: (a) setting up a guiding network platform for the study and interaction of Chinese as a foreign language; and (b) developing some software helping with Chinese learning and testing; and 10. Artistic contents are superior to artistic techniques. There is a need to improve the ethical awareness of Chinese and the cultural intension of Chinese as a language, as well as to maintain its purity and perfect the system for foreign exchange students.

The second part of this volume expands its discussions on the methodologies and practices of Chinese teaching and learning.

Associate Professor Guoqiang Liu's paper deals with Reviving Local Identity via Dialect Maintenance while the world focuses on the wave of studying and learning Chinese. It uses the case of Shanghainese to argue that China spares no effort in its promotion of Putonghua (Mandarin), the official dialect of the country, typically in top-down policy imposition. The promotion of Putonghua as a

common dialect is even written into China´s Constitution of 1982. Forceful measures to promote Putonghua were implemented from 1986 and again from 1992, at the expense of other dialects. Dialects, especially those spoken in southern China, have been under further pressure as the result of internal migration, which restricts the use of vernaculars, and speaking dialects are often regarded as politically incorrect under these circumstances. In the early 2000s, concerns started to surface over the survival of Shanghainese, the vernacular of metropolitan Shanghai. People complained that schools were pushing Putonghua so hard to the extent that pupils were fined for speaking Shanghainese, and children are deprived of opportunities to learn to speak their native dialect. The decline of Shanghainese started to worry Shanghai locals. In 2005, a grass root movement took off in Shanghai for reviving the vernacular, and was joined by social and cultural elites who became spokespersons for this movement.

This paper examines the movement to revive Shanghainese in the context of language policy and language and identity. It explores the background against which this sociolinguistic movement took shape and developed, analysing related public discourse, including the debates arguing for and against preserving and reviving Shanghainese. These debates reveal that people feel that their collective identity is under threat in the face of their declining vernacular, and that losing their vernacular will result in loss of their cultural identity. This paper also looks into initiatives taken by grass root people in reviving the vernacular, including dialect classes for children and school dialect programs. This paper also examines the impact of this movement on language policy and planning, and the resulting policy outcome at local a level in Shanghai.

Dr Zhenyi Guo and Dr Liping Du´s paper looks at an appalling andragogy to facilitate a changing student demand. It points out that the past decade has seen a dramatic increase in student enrolment in Chinese language subjects. There is little doubt that such an increase, in a broad sense, is a result of globalization processes, in which China has played an important role in both political and economic terms. The impact of globalization in this regard can be more specifically seen from the change in students´ learning demands — a change from a career-oriented pursuit to a social-demand-driven passion. All this has led to an expansion in Chinese language teaching. As a result, a boutique-style of provision, which is characterised by teacher-centred and text-based resource-intensive teaching, has become out-dated. Instead, a super-store style of provision, which can serve a much larger group of students, seems to be the correct way to go forward. This paper attempts to explore possible solutions to the challenge that traditional language teaching has faced in the light of andragogical (or adult learning) theories. It argues that while the boutique-style of provision is no longer applicable with the increasing demand in Chinese learning, andragogy has a lot to offer. Through a case analysis, the paper presents a framework for applying the andragogical model within the micro field of Chinese language teaching and learning, arguing that without changing the current basic settings, such as facilities and teaching materials, the application of this framework may not only better facilitate the students´ learning demands and their changing learning objectives, but also better mobilize current teaching resources.

Dr Huiling Xu and Dr Moloney Robyn´s paper is concerned with the changing make-up of the tertiary foreign language classroom. It argues that with the growth of diaspora communities, more students are enrolling to study their family´s heritage language (HL) in

schools and universities. This phenomenon has attracted much research attention in the US, Canada and more recently in Australia. However, limited research has been done on the particular situation of heritage Chinese learners in the Australian tertiary sector. Using quantitative and qualitative data, this case study examines the non-heritage and heritage learners in a mixed beginner Chinese class in their respective linguistic needs, motivation orientations, study goals and their perception on the advantages and disadvantages of a mixed class. The study showed that the two groups shared more commonalities than differences. The data also indicated that there are benefits to combining HL and FL learners, where students are able to mutually facilitate linguistic and cultural connections, and potential intercultural learning.

Dr Bingfu Lu, Dr Yongxian Luo and Dr Xiaozhou Wu´s paper reflects on text design in teaching Chinese as a second language. It argues that while overseas Chinese communities have demonstrated an amazing cultural bond through their native language, paradoxically many young children from Chinese-speaking families are reluctant to learn their mother tongue because the Chinese writing system is notoriously difficult to learn. This paper proposes a model of text diversity to meet the needs of second-language learners. It is suggested that alphabetic texts should be used instead of graphemic texts in the initial stage. Semantic and grammatical information should be incorporated into phonetic texts as well as in graphemic texts to a certain extent. The Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility, the Principle of Structural Consistency and the consistency between the hearing and visual channels should be adapted to linguistic coding.

Dr Qiao Qing´s paper touches on the influence of Task-Based Teaching Methods on the Motivation of Chinese Language Learners. On the basis of presenting and analyzing the theories and research

findings of domestic and international Task-Based Teaching Methods, this paper applies the method to teaching Chinese as a foreign language to study its impact upon student motivation. This study took students at an international school in Hong Kong as a sample and undertook a comparative analysis of student motivations, using questionnaires and other methods. After conducting interviews with students, doing classroom observations, and analyzing the data it concludes that Task-Based Teaching Methods can augment students´ interest and internal motivation, but can also aggravate student anxiety, which must be lessened to achieve improved learning outcomes.

Dr He Hui and Dr Yu Wenting´s paper discusses An Empirical Study on the Usage of Metacognitive Strategies by Foreign Learners of Chinese. It presents an interdisciplinary applied research, by combining the psychological theories and research methods with the teaching practice in TCFL. The study introduced the theories of the learning strategies and the metacognitive strategies (MCS) in the field of educational psychology; it put forward the theoretical framework of this metacognitive strategies research, designed and implemented "The Questionnaire on the Usage of Metacognitive Strategies by Chinese Learners" and carried out interviews. Lastly, it outlined specific proposals on TCFL in terms of MCS-planning strategies, MCS-monitoring strategies and MCS-regulation strategies. The research on metacognitive strategies, the paper claims, will finally lead to the self-regulated learning.

Dr Zhou Shaoming´s paper touches on the difficulties in presenting culture through language classes. The paper argues that it has become a common understanding that culture and language cannot be separated in students´ learning process. However, how such consideration can be put into practice in classrooms remains a

difficult question. In reality, different schools and teachers run different programs and present language and culture using different methods. To put these various cases into a general view could make the conclusion either over-simplified or over-exaggerated. Unless we are able to work out some features that these classrooms have in common, any answers to the question will become less relevant. Therefore, the key issue to resolve it now has become: what do these language classrooms have in common in terms of their teaching and learning programs? The paper uses textbooks employed in Chinese language classes in Victorian Secondary Schools. The textbooks used are one of the few things that we can actually pick up from classrooms to identify common ground. The aim is to identify common features from the textbooks in relation to cultural presentation in Chinese language classrooms. The paper assesses the following questions: which features of Chinese culture are presented? Is there a common approach to the presentation of Chinese culture? What improvement is needed to make it more efficient?

Part 1: Policy Issues of Chinese Teaching and Learning